



## Joshua Chapters 5 to 8 – 4 more Studies – Part 2

### Please Note the following:

1. It is not necessary to answer the Bible Study Questions before meeting together for the Bible Study. Some people like to prepare beforehand whereas others like to think through the Bible Passages in a group setting. It is also not compulsory to answer ALL the questions.
2. It is not necessary to look up all the Bible cross references listed in a particular question; your Growth Group Leader will summarize these Bible cross references for you.
3. Just a reminder that sometimes in our Growth Groups, people feel comfortable sharing very personal and sensitive things about their lives. This information **MUST BE CONFIDENTIAL and NEVER LEAVE THE GROUP**

## Study 1 – Marked by God, Led by the Commander

Joshua 5:1-15

*(Sermon on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2026)*

### Read Joshua 5:1-15

1. What effect does Israel's crossing of the Jordan have on the surrounding nations (v1)?

*The kings of the Amorites and Canaanites **lose heart and melt in fear**. The Israelites' crossing of the River Jordan shows that God is powerfully with them—just as He was at the crossing of the Red Sea—so the other nations recognize they are facing **the living God**, not just another army.*

*Melting hearts are a great thing if they melt in repentance. But sometimes hearts melt before God and then solidify again into an even harder state.*

*When our spiritual enemies see that we are trusting in God and are willing to step out in obedient faith — even when it seems crazy — they instantly lose confidence in their battle against us.*

*We may forget, but our spiritual enemies always remember that **If God is for us, who can be against us?** (Romans 8:31). They know that when we are really trusting in God, their defeat is assured.*

2. Why had circumcision not been practiced in the wilderness? (vv2–8) What was the purpose of circumcision anyway?

*Circumcision wasn't practiced during the wilderness years because:*

- *The generation that left Egypt **disobeyed God** and died in the wilderness.*
- *The covenant sign was not applied to the next generation during that period of judgment.*

*Circumcision was given to Abraham in Book of Genesis 17 as the **sign of God's covenant**. It marked someone as belonging to God's people. It was like a visible badge saying, "I am part of God's promises."*

*Because it involves the removal of flesh, it symbolized **being set apart**—cutting away impurity and living differently from the surrounding nations.*

*Even in the Old Testament, God made it clear the outward sign wasn't enough. In Book of Deuteronomy 10:16 and 30:6, Israel is told to "circumcise your hearts." That means:*

- *turning away from stubbornness*
- *loving God fully*
- *inward spiritual change, not just outward ritual*

*In the New Testament, the focus shifts from physical circumcision to spiritual reality. Paul the Apostle explains in Epistle to the Colossians 2:11–12 that believers have a "circumcision made without hands"—a picture of:*

- *sin being cut away*
- *new life in Christ*

*So for Christians, the symbol points to what Jesus does internally, not something done physically.*

*Circumcision was always a powerful act of consecration to God. In it, an Israelite said "I'm not like the other nations. I listen to God and do what He says I should do." It was stepping out in faithful obedience and identifying yourself as one of the Lord's people. It was renouncing the flesh and the world. It was dying to self and living to God.*

***They stayed in their places in the camp till they were healed:*** Obviously, this was suicidal from a military standpoint. All the men of fighting age were made completely vulnerable and unable to fight for a period of several days, ***till they were healed.***

*So, not only did Israel cross over the Jordan at a militarily undesirable place (right in front of Jericho, the strongest military outpost of the Canaanites), they also incapacitated their army for several days. They did this because they trusted God, and His directions, instead of their own wisdom.*

*They were put in the place where they could trust in nothing but God alone — a hard place, but a good place.*

*God only asked this of them after He showed His greatness by the Jordan River crossing. When we remember all the things the power of God has done in our lives, we are willing to trust Him in radical obedience.*

3. Why is it significant that God says, “***I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt***” (v9)? What’s significant about the name ***Gilgal***?

