

## LECTURE 9a: INTRODUCTION TO OT NARRATIVE

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### I. Characteristics of OT Narrative:

- A. Nearly 65% of the OT is (true) story, which makes narrative the most common OT genre and stresses the importance of knowing how to preach it.
- B. Most difficult genre to preach faithfully, because the message is more hidden and is illustrated through an often-convoluted mix of drama, characters, and speeches. Usually the narrator does not tell us outright but allows one of the characters to reveal the main idea in a speech act.
- C. The most important character is always God (even in Esther, where his name or title do not appear); human characters provide patterns for us only in so far as they point us to God.
- D. Biblical narratives are sermons in story form.
- E. The message is found in an entire episode, not a scene, so we must preach episodes.

### II. Interpreting OT Narrative:

- A. **Teach episodes, not just scenes.** Identify the narrative episode and the overarching scene divisions, remembering that verse and chapter divisions were not inspired.
- B. **Consider literary features:**
  - 1. *What is the literary context?* What leads up to the episode, and how does the episode begin and end?
  - 2. *How does the plot develop, and how does it portray characters?*
    - a. What is the nature of the drama? Is there any conflict or problem? How is it resolved?
    - b. Is there any repetition?
    - c. What does God say or do, and how do his words or deeds relate to the covenant?
    - d. Who are the named and secondary human characters, and what relationship do they have with God? What are they saying and doing, and how do their words and deeds relate to the covenant?
  - 3. *Are there any editorial comments?*
- C. **State in a single sentence the narrative episode's main idea.**
  - 1. The main idea will almost always tell us something about God and may also focus on how we are rightly to relate to him.
  - 2. While at times modeled in actions, the main idea is usually stated explicitly in a speech of God (whether directly or through his prophet) or of a named human character.
  - 3. The main idea should be worded to convey the timeless message of the narrative episode; the passage's main idea should be able to speak to any generation.
- D. **Draft an exegetical outline of the narrative episode** that shows how every scene and all the parts contribute to the overall main idea.
- E. **Consider theological trajectories.**
  - 1. Does the narrative focus more on believing or doing?
  - 2. What does the narrative want us to know about God—his character and/or his deeds?

3. How does the narrative anticipate the Christ, whether through divine speech or action, human speech or action (or failure), or a related event?
- F. Preach the story through your outline**, stressing the main idea throughout the message.

**LECTURE 9b: JOSHUA**  
**“The God who gives rest in the land”**  
 Jason S. DeRouchie, PhD

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**I. Orienting Data for Joshua:**

- A. Book’s Name:** From the primary human figure Joshua (“Yahweh is help/salvation”), who is “the servant of Yahweh” (Judg 2:8) and successor to Moses as prophet and leader/commander of Israel
- B. Historical Coverage:** From the beginning of the conquest of Canaan to the death of Joshua
- C. Content:** Israel’s partial conquest, distribution, and settlement of the Promised Land; Israel’s reaffirmation of their covenant loyalty to God
- D. Theological Emphases:**
  1. God’s faithfulness to fulfill his promises of land and presence
  2. God’s holiness, justice, and power and his faithfulness to defeat wickedness
  3. Lasting life in relationship with God comes by trusting and living in accordance with God’s Word.

- E. Theme:** By means of wars of judgment, Yahweh gives land and rest to the nation of Israel in fulfillment of his promise to the patriarchs and to provide a place for his loyal children to live for him.
- F. Outline:**
1. Israel Crosses into the Land (1:1–4:23)
    - a. Perspectives on the Fulfillment of the Land Promise (1:1–3:1)
    - b. Yahweh’s Presence and Israel’s Crossing into the Land (3:2–4:24)
  2. Yahweh Faithfully Gives the Land (5:1–21:45)
    - a. Yahweh’s Holiness and the Taking of the Land (5:13–8:29)
    - b. Yahweh’s Covenant Renewal with His People (8:30–35)
    - c. Yahweh’s Victory in the South and North (9:1–11:23)
      - 11:21–23 Epilogue
    - d. The Scope and Spoils of Yahweh’s War of Judgment (12:1–21:45)
      - 21:43–45 Epilogue
  3. Israel Must Serve Yahweh in the Land (22:1–24:33)
    - a. The Need for Unity (22:1–34)
    - b. The Need for Loyalty (23:1–24:33)
    - c. *To Be Seen*

## II. Key Introductory Issues for Joshua:

### A. The Foundational Role of God’s Word:

1. The people of Israel must keep God’s Word.
  - Josh. 1:8. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.
2. God always keeps his Word.
  - Josh. 21:43–45. Thus the LORD gave to Israel all the land that he swore to give to their fathers. And they took possession of it, and they settled there. And the LORD gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the LORD had given all their enemies into their hands. Not one word of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.
  - See also Josh. 1:3, 15; 11:21–23; 21:42; 22:4; 23:1
3. Synthesis: God keeps his Word; so should we!
  - Josh. 23:14–16. 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 word 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. 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 evil things, until he has destroyed you from off this good land that the LORD your God has given you, if you transgress the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded 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 off the good land that he has given to you.
  - Josh. 24:14–18. [Joshua said:]“Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. <sup>15</sup>And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” <sup>16</sup>Then the people answered, “Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods, <sup>17</sup>for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight and preserved us in all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we

