



“Into Our Destiny In Christ”
Seminar on the Book of Joshua

Sat 20 Jan 2024

The Bible Church



Historical Context Of The Book Of Joshua

- The book covers a most important period of Israel's history.
- This is a book about conquest and inheritance.
- **It tells how God's people entered, conquered and settled in Canaan.**
- But the story goes back 650 years earlier to God's promise to Abraham.
- In His covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12:1-7):

	God Promised Abraham	Text
1	Property – the land of Canaan	Gen. 12:1; 7
2	People – a great nation	Gen. 12:2
3	Prosperity – blessing	Gen. 12:3



Historical Context Of The Book Of Joshua

In the 650 years before the book of Joshua:

Event	OT Book	Year
God Calls Abraham	Genesis	2060 BCE
Jacob's family go to live in Egypt	Genesis	1845 BCE
400 years of captivity in Egypt	Exodus	
Moses leads Israel out of Egypt; the people refuse to enter Canaan & wander 40 years in the wilderness	Exodus Numbers	1447 BCE
Death of Moses	Deuteronomy	1407 BCE
God Commands Joshua	Joshua	1406 BCE

God is about to fulfil His age-old promise to Abraham.

Joshua Connects The Pentateuch To The Historical Books

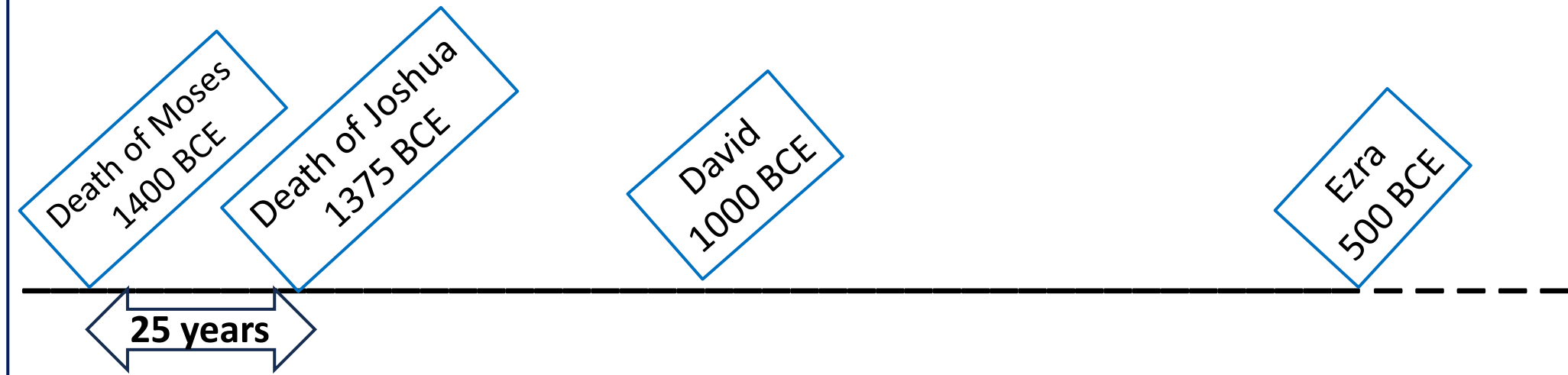
HISTORICAL BOOKS



Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I II Samuels, I II Kings, I II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

- After the Pentateuch, God's dealings with His people continues into the 12 historical books, starting with Joshua.
- The Pentateuch ends with God's people outside the Promised Land.
- Did God fulfil His promise to Abraham?
- Yes, He did, in Joshua (21:43-45).

When the Events in Joshua Occurred



Who Wrote The Book & When?



- The book is named after its main character, Joshua.
- The name Joshua (Hebrew **יְהוֹשֻׁעַ**) means “**the Lord is salvation**”.
- A most appropriate name for God’s commander-in-chief who achieved battle victories by relying on a faithful God.
- “Joshua” is *lēsous* in Greek; Jesus in English, our Saviour’s name.
- Scholars (not all) believe Joshua himself wrote the book.
- Evidence includes the use of “we” and “us” (5:1,6).
- Detailed accounts of military battles indicate first hand experiences.
- After Joshua’s death high priests Eleazar or Phinehas may have provided supplementary material (15:13-19; 19:47; 24:29-33).
- If Joshua wrote the book, it was probably written around 1380 BCE.

Structure Of The Book Of Joshua

- The book has a simple, symmetrical structure
- The 24 chapters divide into two halves of 12 chapters each.