*Reproach means a something that is a source of shame.*

*The Hebrew word means – shame, scorn or disgrace*

*Possibly referring to:*

- *The Israelites identity as slaves in Egypt*
- *The shame of the Israelites disobedience and wilderness wandering*
- *The fact that in the wilderness God let a whole generation pass because their disobedience*

*In other words God is saying “their old identity is gone”*

*The name Gilgal in Hebrew means “a wheel or rolling”, hence the idea of God ‘rolling away’ their reproach (shame)*

***It is a turning point – a new beginning in the land for God’s covenant people!***

*i. The city of Gilgal became a beachhead and camp for Israel in their conquest of Canaan. They returned there after battle and remembered, finding strength in the remembrance of the memorial, their obedience, and their redemption.*

*ii. It is good to have a place like Gilgal in our lives. This is a place where we first come into God’s promises, a place of memorial, a place of obedience and redemption.*

4. What is the significance of celebrating Passover in the land? (v10)

*This is the **first Passover in the Promised Land**:*

- *It remembers God’s rescue of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt*
- *It marks the **fulfilment of God’s promise** to deliver the people*
- *It connects past salvation in Egypt with the present reality of being saved to occupy the Promised Land*

*It says: The God who redeemed you has now delivered you.*

*The original Passover itself could never be repeated, but there was power in its remembrance. They were to always live remembering that they were a people delivered and remembering God's work of deliverance.*

*In the same way, we are to be in constant remembrance of our redemption at Calvary and live our lives in the shadow of the cross.*

#### 5. Why did the manna stop? (vv11-12)

*The manna stops because God 's provision in the wilderness is no longer needed because the people can now eat the **produce of the Promised Land***

*This signals – a transition from miracle provision to ordinary provision and from wandering to settled inheritance in a new land.*

*When the people were able to provide for themselves from the rich produce of Canaan, God stopped the manna. He didn't want them to get lazy, but to enter into a new partnership of trust with Him.*

*They had to trust God to bring the manna every day, but they also had to trust Him to provide for you through other means.*

*God always provides, but He is perfectly free to change the source of His provision from time to time. We need to trust in Him, not in His manner of provision, or we will stumble when those change.*

#### 6. Who does Joshua meet and what is his response? (v13)

*Joshua meets a man with a drawn sword in his hand – He is the commander of the Lord's army!*

*Joshua boldly approaches this mysterious Man with a drawn sword. As a shepherd over God's people, he has a responsibility to see if this man is a friend or a foe.*

*Joshua's response is initially cautious ("Are you for us or for our enemies?" – but then Joshua **falls face down in worship** (v14) when he realises who it is!*

#### 7. What is the significance of the commander's answer, "**Neither... but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come**"? (v14)



*The commander's answer is significant because it shows God is not on Israel's side; Israel must be on God's side.*

*In the last chapter, Joshua was exalted – this chapter God humbles Joshua and shows ultimately God is in sovereign control of Israel (and all nations) – not Joshua! Joshua needs to know his place in relation to God!*

8. Why is the place where Joshua is standing holy? (cf. Exodus 3:5) (v15)

*Because God's presence (just like at the Burning Bush with Moses) makes the ground Holy! This means Joshua is standing before a Divine figure.*

*Some commentators suggest this is a **theophany** – or even a pre-incarnation appearance of Jesus! A **theophany** is a visible, tangible, or audible manifestation of God to human beings. The word comes from Greek meaning 'appearance of God' We know that this Being, standing before Joshua, was God. Though the title **Commander of the army of the Lord** could perhaps apply to an angel (such as Michael, based on a passage like Revelation 12:7), Joshua's falling down, and worshipping is inconsistent with angels, who never receive worship (Revelation 22:8-9).*

*The **Army of the Lord** here is used in a way that implies that the armies commanded are **angelic armies**. This is a Being who commands angels.*

*As well, Joshua refers to the angel as **my Lord**; but most of all, the command to remove his sandals (a picture of our humanity and contact with a "dirty" world), was to Joshua (who read and knew Exodus 3:4-6 because he was in God's word) clear proof that the Man standing before him was the voice from the burning bush.*

*The idea of Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity, appearing as a man before Bethlehem is provocative, but logical. We know that He existed before Bethlehem (Micah 5:2); why should He not, on isolated but important occasions, appear in bodily form? This idea is also evident in passages like Genesis 18:16-33, 32:24-30, and Judges 13:1-23.*

9. **Ponder:** Where might God be calling you to **spiritual preparation before action**?

*God calls His people into spiritual preparation before action by:*

*Renewal of our commitment to God (like circumcision was a sign of renewing the covenant)*

*Remembrance of what God has done for us (like remembering what God has done in the past before they start the battle of Jericho– remembering things like- like Passover, Red Sea crossing and Jordan River crossing)*

*God’s people might also have to repent and re-centre their lives of God*

10. **Ponder:** Where might you be trying to get God “**on your side**” or are you seeking to **submit to His purposes**?