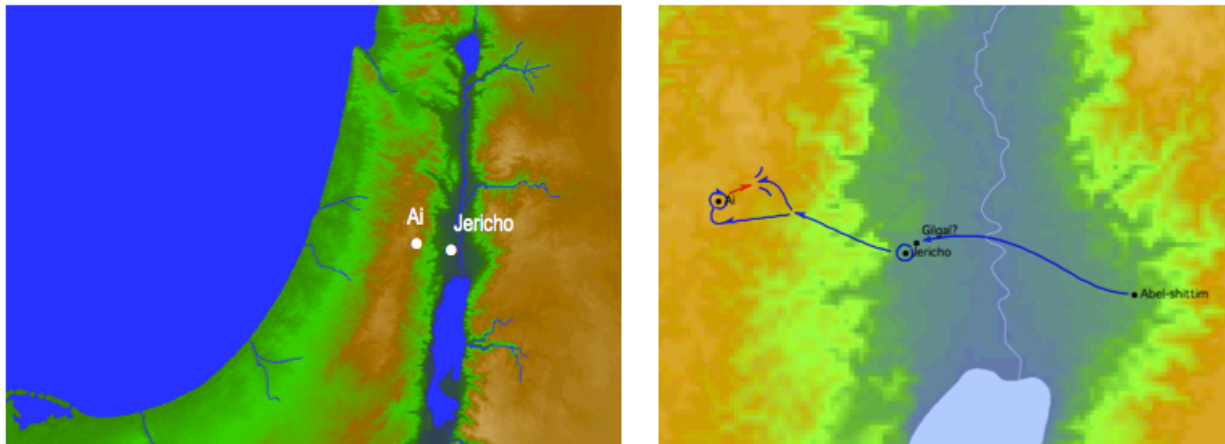
passed. <sup>18</sup>And the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God.”

- Josh. 24:31–32. 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. <sup>32</sup>As for the bones of Joseph, which the people of Israel brought up from Egypt, they buried them at Shechem, in the piece of land that Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of money. It became an inheritance of the descendants of Joseph. (See Gen. 50:24–26.)

### B. Ignored Areas in the Battle of Jericho:

1. The total annihilation of every man, woman, boy and girl (Josh. 6:21). Question: What makes Israel’s annihilation of the Canaanites okay but Hitler’s attempted genocide of the Jews not okay?
2. The Jericho story *continues* with the sin of Achan and the fiasco at Ai (Josh. 7–8). Question: Why are so many chapters devoted to these two battles, whereas the rest of the conquest is summarized in three chapters (chs. 9–11)?

Fig. 9.1. Initial Stages of the Conquest



## III. The Message of Joshua

### A. Israel Crosses into the Land (1:1–4:23)

1. Backdrop:
  - a. Yahweh calls for the absolute eradication of his enemies.
    - Deut. 7:1–4, 25–26. When Yahweh your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than you, <sup>2</sup>and when Yahweh your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. <sup>3</sup>You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, <sup>4</sup>for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of Yahweh would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly. <sup>5</sup>But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and chop down their Asherim and burn their carved images with fire.... <sup>25</sup>The carved images of their gods you shall burn with fire. You shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them or take it for yourselves, lest you be ensnared by it, for it is an abomination to Yahweh your God. <sup>26</sup>And you shall not bring an abominable thing into your house and become devoted to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest and abhor it, for it is devoted to destruction.

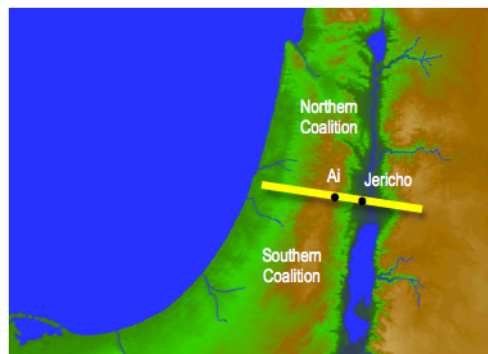
- Deut. 20:16–18. But in the cities of these peoples that Yahweh your God is giving you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes, <sup>17</sup>but you shall devote them to complete destruction, the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, as Yahweh your God has commanded, <sup>18</sup>that they may not teach you to do according to all their abominable practices that they have done for their gods, and so you sin against Yahweh your God.
- b. Yahweh’s promises to give Israel rest in his presence.
- Exod. 15:13–18. You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed; you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode. <sup>14</sup> The peoples have heard; they tremble; pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia. <sup>15</sup> Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed; trembling seizes the leaders of Moab; all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away. <sup>16</sup> Terror and dread fall upon them; because of the greatness of your arm, they are still as a stone, till your people, O LORD, pass by, till the people pass by whom you have purchased. <sup>17</sup> You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain, the place, O LORD, which you have made for your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established. <sup>18</sup> The LORD will reign forever and ever.
  - Exod. 33:14. And he said, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”
  - Deut. 3:18–22. And I commanded you at that time, saying, “The LORD your God has given you this land to possess. All your men of valor shall cross over armed before your brothers, the people of Israel. <sup>19</sup> Only your wives, your little ones, and your livestock (I know that you have much livestock) shall remain in the cities that I have given you, <sup>20</sup> until the LORD gives rest to your brothers, as to you, and they also occupy the land that the LORD your God gives them beyond the Jordan. Then each of you may return to his possession which I have given you.’ <sup>21</sup> And I commanded Joshua at that time, ‘Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings. So will the LORD do to all the kingdoms into which you are crossing. <sup>22</sup> You shall not fear them, for it is the LORD your God who fights for you.’
  - Deut. 12:9–11. for you have not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance that the LORD your God is giving you. <sup>10</sup> But when you go over the Jordan and live in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and when he gives you rest from all your enemies around, so that you live in safety, <sup>11</sup> then to the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make his name dwell there, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, and all your finest vow offerings that you vow to the LORD.
  - Deut. 25:19. Therefore when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your enemies around you, in the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you shall not forget.
  - Josh 1:13–15. 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.” <sup>14</sup> Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land that Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but all the men of valor among you shall pass over armed before your brothers and shall help them, <sup>15</sup> until the LORD gives rest to your brothers as he has to you, and they also take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and shall possess it, the land that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise.
2. Overview:
- a. Perspectives on the Fulfillment of the Land Promise (1:1–3:1)
    - i. Yahweh’s Commissioning of Joshua (1:1–9)
    - ii. Joshua’s Call to Readiness and Unity (1:10–18)
    - iii. The Reconnaissance of the Enemy in Jericho (2:1–3:1)

