

# JOSHUA



## Read Joshua 1

This book begins with two covenants. One God makes with Joshua and the other Joshua makes with the Transjordanian tribes. The first covenant resembles the one God made with Moses; it is now made with Joshua, who will lead the people. Joshua reminds the Transjordanian tribes of their agreement with Moses to help the other tribes conquer the land west of the Jordan River. Then they will be allowed to return back across the Jordan to settle with their families.

**Reflect:** We begin this book hearing about promises and what they mean. God's promise forms the basis of Joshua's ability to lead the people to possess the land. How does God's promise in Jesus figure into your life?

**Pray:** Hear God's words to Joshua as if they were being spoken to you in baptism. Respond to God from your heart.

**Act:** Make a list of the important promises you have made.

## God's Commission to Joshua

**1** After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying, <sup>2</sup>"My servant Moses is dead. Now proceed to cross the Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the Israelites. <sup>3</sup>Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, as I promised to Moses. <sup>4</sup>From the wilderness and the Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, to the Great Sea in the west shall be your territory. <sup>5</sup>No one shall be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. <sup>6</sup>Be strong and courageous; for you shall put this people in possession of the land that I swore to their ancestors to give them. <sup>7</sup>Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to act in accordance with all the law that my servant Moses commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you may be successful wherever you go. <sup>8</sup>This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to act in accordance with all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall be successful. <sup>9</sup>I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

## Preparations for the Invasion

<sup>10</sup> Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, <sup>11</sup> "Pass through the camp, and command the peo-

ple: ‘Prepare your provisions; for in three days you are to cross over the Jordan, to go in to take possession of the land that the LORD your God gives you to possess.’”

12 To the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh Joshua said, 13 “Remember the word that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, ‘The LORD your God is providing you a place of rest, and will give you this land.’ 14 Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land that Moses gave you beyond the Jordan. But all the warriors among you shall cross over armed before your kindred and shall help them, 15 until the LORD gives rest to your

kindred as well as to you, and they too take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to your own land and take possession of it, the land that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan to the east.”

16 They answered Joshua: “All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 17 Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you. Only may the LORD your God be with you, as he was with Moses! 18 Whoever rebels against your orders and disobeys your words, whatever you command, shall be put to death. Only be strong and courageous.”

## Read Joshua 2

The spies sent out by Joshua are welcomed by Rahab, who is in a sinful profession. She is not a prime candidate for knowing the Lord, but her kindness to the spies earns her a place of safety when Israel attacks Jericho.

**Reflect:** Rahab makes a promise, and the spies make a promise. So much depends on trusting the other person. We can learn faithfulness from God’s faithfulness to us through the ages.

**Pray:** For all the faithfulness you have shown me when I was a stranger or in uneasy times, Lord, I give you thanks. May I learn to be faithful in my relationships with others.

**Act:** Rahab tied a scarlet cord in her window as a sign of her promise. Find those symbols in your life that remind you of promises that are important to you.

## Spies Sent to Jericho

**2** Then Joshua son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” So they went, and entered the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab, and spent the night there. <sup>2</sup>The king of Jericho was told, “Some Israelites have come here tonight to search out the land.” <sup>3</sup>Then the king of Jericho sent orders to Rahab, “Bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house, for they have come only to search out the whole land.” <sup>4</sup>But the woman took the two men and hid them. Then she said, “True, the men came to me, but I did not know where they came from. <sup>5</sup>And when it was time to close the gate at dark, the men went out. Where the men went I do not know. Pursue them quickly, for you can overtake them.” <sup>6</sup>She had, however, brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax that she had laid out on the roof. <sup>7</sup>So the men pursued them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords. As soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.

<sup>8</sup>Before they went to sleep, she came up to them on the roof <sup>9</sup>and said to the men: “I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that dread of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt in fear before you. <sup>10</sup>For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea<sup>a</sup> before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. <sup>11</sup>As soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no courage left in any of us because of you. The LORD your God is indeed God in heaven above and on earth below. <sup>12</sup>Now

<sup>a</sup> Or Sea of Reeds

then, since I have dealt kindly with you, swear to me by the LORD that you in turn will deal kindly with my family. Give me a sign of good faith <sup>13</sup> that you will spare my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.” <sup>14</sup> The men said to her, “Our life for yours! If you do not tell this business of ours, then we will deal kindly and faithfully with you when the LORD gives us the land.”

<sup>15</sup> Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the outer side of the city wall and she resided within the wall itself. <sup>16</sup> She said to them, “Go toward the hill country, so that the pursuers may not come upon you. Hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers have returned; then afterward you may go your way.” <sup>17</sup> The men said to her, “We will be released from this oath that you have made us swear to you <sup>18</sup> if we invade the land and you do not tie this crimson cord in the window through which you let us down, and you do not gather into your

house your father and mother, your brothers, and all your family. <sup>19</sup> If any of you go out of the doors of your house into the street, they shall be responsible for their own death, and we shall be innocent; but if a hand is laid upon any who are with you in the house, we shall bear the responsibility for their death. <sup>20</sup> But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be released from this oath that you made us swear to you.” <sup>21</sup> She said, “According to your words, so be it.” She sent them away and they departed. Then she tied the crimson cord in the window.

<sup>22</sup> They departed and went into the hill country and stayed there three days, until the pursuers returned. The pursuers had searched all along the way and found nothing. <sup>23</sup> Then the two men came down again from the hill country. They crossed over, came to Joshua son of Nun, and told him all that had happened to them. <sup>24</sup> They said to Joshua, “Truly the LORD has given all the land into our hands; moreover all the inhabitants of the land melt in fear before us.”

### Read Joshua 3

This story is told in such a way that it reminds us of the crossing of the Red Sea in Exodus 14. This mighty act of God at the Jordan inaugurates the entrance of Israel into the Promised Land, just as God’s act at the Red Sea marked his saving of Israel from destruction at the hands of Pharaoh.

**Reflect:** God marks the beginning of Israel’s life in the Promised Land with a sign of his power and caring presence. What “signs” has God given to mark the significant events in your life?

**Pray:** Lord, may I see your saving acts in scripture as things you did for me. May I always remember how, in saving your people, you have saved me.

**Act:** Look at a picture taken during an important event in your life. How was God present to you at that moment?

### Israel Crosses the Jordan

**3** Early in the morning Joshua rose and set out from Shittim with all the Israelites, and they came to the Jordan. They camped there before crossing over. <sup>2</sup> At the end of three days the officers went through the camp <sup>3</sup> and commanded the people, “When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God being carried by the levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place. Follow it, <sup>4</sup> so that you may know the way you should go, for you have not passed this way before. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, a distance of about two thousand cubits; do not come any nearer to it.” <sup>5</sup> Then Joshua said to the people, “Sanctify yourselves; for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.” <sup>6</sup> To the priests Joshua said, “Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass on in front of the people.” So they took up the ark of the covenant and went in front of the people.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD said to Joshua, “This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, so that they may know that I will be with you as I was with Moses. <sup>8</sup> You are the one who shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, “When you come to the edge of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.”

<sup>9</sup> Joshua then said to the Israelites, “Draw near and hear the words of the LORD your God.” <sup>10</sup> Joshua said, “By this you shall know that among you is the living God who without fail will drive out from before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites: <sup>11</sup> the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is going to pass before you into the Jordan. <sup>12</sup> So now select twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. <sup>13</sup> When the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan flowing from above shall be cut off; they shall stand in a single heap.”

<sup>14</sup> When the people set out from their tents to cross over the Jordan, the priests

bearing the ark of the covenant were in front of the people. <sup>15</sup> Now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest. So when those who bore the ark had come to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the edge of the water, <sup>16</sup> the waters flowing from above stood still, rising up in a single heap far off at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, while those flowing toward the sea of the Arabah, the Dead Sea,<sup>a</sup> were wholly cut off. Then the people crossed over opposite Jericho. <sup>17</sup> While all Israel were crossing over on dry ground, the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, until the entire nation finished crossing over the Jordan.

### Read Joshua 4

This conclusion of the story of the crossing of the Jordan focuses on the stones that were set up as markers, a memorial so that people would not forget God’s mighty act.

**Reflect:** Remembering God’s saving deeds is the duty of people of faith. We must remember and tell the story of what God has done for us.

**Pray:** Recite the words: “Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter” in a chant. The year of faith teaches us the saving deeds that God has done for us.

**Act:** Visit a church. The church building is meant to remind us of God’s presence.

### Twelve Stones Set Up at Gilgal

**4** When the entire nation had finished crossing over the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua: <sup>2</sup> “Select twelve men from the people, one from each tribe, <sup>3</sup> and command them, ‘Take twelve stones from here out of the middle of the Jordan, from the place where the priests’ feet stood, carry them over with you, and lay them down in the place where you camp tonight.’” <sup>4</sup> Then Joshua summoned the twelve men from the Israelites, whom he had appointed, one from each tribe. <sup>5</sup> Joshua said to them, “Pass on before the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan, and each of you take up a stone on his shoulder, one for each of the tribes of the Israelites, <sup>6</sup> so that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, ‘What do those stones mean to you?’ <sup>7</sup> then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off in front of the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the Israelites a memorial forever.”

<sup>8</sup> The Israelites did as Joshua commanded. They took up twelve stones out of the middle of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, as the LORD told Joshua, carried them over with them to the place where they camped, and laid them down there. <sup>9</sup> (Joshua set up twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant had stood; and they are there to this day.)

<sup>10</sup> The priests who bore the ark remained standing

<sup>a</sup> Heb Salt Sea

in the middle of the Jordan, until everything was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua to tell the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua. The people crossed over in haste. <sup>11</sup>As soon as all the people had finished crossing over, the ark of the LORD, and the priests, crossed over in front of the people. <sup>12</sup>The Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh crossed over armed before the Israelites, as Moses had ordered them. <sup>13</sup>About forty thousand armed for war crossed over before the LORD to the plains of Jericho for battle.

<sup>14</sup>On that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they stood in awe of him, as they had stood in awe of Moses, all the days of his life.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD said to Joshua, <sup>16</sup>“Command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant,<sup>a</sup> to come up out of the Jordan.” <sup>17</sup>Joshua therefore commanded the priests, “Come up out of the Jordan.” <sup>18</sup>When the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of

the LORD came up from the middle of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests’ feet touched dry ground, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks, as before.

<sup>19</sup>The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. <sup>20</sup>Those twelve stones, which they had taken out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal, <sup>21</sup>saying to the Israelites, “When your children ask their parents in time to come, ‘What do these stones mean?’ <sup>22</sup>then you shall let your children know, ‘Israel crossed over the Jordan here on dry ground.’ <sup>23</sup>For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you crossed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea,<sup>b</sup> which he dried up for us until we crossed over, <sup>24</sup>so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, and so that you may fear the LORD your God forever.”

### The New Generation Circumcised

**5** When all the kings of the Amorites beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan for the Israelites until they had crossed over, their hearts melted, and there was no longer any spirit in them, because of the Israelites.

<sup>2</sup>At that time the LORD said to Joshua, “Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites a second time.” <sup>3</sup>So Joshua made flint knives, and circumcised the Israelites at Gibeath-haaraloth.<sup>c</sup> <sup>4</sup>This is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the males of the people who came out of Egypt, all the warriors, had died during the journey through the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt. <sup>5</sup>Although all the people who came out had been circumcised, yet all the people born on the journey through the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised. <sup>6</sup>For the Israelites traveled forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, the warriors who came out of Egypt, perished, not having listened to the voice of the LORD. To them the LORD swore that he would not let them see the land that he had sworn to their ancestors to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. <sup>7</sup>So it was their children, whom he raised up in their place, that Joshua cir-

<sup>a</sup> Or *treaty*, or *testimony*; Heb *eduth*

<sup>b</sup> Or *Sea of Reeds*

<sup>c</sup> That is *the Hill of the Foreskins*

### Read Joshua 5:1–12

In this passage we learn about three elements that have been part of Israel's story for some time: circumcision, manna, and the Passover. These elements have marked the Israelites' identity as God's people. Now, in the Promised Land, changes are in order, as well as a rededication to being faithful to God.