*Here are some ways we might try to get God “on our side” rather than submitting to His purposes*

- **Using prayer as a persuasion rather than a surrender** – treating prayer like a way to convince God to bless what we have already decided – or praying only **AFTER** our plan is set! Praying “Lord make this work” rather than praying “Lord, is it your will?”
- **Selective obedience** – following God only when it suits us and ignoring Him when it costs us. Or saying “I will obey as long as it doesn’t disrupt my comfort, relationships or goals”
- **Using scripture to justify ourselves** – like quoting scripture out of context to justify our decision.
- **Equating success with God’s approval** – saying things like “it’s working, so God must be in it!”
- **Using emotional confirmation** – “I feel this is right – it must be God”
- **Making deals with God** – “if you do this God; I will do this!”
- **Acting first, seeking God later** – it’s like we’re saying “Follow me, Lord – instead of “lead me”
- **Ministry driven self-justification** – ‘this ministry is for God; it must be from God”

11. **Ponder:** What “**old reproach**” or past identity do you need to leave behind in Christ?

- *Past shame*

- *Past failures*
- *Past sin*
- *Old labels*

**In Christ our “old reproach” have been rolled away!**

12. Do you remember and celebrate God’s past faithfulness in your life? List some examples...

- *When God first called me and saved me*
- *When God provided for me*
- *When God answered my prayers*
- *When God called me into full-time ministry*
- *When He blessed me with my wife and my children*

Where is **JESUS** in **Joshua 5:1-15**?

- **Circumcision** – points to circumcision of the heart – fulfilled in a relationship with Jesus
- **Passover** – Jesus is our Passover Lamb
- **Manna** – Jesus is the bread of life
- **Rolled away your reproach** – when we repent and put our faith in Jesus; He rolls away our reproach (our shame and disgrace)
- **Commander of the Lord’s Army** – a pre-incarnation of Jesus!
- **Holy Ground** – points to God with His people -points to Jesus – our Immanuel = God with us!

13. How do the following New Testament passages relate to **Joshua 5:1-15**?

**John 6:30-35, 48-51**

*The Manna → points to Jesus who is the **true bread from heaven***

*The manna was a temporary provision – Jesus is a permanent provision pointing to a permanent provision, that is **eternal life***

**Acts 9:1–6**



*Like Joshua who encounters the Lord and is brought into submission; likewise Saul encounters the Lord as Saul travels to Damascus and Saul is brought into to submission to the Lord.*

*In both instances, the Lord confronts both Joshua and Saul – they submit to the Lord – and the Lord redirects their paths.*

### **Romans 2:28-29**

*In Joshua the men had to be physically circumcised to be identified as God's people and belonging to the covenant of the Lord. In Romans, Paul talks about the fact that true circumcision is circumcision of the heart; it is not physical and external – it is spiritual and internal – a transformation of the heart by the Holy Spirit!*

### **Colossians 2:6-15**

*As believers, Paul says we experience a circumcision in Christ Jesus. Jesus death and resurrection remove our sin – defeats the forces of evil – and cancels our debt of death for our sins – and takes our place – so we go free.*

### **1 Corinthians 5:6-8**

*Passover is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus – He is OUR Passover Lamb – sacrificed for OUR sins*

### **Hebrews 4:8-11**

*Even though Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land – he did not lead them into an ultimate rest. Instead, Jesus gives us true rest now, leading to eternal rest in Heaven!*

### **Revelation 19:11-16**

*The commander of the Lord's army in Joshua 5 points us forward to Jesus: the Warrior King who leads the heavenly armies*

What's the **BIG IDEA** of Joshua 5:1-15?

Before God’s people step into battle, they must be spiritually prepared, covenant-renewed, and fully surrendered to God’s authority—because victory comes not from having God on our side, but from being aligned with Him.

OR

“God prepares His people before He uses them—and calls them to submit”



What light globe moment did you have?

What **questions** do you have about the passages in this study?

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

**<sup>9</sup> Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” So the place has been called Gilgal to this day.**

**Finish in prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank you that you prepare us and call us to belong to you. Forgive us for relying on our own strength instead of submitting to you. Thank you that in Christ our reproach is taken away and we are made new. Help us to walk in humility, to trust your ways, and to live aware of your presence. Prepare us for what lies ahead, and lead us under your authority. Amen.