Joshua 1-12	Joshua 13-24
Securing the Land	Settling the Land
Conquest of Land	Distribution of Land to the Tribes
Warlords in Canaan	Landlords in Canaan
7 years	18 years

- However, the above can be further fine-tuned.

Outline (1)

Joshua 1-12		Joshua 13-24	
Securing the Land		Settling the Land	
Joshua 1-5 (5 chapters)	Joshua 6-12 (7 chapters)	Joshua 13-21 (9 chapters)	Joshua 22-24 (3 chapters)
Cross the Jordan into the land	Take the land	Divide the Land	Serve the Lord in the land

Outline (2)

Joshua 1-5	Joshua 6-12			Joshua 13-21			Joshua 22-24
<u>Cross the Jordan</u>	<u>Take the land</u>			<u>Divide the Land</u>			<u>Serve the Lord</u>
Preparation	Military Campaigns			Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Consecration
Commission (ch. 1)	<u>Central Campaign</u>	<u>Southern Campaign</u>	<u>Northern Campaign</u>	Reuben, Gad, ½	Benjamin (ch. 18)	Cities of refuge (ch. 20)	Commissioning the eastern tribes; altar of witness (ch. 22)
Spying & Rahab (ch. 2)	Fall of Jericho (ch. 6)	Defence of Gibeon & Conquest of the South (ch. 10)	Conquest of the North (ch. 11)	Manasseh (ch. 13)	Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, Dan, Joshua (ch. 19)	Levites – 48 towns (ch. 21)	Joshua's charge to the leaders (ch. 23)
Crossing Jordan (ch. 3)	Achan's sin (ch. 7)		List of defeated kings (ch. 12)	Caleb (ch. 14)			
Memorials (ch. 4)	Renewal & Ai's defeat (ch. 8)			Judah (ch. 15)			
Consecration (ch. 5)	Gibeonite deception (ch. 9)			Ephraim (ch. 16)			
				½ Manasseh (ch. 17)			Covenant renewal at Shechem (ch. 24)

Preparations For Conquest (Chapters 1-5)

- Moses has died.
- The LORD commands Joshua to take over the reins of leadership.
- Joshua is to be strong and courageous and pay careful attention to God’s Word.
- Careful obedience to God’s Word will bring blessings and success.
- The first five chapters record the multi-faceted preparations of Joshua and the people for the impending conquest of Canaan.

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5
Preparations For Conquest:				
Spiritually	Militarily	Geographically	Historically	Spiritually
“Be Strong”	“Go View”	“Cross Over”	“Remember”	“Consecrate”
Joshua commissioned	Spying the land; Rahab	Miracle of Jordan crossing	Setting up memorial stones	Circumcision at Gilgal

Crossing River Jordan & Setting Up Camp At Gilgal

- River Jordan was miraculously held back to allow the Israelites to cross on dry ground (3:16), a parallel to crossing the Red Sea.
- R. Jordan was in flood stage and the Canaanites did not expect the Israelite crossing.
- Gilgal was Israel's first encampment in Canaan.
- Gilgal marks a significant transition for Israel.
- They have arrived in Canaan with a new leader.
- The miraculous manna ceased.
- The rite of circumcision was re-established and the Passover celebrated.
- The people are ready to "Take the Land".



Various Groups Living In Canaan



- Even before the time of Abraham, Canaan was inhabited.
- Joshua 3:10 mentions 7 groups: Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, & Jebusites.
- All of these groups are sometimes called Canaanites.
- They are called by different names as they settled in different areas.
- These groups occupied their own city-states that were fortified and very large (as reported by the spies in Num. 13:28).
- E.g., Jebusites lived in Jebus (Jerusalem) later conquered by David and made the capital of Israel (2 Sam. 5). A Jebusite king was slain by Joshua (Jos. 10:1-27).