**Reflect:** The cessation of the manna was a sign to the Israelites that they had completed the journey they had begun forty years ago. They had started out with God's care guiding them and that care had been with them despite many difficulties. Faithfulness as a two-way street is marked by the revival of circumcision and the keeping of Passover.

**Pray:** Lord, you have always been faithful. May I be thankful and show my faithfulness to you in return.

**Act:** Consider the elements of your life that give evidence of your faithfulness to God.

cumcised; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way.

8 When the circumcising of all the nation was done, they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed. 9 The LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal<sup>a</sup> to this day.

### The Passover at Gilgal

10 While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. 11 On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. 12 The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

### Joshua's Vision

13 Once when Joshua was by Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing before him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you one of us, or one of our adversaries?" 14 He replied, "Neither; but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and he said to him, "What do you command your servant, my lord?" 15 The commander of the army of the LORD said to Joshua, "Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so.

### Jericho Taken and Destroyed

**6** Now Jericho was shut up inside and out because of the Israelites; no one came out and no one went in. 2 The LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have handed Jericho over to you, along with its king and soldiers. 3 You shall march around the city, all the warriors circling the city once. Thus you shall do for six days, 4 with seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, the priests blowing the trumpets. 5 When they make a long blast with the ram's horn, as soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and all the people shall charge straight ahead." 6 So Joshua son of Nun summoned the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and have seven priests carry seven trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark of the LORD." 7 To the people he said, "Go forward and march around the city; have the armed men pass on before the ark of the LORD."

<sup>a</sup> Related to Heb *galal* to roll

### Read Joshua 5:13—6:27

There are three parts to this story of the conquest of Jericho. The first part tells of Joshua's commission from the Lord to attack Jericho, the second details the march of the ark and the Israelites around Jericho, and the third part takes up the fate of Rahab, a resident of Jericho, whose cooperation merited her a place in Israel's future.

**Reflect:** Joshua is obedient to the Lord's command. The people are obedient to the Lord's command. Rahab is obedient to the Lord's will. All this obedience makes it an opportune time for me to consider where my own obedience to the Lord has helped me.

**Pray:** Lord, your will is the route to happiness in my life. Please grant me your mercy and help me deal with all the ways in which I find obedience a challenge.

**Act:** Make a list of the ways in which you find obedience difficult in your life.

8 As Joshua had commanded the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD went forward, blowing the trumpets, with the ark of the covenant of the LORD following them. 9 And the armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets; the rear guard came after the ark, while the trumpets blew continually. 10 To the people Joshua gave this command: "You shall not shout or let your voice be heard, nor shall you utter a word, until the day I tell you to shout. Then you shall shout." 11 So the ark of the LORD went around the city, circling it once; and they came into the camp, and spent the night in the camp.

12 Then Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. 13 The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD passed on, blowing the trumpets continually. The armed men went before them, and the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets blew continually. 14 On the second day they marched around the city once and then returned to the camp. They did this for six days.

15 On the seventh day they rose early, at dawn, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. It was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times. 16 And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city. 17 The city and all that is in it shall be devoted to the LORD for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live because she hid the messengers we sent. 18 As for you, keep away from the things devoted to destruction, so as not to covet<sup>a</sup> and take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel an object for destruction, bringing trouble upon it. 19 But all silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are sacred to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD." 20 So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpets, they raised a great shout, and the wall fell down flat; so the people charged straight ahead into the city and captured it. 21 Then they devoted to destruction by the edge of the sword all in the city, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys.

22 Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the prostitute's house, and bring the woman out of it and all who belong to her, as you swore to her." 23 So the young men who had been spies went in and brought Rahab out, along with her father, her mother, her brothers, and all who belonged to her—they

<sup>a</sup> Gk: Heb *devote to destruction* Compare 7.21

brought all her kindred out—and set them outside the camp of Israel. <sup>24</sup>They burned down the city, and everything in it; only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. <sup>25</sup>But Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, Joshua spared. Her family<sup>a</sup> has lived in Israel ever since. For she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

<sup>26</sup> Joshua then pronounced this oath, saying,

“Cursed before the LORD be anyone who tries  
to build this city—this Jericho!  
At the cost of his firstborn he shall  
lay its foundation,  
and at the cost of his youngest he  
shall set up its gates!”

<sup>27</sup> So the LORD was with Joshua; and his fame was in all the land.

### Read Joshua 7

This episode deals with the consequences of disobedience to God’s command. Achan disobeys the command to destroy all the goods of Jericho when he secretly keeps a mantle, a gold bar, and some silver for himself. Israel is defeated at Ai because of Achan’s sin. Achan is stoned to death for his crime at the Valley of Achor, which means “trouble.”

**Reflect:** Joshua’s faith seems to be shaken by the loss at Ai. He is ready to give up rather than solve the problem. Faith takes a strength that can endure defeat as well as joyful victory.

**Pray:** Forgive me, Lord, for the times when my faith has been too weak for me to move on in my life.

**Act:** Consider an issue, past or present, where your faith was shaken.

### The Sin of Achan and Its Punishment

**7** But the Israelites broke faith in regard to the devoted things: Achan son of Carmi son of Zabdi son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things; and the anger of the LORD burned against the Israelites.

<sup>2</sup> Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-aven, east of Bethel, and said to them, “Go up and spy out the land.” And the men went up and spied out Ai. <sup>3</sup> Then they returned to Joshua and said to him, “Not all the people need go up; about two or three thousand men should go up and attack Ai. Since they are so few, do not make the whole people toil up there.” <sup>4</sup> So about three thousand of the people went up there; and they fled before the men of Ai. <sup>5</sup> The men of Ai killed about thirty-six of them, chasing them from outside the gate as far as Shebarim and killing them on the slope. The hearts of the people melted and turned to water.

<sup>6</sup> Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the ground on his face before the ark of the LORD until the evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. <sup>7</sup> Joshua said, “Ah, Lord GOD! Why have you brought this people across the Jordan at all, to hand us over to the Amorites so as to destroy us? Would that we had been content to settle beyond the Jordan! <sup>8</sup> O Lord, what can I say, now that Israel has turned their backs to their enemies! <sup>9</sup> The Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it, and surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. Then what will you do for your great name?”

<sup>10</sup> The LORD said to Joshua, “Stand up! Why have you fallen upon your face? <sup>11</sup> Israel has sinned; they have transgressed my covenant that I imposed on them. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have acted deceitfully, and they have put them among their own belongings. <sup>12</sup> Therefore the Israelites are unable to stand before their enemies; they turn their backs to their enemies, because

<sup>a</sup> Heb She



they have become a thing devoted for destruction themselves. I will be with you no more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you. <sup>13</sup> Proceed to sanctify the people, and say, ‘Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow; for thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, “There are devoted things among you, O Israel; you will be unable to stand before your enemies until you take away the devoted things from among you.”’ <sup>14</sup> In the morning therefore you shall come forward tribe by tribe. The tribe that the LORD takes shall come near by clans, the clan that the LORD takes shall come near by households, and the household that the LORD takes shall come near one by one. <sup>15</sup> And the one who is taken as having the devoted things shall be burned with fire, together with all that he has, for having transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and for having done an outrageous thing in Israel.”

<sup>16</sup> So Joshua rose early in the morning, and brought Israel near tribe by tribe, and the tribe of Judah was taken. <sup>17</sup> He brought near the clans of Judah, and the clan of the Zerahites was taken; and he brought near the clan of the Zerahites, family by family,<sup>a</sup> and Zabdi was taken. <sup>18</sup> And he brought near his household one by one, and Achan son of Carmi son of Zabdi son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. <sup>19</sup> Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the LORD God of Israel and make confes-

sion to him. Tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.” <sup>20</sup> And Achan answered Joshua, “It is true; I am the one who sinned against the LORD God of Israel. This is what I did: <sup>21</sup> when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels, then I coveted them and took them. They now lie hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath.”

<sup>22</sup> So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there it was, hidden in his tent with the silver underneath. <sup>23</sup> They took them out of the tent and brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites; and they spread them out before the LORD. <sup>24</sup> Then Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan son of Zerah, with the silver, the mantle, and the bar of gold, with his sons and daughters, with his oxen, donkeys, and sheep, and his tent and all that he had; and they brought them up to the Valley of Achor. <sup>25</sup> Joshua said, “Why did you bring trouble on us? The LORD is bringing trouble on you today.” And all Israel stoned him to death; they burned them with fire, cast stones on them, <sup>26</sup> and raised over him a great heap of stones that remains to this day. Then the LORD turned from his burning anger. Therefore that place to this day is called the Valley of Achor.<sup>b</sup>

### Ai Captured by a Stratagem and Destroyed

**8** Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not fear or be dismayed; take all the fighting men with you, and go up now to Ai. See, I have handed over to you the king of Ai with his people, his city, and his land. <sup>2</sup> You shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king; only its spoil and its livestock you may take as booty for yourselves. Set an ambush against the city, behind it.”

<sup>3</sup> So Joshua and all the fighting men set out to go up against Ai. Joshua chose thirty thousand warriors and sent them out by night <sup>4</sup> with the command, “You shall lie in ambush against the city, behind it; do not go very far from the city, but all of you stay alert. <sup>5</sup> I and all the people who are with me will approach the city. When they come out against us, as before, we shall flee from

<sup>a</sup> Mss Syr: MT *man by man*

<sup>b</sup> That is *Trouble*

## Read Joshua 8

This second story about the conquest of Ai illustrates the difference made by meticulous observance of the Lord's commands. Joshua is now pictured as a paragon of faithfulness and a great military leader. At the conclusion of the story he demonstrates his role as a religious leader by faithfully reading the law of Moses to all the people.

**Reflect:** The Lord calls Israel to be faithful again after its disobedience. God does not give up on Israel. Israel, for its part, will not give up its struggle to be faithful to the Lord. Faithfulness can be hard work.

**Pray:** Ask God, in prayer, for the courage to renew your faithfulness after you fall.

**Act:** Seek the Lord's forgiveness for a time when your faith was not strong enough to prevent a fall in your life.

them. <sup>6</sup> They will come out after us until we have drawn them away from the city; for they will say, 'They are fleeing from us, as before.' While we flee from them, <sup>7</sup> you shall rise up from the ambush and seize the city; for the LORD your God will give it into your hand. <sup>8</sup> And when you have taken the city, you shall set the city on fire, doing as the LORD has ordered; see, I have commanded you." <sup>9</sup> So Joshua sent them out; and they went to the place of ambush, and lay between Bethel and Ai, to the west of Ai; but Joshua spent that night in the camp.<sup>a</sup>

10 In the morning Joshua rose early and mustered the people, and went up, with the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai. <sup>11</sup> All the fighting men who were with him went up, and drew near before the city, and camped on the north side of Ai, with a ravine between them and Ai. <sup>12</sup> Taking about five thousand men, he set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, to the west of the city. <sup>13</sup> So they stationed the forces, the main encampment that was north of the city and its rear guard west of the city. But Joshua spent that night in the valley. <sup>14</sup> When the king of Ai saw this, he and all his people, the inhabitants of the city, hurried out early in the morning to the meeting place facing the Arabah to meet Israel in battle; but he did not know that there was an ambush against him behind the city. <sup>15</sup> And Joshua and all Israel made a pretense of being beaten before them, and fled in the direction of the wilderness. <sup>16</sup> So all the people who were in the city were called together to pursue them, and as they pursued Joshua they were drawn away from the city. <sup>17</sup> There was not a man left in Ai or Bethel who did not go out after Israel; they left the city open, and pursued Israel.