- b. Yahweh's Presence Israel's Crossing into the Land (3:2–4:24)
  - i. Yahweh's Triumphal Entry into Canaan (3:2–3:17)
  - ii. Memorials of Yahweh's Power (4:1–4:24)
3. God called Joshua to heed the law of Moses so as to have success.
  - 1:7. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go.
4. The goal was to secure Yahweh's promised rest in the land.
  - 1:13. 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." (Cf. Exod 15:13–18; 33:14; Deut 3:18–22; 12:8–11; 25:19)
5. The Lord acts in a way to recall the first exodus when Israel crosses over to the land.
  - 4:23–24. For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over, so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever."

### B. Yahweh Faithfully Gives the Land (5:1–21:45)

1. Yahweh had claimed the land of Canaan as his sacred turf, so it needed to be cleaned up. Yahweh's wars of judgment are about his holiness.
  - 5:13–15. When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" And he said, "No; but I am the commander of the army of the LORD. Now I have come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, "What does my lord say to his servant?" And the commander of the LORD'S army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.
2. Joshua took the land and gave it to Israel as an inheritance.
  - Josh. 11:21–23. And Joshua came at that time and cut off the Anakim from the hill country.... Joshua devoted them to destruction with their cities. There was none of the Anakim left in the land of the people of Israel. Only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod did some remain. 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.
  - Josh. 14:15. And the land had rest from war.

Fig. 9.2. The Strategy of the Conquest



3. Yahweh gave rest and by this fulfilled his promise to give Abraham's descendants a land.

- 21:43–45. Thus the LORD gave to Israel all the land that he swore to give to their fathers. And they took possession of it, and they settled there. And the LORD gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the LORD had given all their enemies into their hands. Not one word of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass. (Cf. 14:15; 22:4; 23:1)



#### 4. Added Statements that Anticipate a Greater Fulfillment of Eden-Like Rest.

- Josh. 13:1, 6–7. Now Joshua was old and advanced in years, and the LORD said to him, “You are old and advanced in years, and there remains yet very much land to possess.... <sup>6</sup>I myself will drive them out from before the people of Israel. 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 half the tribe of Manasseh.”
- Josh. 13:13. Yet the people of Israel did not drive out the Geshurites or the Maacathites, but Geshur and Maacath dwell in the midst of Israel to this day.
- Josh. 15:63. But the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the people of Judah could not drive out, so the Jebusites dwell with the people of Judah at Jerusalem to this day.
- Josh. 16:10. However, they did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, so the Canaanites have lived in the midst of Ephraim to this day but have been made to do forced labor.



- Josh. 17:12. Yet the people of Manasseh could not take possession of those cities, but the Canaanites persisted in dwelling in that land.
- Josh. 17:16–18. The people of Joseph said, “The hill country is not enough for us. Yet all the Canaanites who dwell in the plain have chariots of iron, both those in Beth-shean 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 a numerous people and have great power. You shall not have one allotment 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.”
- Cf. Judg. 1:21, 27–36.

### C. Israel Must Serve Yahweh in the Land (22:1–24:33)

#### 1. The Charges and the Warning

- 22:5. Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments and to cling to him and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.”
- Josh. 23:14–16. 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 word 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. 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 evil things, until he has destroyed you from off this good land that the LORD your God has given you, if you transgress the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded 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 off the good land that he has given to you.
- 24:14–15. Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

#### 2. The Book’s Suspenseful Ending: The open-ended conclusion (Josh. 24:29–33).

Question: Israel is in the land, and Israel’s leaders are now gone. God has remained faithful to his Word. Will Israel remain faithful to it as well?

## IV. The Book of Joshua and Jesus

### A. Synthesis:

1. Joshua (“Yahweh saves”) is a picture of the coming deliver who will bring rest, restoring what was lost in Eden (cf. Gen 2:1–3; 3:15; Matt 1:21).
  - 10:24–25. And when they brought those kings out to Joshua, Joshua summoned all the men of Israel and said to the chiefs of the men of war 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. And Joshua said to them, “Do not be afraid or dismayed; be strong and courageous. For thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight.”
  - Heb 4:1, 8–10. Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it.... For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then, there remains a Sabbath rest

for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

2. Israel never eradicated many peoples, which identified that they should still anticipate a greater Eden-like rest.
  - 13:1. Now Joshua was old and advanced in years, and the LORD said to him, "You are old and advanced in years, and there remains yet very much land to possess...."
  - Israel failed to drive out Geshur and Maacath in the north east (13:13), the Jebusites from Jerusalem (15:63), the Canaanites from Gezer (16:10) or from the region of Manasseh (17:12), or from Beth-shean and the region of the Valley of Jezreel (17:16–17). (Cf. Judg 1:21, 27–36; see also Gen 26:3–4; Ps 95:7–11; Heb 4:1–11).