Our Difficulty With God's Command To Destroy The Canaanites

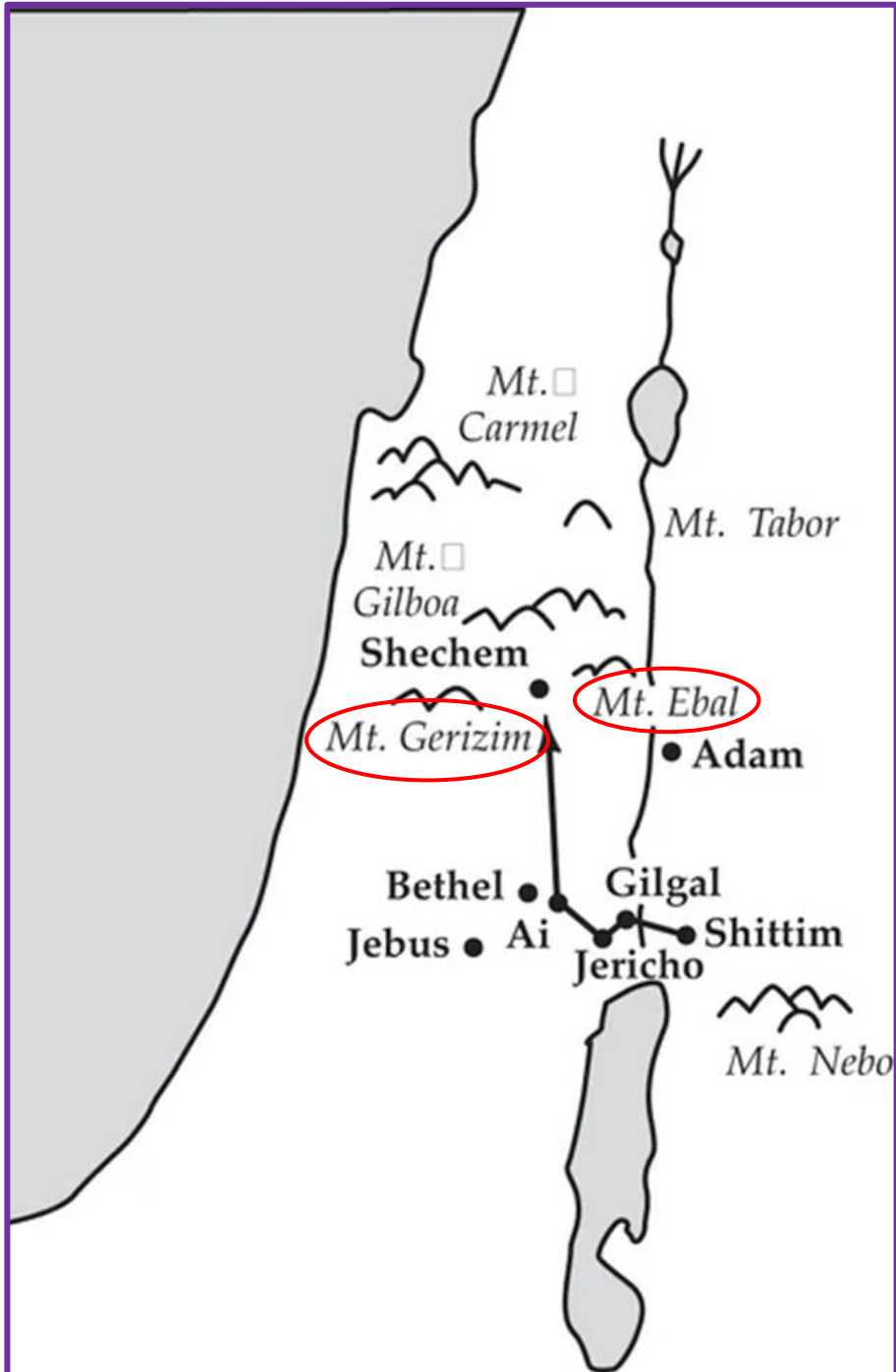
- God is a God of life, mercy and grace. But He is also a God of righteousness and justice and will punish wickedness and corruption.
- War can be an instrument of God's justice and punishment.
- Recall other instruments of God's punishment, e.g., the Flood.
- The depravity of the Canaanites included deviant sexual practices and child sacrifices to their gods (Lev. 18).
- God held back His judgement for 400 years until the iniquities of the Amorites (a synonym for Canaanites) reached a point of no return (Gen. 15:16).
- Joshua's conquest was God's punishment for the sin of the Canaanites.
- Also, with the complete removal of the depraved culture in the land, God's people would not be contaminated to follow any of their sinful practices.
- God similarly removed His people from the land (using the Assyrians and Babylonians) when they rebelled against God and turned from Him.

Military Strategy & Central Campaign



- The military strategy was one of “divide and conquer”; surprise attacks & always relying on God.
- Firstly, the central campaign to drive a wedge between the northern and southern cities.
- This prevented a massive Canaanite alliance of the north and south against Israel.
- The key to Canaan was the city of Jericho (★).
- Chapter 6: The victory was a supernatural one using marching around the city accompanied by the ark and priests blowing trumpets.
- This was to be the prototype of future battles – God is the “commander” and Israel is to follow His commands, even if they were unconventional.
- God won the battle; all the spoils were to be devoted to Him as a kind of first-fruits of the conquest.