18 Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Stretch out the sword that is in your hand toward Ai; for I will give it into your hand." And Joshua stretched out the sword that was in his hand toward the city. <sup>19</sup> As soon as he stretched out his hand, the troops in ambush rose quickly out of their place and rushed forward. They entered the city, took it, and at once set the city on fire. <sup>20</sup> So when the men of Ai looked back, the smoke of the city was rising to the sky. They had no power to flee this way or that, for the people who fled to the wilderness turned back against the pursuers. <sup>21</sup> When Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city and that the smoke of the city was rising, then they turned back and struck down the men of Ai. <sup>22</sup> And the others came out from the city against them; so they were surrounded by Israelites, some on one side, and some on the other; and Israel struck them down until no one was left who survived or escaped. <sup>23</sup> But the king of Ai was taken alive and brought to Joshua.

<sup>a</sup> Heb among the people

24 When Israel had finished slaughtering all the inhabitants of Ai in the open wilderness where they pursued them, and when all of them to the very last had fallen by the edge of the sword, all Israel returned to Ai, and attacked it with the edge of the sword. <sup>25</sup> The total of those who fell that day, both men and women, was twelve thousand—all the people of Ai. <sup>26</sup> For Joshua did not draw back his hand, with which he stretched out the sword, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. <sup>27</sup> Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as their booty, according to the word of the LORD that he had issued to Joshua. <sup>28</sup> So Joshua burned Ai, and made it forever a heap of ruins, as it is to this day. <sup>29</sup> And he hanged the king of Ai on a tree until evening; and at sunset Joshua commanded, and they took his body down from the tree, threw it down at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raised over it a great heap of stones, which stands there to this day.

### Joshua Renews the Covenant

30 Then Joshua built on Mount Ebal an

altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, <sup>31</sup> just as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the Israelites, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, “an altar of unhewn<sup>a</sup> stones, on which no iron tool has been used”; and they offered on it burnt offerings to the LORD, and sacrificed offerings of well-being. <sup>32</sup> And there, in the presence of the Israelites, Joshua<sup>b</sup> wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written. <sup>33</sup> All Israel, alien as well as citizen, with their elders and officers and their judges, stood on opposite sides of the ark in front of the levitical priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, half of them in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded at the first, that they should bless the people of Israel. <sup>34</sup> And afterward he read all the words of the law, blessings and curses, according to all that is written in the book of the law. <sup>35</sup> There was not a word of all that Moses commanded that Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, and the women, and the little ones, and the aliens who resided among them.

### The Gibeonites Save Themselves by Trickery

**9** Now when all the kings who were beyond the Jordan in the hill country and in the lowland all along the coast of the Great Sea toward Lebanon—the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites—heard of this, <sup>2</sup> they gathered together with one accord to fight Joshua and Israel.

<sup>3</sup> But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, <sup>4</sup> they on their part acted with cunning: they went and prepared provisions,<sup>c</sup> and took worn-out sacks for their donkeys, and wineskins, worn-out and torn and mended, <sup>5</sup> with worn-out, patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes; and all their provisions were dry and moldy. <sup>6</sup> They went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the Israelites, “We have come from a far country; so now make a treaty with us.” <sup>7</sup> But the Israelites said to the Hivites, “Perhaps you live among us; then how can we make a treaty with you?” <sup>8</sup> They said to Joshua, “We are your servants.” And Joshua said to them, “Who are you? And where do you come from?”

<sup>a</sup> Heb *whole*

<sup>b</sup> Heb *he*

<sup>c</sup> Cn: Meaning of Heb uncertain

### Read Joshua 9

The Gibeonites in this story create a deception of which Israel becomes the victim. The Israelites are faced with a dilemma once the deception becomes known. They resolve to be faithful to their oath to the Gibeonites.

**Reflect:** Faithfulness tempered with mercy is the path Israel chooses in dealing with the difficult situation it faces with the Gibeonites. Faithfulness and mercy are two aspects of God's dealings with us.

**Pray:** Repeat the words of the psalmist: "Mercy and faithfulness have met, justice and peace have embraced." Pray these words over for some moments.

**Act:** Recall a time you were called upon to show mercy in a difficult situation.

<sup>9</sup> They said to him, "Your servants have come from a very far country, because of the name of the LORD your God; for we have heard a report of him, of all that he did in Egypt, <sup>10</sup> and of all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, King Sihon of Heshbon, and King Og of Bashan who lived in Ashtaroth. <sup>11</sup> So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country said to us, 'Take provisions in your hand for the journey; go to meet them, and say to them, "We are your servants; come now, make a treaty with us."<sup>12</sup> Here is our bread; it was still warm when we took it from our houses as our food for the journey, on the day we set out to come to you, but now, see, it is dry and moldy; <sup>13</sup> these wineskins were new when we filled them, and see, they are burst; and these garments and sandals of ours are worn out from the very long journey." <sup>14</sup> So the leaders<sup>a</sup> partook of their provisions, and did not ask direction from the LORD. <sup>15</sup> And Joshua made peace with them, guaranteeing their lives by a treaty; and the leaders of the congregation swore an oath to them.

<sup>16</sup> But when three days had passed after they had made a treaty with them, they heard that they were their neighbors and were living among them. <sup>17</sup> So the Israelites set out and reached their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim. <sup>18</sup> But the Israelites did not attack them, because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel. Then all the congregation murmured against the leaders. <sup>19</sup> But all the leaders said to all the congregation, "We have sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we must not touch them. <sup>20</sup> This is what we will do to them: We will let them live, so that wrath may not come upon us, because of the oath that we swore to them." <sup>21</sup> The leaders said to them, "Let them live." So they became hewers of wood and drawers of water for all the congregation, as the leaders had decided concerning them.

<sup>22</sup> Joshua summoned them, and said to them, "Why did you deceive us, saying, 'We are very far from you,' while in fact you are living among us? <sup>23</sup> Now therefore you are cursed, and some of you shall always be slaves, hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God." <sup>24</sup> They answered Joshua, "Because it was told to your servants for a certainty that the LORD your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land before you; so we were in great fear for our lives because of you, and did this thing. <sup>25</sup> And now we are in your hand: do as it seems good and right in your sight to do to us." <sup>26</sup> This is what he did for them: he saved

<sup>a</sup> Gk: Heb *men*

them from the Israelites; and they did not kill them. <sup>27</sup> But on that day Joshua made them hewers of wood and drawers of water

for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, to continue to this day, in the place that he should choose.

### Read Joshua 10

This rather long story tells of an episode in which an alliance of five kings opposes Joshua and Israel. As the narrator informs us throughout, the enemies of Israel stand no chance, since the Lord fights for Israel as a champion warrior. Joshua concludes the story by delivering “justice” to the five kings and their cities.

**Reflect:** The violence of this story causes us to shudder, yet it is in the midst of this less-than-perfect world that Joshua prays and lives out his faith. Often we are faced with the imperfect nature of our world. Can a person of faith exist in the real world?

**Pray:** Like Joshua, Lord, I live in an imperfect world and I am a sinful person. Like Joshua, may I have confidence in your loving power at work in my world.

**Act:** Read a news story about an international conflict. Pray for the situation to be resolved in peace.

### The Sun Stands Still

**10** When King Adoni-zedek of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it, doing to Ai and its king as he had done to Jericho and its king, and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them, <sup>2</sup> he<sup>a</sup> became greatly frightened, because Gibeon was a large city, like one of the royal cities, and was larger than Ai, and all its men were warriors. <sup>3</sup> So King Adoni-zedek of Jerusalem sent a message to King Hoham of Hebron, to King Piram of Jarmuth, to King Japhia of Lachish, and to King Debir of Eglon, saying, <sup>4</sup> “Come up and help me, and let us attack Gibeon; for it has made peace with Joshua and with the Israelites.” <sup>5</sup> Then the five kings of the Amorites—the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon—gathered their forces, and went up with all their armies and camped against Gibeon, and made war against it.

<sup>6</sup> And the Gibeonites sent to Joshua at the camp in Gilgal, saying, “Do not abandon your servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us; for all the kings of the Amorites who live in the hill country are gathered against us.” <sup>7</sup> So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the fighting force with him, all the mighty warriors. <sup>8</sup> The LORD said to Joshua, “Do not fear them, for I have handed them over to you; not one of them shall stand before you.” <sup>9</sup> So Joshua came upon them suddenly, having marched up all night from Gilgal. <sup>10</sup> And the LORD threw them into a panic before Israel, who inflicted a great slaughter on them at Gibeon, chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah. <sup>11</sup> As they fled before Israel, while they were going down the slope of Beth-horon, the LORD threw down huge stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died; there were more who died because of the hailstones than the Israelites killed with the sword.

<sup>12</sup> On the day when the LORD gave the Amorites over to the Israelites, Joshua spoke to the LORD; and he said in the sight of Israel,

“Sun, stand still at Gibeon,  
and Moon, in the valley of Aijalon.”

<sup>13</sup> And the sun stood still, and the moon stopped,  
until the nation took vengeance on their enemies.

Is this not written in the Book of Jashar? The sun

<sup>a</sup> Heb they

stopped in midheaven, and did not hurry to set for about a whole day. <sup>14</sup>There has been no day like it before or since, when the LORD heeded a human voice; for the LORD fought for Israel.

<sup>15</sup>Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

### Five Kings Defeated

<sup>16</sup>Meanwhile, these five kings fled and hid themselves in the cave at Makkedah. <sup>17</sup>And it was told Joshua, "The five kings have been found, hidden in the cave at Makkedah." <sup>18</sup>Joshua said, "Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and set men by it to guard them; <sup>19</sup>but do not stay there yourselves; pursue your enemies, and attack them from the rear. Do not let them enter their towns, for the LORD your God has given them into your hand." <sup>20</sup>When Joshua and the Israelites had finished inflicting a very great slaughter on them, until they were wiped out, and when the survivors had entered into the fortified towns, <sup>21</sup>all the people returned safe to Joshua in the camp at Makkedah; no one dared to speak<sup>a</sup> against any of the Israelites.

<sup>22</sup>Then Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave, and bring those five kings out to me from the cave." <sup>23</sup>They did so, and brought the five kings out to him from the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon. <sup>24</sup>When they brought the kings out to Joshua, Joshua summoned all the Israelites, and said to the chiefs of the warriors who had gone with him, "Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings." Then they came near and put their feet on their necks. <sup>25</sup>And Joshua said to them, "Do not be afraid or dismayed; be strong and courageous; for thus the LORD will do to all the enemies against whom you fight." <sup>26</sup>Afterward Joshua struck them down and put them to death, and he hung them on five

trees. And they hung on the trees until evening. <sup>27</sup>At sunset Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees and threw them into the cave where they had hidden themselves; they set large stones against the mouth of the cave, which remain to this very day.

<sup>28</sup>Joshua took Makkedah on that day, and struck it and its king with the edge of the sword; he utterly destroyed every person in it; he left no one remaining. And he did to the king of Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho.

<sup>29</sup>Then Joshua passed on from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, to Libnah, and fought against Libnah. <sup>30</sup>The LORD gave it also and its king into the hand of Israel; and he struck it with the edge of the sword, and every person in it; he left no one remaining in it; and he did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho.

<sup>31</sup>Next Joshua passed on from Libnah, and all Israel with him, to Lachish, and laid siege to it, and assaulted it. <sup>32</sup>The LORD gave Lachish into the hand of Israel, and he took it on the second day, and struck it with the edge of the sword, and every person in it, as he had done to Libnah.

<sup>33</sup>Then King Horam of Gezer came up to help Lachish; and Joshua struck him and his people, leaving him no survivors.

<sup>34</sup>From Lachish Joshua passed on with all Israel to Eglon; and they laid siege to it, and assaulted it; <sup>35</sup>and they took it that day, and struck it with the edge of the sword; and every person in it he utterly destroyed that day, as he had done to Lachish.

<sup>36</sup>Then Joshua went up with all Israel from Eglon to Hebron; they assaulted it, <sup>37</sup>and took it, and struck it with the edge of the sword, and its king and its towns, and every person in it; he left no one remaining, just as he had done to Eglon, and utterly destroyed it with every person in it.