## Study 2 – And the Walls Came Tumbling Down

Joshua 6:1-27

*(Sermon on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2026)*

### Read Joshua 6:1-27

1. How is Jericho described at the start? Is that a problem? (v1)?

*Jericho is totally secure. No one can go in or out!*

*Humanly speaking, yes, it's a problem: it's fortified and inaccessible.*

***But this battle belongs to the Lord; not Israel's.***

2. What does God declare before the battle begins? (v2)

*God declares "I have delivered Jericho into your hands" – not "I will" but "I have" – it's a foregone conclusion.*

3. What are the people commanded to do daily? (vv3-4)

*The people are commanded to march around the city once a day for six days*

*The priests are to carry trumpets and the Ark of the Covenant is to go with them*

*It's a quiet, repetitive, faith-filled obedience, not a military assault.*

***The Divine King was marking out the city as His!***

4. What happens on the seventh day? (vv15-16)

*They march around the city seven times. At Joshua's command, the people shout; the priests blow trumpets and the walls collapse.*

*This is the climactic act of faith and obedience.*

*This march took place over seven days, meaning that the Israelites had to have marched on a Sabbath Day; but this would not be considered "work" because it is a work of God's sovereign grace and power, not of human works! Besides, it is God's ordained for them to march on the Sabbath and what God says in a specific situation trumps what the commandment says about the Sabbath.*

***The number seven is repeated three times in v15 which signified perfection***

5. Why is silence required on the seventh day? (v10)

*The silence emphasizes that the people are to wait on God's timing; there is to be no human strategy or boasting; this is all God's doing. God will tell them when to shout out the victory*

6. What is the significance of the ark leading the procession? (v13)

*The Ark of the Covenant always represents the presence of God going with His people. It also shows that God is the one leading the battle and He is the one who will bring about victory; not the people!*

7. What happens to Jericho? (v20)

*When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men shouted, the walls collapsed and the people went in and took the city. No weapons, no military attack, no ladders or siege-towers to climb the walls.*

8. What does it mean that the city of Jericho and all that is in it is “**devoted**”? (vv17-21)

*Everything is set apart to God*

*Everything is either destroyed or given to the Lord*

*This is not plundering – it is judgement and consecration.*

*It seems living things are not kept but silver, gold, bronze and iron articles are kept.*

*The destruction of Jericho is tied to **divine judgment on Jericho** (not arbitrary violence)*

*The metals are not for personal use but belong **wholly to God***

*This sets up the seriousness of **Achan’s sin in the next chapter Joshua 7**, where taking devoted things becomes theft from God.*

*Jericho is like the “firstfruits” of the land of Canaan in that it belongs wholly to the Lord—but unlike firstfruits, it is given to Him through **judgment rather than thanksgiving**. The valuables are set apart for the treasury of the Lord.*

*God claims the **first and the best***

*And His holiness means we cannot treat what is His as common (which is exactly what goes wrong in Joshua 7)*

9. What distinguishes Rahab from the rest of the city? (vv22-25)

*Her faith in the one true God which we read about in Joshua chapter 2.*

*V22 – the spies had made an oath to her in chapter 2 which they honoured.*

*V23 – Because of Rahab’s faith her whole family were saved.*

*V25 – says specifically that Rahab and her family were saved because she hid the spies that Joshua had sent into Jericho – and that she lives amongst the Israelites to this day!*

***In other words, Rahab was saved through faith; not through nationality!***

10. **Ponder:** Why do you think Joshua made the solemn oath? (vv26-27)

*Joshua puts a curse on anyone who rebuilds the city of Jericho because Jericho is to be a permanent testimony of God’s judgment on Jericho. It is also a warning not to undo what God has declared and done! This is the first victory in the Promised Land and unique and sacred to the Lord.*

***The first-born belong to the Lord (Exodus 13:1) and in this case the “first-born” city takes the place of the firstborn and belongs and is “devoted” to the Lord!***

11. **Ponder:** Humanly speaking, the way Jericho was destroyed didn’t make sense.