## B. Development:

1. In Genesis 1, God called the first man and woman to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28). There would, therefore, be a dual emphasis on working and guarding the Garden (2:15) while also seeking to expand it until the image of God reached the ends of the earth.
2. Following the fall and exile from the Garden, God set Abraham and his offspring apart as the agents through whom God would restore the garden paradise and fulfill the global expansion of his glory. The people would inherit Canaan (17:8), while also controlling "this land [singular], from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates" (15:18). In this context, Abraham would become "a great nation," enjoying both God's blessing and a great name (12:1–2). But the Lord also promised more, for the "land" [singular] would one day expand to "lands" [plural] (26:3–4): "Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. <sup>4</sup> I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." The last comment regarding blessing links this land expansion to the work of the coming deliver, who "shall possess the gate of his enemies" and in whom "shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (22:17–18).
3. With echoes of Eden, Moses tagged the promised land God's "mountain ... abode ... sanctuary" (Exod. 15:17). Joshua, therefore, would be the agent through whom God would fulfill stage one of the Abrahamic covenant, and his life would anticipate a great "Joshua" who would establish the second. We see this anticipated in Joshua's humiliation of his enemies, matched with the reaffirmation of Genesis 3:15 that full deliverance over the powers of darkness will come: "Joshua summoned all the men of Israel and said to the chiefs of the men of war 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. And Joshua said to them, 'Do not be afraid or dismayed; be strong and courageous. For thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight' (Josh 10:24–25; cf. Gen 3:14–15: "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. <sup>15</sup> I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.").

4. In anticipation of the conquest, Yahweh asserted to Joshua, “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success” (Josh 1:8). Later, the psalmist speaks of a man whose “delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night” (Ps 1:1). It is this one against whom “the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain” (2:1)—the one who is Yahweh’s “Anointed” and begotten “Son,” whose heritage is the nations and who will possess “the ends of the earth” (2:7–8). The NT identifies the king in Psalm 1–2 as Jesus (e.g., Acts 2:25–26; 13:32–33; Rev 12:5; 19:15). The Greek name Jesus is none other than the Hebrew name Joshua, the name he received “for he will save his people from their sins” (Matt 1:21). In Christ, the greater Joshua has come who fulfills stage two of the Abrahamic covenant. He has disarmed the powers of darkness (Col 2:15; cf. Rev 12:5; 19:15) and secures certain victory for his offspring over the serpent (Luke 10:17–19; Rom 16:20; Rev 2:27; 12:11). By this means Abraham will inherit the world (Rom 4:13).

**C. When Jesus Saves, He Brings a Greater Rest than Joshua.**

1. Matt 1:21. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.
2. Matt 11:28. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
3. Heb 4:8–11. For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

**D. All in Christ Will Enjoy the Full Inheritance That God Promised Abraham.**

1. Gal 3:18, 29. For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.... And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.
2. 1 Pet 1:3–5. According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

- V. Book Summary:** God presents Joshua as a foreshadow of the ultimate deliverer and uses him to cause Israel to enter God’s rest in the promised land where they should serve the Lord.

**VI. Excursus: The Nature and Justification of Yahweh’s Wars of Judgment**

**THINK!**

Richard Dawkins wrote (*The God Delusion* [Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006], 247): “The ethnic cleansing begun in the time of Moses is brought to bloody fruition in the book of Joshua, a text remarkable for the bloodthirsty massacres it records and the xenophobic relish with which it does so.... And the Bible story of Joshua’s destruction of Jericho, and the invasion of the Promised Land in general, is morally indistinguishable from Hitler’s invasion of Poland, or Saddam Hussein’s massacres of the

Kurds and the Marsh Arabs." How would you respond to Dawkins? As you craft an answer, consider the following questions: (1) Are there any fundamental differences between Israel's call to annihilate the Canaanites and Hitler's attempted genocide of the Jews? Why would Israel's act be justified and Hitler's not? (2) Is it okay to use OT conquest texts to justify the Medieval Crusades, abortion clinic bombings, or the like? (3) Do Yahweh's Wars of Judgment have any relationship to physical wars today? How about to spiritual warfare? (After wrestling on your own, continue to read on below.)

### A. Overview

1. Yahweh's wars of judgment have nothing to do with racism, nationalism, or prejudice. They are wars of retributive justice against sin and rebellion and hostility to God and his people.
2. Yahweh is always viewed as the great warrior (e.g., Exod 15:3; Josh 5:13–15; Ps 24:8; Isa 42:13; Zeph 1:14; 3:17), who deserves allegiance (Deut 6:4–50 and who fights for his people against those who refuse to pay him homage (e.g., Exod 14:14, 25; Josh 10:14, 42; 1 Sam 17:47; cf. Num 21:14), whether through direct covenant rebellion, aggression, or failure to surrender. Yahweh alone secures victory, and all violators of war protocol become the enemy.
3. Israel enters battle to execute Yahweh's vengeance; Israel herself operates only as the agent of God's wrath (e.g., Num. 31:3; cf. Isa. 34:8; Jer. 46:10; Rom. 13:4). As Yahweh's agents, when they engaged in battle, they did not expect to lose anyone (Num. 31:49; cf. Jer. 23:4).
4. God intended that *all* Israel's wars operated as direct judgment against rebellion and wickedness or against hostility directed toward his people (Deut. 7:9–10; 9:5–6; 20:1, 10–18). Some examples of God confronting sustained rebellion and wickedness include the flood (Gen. 6:5–7, 11–13), the incineration of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18:20–21; 19:24–25; Jude 7); the conquest of Canaan (Gen. 15:16; Deut. 7:25–26; 9:5–6; 20:16–18); the destruction of the Amalekites (Exod. 17:14; Deut. 25:17–19; 1 Sam. 15:3, 18). Some examples of God's working against direct hostility against his people include the plagues and destruction of Egypt after Pharaoh's refusal to let Israel go (Exod. 7–15); Israel's war of vengeance on Midian (Num. 31); Deborah and Barak's defeat of Sisera (Judg. 4–5); Israel's battles against the Philistines, including David's defeat of Goliath (1 Sam. 4, 13:1–6, 14, 17, etc.); David's numerous victories over the border countries, resulting in "rest from all his surrounding enemies" (2 Sam. 7:1; 8:1–14; cf. 1 Kgs. 4:21–24); perhaps the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1–11) and Herod (12:23).
5. *All* Israel's wars were to be preceded by potential for peace if the nation Israel approached was not aggressive but desirous of peace (Deut. 20:10–12; Josh. 11:19–20). If they accepted peace, the entire population would become Israel's forced laborers (Deut. 20:11). If they refused peace, acted aggressively, and the land was far off (yet likely within the borders of Israel's promised kingdom: Gen. 15:18–21; Exod. 23:31; Deut. 1:7; 11:24; Josh. 1:4; cf. 1 Kgs 4:21–24), the males are executed but everything else becomes spoil (Deut. 20:13–15). The execution of the household heads indicates that Yahweh is greater than the gods of the nations, which should not be worshiped. If the opposing nation refused peace, acted aggressively, and was near (i.e., within the borders of Israel's promised land that included the tribal allotments (Gen. 17:8; Num. 34:1–12; Deut. 34:1–4; Josh. 13–21), then Israel was to save nothing that breaths (Deut. 20:16–17). This