Central Campaign (chaps. 6-9)



- The next strategic city to take was Ai.
- Chapter 7: Up against a smaller city Israel failed because of Achan stealing “devoted things”.
- Chapter 8: After this was dealt with God assured Joshua of victory over Ai (8:1).
- This concludes the Central Campaign.
- Then Joshua led all the people to the Plain of Shechem (8:30-35) (see route on map).
- For the significance of Shechem see Gen. 12:6-7.
- On Mt. Ebal Joshua set up an altar.
- And he made a copy of the Law of Moses.
- This is in accordance with Deut. 27 (and in the context of recent failure to obey God) to affirm Israel’s commitment to God’s covenant.

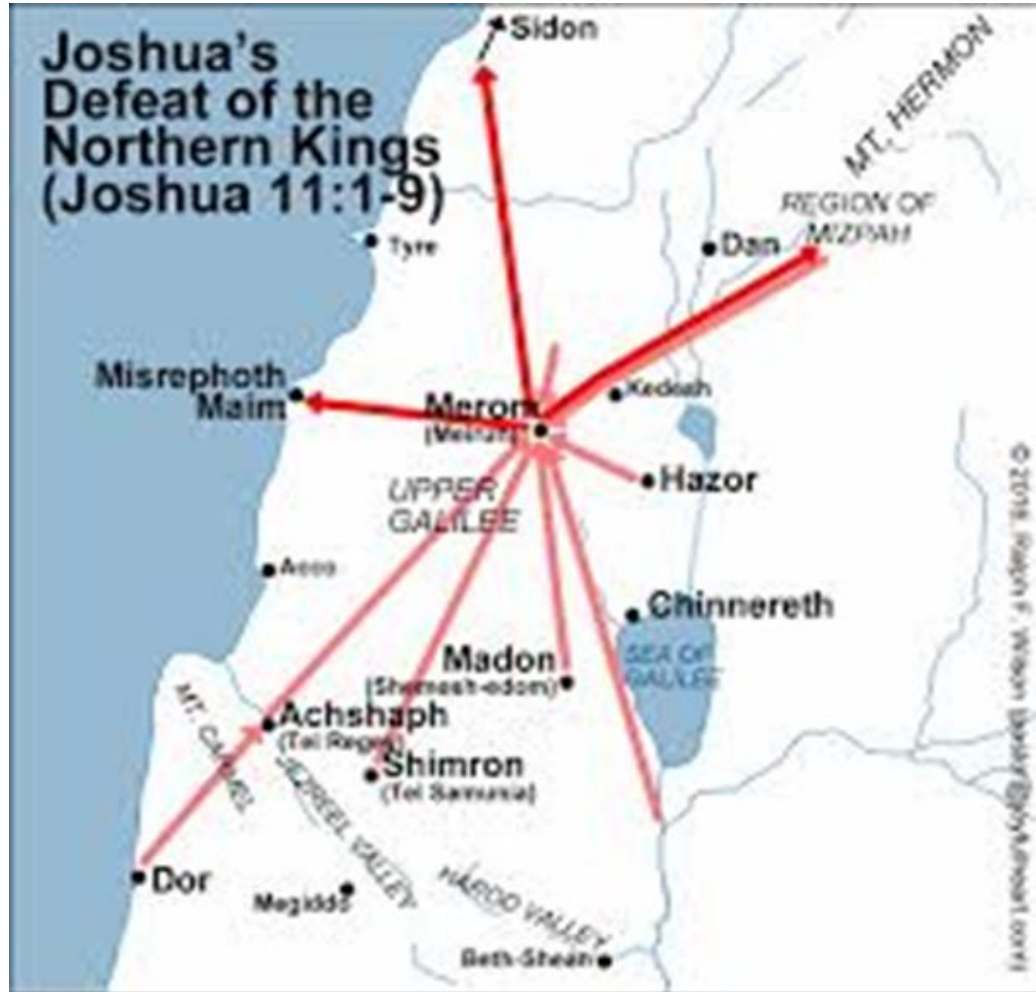
Southern Campaign (chap. 10)

- Chapter 9: Israel was deceived into making a peace treaty with a group of Hivites whose capital city was Gibeon (see map below).
- So these Canaanites were allowed to live among them, contrary to the command of God (3:10).
- Had the Israelites consulted God this would not have happened (9:14).