Where is God calling you to **trust Him in ways that don’t make human sense?**

- *Perhaps God is calling us to WAIT rather than to act impulsively!*
- *To trust God even when the outcome seems unclear*
- *Making decisions about certain ministries – God might be calling you to a ministry but you are hesitant – instead of trusting God will be with you*

12. **Ponder:** Are there areas where you obey selectively instead of completely?

*The instructions that God gave the people to take Jericho were specific and required total/complete obedience; not selective obedience.*

*Examples:*

- *Willing to forgive some people but holding resentment to others (Matthew 18)*
- *Showing holiness/godliness in your “public” life but not in your “private” life*
- *Generally being honest and truthful but justifying exaggeration or “white” lies*
- *Praying when in need but not in adoration, thanks or confession*
- *Reading your favourite parts of the Bible but avoiding challenging passages*
- *Worshipping on Sunday – but not during the week*



- *Attending ‘events’ at church but not joining together for worship on Sundays*
- *Showing kindness to people whom it’s easy to like but being distant to difficult people*
- *Avoiding obvious slandering of people but happy to gossip and talk behind people’s backs*
- *Giving when it feels comfortable and easy – but not giving sacrificially*
- *Serving in the “visible” roles but avoiding the costly or “unseen” roles*
- *Happy to share our faith in safe settings but remaining silent when it might be awkward for us*

*Selective obedience is when we **treat God’s commands like a menu rather than a mandate**—choosing what suits us and ignoring what costs us.*

13. **Ponder:** Do you rely more on **your own strength** or on God’s power?

- *We might use our own strategies instead of praying and trusting God*
- *We might rely on our own experience and wisdom instead of consulting God*
- *We want to control things instead of realizing God is in control – and we think we have to “help” God!*

14. **Ponder:** How does Rahab’s story challenge your understanding of who can be saved?

*Rahab’s story shows us*

- *No one is beyond saving – no one is beyond God’s grace and mercy*
- *Outsiders can become insiders*
- *God uses/chooses the most unlikely (humanly-speaking) people to achieve His purposes*
- *Faith is what matters; not background, race, colour, education, social status*

Where is **JESUS** in **Joshua 6:1-27**?

- ***Jesus is the true “Joshua”** (same name in Hebrew: Yeshua) who brings ultimate victory*
- *The fall of Jericho points to Christ’s victory over **sin, death, and spiritual strongholds***

- *The Ark of the Covenant (God's presence) anticipates **God dwelling with us in Christ** – Jesus is called Immanuel. The mercy seat on the cover of the Ark of the Covenant is where sacrifice is made for the sin of the people; Jesus is our mercy seat and sacrifice for sin*
- *Rahab foreshadows the **inclusion of sinners and Gentiles** into God's people (she even appears in Jesus' genealogy, Matthew 1)*

15. How do the following New Testament passages relate to **Joshua 6:1-27**?

### **Hebrews 11:30-31**

*Hebrews 11:30-31 connect with Joshua 6:*

- *V30 – the walls of Jericho fell down by faith*
- *V31 – By faith the prostitute Rahab helped the spies and was saved*

### **James 2:25**

*The context of this passage in James is that faith without good works is a dead faith. Here in verse 25, James makes the point that even Rahab the prostitute was considered righteous (right with God and approved by God) because of the good works that accompanied her faith; i.e. she not only had faith in the one true God but she acted on that faith but helping the spies!*

### **2 Corinthians 10:3-5**

*This passage reminds us:*

*V3 – even though we live in this world, we don't wage war like the world does*

*V4 – Our weapons are not physical weapons of the world but weapons of divine power – i.e. spiritual weapons – the witness of the Gospel (good News of Jesus); the Holy Spirit; prayer and God's Word*

*V5 – We use these spiritual weapons to demolish anything that sets itself up against the knowledge of God – and we take captive every thought so it is made obedient to Jesus*

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Joshua 6:1-27**?

Victory comes not by human strength or strategy, but by trusting and obeying God's word—because the battle belongs to the Lord.

OR

God's people win God's battle God's way!

OR

When God gives His promise, His people are called to obedient faith while He brings the victory.



What light globe moment did you have?

What **questions** do you have about the passages in this study?