would ensure that those households remaining would not be able to ensnare Israel in idolatry (Deut. 20:18).

6. Christ’s death on the cross (Isa. 53:4–9; Rom. 3:25; 4:24–25; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22–25; 1 John 4:10) and the final Day of Yahweh (Joel 2:11; Amos 5:18–20; 1 Thess. 5:2–3; 2 Thess. 1:5–10) are the antitypes to all preceding divine wars of judgment.

**Fig. 9.3. Yahweh’s Wars of Judgment**

<p><u>Deuteronomy 7:9–10.</u> “Know therefore that Yahweh your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, and <i>repays to their face those who hate him, by destroying them.</i> He will not be slack with one who hates him. He will repay him to his face.”</p>									
<b>General</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yahweh does the fighting and alone gives victory—thus Yahweh’s wars are often called “holy” wars (Exod. 14:14; Deut. 1:30; 20:4; Josh. 23:3; Neh. 4:20; cf. Deut. 1:42; Josh. 1:9; chs. 7–8; Prov. 127:1b).</li> <li>2. War is a religious undertaking, thus requiring various forms of self-denial and sacrifice (Exod. 19:15; Deut. 23:9–14; Josh. 5:1–15; 1 Sam. 13:1–15; 21:4–5; cf. 2 Sam. 11:1–13; 1 Cor. 7:5).<sup>1</sup></li> <li>3. All precious metals won in battle belong to Yahweh; pagan shrines are destroyed (Num. 18:14; Deut. 7:5, 25–26; Josh. 6:19, 24).</li> <li>4. Violators become the enemy (Num. 33:55–56; Deut. 8:19–20; cf. 7:4; 13:12–18; Josh. 7:11–12, 19–26).</li> </ol>								
<b>Nature</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Yahweh’s wars of retributive judgment against (1) sustained wickedness and rebellion (Deut. 7:9–10; 9:5–6; 20:16–18) and (2) refusing terms of peace and/or assertively warring against Israel (Deut. 20:1, 10–15). The wars have <i>nothing to do with racism, nationalism, or prejudice</i>; enemies of war are Yahweh’s enemies, having worshipped other gods and having shown hostility against Yahweh and his people.</li> </ol>								
<b>Purpose</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. (a) To halt aggressive hostility against Yahweh and his people by displaying the seriousness of refusing Yahweh’s terms of peace (Deut. 20:12–13); (b) to root out wickedness by punishing sin (Deut. 7:9–10; 9:5–6; cf. Gen. 15:16; Rom. 6:23); (c) to cleanse the land from defilement (Lev. 18:24–30; Isa. 24:4–6); (d) to protect God’s people from apostasy and ultimate destruction (Exod. 23:33; Num. 33:35–36; Deut. 7:3–4, 25; 8:19–20; 20:16–18); (e) to display the greatness of God and his people (Exod. 15:11–18; Deut. 2:25; 4:32–35).</li> </ol>								
<b>Initiation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Yahweh alone initiates judgment wars and specifies the opponents, whether by means of a recognized prophet (Gen. 15:16; Exod. 23:23–33; Num. 13:1–2; 33:50–56; Deut. 2:19, 24, 37; 7:1–5, 16–26; 20:1–18; 24:17–19; Josh. 1:1–5; 9:14–15; 1 Sam. 23:1–5; cf. Isa. 53:10; Acts 2:23; 4:27–28) or by means of an enemy’s aggressive action through refusing terms of peace or offensively engaging Israel (Deut 20:11–12).</li> </ol>								
<b>Army</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. All able-bodied men over twenty participate (Num. 26:2; cf. 32:6, 16–17, 26–27; Josh. 1:14), though new homeowners, new business owners, and newly married men were excused from war (Deut. 20:5–8; 24:5; cf. Judg. 7:2–3; 1 Sam. 8:11–12).</li> </ol>								
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"><b>Wars within the Promised Tribal Land</b></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"><b>Wars outside the Promised Tribal Land</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <p>Yahweh gave different rules for wars within Israel’s tribal allotments (Gen. 17:8; Num. 34:1–12; Deut. 34:1–4; Josh. 13–21) and wars outside these allotments but still within the promised kingdom (Gen. 15:18–21; Exod. 23:31; Deut. 1:7; 11:24; Josh. 1:4; cf. 1 Kgs. 4:21–24).</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>End</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>End</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Battle concluded when the entire enemy population is annihilated, including men, women, and children (Deut. 7:2, 16; 20:16–17; 25:19; cf. Deut. 2:34; 3:6; Josh. 6:21; 8:2, 26;</li> </ol> </td> <td> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Battle concluded when enemy aggression ceases and all armed enemy warriors or offenders are destroyed (Deut. 20:13; cf. Num. 31:14–18).</li> </ol> </td> </tr> </table>		<b>Wars within the Promised Tribal Land</b>	<b>Wars outside the Promised Tribal Land</b>	<p>Yahweh gave different rules for wars within Israel’s tribal allotments (Gen. 17:8; Num. 34:1–12; Deut. 34:1–4; Josh. 13–21) and wars outside these allotments but still within the promised kingdom (Gen. 15:18–21; Exod. 23:31; Deut. 1:7; 11:24; Josh. 1:4; cf. 1 Kgs. 4:21–24).</p>		<b>End</b>	<b>End</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Battle concluded when the entire enemy population is annihilated, including men, women, and children (Deut. 7:2, 16; 20:16–17; 25:19; cf. Deut. 2:34; 3:6; Josh. 6:21; 8:2, 26;</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Battle concluded when enemy aggression ceases and all armed enemy warriors or offenders are destroyed (Deut. 20:13; cf. Num. 31:14–18).</li> </ol>
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<sup>1</sup> Yahweh considered war in Israel a holy endeavor, for his presence went with his people and fought for them (Deut 20:1, 4). Sexual intercourse was ritually impure (Lev 15:18), and God had stressed, “When you are encamped against your enemies, then you shall keep yourself from every evil thing” (Deut 23:9). Just like at Mount Sinai, where God did not allow sexual intercourse in light of his approaching presence (Exod 19:15), so too warriors were to refrain from engaging in sex during God’s holy wars (1 Sam 21:5).