- Chapter 10: The southern cities (described as Amorite cities) attacked Gibeon.
- Joshua honoured the treaty and launched a surprise attack on the Amorite forces.
- God gave a “long day” (10:12-14) so Israel could gain a great victory.
- The defeat of the southern coalition was followed by attacks on six southern cities.



Northern Campaign (chaps. 11 & 12)



- The northern kings formed a coalition under Jabin, king of Hazor.
- This coalition was more formidable than the southern coalition.
- The battle was at Merom.
- The Lord gave Joshua and his army victory and they pursued the enemies to Sidon, Maim & the Valley of Mizpah (dark red arrows on map).
- 11:23 summarises the events of chapters 1-11.
- Chapter 12 summarises both Moses' and Joshua's victories on both sides of the Jordan.

DIVISION OF THE PROMISED LAND TO THE 12 TRIBES OF ISRAEL

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Division Of The Land

- Joshua was growing old and there still remained “very much land to be taken over” (13:1).
- E.g., the Philistines occupied the land along the Mediterranean coast (see map).
- They remained a thorn in Israel’s side through the reigns of Saul and David.
- Joshua allots territories to each tribe with instructions to drive out the remaining Canaanites and possess the land completely.

Phase 1: Allocations For Five Tribes

- Chapter 13: Allotment to Reuben, Gad and half tribe of Manasseh on the east of Jordan.

Division Of The Land



- Chapter 14: Caleb at age 85 (v. 10) asks for and receives Mt. Hebron, a known Canaanite stronghold!
- Chapter 15: Allotment to Judah.
- Chapters 16-17: Allotment to Joseph's sons – Ephraim and other half tribe of Manasseh.

Phase 2: Allocations For Seven Tribes

- The tabernacle is moved to Shiloh (◆) which becomes the “central” centre of Israel's worship.
- Chapter 18: Allotment to Benjamin.
- Chapter 19: Allotment to rest of tribes and allotment to Joshua.
- Dan had difficulty settling in their allotment (19:47) so they migrated north (Jud. 1:34).
- “Dan to Beersheba” delineated the borders of Israel.