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

**V2 - When God gives His promise, His people are called to obedient faith while He brings the victory.**

**Finish in prayer:** Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are the God who gives victory—not by our strength, but by your power. Help us to trust you, even when your ways seem strange or difficult, and to walk in faithful obedience to your word. Forgive us for the times we rely on ourselves instead of you. Teach us to depend on you fully, and to follow you with patient, persevering faith. Thank you for your mercy, shown even in Rahab's story—that you save those who trust in you. Help us to live as people of faith, and to give you all the glory in every victory. In Jesus' name, Amen.

### Study 3 – Sin, Defeat and Restoration

Joshua 7:1-8:29

*(Sermon on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2026)*

#### Read Joshua 7:1-26

1. What problem do we discover in verse 1?

*We discover that the Israelites break the covenant of faith with God because Achan son of Karmi, son of Zimri, son of Zerah of the tribe of Judah, secretly takes some of the devoted things from Jericho that were meant to belong to the Lord alone.*

*Although one-man sins, God says “the Israelites acted unfaithfully,” showing the sin affected the whole covenant community.*

*Note: Joshua 6:18 says: “But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it.”*

***Note: Joshua doesn't know about this yet!***

2. What plans does Joshua implement for taking Ai? What actually happened? (vv2-5)

*Joshua sends spies to Ai. The spies report that only a small portion of the army is required because Ai seems weak. Joshua sends about 3,000 men rather than the whole army.*

*Instead of victory, Israel is defeated. About 36 Israelites are killed, the army flees in fear, and the people lose courage.*

***Note: the sin of complacency and relying on themselves rather than remembering they only conquered Jericho so easily because God fought the battle. Also, Joshua did not pray before making these plans.***

***The recommendation to send only two or three thousand men was either a response of faith or self-confidence. In the end, it did not matter; in their disobedience, they could have sent 100,000 troops and it would have made no difference.***

*Israel's success depended on their own state of being conquered by God; Achan's rebellion showed that in that respect, they were not conquered by Him — and therefore open to defeat.*

3. How does Joshua initially interpret the defeat? (vv6-9)

*Joshua is devastated. He tears his clothes, falls before the Ark, and questions why God brought Israel across the Jordan only to let them be defeated. He fears the Canaanites will destroy Israel and that **God's name will be dishonoured** among the nations.*

*For Joshua and the elders of Israel, this defeat was a national calamity. They did not take this defeat lightly; there was no "win a few, lose a few" mentality at work. They knew that every battle mattered, and there is always a reason for defeat. Such a defeat doesn't "just happen."*

*Joshua knew that if God's hand of blessing and guidance was not with them, it would be better if they had not come to the Promised Land at all. If God did not deliver them, all would be lost.*

*How different from so much of Christianity today! We are often so filled with man's programs and power, that if God withdrew His blessing and guidance, it wouldn't be missed for a long time.*

***Note: there is difference here between Joshua's questions and the complaining the Israelites did in the wilderness. Joshua complains to God; whereas the Israelites in the wilderness complain about God!***

4. What does God reveal is the true reason for the defeat (vv10-12)? See verse 1.  
*God reveals the problem is not Joshua's failure nor the army but Israel's sin. Israel has broken the covenant by taking devoted things from Jericho. Because of this hidden rebellion, God says He will not remain with them unless the sin is removed.*



*The good news was that God had not failed the nation. The bad news was that this defeat was due to the sin of Israel. Joshua doesn't need to fear that the problem is with God — it is almost comforting to find that the problem is with us!*

**5. Ponder:** What does that teach about corporate responsibility?

*The passage teaches that sin is never purely private among God's people. One person's disobedience can affect an entire community. God's people are connected to one another, and hidden sin can bring harm, weakness, and grief to others.*

*God says that **Israel** had sinned, not only one man. It is staggering to think that the whole nation was found guilty, and thirty-six men were dead, all for the sin of one man and his family.*

*i. Paul speaks in similar terms concerning sin in the church; regarding sin among the Corinthian church, he says Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? (1 Corinthians 5:6) A small amount of sin accepted and tolerated among believers can infect the whole group.*

*ii. In this sense, the acceptance and toleration of the sin is worse than the sin itself, so it must be dealt with strictly.*

*It also reminds us that holiness matters within the covenant community.*

*Israel could not fight in God's power and presence unless they walked in obedience to God. Israel was under a covenant with God that promised blessing on their obedience, and also promised curses upon their disobedience.*

*i. We are not under that kind of covenant. Our position with God is made by the work of Jesus on our behalf, not our works. Yet if we want God's power and presence in our own battles, we must walk in fellowship with Him, and this fellowship is hindered by our sin and rebellion.*