	10:40; 11:14; 1 Sam. 15:3).	
Spoils	10. Once ## 3 and 9 are met, God's people may enjoy all other spoils of war (Deut. 2:34–35; 3:6–7; Josh. 8:2, 27; 11:14). <sup>2</sup>	10. Once ## 3 and 9 are met, all other spoils of war including women, children, and animals may be incorporated into Israel's community (Deut. 20:14; cf. Num. 31:18; Deut 21:10–14).

## B. The Lasting Significance of Yahweh's Wars of Judgment

- Yahweh takes sin seriously and has declared war against all wickedness (Rom. 1:18; 6:23); his day of judgment is at hand (Joel 2:11; Amos 4:12; 5:18–20; 1 Thess. 5:2–3; 2 Thess. 1:5–10; Jude 6–7).
  - Rom. 1:18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.
  - Rom. 6:23. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
  - Joel 2:11. Yahweh utters his voice before his army, for his camp is exceedingly great; he who executes his word is powerful. For the day of Yahweh is great and very awesome; who can endure it?
  - Amos 4:12. Therefore thus I will do to you, O Israel; because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel!
  - Amos 5:18–20. Woe to you who desire the day of Yahweh! Why would you have the day of Yahweh? It is darkness, and not light,<sup>19</sup> as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him.<sup>20</sup> Is not the day of Yahweh darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?
  - 1 Thess. 5:2–3. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.<sup>3</sup> While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.
  - 2 Thess. 1:5–10. This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—<sup>6</sup> since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you,<sup>7</sup> and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels<sup>8</sup> in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.<sup>9</sup> They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,<sup>10</sup> when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.
  - Jude 6–7. And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—<sup>7</sup> just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.
- In love, God sent his messenger, Jesus, to proclaim good news—i.e., the Great King reigns and offers terms for peace (Isa. 52:7–10; 61:1–4; John 3:16, 36; Eph. 2:17–18; cf. Matt. 4:16–17, 23; Mark 1:14–15; Luke 4:16–21, 42–43).
  - Isa. 52:7–10. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”<sup>8</sup> The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of Yahweh to Zion.<sup>9</sup> Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for Yahweh has comforted his people; he has

<sup>2</sup> The complete destruction of all livestock at Jericho (Josh. 6:21) does not appear to have been the norm, as is clear from the explicit mention that livestock could be preserved in the battle against Ai and beyond (8:2).

- redeemed Jerusalem. <sup>10</sup> Yahweh has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.
- Isa. 61:1–4. The Spirit of the Lord Yahweh is upon me, because Yahweh has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; <sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of Yahweh’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; <sup>3</sup> to grant to those who mourn in Zion— to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of Yahweh, that he may be glorified. <sup>4</sup> They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.
  - John 3:16, 36. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. . . . <sup>36</sup> Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.
  - Eph. 2:17–18. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. <sup>18</sup> For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.
  - Matt. 4:16–17, 23. The people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned. . . . <sup>17</sup> From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” . . . <sup>23</sup> And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.
  - Mark 1:14–15. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, <sup>15</sup> and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”
  - Luke 4:16–21, 42–43. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. <sup>17</sup> And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, <sup>18</sup> “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, <sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” <sup>20</sup> And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. <sup>21</sup> And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” . . . <sup>42</sup> And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them, <sup>43</sup> but he said to them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.”
3. Rejecting God’s terms of peace will result in the destruction (i.e., sacrifice) of the wicked (Deut. 7:9–10; Jer. 18:7–10; Heb. 10:26–27; cf. Exod. 22:20; Jer. 46:10; Ezek. 39:17, 20–21; Isa. 22:12–14; 34:1–2; Zeph. 1:7–9).
- Deut. 7:9–10. Know therefore that Yahweh your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, <sup>10</sup> and repays to their face those who hate him, by destroying them. He will not be slack with one who hates him. He will repay him to his face.
  - Jer. 18:7–10. If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, <sup>8</sup> and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it. <sup>9</sup> And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, <sup>10</sup> and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will relent of the good that I had intended to do to it.
  - Heb. 10:26–27. For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, <sup>27</sup> but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.
  - Exod. 22:20. Whoever sacrifices to any god, other than Yahweh alone, shall be devoted to destruction.