<sup>38</sup>Then Joshua, with all Israel, turned back to Debir and assaulted it, <sup>39</sup>and he

<sup>a</sup> Heb moved his tongue

took it with its king and all its towns; they struck them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed every person in it; he left no one remaining; just as he had done to Hebron, and, as he had done to Libnah and its king, so he did to Debir and its king.

40 So Joshua defeated the whole land, the hill country and the Negeb and the lowland and the slopes, and all their kings;

he left no one remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel commanded. <sup>41</sup> And Joshua defeated them from Kadesh-barnea to Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, as far as Gibeon. <sup>42</sup> Joshua took all these kings and their land at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel. <sup>43</sup> Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

### Read Joshua 11

Joshua is faced with yet another confederation of five kings seeking to keep Israel from possessing the land. God promises that Joshua will be victorious. The Israelites are instructed to utterly destroy Hazor, which they do, keeping the other goods for themselves. We are told that at the conclusion of the attack against the five kings the nation was at peace.

**Reflect:** Finally Joshua and Israel are beginning to see the goal clearly in sight. Since leaving Egypt, their faithfulness to the Lord has been a constant struggle for them. How do you understand your life journey with the Lord?

**Pray:** Pray the words of Mary's Magnificat found in Luke 1:46–55.

**Act:** Spend a few minutes in meditation. Focus on a picture from your baptism or some other early point in your life. Marvel at God's care for you.

### The United Kings of Northern Canaan Defeated

**11** When King Jabin of Hazor heard of this, he sent to King Jobab of Madon, to the king of Shimron, to the king of Achshaph, <sup>2</sup> and to the kings who were in the northern hill country, and in the Arabah south of Chinneroth, and in the lowland, and in Naphoth-dor on the west, <sup>3</sup> to the Canaanites in the east and the west, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, and the Jebusites in the hill country, and the Hivites under Hermon in the land of Mizpah. <sup>4</sup> They came out, with all their troops, a great army, in number like the sand on the seashore, with very many horses and chariots. <sup>5</sup> All these kings joined their forces, and came and camped together at the waters of Merom, to fight with Israel.

6 And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them, for tomorrow at this time I will hand over all of them, slain, to Israel; you shall hamstring their horses, and burn their chariots with fire." <sup>7</sup> So Joshua came suddenly upon them with all his fighting force, by the waters of Merom, and fell upon them. <sup>8</sup> And the LORD handed them over to Israel, who attacked them and chased them as far as Great Sidon and Misrephoth-maim, and eastward as far as the valley of Mizpeh. They struck them down, until they had left no one remaining. <sup>9</sup> And Joshua did to them as the LORD commanded him; he hamstringed their horses, and burned their chariots with fire.

10 Joshua turned back at that time, and took Hazor, and struck its king down with the sword. Before that time Hazor was the head of all those kingdoms. <sup>11</sup> And they put to the sword all who were in it, utterly destroying them; there was no one left who breathed, and he burned Hazor with fire. <sup>12</sup> And all the towns of those kings, and all their kings, Joshua took, and struck them with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded. <sup>13</sup> But Israel burned none of the towns that stood on mounds except Hazor, which Joshua did burn. <sup>14</sup> All the spoil of these towns, and the livestock, the Israelites took for their booty; but all the people they struck down with the

edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, and they did not leave any who breathed. <sup>15</sup>As the LORD had commanded his servant Moses, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses.

### Summary of Joshua's Conquests

16 So Joshua took all that land: the hill country and all the Negeb and all the land of Goshen and the lowland and the Arabah and the hill country of Israel and its lowland, <sup>17</sup>from Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir, as far as Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. He took all their kings, struck them down, and put them to death. <sup>18</sup>Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. <sup>19</sup>There was not a town that made peace with the Israelites, except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gib-

eon; all were taken in battle. <sup>20</sup>For it was the LORD's doing to harden their hearts so that they would come against Israel in battle, in order that they might be utterly destroyed, and might receive no mercy, but be exterminated, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

21 At that time Joshua came and wiped out the Anakim from the hill country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with their towns. <sup>22</sup>None of the Anakim was left in the land of the Israelites; some remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod. <sup>23</sup>So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war.

### The Kings Conquered by Moses

**12** Now these are the kings of the land, whom the Israelites defeated, whose land they occupied beyond the Jordan toward the east, from the Wadi Arnon to Mount Hermon, with all the Arabah eastward: <sup>2</sup>King Sihon of the Amorites who lived at Heshbon, and ruled from Aroer, which is on the edge of the Wadi Arnon, and from the middle of the valley as far as the river Jabbok, the boundary of the Ammonites, that is, half of Gilead, <sup>3</sup>and the Arabah to the Sea of Chinneroth eastward, and in the direction of Beth-jeshimoth, to the sea of the Arabah, the Dead Sea,<sup>a</sup> southward to the foot of the slopes of Pisgah; <sup>4</sup>and King Og<sup>b</sup> of Bashan, one of the last of the Rephaim, who lived at Ashtaroth and at Edrei <sup>5</sup>and ruled over Mount Hermon and Salecah and all Bashan to the boundary of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and over half of Gilead to the boundary of King Sihon of Heshbon. <sup>6</sup>Moses, the servant of the LORD, and the Israelites defeated them; and Moses the servant of the LORD gave their land for a possession to the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

### The Kings Conquered by Joshua

7 The following are the kings of the land whom Joshua and the Israelites defeated on the west side of the Jordan, from Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak, that rises toward Seir (and Joshua gave

<sup>a</sup> Heb Salt Sea

<sup>b</sup> Gk: Heb the boundary of King Og



### Read Joshua 12

This chapter lists the lands conquered first by Moses and then by Joshua. The list is long, thirty-one kings in all, but it represents many years of faithfulness from the time the Israelites left Egypt until they were fully settled in the land, about fifty years later.

**Reflect:** What's in a name? This list of names is meant to be meaningful to the readers. Most of us will miss the geographical significance, but each name is yet another memory for the people who lived through the experience of claiming the Promised Land. What memories do you have of God's promises being fulfilled in your life? What names are meaningful in your story?

**Pray:** Slowly recite the list of names from the chapter out loud. As you go along, give thanks for God's promise unfolding in your life.

**Act:** Make a list of the names of people and places important in your own faith journey.

their land to the tribes of Israel as a possession according to their allotments, <sup>8</sup> in the hill country, in the lowland, in the Arabah, in the slopes, in the wilderness, and in the Negeb, the land of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites):

- |    |  |     |
|----|--|-----|
| 9  | the king of Jericho                        | one |
|    | the king of Ai, which is next to Bethel    | one |
| 10 | the king of Jerusalem                      | one |
|    | the king of Hebron                         | one |
| 11 | the king of Jarmuth                        | one |
|    | the king of Lachish                        | one |
| 12 | the king of Eglon                          | one |
|    | the king of Gezer                          | one |
| 13 | the king of Debir                          | one |
|    | the king of Geder                          | one |
| 14 | the king of Hormah                         | one |
|    | the king of Arad                           | one |
| 15 | the king of Libnah                         | one |
|    | the king of Adullam                        | one |
| 16 | the king of Makkedah                       | one |
|    | the king of Bethel                         | one |
| 17 | the king of Tappuah                        | one |
|    | the king of Hopher                         | one |
| 18 | the king of Aphek                          | one |
|    | the king of Lasharon                       | one |
| 19 | the king of Madon                          | one |
|    | the king of Hazor                          | one |
| 20 | the king of Shimron-meron                  | one |
|    | the king of Achshaph                       | one |
| 21 | the king of Taanach                        | one |
|    | the king of Megiddo                        | one |
| 22 | the king of Kedesh                         | one |
|    | the king of Jokneam in Carmel              | one |
| 23 | the king of Dor in Naphath-dor             | one |
|    | the king of Goyim in Galilee, <sup>a</sup> | one |
| 24 | the king of Tirzah                         | one |

thirty-one kings in all.

### The Parts of Canaan Still Unconquered

**13** Now Joshua was old and advanced in years; and the LORD said to him, "You are old and advanced in years, and very much of the land still remains to be possessed. <sup>2</sup> This is the land that still remains: all the regions of the Philistines, and all those of the Geshurites <sup>3</sup> (from the Shihor, which is east of Egypt, northward to the boundary of Ekron, it is reckoned as Canaanite; there are five rulers of the Philistines, those of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron), and those of the Avvim <sup>4</sup> in the south; all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that belongs to the Sidonians, to Aphek, to the

<sup>a</sup> Gk: Heb *Gilgal*

### Read Joshua 13

The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh are called the Transjordanian tribes because they settled east of the Jordan River. These people were part of Israel, but they chose to settle in land just outside of Israel. This was agreeable to Moses as long as they crossed the Jordan to help the other tribes settle that land. They did this, and the chapter records the land they received as their inheritance.

**Reflect:** “Membership has its rewards.” So says the slogan for the American Express card. “Faith has its rewards” might be the slogan for this chapter. What rewards has your faith earned you?

**Pray:** Lord, you know that I do not seek rewards, but I humbly and gratefully receive what you so generously give to those you love.

**Act:** List the rewards of faith you treasure most in your life.

boundary of the Amorites, <sup>5</sup> and the land of the Gaba-lites, and all Lebanon, toward the east, from Baal-gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo-hamath, <sup>6</sup> all the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon to Misrephoth-maim, even all the Sidonians. I will myself drive them out from before the Israelites; only allot the land to Israel for an inheritance, as I have commanded you. <sup>7</sup> Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance to the nine tribes and the half-tribe of Manasseh.”

### The Territory East of the Jordan

<sup>8</sup> With the other half-tribe of Manasseh<sup>a</sup> the Reubenites and the Gadites received their inheritance, which Moses gave them, beyond the Jordan eastward, as Moses the servant of the LORD gave them: <sup>9</sup> from Aroer, which is on the edge of the Wadi Arnon, and the town that is in the middle of the valley, and all the tableland from<sup>b</sup> Medeba as far as Dibon; <sup>10</sup> and all the cities of King Sihon of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, as far as the boundary of the Ammonites; <sup>11</sup> and Gilead, and the region of the Geshurites and Maacathites, and all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan to Salecah; <sup>12</sup> all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei (he alone was left of the survivors of the Rephaim); these Moses had defeated and driven out. <sup>13</sup> Yet the Israelites did not drive out the Geshurites or the Maacathites; but Geshur and Maacath live within Israel to this day.

<sup>14</sup> To the tribe of Levi alone Moses gave no inheritance; the offerings by fire to the LORD God of Israel are their inheritance, as he said to them.

### The Territory of Reuben

<sup>15</sup> Moses gave an inheritance to the tribe of the Reubenites according to their clans. <sup>16</sup> Their territory was from Aroer, which is on the edge of the Wadi Arnon, and the town that is in the middle of the valley, and all the tableland by Medeba; <sup>17</sup> with Heshbon, and all its towns that are in the tableland; Dibon, and Bamoth-baal, and Beth-baal-meon, <sup>18</sup> and Jahaz, and Kedemoth, and Mephaath, <sup>19</sup> and Kiriathaim, and Sibmah, and Zereth-shahar on the hill of the valley, <sup>20</sup> and Beth-peor, and the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth-jeshimoth, <sup>21</sup> that is, all the towns of the tableland, and all the kingdom of King Sihon of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses defeated with the leaders of Midian, Evi and Rekem and Zur and Hur and Reba, as princes of Sihon, who lived in the land. <sup>22</sup> Along with the rest of those they put to death, the Israelites also put to the sword Balaam son of Beor, who practiced divination. <sup>23</sup> And the border of the Reubenites was the Jordan and

<sup>a</sup> Cn: Heb *With it*

<sup>b</sup> Compare Gk: Heb lacks *from*

its banks. This was the inheritance of the Reubenites according to their families with their towns and villages.