*ii. Our position before God is secure in Jesus, but our fellowship with Him is hindered by our sin (1 John 1:6). This fellowship with God is our wellspring of power to live in the Spirit.*

**6. What process does God say must be followed? Why? (vv13-15)**

*God commands Israel to consecrate themselves and then come tribe by tribe, clan by clan, family by family, until the guilty person is identified.*

*This process:*

- *shows God's justice and patience,*
- *removes any doubt about guilt,*
- *exposes hidden sin publicly,*
- *and demonstrates that God sees what people try to hide. We cannot hide anything from God.*

*Note: as v14 says “**the tribe the Lord chooses shall come forward**” suggests that the method of lots or Urim and Thummim was used to choose the correct tribe, clan, family and person!*

*Though the identity of the sinning family was unknown to Joshua, it was known to God. Secret sin on earth is an open scandal before God. Therefore, we should live our lives with “one set of books,” with one kind of life that can be seen by anybody, anywhere.*

7. How is Achan's sin uncovered? (vv16-19) – see Numbers 32:23.

*Numbers 32:23 says: “be sure your sin will find you out.” Achan's hidden sin is eventually exposed by God.*

*This must have been an excruciating experience for Achan. How much better to simply walk in obedience to God!*

*Achan's sin is uncovered through the God-directed process of casting lots; Achan is identified step by step until he alone remains.*

*Joshua says to Achan: “**My son, I beg you, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession to Him**”: Even when we sin and try to cover it up, we can still **give glory to the Lord** by openly and honestly confessing our sin. Hidden sin always has a special power over us.*

8. What does Achan confess? (vv20-21)

*Achan's confession is very specific: "It is true! I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel. This is what I have done: When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath."*

*Measured against the lives of thirty-six men and the welfare of the entire nation, what Achan gained was insignificant. Truly, the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows (1 Timothy 6:10).*

*Achan admits that he sinned against the Lord. He confesses that he saw a beautiful Babylonian robe, silver, and gold, and he coveted them, took them, and hid them beneath his tent.*

***The pattern echoes Genesis 3: he saw, he desired, and he took.***

9. What is the punishment for Achan? Why is the punishment so severe? (vv22-25) – see Joshua 6:18-19.

*Achan, along with all connected to his rebellion and possessions, is judged in the Valley of Achor. He is stoned and burned.*

*The punishment is severe because:*

- *the devoted things belonged to God,*
- *Achan's sin endangered the whole nation,*
- *Israel was at a crucial holy moment entering the land, and open rebellion against God's covenant holiness could not be ignored.*

*Joshua 6:18–19 had clearly warned Israel not to take these things.*

*Achan's sons and daughters had specific knowledge of the sin because it is unlikely that he could bury so much under their tent without their knowledge. At the same time, they were not necessarily stoned with Achan. Instead of being killed with their father, Achan's children were probably brought forward to witness the judgment against their father.*

**Read Joshua 8:1-29**

10. What changes in Joshua 8 before attacking Ai again? (vv1-2)

*Before the second attack: the sin has been exposed and dealt with; God again speaks assurance to Joshua and says He has delivered the King of Ai into Joshua's hands. Joshua now follows God's direction carefully, and the whole army participates. God also now permits Israel to take plunder from Ai, unlike Jericho.*

11. What role does strategy (the ambush) play in this victory? (vv3-9)

*God uses wise military strategy alongside His sovereign power. Israel sets an ambush behind the city while the main force draws Ai's army out. The victory shows that trusting God does not eliminate the need for wisdom, planning, and obedience.*

12. Why does Joshua hold out his javelin until victory is complete? (vv18, 26) – see Exodus 17:8-12.

*Joshua's raised javelin parallels Moses holding up his staff during the battle against Amalek in Exodus 17. It symbolizes dependence on God for victory. The battle is won not merely by military strength but through God's power and covenant faithfulness.*

13. **Ponder:** 12,000 people from Ai were killed in the attack. The Lord God commands this judgment; what are to make of this? How should we respond? (see Luke 19:41-44).