- Jer. 46:10. That day is the day of the Lord Yahweh of hosts, a day of vengeance, to avenge himself on his foes. The sword shall devour and be sated and drink its fill of their blood. For the Lord Yahweh of hosts holds a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates.
  - Ezek. 39:17, 20–21. As for you, son of man, thus says the Lord Yahweh: Speak to the birds of every sort and to all beasts of the field, “Assemble and come, gather from all around to the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you, a great sacrificial feast on the mountains of Israel, and you shall eat flesh and drink blood. . . .<sup>20</sup> And you shall be filled at my table with horses and charioteers, with mighty men and all kinds of warriors,” declares the Lord Yahweh.<sup>21</sup> “And I will set my glory among the nations, and all the nations shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid on them.
  - Isa. 22:12–14. In that day the Lord Yahweh of hosts called for weeping and mourning, for baldness and wearing sackcloth;<sup>13</sup> and behold, joy and gladness, killing oxen and slaughtering sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine. “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”<sup>14</sup> Yahweh of hosts has revealed himself in my ears: “Surely this iniquity will not be atoned for you until you die,” says the Lord Yahweh of hosts.
  - Isa. 34:1–2. Draw near, O nations, to hear, and give attention, O peoples! Let the earth hear, and all that fills it; the world, and all that comes from it.<sup>2</sup> For Yahweh is enraged against all the nations, and furious against all their host; he has devoted them to destruction, has given them over for slaughter.
  - Zeph. 1:7–9. Be silent before the Lord Yahweh! For the day of the Yahweh is near; Yahweh has prepared a sacrifice and consecrated his guests.<sup>8</sup> And on the day of Yahweh’s sacrifice—“I will punish the officials and the king’s sons and all who array themselves in foreign attire.<sup>9</sup> On that day I will punish everyone who leaps over the threshold, and those who fill their master’s house with violence and fraud.
4. For all who accept God’s terms of peace, Christ’s sacrifice on the cross satisfied God’s wrath, breaking the stronghold of evil against them (Col. 2:13–15; Heb. 2:14; 1 Peter 3:22; cf. 2 Cor. 4:2–4; Eph. 2:1–7) and enabling God to justly forgive and support them (Rom. 3:23–26; 5:9–10; 8:29–32; 1 John 4:9–10).
- Col. 1:13–15. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,<sup>14</sup> by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.<sup>15</sup> He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.
  - Heb. 2:14. Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil.
  - 1 Pet. 3:22. who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.
  - 2 Cor. 4:2–4. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God’s word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience in the sight of God.<sup>3</sup> And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.<sup>4</sup> In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
  - Eph. 2:1–7. And you were dead in the trespasses and sins<sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—<sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.<sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,<sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—<sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,<sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.



- Rom. 3:23–26. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,<sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,<sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.<sup>26</sup> It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
  - Rom. 5:9–10. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.<sup>10</sup> For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.
  - Rom. 8:29–32. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.<sup>30</sup> And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.<sup>31</sup> What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?<sup>32</sup> He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?
  - 1 John 4:9–10. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.<sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
5. While all authority in heaven and on earth is Christ’s (Matt. 28:18), Jesus’ kingdom is not of this world and will progress through prayer and persuasion and not through blade or pistol (Matt. 26:52; John 18:36; Acts 1:1–8)—by suffering to bring life not to cause death (Mark 10:45; Col. 1:24).
- Matt. 28:18. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
  - Matt. 26:52. Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword.”
  - John 18:36. Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”
  - Acts 1:1–8. In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach,<sup>2</sup> until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.<sup>3</sup> He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.<sup>4</sup> And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me;<sup>5</sup> for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”<sup>6</sup> So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”<sup>7</sup> He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.<sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
  - Mark 10:45. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
  - Col. 1:24. Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church.
6. The coming of Christ inaugurated “the year of Yahweh’s favor” in anticipation of “the day of vengeance of our God” (Isa. 61:2; cf. Luke 4:19; 2 Cor. 6:2). As ambassadors of the Messiah (Isa. 59:15–21; cf. Acts 13:45–48; 26:15–23), Christians are engaged in spiritual battle against the same powers that deceived both the Canaanites and Israelites (2 Cor. 10:3–6; Eph. 6:10–12; 1 Peter 5:6–11). In this spiritual battle, we must take up the mission of Christ to proclaim the terms of peace (Matt. 28:18–20; Rom. 1:16–17; 10:12–17; 2 Cor. 5:18–21) and

to be a neighbor—loving, forgiving, praying for, and doing good to even one’s enemies (Matt. 5:44; Luke 6:27, 35; 10:25–37; Rom. 12:17–21), confident that the Day of Yahweh will ultimately come.