### The Territory of Gad

24 Moses gave an inheritance also to the tribe of the Gadites, according to their families. <sup>25</sup> Their territory was Jazer, and all the towns of Gilead, and half the land of the Ammonites, to Aroer, which is east of Rabbah, <sup>26</sup> and from Heshbon to Ramath-mizpeh and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the territory of Debir,<sup>a</sup> <sup>27</sup> and in the valley Beth-haram, Beth-nimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of King Sihon of Heshbon, the Jordan and its banks, as far as the lower end of the Sea of Chinnereth, eastward beyond the Jordan. <sup>28</sup> This is the inheritance of the Gadites according to their clans, with their towns and villages.

### The Territory of the Half-Tribe of Manasseh (East)

29 Moses gave an inheritance to the half-tribe of Manasseh; it was allotted to the half-tribe of the Manassites according to their families. <sup>30</sup> Their territory extended from Mahanaim, through all Bashan, the whole kingdom of King Og of Bashan, and all the settlements of Jair, which are in Bashan, sixty towns, <sup>31</sup> and half of Gilead, and Ashtaroth, and Edrei, the towns of the kingdom of Og in Bashan; these were allotted to the people of Machir son of Manasseh according to their clans—for half the Machirites.

32 These are the inheritances that Moses distributed in the plains of Moab, beyond the Jordan east of Jericho. <sup>33</sup> But to the tribe of Levi Moses gave no inheritance; the LORD God of Israel is their inheritance, as he said to them.

#### Read Joshua 14

This short narrative tells the story of how Hebron was apportioned to the Kenizzites and Caleb, their leader. Caleb's faithfulness to Moses in the desert proved his loyalty and genuineness of faith. The fact that the tribe of Levi, representing the priests of Israel, had no set apportionment was deemed an important enough point to be repeated.

**Reflect:** Joshua and Caleb are old friends, and their friendship is based on their having served the Lord from their youth. Joshua treats Caleb with deep respect. What relationships in your life do you value in this way?

**Pray:** I give you thanks, Lord, for the friends with whom you have graced my life. May I always treat them with respect and love.

**Act:** Make a list of those friends you consider to be God-given.

### The Distribution of Territory West of the Jordan

**14** These are the inheritances that the Israelites received in the land of Canaan, which the priest Eleazar, and Joshua son of Nun, and the heads of the families of the tribes of the Israelites distributed to them. <sup>2</sup> Their inheritance was by lot, as the LORD had commanded Moses for the nine and one-half tribes. <sup>3</sup> For Moses had given an inheritance to the two and one-half tribes beyond the Jordan; but to the Levites he gave no inheritance among them. <sup>4</sup> For the people of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim; and no portion was given to the Levites in the land, but only towns to live in, with their pasture lands for their flocks and herds. <sup>5</sup> The Israelites did as the LORD commanded Moses; they allotted the land.

### Hebron Allotted to Caleb

6 Then the people of Judah came to Joshua at Gilgal; and Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know what the LORD said to Moses the man of God in Kadesh-barnea concerning you and me. <sup>7</sup> I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land; and I brought him an honest report. <sup>8</sup> But my companions who went up with me made the heart of the people melt; yet I wholeheartedly followed the LORD my God. <sup>9</sup> And Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land on which your foot has trodden shall be an inheritance

<sup>a</sup> Gk Syr Vg: Heb *Lidebir*

for you and your children forever, because you have wholeheartedly followed the LORD my God.’<sup>10</sup> And now, as you see, the LORD has kept me alive, as he said, these forty-five years since the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses, while Israel was journeying through the wilderness; and here I am today, eighty-five years old.<sup>11</sup> I am still as strong today as I was on the day that Moses sent me; my strength now is as my strength was then, for war, and for going and coming.<sup>12</sup> So now give me this hill country of which the LORD spoke on that day; for you heard on that day how the

Anakim were there, with great fortified cities; it may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall drive them out, as the LORD said.”

13 Then Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb son of Jephunneh for an inheritance.<sup>14</sup> So Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholeheartedly followed the LORD, the God of Israel.<sup>15</sup> Now the name of Hebron formerly was Kiriath-arba;<sup>a</sup> this Arba was<sup>b</sup> the greatest man among the Anakim. And the land had rest from war.

### Read Joshua 15

This very lengthy chapter is made up of two parts that have to do with the inheritance of Judah’s tribe in the land. First we are told of how the land was bounded, north, south, east, and west. We hear of Othniel’s marriage to Achsah, Caleb’s daughter, as a reward for his service. We also find a long list of the cities that belong to Judah and the divisions among them.

**Reflect:** Judah seems to be the largest of all the tribes of Israel. It is from this tribe that Kings David and Solomon and their successors will come. The messiah, we are told, will come from Judah’s tribe. Jesus will be born into the tribe of Judah. How mysterious are God’s ways and choices!

**Pray:** How deep are the riches and the mysterious wisdom you have, O Lord!

**Act:** Examine your own family tree as far back as you can go. Think about the experiences of those who lived long ago. How are you like them?

### The Territory of Judah

**15** The lot for the tribe of the people of Judah according to their families reached southward to the boundary of Edom, to the wilderness of Zin at the farthest south.<sup>2</sup> And their south boundary ran from the end of the Dead Sea,<sup>c</sup> from the bay that faces southward;<sup>3</sup> it goes out southward of the ascent of Akrabbim, passes along to Zin, and goes up south of Kadesh-barnea, along by Hezron, up to Addar, makes a turn to Karka,<sup>4</sup> passes along to Azmon, goes out by the Wadi of Egypt, and comes to its end at the sea. This shall be your south boundary.<sup>5</sup> And the east boundary is the Dead Sea,<sup>c</sup> to the mouth of the Jordan. And the boundary on the north side runs from the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan;<sup>6</sup> and the boundary goes up to Beth-hoglah, and passes along north of Beth-arabah; and the boundary goes up to the Stone of Bohan, Reuben’s son;<sup>7</sup> and the boundary goes up to Debir from the Valley of Achor, and so northward, turning toward Gilgal, which is opposite the ascent of Adummim, which is on the south side of the valley; and the boundary passes along to the waters of En-shemesh, and ends at En-rogel;<sup>8</sup> then the boundary goes up by the valley of the son of Hinnom at the southern slope of the Jebusites (that is, Jerusalem); and the boundary goes up to the top of the mountain that lies over against the valley of Hinnom, on the west, at the northern end of the valley of Rephaim;<sup>9</sup> then the boundary extends from the top of the mountain to the spring of the Waters of Nephtoah, and from there to the towns of Mount Ephron; then the boundary bends around to Baalah (that is, Kiriath-jearim);<sup>10</sup> and the boundary circles west of Baalah to Mount Seir, passes along to the northern slope of Mount Jearim (that is, Chesalon), and goes down to Beth-shemesh, and passes along by Timnah;

<sup>a</sup> That is *the city of Arba*  
<sup>b</sup> Heb lacks *this Arba* was  
<sup>c</sup> Heb *Salt Sea*

<sup>11</sup> the boundary goes out to the slope of the hill north of Ekron, then the boundary bends around to Shikkeron, and passes along to Mount Baalah, and goes out to Jabneel; then the boundary comes to an end at the sea. <sup>12</sup> And the west boundary was the Mediterranean with its coast. This is the boundary surrounding the people of Judah according to their families.

### Caleb Occupies His Portion

<sup>13</sup> According to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, he gave to Caleb son of Jephunneh a portion among the people of Judah, Kiriath-arba,<sup>a</sup> that is, Hebron (Arba was the father of Anak). <sup>14</sup> And Caleb drove out from there the three sons of Anak: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi, the descendants of Anak. <sup>15</sup> From there he went up against the inhabitants of Debir; now the name of Debir formerly was Kiriath-sepher. <sup>16</sup> And Caleb said, "Whoever attacks Kiriath-sepher and takes it, to him I will give my daughter Achsah as wife." <sup>17</sup> Othniel son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it; and he gave him his daughter Achsah as wife. <sup>18</sup> When she came to him, she urged him to ask her father for a field. As she dismounted from her donkey, Caleb said to her, "What do you wish?" <sup>19</sup> She said to him, "Give me a present; since you have set me in the land of the Negeb, give me springs of water as well." So Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

### The Towns of Judah

<sup>20</sup> This is the inheritance of the tribe of the people of Judah according to their families. <sup>21</sup> The towns belonging to the tribe of the people of Judah in the extreme south, toward the boundary of Edom, were Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur, <sup>22</sup> Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah, <sup>23</sup> Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan, <sup>24</sup> Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, <sup>25</sup> Hazor-hadattah, Kerioth-hezron (that is, Hazor), <sup>26</sup> Amam, Shema, Moladah, <sup>27</sup> Hazar-gaddah, Heshmon, Beth-pelet, <sup>28</sup> Hazar-shual, Beer-sheba, Biziothiah,

<sup>29</sup> Baalah, lim, Ezem, <sup>30</sup> Eltolad, Chesil, Hormah, <sup>31</sup> Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah, <sup>32</sup> Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain, and Rimmon: in all, twenty-nine towns, with their villages.

<sup>33</sup> And in the lowland, Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah, <sup>34</sup> Zanoah, En-gannim, Tappuah, Enam, <sup>35</sup> Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah, <sup>36</sup> Shaaraim, Adithaim, Gederah, Gederothaim: fourteen towns with their villages.

<sup>37</sup> Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal-gad, <sup>38</sup> Dulan, Mizpeh, Jokthe-el, <sup>39</sup> Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon, <sup>40</sup> Cabbon, Lahmam, Chitlish, <sup>41</sup> Gederoth, Beth-dagon, Naamah, and Makedah: sixteen towns with their villages.

<sup>42</sup> Libnah, Ether, Ashan, <sup>43</sup> Iptah, Ashnah, Nezib, <sup>44</sup> Keilah, Achzib, and Mareshah: nine towns with their villages.

<sup>45</sup> Ekron, with its dependencies and its villages; <sup>46</sup> from Ekron to the sea, all that were near Ashdod, with their villages.

<sup>47</sup> Ashdod, its towns and its villages; Gaza, its towns and its villages; to the Wadi of Egypt, and the Great Sea with its coast.

<sup>48</sup> And in the hill country, Shamir, Jattir, Socoh, <sup>49</sup> Dannah, Kiriath-sannah (that is, Debir), <sup>50</sup> Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim, <sup>51</sup> Goshen, Holon, and Giloh: eleven towns with their villages.

<sup>52</sup> Arab, Dumah, Eshan, <sup>53</sup> Janim, Beth-tappuah, Aphekah, <sup>54</sup> Humtah, Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), and Zior: nine towns with their villages.

<sup>55</sup> Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah, <sup>56</sup> Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah, <sup>57</sup> Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah: ten towns with their villages.

<sup>58</sup> Halhul, Beth-zur, Gedor, <sup>59</sup> Maarath, Beth-anoth, and Eltekon: six towns with their villages.

<sup>60</sup> Kiriath-baal (that is, Kiriath-yearim) and Rabbah: two towns with their villages.

<sup>61</sup> In the wilderness, Beth-arabah, Mid-din, Secacah, <sup>62</sup> Nibshan, the City of Salt, and En-gedi: six towns with their villages.

<sup>63</sup> But the people of Judah could not drive out the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so the Jebusites live with the people of Judah in Jerusalem to this day.

<sup>a</sup> That is the city of Arba

**Read Joshua 16**

This chapter describes the borders of Ephraim and Manasseh. The exactness of the names might be frustrating for us. The concern was that each tribe receive its fair share of the inheritance that God had given to all his people. There was even a provision for allowing the Canaanites and the Jebusites to live alongside their previous enemies as friends.

**Reflect:** God has promised life in the land to his people. The marks of that life must be fairness and justice for those who live there. Israel will have to learn to treat its former enemies as friends. What must we in our own day learn from this example?

**Pray:** Lord, help me to learn to love as you would have me love others.

**Act:** Offer some practical kindness to someone new to you.

**Read Joshua 17**

This chapter deals with a very practical concern brought forward by the Josephite tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh. They are too numerous for the territory they have been granted in the division of the land. Joshua must be practical and fair in the resolution he offers.