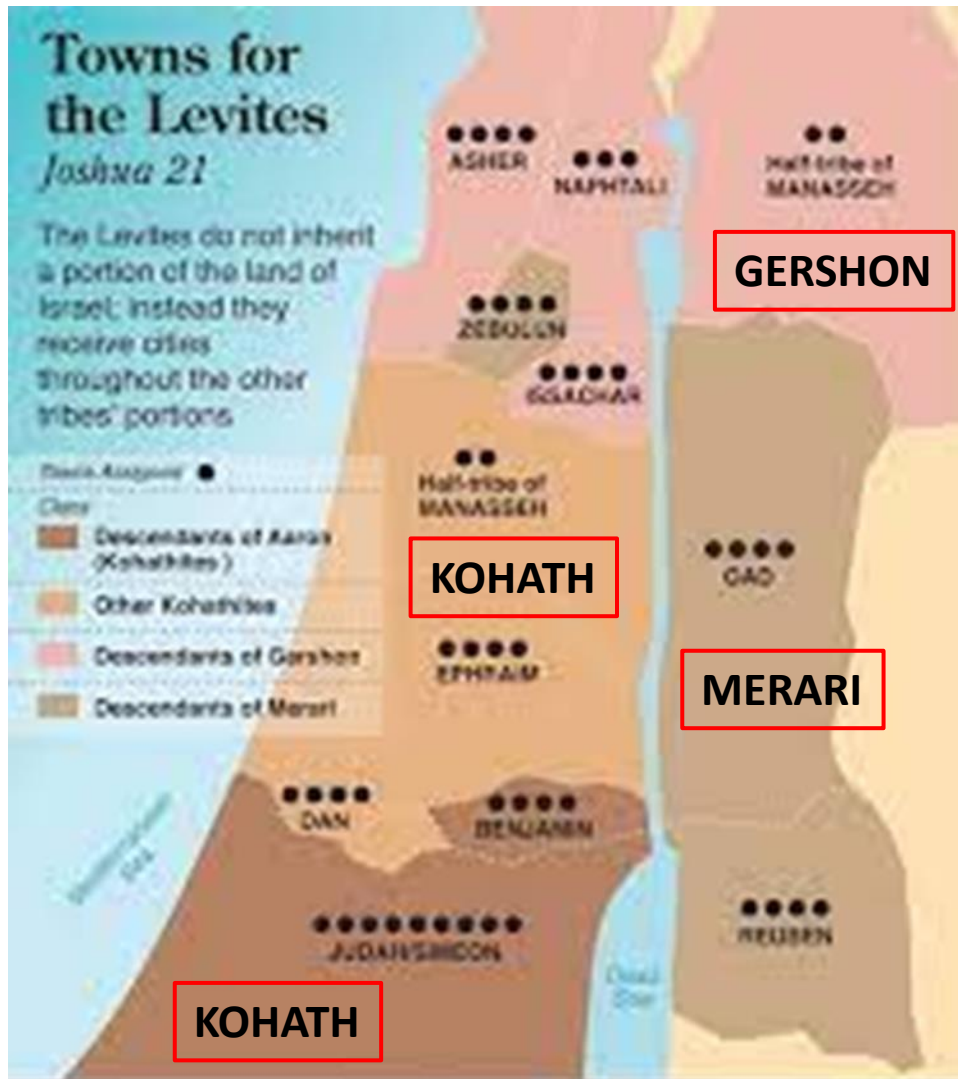
The Cities of Refuge

Phase 3: Cities of Refuge and Levite Towns

- Chapter 20: Six Cities of Refuge
- These were safe havens for those who had killed someone accidentally.
- If found innocent by the city assembly the fugitive could remain in the city until the death of the High Priest.
- Then he could return home without fear of someone seeking revenge for his innocent killing.
- This system upheld the principle, “innocent until proven guilty” – quite progressive in those days.



Towns For The Levites



- Chapter 21: Towns for the Levites
- The Levites had no tribal allotment of land.
- The Lord was their inheritance (13:33).
- Instead, 48 towns scattered among the tribes were given to the three families of Levites:
 - Kohath;
 - Gershon;
 - Merari
- Living among the tribes they could influence Israel to worship God and avoid idolatry.
- The 48 towns included the 6 cities of refuge.
- Finally, the division of the land is done.

Serve The Lord In The Land (Chapters 22-24)

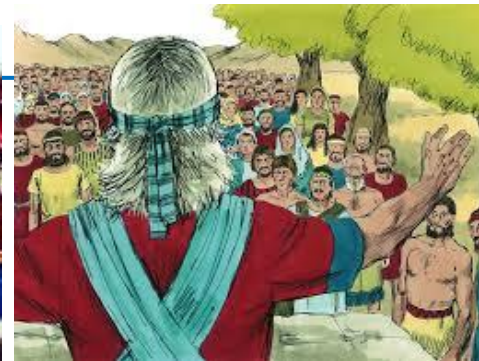
- Chapter 22 begins the 4th and final section of the book.
- The theme of this last section is “Serve the Lord in the Land”.

Chapter 22	Chapter 23	Chapter 24
A Memorial for the Future	A Challenge for the Present	A Commitment for All Time
Witness to Unity	Charge Given	Covenant Renewed

- Chapter 22: Eastern tribes return home.
- A memorial altar they set up at the Jordan horrified the western tribes.
- Civil war nearly broke out before the misunderstanding was cleared up.

Serve The Lord In The Land (Chapters 22-24)

- Chapter 23:
- A long time (about 18 years) had passed since the end of the conquest (23:1).
- Israel had been dwelling in the land and enjoying rest from their enemies.
- Joshua was getting very old (23:1, 14; cf. 24:29).
- Like Moses (in Deuteronomy) Joshua gave farewell addresses – first to the leaders (chapter 23) and then to the people (chapter 24).
- He challenged the leaders to keep trusting God and not violate the covenant of God by serving other gods and bowing down to them.



Serve The Lord In The Land

- Chapter 24: The Covenant Renewed At Shechem
- Joshua gathered the people and chose Shechem for the people to present themselves before God.
- He reviewed what God had done for Israel.
- It was a very long list of God's goodness and grace.
- Then he challenged the people to choose to serve the Lord.



AS FOR ME
and my HOUSE
WE WILL SERVE
THE Lord
JOSHUA 24:15

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- Will we also choose to serve the Lord?



Our Inheritance In Christ

- Joshua led the people from victory to victory as they followed the Lord and claimed their promised inheritance.
- The word inheritance is used 58 times in Joshua.
- Our inheritance, however, is not land or real estate.
- It is something more satisfying and eternal.
- What is it?
- And how do we grow into our destiny in Christ?
- Stay tuned to the sermon series.



Into Our Destiny In Christ