- Isa. 61:2. . . . to proclaim the year of Yahweh’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.
- Luke 4:19. . . . to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.
- 2 Cor. 6:2. For he says, “In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.
- Isa. 59:15–21. Truth is lacking, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. Yahweh saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice. <sup>16</sup> He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him. <sup>17</sup> He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak. <sup>18</sup> According to their deeds, so will he repay, wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies; to the coastlands he will render repayment. <sup>19</sup> So they shall fear the name of Yahweh from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun; for he will come like a rushing stream, which the wind of Yahweh drives. <sup>20</sup> And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,” declares Yahweh. <sup>21</sup> And as for me, this is my covenant with them,” says Yahweh: “My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children’s offspring,” says Yahweh, “from this time forth and forevermore.”
- Acts 13:45–48. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. <sup>46</sup> And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. <sup>47</sup> For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, ‘I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’” <sup>48</sup> And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.
- Acts 26:15–23. And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. <sup>16</sup> But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, <sup>17</sup> delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you <sup>18</sup> to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’ <sup>19</sup> Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, <sup>20</sup> but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance. <sup>21</sup> For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. <sup>22</sup> To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: <sup>23</sup> that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”
- 2 Cor. 10:3–6. For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup> For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. <sup>5</sup> We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, <sup>6</sup> being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.
- Eph. 6:10–12. Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

- 1 Pet. 5:6–11. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, <sup>7</sup> casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. <sup>8</sup> Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. <sup>10</sup> And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. <sup>11</sup> To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.
- Matt. 28:18–20. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
- Rom. 1:16–17. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”
- Rom. 10:12–17. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. <sup>13</sup> For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” <sup>14</sup> How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? <sup>15</sup> And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” <sup>16</sup> But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” <sup>17</sup> So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
- 2 Cor. 5:18–21. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
- Matt. 5:44. But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.
- Luke 6:27, 35. But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. . . . <sup>35</sup> But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.
- Luke 10:25–37. And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” <sup>26</sup> He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” <sup>27</sup> And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>28</sup> And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.” <sup>29</sup> But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” <sup>30</sup> Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. <sup>34</sup> He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ <sup>36</sup> Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” <sup>37</sup> He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”
- Rom. 10:17–21. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. <sup>18</sup> If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. <sup>19</sup> Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” <sup>20</sup> To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if

he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.”<sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

7. Today Jew and Gentile in Christ stand together as one people of God with no ties to *political* parties or provinces; therefore, physical conquest, defense, or subjugation is not part of the church’s mission (Eph. 2:13–16; cf. Rom. 2:28–29; 3:29–30; 11:5, 11–32; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28).
8. Physical wars today are not necessarily wrong but are not directly about Jesus’ kingdom (though he controls all, Matt. 28:18; cf. Dan. 2:44; 4:34–35; Eph. 1:11) or about God’s people standing as his agents of wrath. Rather, they are about the defense and expansion of *human, earthly* kingdoms, which God establishes and destroys (Ps. 75:7; Prov. 21:1; Dan. 2:21; 4:17; 5:21; Rom. 13:1) and which he commissions to “do good” and to uphold justice in the light of good (Rom. 13:4). (On just war, see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, pt. II-II, q. 40; John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV. xx. 11.)

## VII. Guided Reading for Joshua:

### A. Points of Focus:

1. Key chapters: Josh. 1–2; 5:13–8:35; ch. 24
2. Key persons: Yahweh, Joshua, Rahab the harlot, the captain of Yahweh’s hosts, Achan, Caleb, the priests Eleazar & Phinehas
3. Key places: Canaan, Ebal, Gerezim, Gibeon, Gilgal, Hazor, Jericho

### B. Questions:

1. Summarize in your own words the theme of the book of Joshua?
2. Place the following content descriptions in order with respect to the structure of Joshua:

Joshua 1–12	Covenant renewal
Joshua 13–22	Israel conquers the land
Joshua 23–24	Joshua divides the land

3. Who accompanied Moses when the tablets of the testimony were received, stood watch at the temporary tent of meeting before the tabernacle was constructed, represented the tribe of Ephraim when the twelve spies went into Canaan? What does this individual’s name mean?
4. What is the name of the female Canaanite prostitute who housed and protected the Israelite spies and acknowledged Yahweh as God of the world? What is the name of the Israelite who stole precious items from Jericho that were set apart for Yahweh and thus received the same judgment that was due the Canaanites?
5. Who is ultimately attributed the recognition for Israel’s victories in conquest (see Josh. 21:43)? How does the story of Israel’s conquest of Jericho and Ai show this to be the case?
6. How many times did Israel march around Jericho? What are the names of all the towns Israel burned during the conquest of Canaan?
7. What do the two epilogues in Josh. 11:21–23 and 21:43–45 tell us about the main message of the book? In the light of this, can you explain why the author would include 10 chapters of tribal allotments (chs. 12–21)? What do we learn about

God through these? How does one of the final statements of the book in Josh. 24:32 relate to this theme?

8. According to the book's introduction in Joshua 1, what must Israel do in order to be "prosperous and successful" in the land? What does this and the statements in Josh. 23:14–16 add to the main message of the book?
9. "And if it is evil in your eyes to serve Yahweh, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh." By whom was this declared, and in what chapter were they recorded?
10. Essay: Characterize Yahweh's Wars of Judgment that are depicted in Deuteronomy 7:1–5; 9:1–5; and 20:16–18. Make a list of examples from Scripture where Yahweh declares war against sinfulness. Clarify why Israel was justified in performing genocide on the Canaanites, whereas Hitler was not justified in attempting a similar feat on the Jews. Finally, consider the lasting significance of Yahweh's Wars of Judgment for the church today, wrestling with questions like: (1) Why was Israel justified in performing genocide on the Canaanites, whereas Hitler was not justified in attempting a similar feat on the Jews? (2) Is it justified to use OT conquest texts as justification for the Medieval Crusades, abortion clinic bombings, or the like? (3) Do Yahweh's Wars of Judgment have any relationship to physical wars today? How about to spiritual warfare?