**Reflect:** God has given the Promised Land to his people; now they will have to figure out how to make the best use of God's gift. God's gifts to us may seem too little at times. At such times, if we act in faith we will find the way to best use what God has given us.

**Pray:** Lord, teach me your ways, so that in times of trouble I might meet with faith and creativity the challenges I face.

**Act:** Consider your greatest weakness. How will God's gifts enable you to be equal to the challenge?

**The Territory of Ephraim**

**16** The allotment of the Josephites went from the Jordan by Jericho, east of the waters of Jericho, into the wilderness, going up from Jericho into the hill country to Bethel; <sup>2</sup>then going from Bethel to Luz, it passes along to Ataroth, the territory of the Archites; <sup>3</sup>then it goes down westward to the territory of the Japhletites, as far as the territory of Lower Beth-horon, then to Gezer, and it ends at the sea.

4 The Josephites—Manasseh and Ephraim—received their inheritance.

5 The territory of the Ephraimites by their families was as follows: the boundary of their inheritance on the east was Ataroth-addar as far as Upper Beth-horon, <sup>6</sup>and the boundary goes from there to the sea; on the north is Michmethath; then on the east the boundary makes a turn toward Taanath-shiloh, and passes along beyond it on the east to Janoah, <sup>7</sup>then it goes down from Janoah to Ataroth and to Naarah, and touches Jericho, ending at the Jordan. <sup>8</sup>From Tappuah the boundary goes westward to the Wadi Kanah, and ends at the sea. Such is the inheritance of the tribe of the Ephraimites by their families, <sup>9</sup>together with the towns that were set apart for the Ephraimites within the inheritance of the Manassites, all those towns with their villages. <sup>10</sup>They did not, however, drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer: so the Canaanites have lived within Ephraim to this day but have been made to do forced labor.

**The Other Half-Tribe of Manasseh (West)**

**17** Then allotment was made to the tribe of Manasseh, for he was the firstborn of Joseph. To Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead, were allotted Gilead and Bashan, because he was a warrior. <sup>2</sup>And allotments were made to the rest of the tribe of Manasseh, by their families, Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hephher, and Shemida; these were the male descendants of Manasseh son of Joseph, by their families.

3 Now Zelophehad son of Hephher son of Gilead son of Machir son of Manasseh had no sons, but only daughters; and these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. <sup>4</sup>They came before the priest Eleazar and Joshua son of Nun and the leaders, and said, "The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance along with our male kin." So according to the commandment of the LORD he gave them an inheritance among the kinsmen of their father. <sup>5</sup>Thus there fell to Manasseh ten portions, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which is on the other side of the Jordan, <sup>6</sup>because the daughters of Manasseh received

an inheritance along with his sons. The land of Gilead was allotted to the rest of the Manassites.

7 The territory of Manasseh reached from Asher to Michmethath, which is east of Shechem; then the boundary goes along southward to the inhabitants of En-tappuah. <sup>8</sup>The land of Tappuah belonged to Manasseh, but the town of Tappuah on the boundary of Manasseh belonged to the Ephraimites. <sup>9</sup>Then the boundary went down to the Wadi Kanah. The towns here, to the south of the wadi, among the towns of Manasseh, belong to Ephraim. Then the boundary of Manasseh goes along the north side of the wadi and ends at the sea. <sup>10</sup>The land to the south is Ephraim's and that to the north is Manasseh's, with the sea forming its boundary; on the north Asher is reached, and on the east Issachar. <sup>11</sup>With in Issachar and Asher, Manasseh had Bethshean and its villages, Ibleam and its villages, the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, the inhabitants of En-dor and its villages, the inhabitants of Taanach and its villages, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages (the third is Naphth).<sup>a</sup> <sup>12</sup>Yet the Manassites could not take possession of those towns; but the Canaanites continued to live in that land. <sup>13</sup>But when the Is-

raelites grew strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not utterly drive them out.

### The Tribe of Joseph Protests

14 The tribe of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, "Why have you given me but one lot and one portion as an inheritance, since we are a numerous people, whom all along the LORD has blessed?" <sup>15</sup>And Joshua said to them, "If you are a numerous people, go up to the forest, and clear ground there for yourselves in the land of the Perizzites and the Rephaim, since the hill country of Ephraim is too narrow for you." <sup>16</sup>The tribe of Joseph said, "The hill country is not enough for us; yet all the Canaanites who live in the plain have chariots of iron, both those in Bethshean and its villages and those in the Valley of Jezreel." <sup>17</sup>Then Joshua said to the house of Joseph, to Ephraim and Manasseh, "You are indeed a numerous people, and have great power; you shall not have one lot only, <sup>18</sup>but the hill country shall be yours, for though it is a forest, you shall clear it and possess it to its farthest borders; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have chariots of iron, and though they are strong."

### The Territories of the Remaining Tribes

**18** Then the whole congregation of the Israelites assembled at Shiloh, and set up the tent of meeting there. The land lay subdued before them.

2 There remained among the Israelites seven tribes whose inheritance had not yet been apportioned. <sup>3</sup>So Joshua said to the Israelites, "How long will you be slack about going in and taking possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has given you? <sup>4</sup>Provide three men from each tribe, and I will send them out that they may begin to go throughout the land, writing a description of it with a view to their inheritances. Then come back to me. <sup>5</sup>They shall divide it into seven portions, Judah continuing in its territory on the south, and the house of Joseph in their territory on the north. <sup>6</sup>You shall describe the land in seven divisions and bring the description here to me; and I will cast lots for you here before the LORD our God. <sup>7</sup>The Levites have no portion among you, for the priesthood

<sup>a</sup> Meaning of Heb uncertain

## Read Joshua 18

As we go on reading the story of the settling of the land we get a sense of Joshua's urgency that the task be completed before apathy sets in among the people. He deputizes representatives to survey the land for proper distribution. They complete the task.

**Reflect:** Apathy was beginning to cause the people to slow down in completing their mission from God. How do you fight the onset of apathy in your own journey of faith?

**Pray:** "Come Holy Spirit fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love..." Repeat these words several times.

**Act:** Review your daily routine and try to detect where apathy might be holding you back.

of the LORD is their heritage; and Gad and Reuben and the half-tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance beyond the Jordan eastward, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them."

8 So the men started on their way; and Joshua charged those who went to write the description of the land, saying, "Go throughout the land and write a description of it, and come back to me; and I will cast lots for you here before the LORD in Shiloh."<sup>9</sup> So the men went and traversed the land and set down in a book a description of it by towns in seven divisions; then they came back to Joshua in the camp at Shiloh,<sup>10</sup> and Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD; and there Joshua apportioned the land to the Israelites, to each a portion.

## The Territory of Benjamin

11 The lot of the tribe of Benjamin according to its families came up, and the territory allotted to it fell between the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Joseph.<sup>12</sup> On the north side their boundary began at the Jordan; then the boundary goes up to the slope of Jericho on the north, then up through the hill country westward; and it ends at the wilderness of Beth-aven.<sup>13</sup> From there the boundary passes along southward in the direction of Luz, to the slope of Luz (that is, Bethel), then the boundary goes down to Ataroth-addar, on the mountain that lies south of Lower Beth-horon.<sup>14</sup> Then the boundary goes in another direction, turning on the western side southward from the mountain that lies to the south, opposite Beth-horon, and it ends at Kiriath-baal (that is, Kiriath-jearim), a town belonging to the tribe of Judah. This forms the western side.<sup>15</sup> The southern side begins at the outskirts of Kiriath-jearim; and the boundary goes from there to Ephron,<sup>a</sup> to the spring of the Waters of Nephtoah;<sup>16</sup> then the boundary goes down to the border of the mountain that overlooks the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is at the north end of the valley of Rephaim; and it then goes down the valley of Hinnom, south of the slope of the Jebusites, and downward to En-rogel;<sup>17</sup> then it bends in a northerly direction going on to En-shemesh, and from there goes to Gelliloth, which is opposite the ascent of Adummim; then it goes down to the Stone of Bohan, Reuben's son;<sup>18</sup> and passing on to the north of the slope of Beth-arabah<sup>b</sup> it goes down to the Arabah;<sup>19</sup> then the boundary passes on to the north of the slope of Beth-hoglah; and the boundary ends at the northern bay of the Dead Sea,<sup>c</sup> at the south end of the Jordan: this is the southern border.<sup>20</sup> The Jordan forms its boundary on the eastern side. This is the in-

<sup>a</sup> Cn See 15.9. Heb westward

<sup>b</sup> Gk: Heb to the slope over against the Arabah

<sup>c</sup> Heb Salt Sea



heritance of the tribe of Benjamin, according to its families, boundary by boundary all around.

21 Now the towns of the tribe of Benjamin according to their families were Jericho, Beth-hoglah, Emek-keziz, <sup>22</sup> Beth-arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel, <sup>23</sup> Avvim, Parah, Ophrah, <sup>24</sup> Cephah-ammoni, Oph-

ni, and Geba—twelve towns with their villages: <sup>25</sup> Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth, <sup>26</sup> Mizpeh, Chephirah, Mozah, <sup>27</sup> Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah, <sup>28</sup> Zela, Haeleph, Jebus<sup>a</sup> (that is, Jerusalem), Gibeah<sup>b</sup> and Kiriath-jearim<sup>c</sup>—fourteen towns with their villages. This is the inheritance of the tribe of Benjamin according to its families.

### Read Joshua 19

This lengthy section is a long list of territories allotted to the tribes of Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan. The names of the places may be confusing, but what should not be missed is the point that each tribe had to have a share in the land.

**Reflect:** The share that each clan received was meant to be sufficient to satisfy its needs. After all that the Israelites had gone through they found that God could be counted on to provide all they needed. How much have you experienced God's care?

**Pray:** Ask for what you need in prayer. Ask the Lord to remember his care toward Israel and repeat it in your life.

**Act:** Take a few moments to look at a map of Israel in the age of Joshua. Locate as many places as you can.

### The Territory of Simeon

**19** The second lot came out for Simeon, for the tribe of Simeon, according to its families; its inheritance lay within the inheritance of the tribe of Judah. <sup>2</sup>It had for its inheritance Beer-sheba, Sheba, Moladah, <sup>3</sup>Hazar-shual, Balah, Ezem, <sup>4</sup>Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah, <sup>5</sup>Ziklag, Beth-marcaboth, Hazar-susah, <sup>6</sup>Beth-lebaoth, and Sharuhem—thirteen towns with their villages; <sup>7</sup>Ain, Rimmon, Ether, and Ashan—four towns with their villages; <sup>8</sup>together with all the villages all around these towns as far as Baalath-beer, Ramah of the Negeb. This was the inheritance of the tribe of Simeon according to its families. <sup>9</sup>The inheritance of the tribe of Simeon formed part of the territory of Judah; because the portion of the tribe of Judah was too large for them, the tribe of Simeon obtained an inheritance within their inheritance.

### The Territory of Zebulun

10 The third lot came up for the tribe of Zebulun, according to its families. The boundary of its inheritance reached as far as Sarid; <sup>11</sup>then its boundary goes up westward, and on to Maralah, and touches Dabbesheth, then the wadi that is east of Jokneam; <sup>12</sup>from Sarid it goes in the other direction eastward toward the sunrise to the boundary of Chisloth-tabor; from there it goes to Daberath, then up to Japhia; <sup>13</sup>from there it passes along on the east toward the sunrise to Gath-hepher, to Eth-kazin, and going on to Rimmon it bends toward Neah; <sup>14</sup>then on the north the boundary makes a turn to Hannathon, and it ends at the valley of Iphtah-el; <sup>15</sup>and Kattath, Nahalal, Shimron, Idalah, and Bethlehem—twelve towns with their villages. <sup>16</sup>This is the inheritance of the tribe of Zebulun, according to its families—these towns with their villages.

### The Territory of Issachar

17 The fourth lot came out for Issachar, for the tribe of Issachar, according to its families. <sup>18</sup>Its territory included Jezreel, Chesulloth, Shunem, <sup>19</sup>Hapharaim, Shion, Anaharath, <sup>20</sup>Rabbith, Kishion, Ebez, <sup>21</sup>Remeth,

<sup>a</sup> Gk Syr Vg: Heb *the Jebusite*

<sup>b</sup> Heb *Gibeath*

<sup>c</sup> Gk: Heb *Kiriath*

En-gannim, En-haddah, Beth-pazzez;<sup>22</sup> the boundary also touches Tabor, Shahazumah, and Beth-shemesh, and its boundary ends at the Jordan—sixteen towns with their villages.<sup>23</sup> This is the inheritance of the tribe of Issachar, according to its families—the towns with their villages.

### The Territory of Asher

24 The fifth lot came out for the tribe of Asher according to its families.<sup>25</sup> Its boundary included Helkath, Hali, Beten, Achshaph,<sup>26</sup> Allammelech, Amad, and Mishal; on the west it touches Carmel and Shihor-libnath,<sup>27</sup> then it turns eastward, goes to Beth-dagon, and touches Zebulun and the valley of Iphtah-el northward to Beth-emek and Neiel; then it continues in the north to Cabul,<sup>28</sup> Ebron, Rehob, Hammon, Kanah, as far as Great Sidon;<sup>29</sup> then the boundary turns to Ramah, reaching to the fortified city of Tyre; then the boundary turns to Hosah, and it ends at the sea; Mahalab,<sup>a</sup> Achzib,<sup>30</sup> Ummah, Aphek, and Rehob—twenty-two towns with their villages.<sup>31</sup> This is the inheritance of the tribe of Asher according to its families—these towns with their villages.

### The Territory of Naphtali

32 The sixth lot came out for the tribe of Naphtali, for the tribe of Naphtali, according to its families.<sup>33</sup> And its boundary ran from Heleph, from the oak in Zaanannim, and Adami-nekeb, and Jabneel, as far as Lakkum; and it ended at the Jordan;<sup>34</sup> then the boundary turns westward to Aznoth-tabor, and goes from there to Hukkok, touching Zebulun at the south, and Asher on the west, and Judah on the east at the Jordan.<sup>35</sup> The fortified towns are Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Chinnereth,<sup>36</sup> Ada-

mah, Ramah, Hazor,<sup>37</sup> Kedesh, Edrei, En-hazor,<sup>38</sup> Iron, Migdal-el, Horem, Beth-anath, and Beth-shemesh—nineteen towns with their villages.<sup>39</sup> This is the inheritance of the tribe of Naphtali according to its families—the towns with their villages.

### The Territory of Dan

40 The seventh lot came out for the tribe of Dan, according to its families.<sup>41</sup> The territory of its inheritance included Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir-shemesh,<sup>42</sup> Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Ithlah,<sup>43</sup> Elon, Timnah, Ekron,<sup>44</sup> Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath,<sup>45</sup> Jehud, Bene-berak, Gath-rimmon,<sup>46</sup> Me-jarkon, and Rakkon at the border opposite Joppa.<sup>47</sup> When the territory of the Danites was lost to them, the Danites went up and fought against Leshem, and after capturing it and putting it to the sword, they took possession of it and settled in it, calling Leshem, Dan, after their ancestor Dan.<sup>48</sup> This is the inheritance of the tribe of Dan, according to their families—these towns with their villages.

### Joshua's Inheritance

49 When they had finished distributing the several territories of the land as inheritances, the Israelites gave an inheritance among them to Joshua son of Nun.<sup>50</sup> By command of the LORD they gave him the town that he asked for, Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim; he rebuilt the town, and settled in it.

51 These are the inheritances that the priest Eleazar and Joshua son of Nun and the heads of the families of the tribes of the Israelites distributed by lot at Shiloh before the LORD, at the entrance of the tent of meeting. So they finished dividing the land.

### The Cities of Refuge

**20** Then the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying,<sup>2</sup> "Say to the Israelites, 'Appoint the cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses,<sup>3</sup> so that anyone who kills a person without intent or by mistake may flee there; they shall be for you a refuge from the avenger of blood.<sup>4</sup> The slayer shall flee to one of these cities and

<sup>a</sup> Cn Compare Gk: Heb *Mehebel*

### Read Joshua 20

This short chapter tells of a rather strange feature of Israel's system of justice. The "cities of refuge" were in fact extraordinary in that they looked out for the rights of a person who might otherwise have been delivered to "justice." This was an acknowledgment that justice must be based on truth, and truth is not always immediately evident, especially to a superficial observer.

**Reflect:** True justice must be the concern of anyone who serves God. How hard must we work to discover the truth where justice is involved?

**Pray:** Lord, our world professes to want justice, but there are few who are interested in a kind of justice that might cost them their own preconceptions and prejudices. Help me to see beyond the obstacles I erect to justice in my world.

**Act:** Learn more about an issue relating to justice in our world.

### Read Joshua 21

The allotment of cities and pasture lands to the three clans of Levites completes the distribution of the Promised Land to God's people. The pasture lands would enable the Levites to provide for their basic needs. The cities of refuge would be under the control of the Levitical priests, making them responsible for seeing justice done in the cases of murder.

**Reflect:** The narrator tells us that all of God's promises to Israel came to pass. What promises from the Lord have yet to come to pass for you?

**Pray:** Lord, make me know your ways. Lord, help me to trust in your providential love and care.

**Act:** Make a list of the promises you try to keep.

shall stand at the entrance of the gate of the city, and explain the case to the elders of that city; then the fugitive shall be taken into the city, and given a place, and shall remain with them. <sup>5</sup> And if the avenger of blood is in pursuit, they shall not give up the slayer, because the neighbor was killed by mistake, there having been no enmity between them before. <sup>6</sup> The slayer shall remain in that city until there is a trial before the congregation, until the death of the one who is high priest at the time: then the slayer may return home, to the town in which the deed was done."

7 So they set apart Kedesh in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali, and Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the hill country of Judah. <sup>8</sup> And beyond the Jordan east of Jericho, they appointed Bezer in the wilderness on the tableland, from the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead, from the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan, from the tribe of Manasseh. <sup>9</sup> These were the cities designated for all the Israelites, and for the aliens residing among them, that anyone who killed a person without intent could flee there, so as not to die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until there was a trial before the congregation.

### Cities Allotted to the Levites

**21** Then the heads of the families of the Levites came to the priest Eleazar and to Joshua son of Nun and to the heads of the families of the tribes of the Israelites; <sup>2</sup> they said to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, "The LORD commanded through Moses that we be given towns to live in, along with their pasture lands for our livestock." <sup>3</sup> So by command of the LORD the Israelites gave to the Levites the following towns and pasture lands out of their inheritance.

4 The lot came out for the families of the Kohathites. So those Levites who were descendants of Aaron the priest received by lot thirteen towns from the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin.

5 The rest of the Kohathites received by lot ten towns from the families of the tribe of Ephraim, from the tribe of Dan, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

6 The Gershonites received by lot thirteen towns from the families of the tribe of Issachar, from the tribe of Asher, from the tribe of Naphtali, and from the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan.

7 The Merarites according to their families received twelve towns from the tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad, and the tribe of Zebulun.

8 These towns and their pasture lands the Israelites gave by lot to the Levites, as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

9 Out of the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Simeon they gave the following towns mentioned by name, <sup>10</sup> which went to the descendants of Aaron, one of the families of the Kohathites who belonged to the Levites, since the lot fell to them first. <sup>11</sup> They gave them Kiriath-arba (Arba being the father of Anak), that is Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, along with the pasture lands around it. <sup>12</sup> But the fields of the town and its villages had been given to Caleb son of Jephunneh as his holding.

13 To the descendants of Aaron the priest they gave Hebron, the city of refuge for the slayer, with its pasture lands, Libnah with its pasture lands, <sup>14</sup> Jattir with its pasture lands, Eshtemoa with its pasture lands, <sup>15</sup> Holon with its pasture lands, Debir with its pasture lands, <sup>16</sup> Ain with its pasture lands, Juttah with its pasture lands, and Bethshemesh with its pasture lands—nine towns out of these two tribes. <sup>17</sup> Out of the tribe of Benjamin: Gibeon with its pasture lands, Geba with its pasture lands, <sup>18</sup> Anathoth with its pasture lands, and Almon with its pasture lands—four towns. <sup>19</sup> The towns of the descendants of Aaron—the priests—were thirteen in all, with their pasture lands.

20 As to the rest of the Kohathites belonging to the Kohathite families of the Levites, the towns allotted to them were out of the tribe of Ephraim. <sup>21</sup> To them were given Shechem, the city of refuge for the slayer, with its pasture lands in the hill country of Ephraim, Gezer with its pasture lands, <sup>22</sup> Kibzaim with its pasture lands, and Beth-horon with its pasture lands—four towns. <sup>23</sup> Out of the tribe of Dan: Elteke with its pasture lands, Gibbethon with its pasture lands, <sup>24</sup> Aijalon with its pasture lands, Gath-rimmon with its pasture lands—four towns. <sup>25</sup> Out of the half-tribe of Manasseh: Taanach with its pasture lands, and Gath-rimmon with its pasture lands—two towns. <sup>26</sup> The towns of the families of the rest of the Kohathites were ten in all, with their pasture lands.

27 To the Gershonites, one of the families of the Levites, were given out of the half-tribe of Manasseh, Golan in Bashan with its pasture lands, the city of refuge for

the slayer, and Beeshterah with its pasture lands—two towns. <sup>28</sup> Out of the tribe of Issachar: Kishion with its pasture lands, Daberath with its pasture lands, <sup>29</sup> Jarmuth with its pasture lands, En-gannim with its pasture lands—four towns. <sup>30</sup> Out of the tribe of Asher: Mishal with its pasture lands, Abdon with its pasture lands, <sup>31</sup> Helkath with its pasture lands, and Rehob with its pasture lands—four towns. <sup>32</sup> Out of the tribe of Naphtali: Kedesh in Galilee with its pasture lands, the city of refuge for the slayer, Hammoth-dor with its pasture lands, and Kartan with its pasture lands—three towns. <sup>33</sup> The towns of the several families of the Gershonites were in all thirteen, with their pasture lands.

34 To the rest of the Levites—the Merarite families—were given out of the tribe of Zebulun: Jokneam with its pasture lands, Kartah with its pasture lands, <sup>35</sup> Dimnah with its pasture lands, Nahalal with its pasture lands—four towns. <sup>36</sup> Out of the tribe of Reuben: Bezer with its pasture lands, Jahzah with its pasture lands, <sup>37</sup> Kedemoth with its pasture lands, and Mephaath with its pasture lands—four towns. <sup>38</sup> Out of the tribe of Gad: Ramoth in Gilead with its pasture lands, the city of refuge for the slayer, Mahanaim with its pasture lands, <sup>39</sup> Heshbon with its pasture lands, Jazer with its pasture lands—four towns in all. <sup>40</sup> As for the towns of the several Merarite families, that is, the remainder of the families of the Levites, those allotted to them were twelve in all.

41 The towns of the Levites within the holdings of the Israelites were in all forty-eight towns with their pasture lands. <sup>42</sup> Each of these towns had its pasture lands around it; so it was with all these towns.

43 Thus the LORD gave to Israel all the land that he swore to their ancestors that he would give them; and having taken possession of it, they settled there. <sup>44</sup> And the LORD gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their ancestors; not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the LORD had given all their enemies into their hands. <sup>45</sup> Not one of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.

### Read Joshua 22

The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh build an altar in their territory on the eastern side of the Jordan River. This causes concern in Israel that they are rebelling against the religious authority of Israel. An investigation reveals that they are afraid of one day being denied membership in Israel. The matter is concluded in favor of a peaceful unity.

**Reflect:** Fear of rejection by Israel causes the Transjordanian tribes to build an altar testifying to their faith. What role has rejection or prejudice played in your life or in your church?

**Pray:** Lord, help me to always welcome other people of good faith as brothers or sisters to me.

**Act:** Consider the prejudicial attitudes you might be nurturing in yourself or others.

### The Eastern Tribes Return to Their Territory

**22** Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, <sup>2</sup> and said to them, “You have observed all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have obeyed me in all that I have commanded you; <sup>3</sup> you have not forsaken your kindred these many days, down to this day, but have been careful to keep the charge of the LORD your God. <sup>4</sup> And now the LORD your God has given rest to your kindred, as he promised them; therefore turn and go to your tents in the land where your possession lies, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side of the Jordan. <sup>5</sup> Take good care to observe the commandment and instruction that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to keep his commandments, and to hold fast to him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.” <sup>6</sup> So Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their tents.

<sup>7</sup> Now to the one half of the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given a possession in Bashan; but to the other half Joshua had given a possession beside their fellow Israelites in the land west of the Jordan. And when Joshua sent them away to their tents and blessed them, <sup>8</sup> he said to them, “Go back to your tents with much wealth, and with very much livestock, with silver, gold, bronze, and iron, and with a great quantity of clothing; divide the spoil of your enemies with your kindred.” <sup>9</sup> So the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh returned home, parting from the Israelites at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go to the land of Gilead, their own land of which they had taken possession by command of the LORD through Moses.

### A Memorial Altar East of the Jordan

<sup>10</sup> When they came to the region<sup>a</sup> near the Jordan that lies in the land of Canaan, the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by the Jordan, an altar of great size. <sup>11</sup> The Israelites heard that the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh had built an altar at the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region<sup>b</sup> near the Jordan, on the side that belongs to the Israelites. <sup>12</sup> And when the people of Israel heard of it, the whole assembly of the Israelites gathered at Shiloh, to make war against them.

<sup>13</sup> Then the Israelites sent the priest Phinehas son of Eleazar to the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, in the land of Gilead, <sup>14</sup> and with him ten chiefs, one from each of the tribal families of Israel,

<sup>a</sup> Or to Gellioth

<sup>b</sup> Or at Gellioth

every one of them the head of a family among the clans of Israel. <sup>15</sup> They came to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, in the land of Gilead, and they said to them, <sup>16</sup> “Thus says the whole congregation of the LORD, ‘What is this treachery that you have committed against the God of Israel in turning away today from following the LORD, by building yourselves an altar today in rebellion against the LORD? <sup>17</sup> Have we not had enough of the sin at Peor from which even yet we have not cleansed ourselves, and for which a plague came upon the congregation of the LORD, <sup>18</sup> that you must turn away today from following the LORD! If you rebel against the LORD today, he will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel tomorrow. <sup>19</sup> But now, if your land is unclean, cross over into the LORD’s land where the LORD’s tabernacle now stands, and take for yourselves a possession among us; only do not rebel against the LORD, or rebel against us<sup>a</sup> by building yourselves an altar other than the altar of the LORD our God. <sup>20</sup> Did not Achan son of Zerah break faith in the matter of the devoted things, and wrath fell upon all the congregation of Israel? And he did not perish alone for his iniquity!’”

<sup>21</sup> Then the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh said in answer to the heads of the families of Israel, <sup>22</sup> “The LORD, God of gods! The LORD, God of gods! He knows; and let Israel itself know! If it was in rebellion or in breach of faith toward the LORD, do not spare us today <sup>23</sup> for building an altar to turn away from following the LORD; or if we did so to offer burnt offerings or grain offerings or offerings of well-being on it, may the LORD himself take vengeance. <sup>24</sup> No! We did it from fear that in time to come your children might say to our children, ‘What have you to do with the LORD, the God of Israel? <sup>25</sup> For the LORD has made the Jordan a boundary between us and you, you Reubenites and Gadites; you have no portion in the LORD.’ So your children might make our

children cease to worship the LORD. <sup>26</sup> Therefore we said, ‘Let us now build an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice, <sup>27</sup> but to be a witness between us and you, and between the generations after us, that we do perform the service of the LORD in his presence with our burnt offerings and sacrifices and offerings of well-being; so that your children may never say to our children in time to come, “You have no portion in the LORD.”’ <sup>28</sup> And we thought, If this should be said to us or to our descendants in time to come, we could say, ‘Look at this copy of the altar of the LORD, which our ancestors made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifice, but to be a witness between us and you.’ <sup>29</sup> Far be it from us that we should rebel against the LORD, and turn away this day from following the LORD by building an altar for burnt offering, grain offering, or sacrifice, other than the altar of the LORD our God that stands before his tabernacle!”

<sup>30</sup> When the priest Phinehas and the chiefs of the congregation, the heads of the families of Israel who were with him, heard the words that the Reubenites and the Gadites and the Manassites spoke, they were satisfied. <sup>31</sup> The priest Phinehas son of Eleazar said to the Reubenites and the Gadites and the Manassites, “Today we know that the LORD is among us, because you have not committed this treachery against the LORD; now you have saved the Israelites from the hand of the LORD.”

<sup>32</sup> Then the priest Phinehas son of Eleazar and the chiefs returned from the Reubenites and the Gadites in the land of Gilead to the land of Canaan, to the Israelites, and brought back word to them. <sup>33</sup> The report pleased the Israelites; and the Israelites blessed God and spoke no more of making war against them, to destroy the land where the Reubenites and the Gadites were settled. <sup>34</sup> The Reubenites and the Gadites called the altar Witness;<sup>b</sup> “For,” said they, “it is a witness between us that the LORD is God.”

<sup>a</sup> Or *make rebels of us*

<sup>b</sup> Cn Compare Syr: Heb lacks *Witness*

## Read Joshua 23

In this chapter we find a speech given by Joshua at the end of his life. The setting suggests that now, at the end, Joshua wants to leave words of wisdom to his friends. He calls for faithfulness to the Lord's covenant and care about relations with the conquered peoples of the land still living with the Israelites. Joshua reminds them of God's faithfulness to his promises.

**Reflect:** At the end of his life, Joshua reviews all that faith in the Lord has meant for him. What has your faith meant for you? Where has the Lord led you in the years that have gone by?

**Pray:** "O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast and our eternal home." Make these words your prayer.

**Act:** If possible, look at a picture album containing pictures of your past. Stop and remember how God has been with you each step of your journey.

## Joshua Exhorts the People

**23** A long time afterward, when the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies all around, and Joshua was old and well advanced in years, <sup>2</sup> Joshua summoned all Israel, their elders and heads, their judges and officers, and said to them, "I am now old and well advanced in years; <sup>3</sup> and you have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations for your sake, for it is the LORD your God who has fought for you. <sup>4</sup> I have allotted to you as an inheritance for your tribes those nations that remain, along with all the nations that I have already cut off, from the Jordan to the Great Sea in the west. <sup>5</sup> The LORD your God will push them back before you, and drive them out of your sight; and you shall possess their land, as the LORD your God promised you. <sup>6</sup> Therefore be very steadfast to observe and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to the right nor to the left, <sup>7</sup> so that you may not be mixed with these nations left here among you, or make mention of the names of their gods, or swear by them, or serve them, or bow yourselves down to them, <sup>8</sup> but hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day. <sup>9</sup> For the LORD has driven out before you great and strong nations; and as for you, no one has been able to withstand you to this day. <sup>10</sup> One of you puts to flight a thousand, since it is the LORD your God who fights for you, as he promised you. <sup>11</sup> Be very careful, therefore, to love the LORD your God. <sup>12</sup> For if you turn back, and join the survivors of these nations left here among you, and intermarry with them, so that you marry their women and they yours, <sup>13</sup> know assuredly that the LORD your God will not continue to drive out these nations before you; but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a scourge on your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land that the LORD your God has given you.

<sup>14</sup> "And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one thing has failed of all the good things that the LORD your God promised concerning you; all have come to pass for you, not one of them has failed. <sup>15</sup> But just as all the good things that the LORD your God promised concerning you have been fulfilled for you, so the LORD will bring upon you all the bad things, until he has destroyed you from this good land that the LORD your God has given you. <sup>16</sup> If you transgress the covenant of the LORD your God, which he enjoined on you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them, then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and you shall perish quickly from the good land that he has given to you."

### Read Joshua 24

The book of Joshua fittingly concludes with a solemn liturgical renewal of the covenant of the Lord with his people. Joshua recounts the historical deeds of the Lord, from the call of Abraham right up to the present day. Next he asks the people to declare whom they will serve. The people answer that they will serve the Lord. They set up a stone as a witness to the covenant made there that day. The book closes with the story of Joshua's death and burial and the interment of Joseph's bones brought all the way from Egypt.

**Reflect:** When the people declare their agreement to the covenant, they speak of God's past deeds as having been done for them, not their fathers. Faith in God requires a personal knowledge that God has acted for me. How much do I understand God's saving deeds as having been done for me personally?

**Pray:** Lord, in all you have done for your people, you have been acting for me. Keep me ever in touch with the greatness of my debt to you.

**Act:** Make a list of God's saving deeds, starting with the instances in the scriptures and finishing with the deeds God has done in your life.

### The Tribes Renew the Covenant

**24** Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. <sup>2</sup> And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors—Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor—lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods. <sup>3</sup> Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan and made his offspring many. I gave him Isaac; <sup>4</sup> and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. I gave Esau the hill country of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt. <sup>5</sup> Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt with what I did in its midst; and afterwards I brought you out. <sup>6</sup> When I brought your ancestors out of Egypt, you came to the sea; and the Egyptians pursued your ancestors with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea.<sup>a</sup> <sup>7</sup> When they cried out to the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and made the sea come upon them and cover them; and your eyes saw what I did to Egypt. Afterwards you lived in the wilderness a long time. <sup>8</sup> Then I brought you to the land of the Amorites, who lived on the other side of the Jordan; they fought with you, and I handed them over to you, and you took possession of their land, and I destroyed them before you. <sup>9</sup> Then King Balak son of Zippor of Moab, set out to fight against Israel. He sent and invited Balaam son of Beor to curse you, <sup>10</sup> but I would not listen to Balaam; therefore he blessed you; so I rescued you out of his hand. <sup>11</sup> When you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho, the citizens of Jericho fought against you, and also the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I handed them over to you. <sup>12</sup> I sent the hornet<sup>b</sup> ahead of you, which drove out before you the two kings of the Amorites; it was not by your sword or by your bow. <sup>13</sup> I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and towns that you had not built, and you live in them; you eat the fruit of vineyards and oliveyards that you did not plant.

<sup>14</sup> "Now therefore revere the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. <sup>15</sup> Now if you are unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

<sup>16</sup> Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that

<sup>a</sup> Or Sea of Reeds

<sup>b</sup> Meaning of Heb uncertain



we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; <sup>17</sup>for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; <sup>18</sup>and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God.”

19 But Joshua said to the people, “You cannot serve the LORD, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. <sup>20</sup>If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good.” <sup>21</sup>And the people said to Joshua, “No, we will serve the LORD!” <sup>22</sup>Then Joshua said to the people, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve him.” And they said, “We are witnesses.” <sup>23</sup>He said, “Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel.” <sup>24</sup>The people said to Joshua, “The LORD our God we will serve, and him we will obey.” <sup>25</sup>So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem. <sup>26</sup>Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of

God; and he took a large stone, and set it up there under the oak in the sanctuary of the LORD. <sup>27</sup>Joshua said to all the people, “See, this stone shall be a witness against us; for it has heard all the words of the LORD that he spoke to us; therefore it shall be a witness against you, if you deal falsely with your God.” <sup>28</sup>So Joshua sent the people away to their inheritances.

### Death of Joshua and Eleazar

29 After these things Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being one hundred ten years old. <sup>30</sup>They buried him in his own inheritance at Timnath-serah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

31 Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the work that the LORD did for Israel.

32 The bones of Joseph, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem, in the portion of ground that Jacob had bought from the children of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for one hundred pieces of money;<sup>a</sup> it became an inheritance of the descendants of Joseph.

33 Eleazar son of Aaron died; and they buried him at Gibeah, the town of his son Phinehas, which had been given him in the hill country of Ephraim.

<sup>a</sup> Heb *one hundred qesitah*

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