*As we found last study with the conquest of Jericho where all the people were wiped out; this is one of the difficult things about the Book of Joshua. The Bible presents this as divine judgment against deeply sinful nations in the land of Canaan, after a long period of patience from God.*

*We should respond with:*

- *humility rather than superiority,*
- *sorrow over sin and judgment,*
- *gratitude for God's mercy to us,*
- *and seriousness about rejecting God.*

*Jesus Himself wept over coming judgment on Jerusalem in Luke 19. God is not cruel or indifferent. Judgment is His “strange work,” but holiness and justice are real.*

*These passages should move us toward repentance and toward Christ, who bore judgment for sinners.*

14. **Personal reflection:** Are there “hidden sins” in your life that need to be brought into the light? Pray that God will bring to mind the areas in your life that displease Him [no need to share if uncomfortable]

*This is personal reflection and each of us will perhaps have our own “hidden” sins. But we need to realise we can’t hide these sins from God; He already knows. A suggested prayer: “Lord, search me and know my heart. Reveal any hidden sins, selfish desires, bitterness, pride, or compromise in me. Help me walk in repentance and truth through Jesus Christ, our Lord.”*

15. **Personal reflection:** How have you seen sin affect others around you? [no need to share if uncomfortable]

*I’ve seen where one individual’s sin has caused the whole family to suffer – for example if one family member takes drugs; it can affect the whole family’s relationships.*

*Likewise, when one person in a church makes a wrong choice; it can affect the whole church community. For example, if you have one person in a church undermining the leadership of the church; it not only affects the leaders but also the church members who witness this happening; this in turn causes disunity and disharmony. This is why church discipline is sometimes necessary.*

Where is **JESUS** in **Joshua 7:1-8:29**?

- *In His teaching, Jesus revealed the seriousness and consequences of sin more clearly than anyone else*
- *Like Achan our sin deserves judgment. But unlike Achan, we are not punished because Jesus takes our punishment for our sin upon Himself for us!*
- *Jesus is able to keep all of God’s covenant laws where the Israelites and us could not!*



- *God removed the guilt of sin from the Israelites through the punishment of Achan. God removed the guilt of sin from us through the punishment of His Son, Jesus!*
- *Jesus also leads His people in victory over sin, death and evil.*
- *The King of Ai was hanged on a tree from the sin of Ai. Our Lord Jesus was hanged on a cross for our sin. Yet He was innocent, unlike the King of Ai.*

16. How do the following New Testament passages relate to **Joshua 7:1-8:29**?

### **Acts 5:1-11**

*Achan in Joshua 6 and Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5 are very similar:*

- *In both cases – Achan and Annanias/Sapphira tried to hide their sin; but you can't hide anything from God*
- *In both cases there was deception*
- *In both cases the incidents involved keeping back what belonged to God*
- *In both Achan and Annanias/Sapphira's case there was no need to sin. Achan would have been allowed to take plunder from Ai, if he waited. Annanias/Sapphira could have said they would keep so of the proceeds of the sale of the property rather than saying they would give all; and that would have been totally acceptable*
- *In both cases there was deception within God's people [Israel and the Church]*
- *In both cases there was sudden judgment*
- *and a warning/reminder that God's holiness really matters.*
- *Both cases produce fear among God's people (Joshua 7:5; Acts 5:11)*

*In both Joshua 7 and Acts 5, God brings swift and severe judgment at a foundational moment in redemptive history. Achan's sin occurs at the beginning of Israel's conquest of the Promised Land, while Ananias and Sapphira's sin occurs at the beginning of the early church. In each case, God makes clear that His people must not treat His holiness lightly, and that hidden sin threatens the whole covenant community.*

### **Romans 6:23**

*Romans 6:23 says the “wages of sin is death” and Achan’s story vividly demonstrates the wages of sin is death!*

### **1 Corinthians 5:6-7**

*When the Apostle Paul writes to the Church in Corinth, he warns about the effect of sin within the Church. He tells the Church to discipline a man caught in the sin of sexual immorality; the man must be dealt with – otherwise as Paul says “don’t you know that a little yeast (sin) leavens the whole batch of dough (the church)”. In other words, sin spreads through a community if left unchecked*

### **2 Corinthians 5:10**

***For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.***

***Ultimately we must all give an account before God for what we have done. We cannot escape that!***

### **1 John 1:9**

**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

***Unlike Achan’s delayed confession, believers are called to confess sins openly and receive forgiveness and cleansing through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

**The following are optional...**

### **Romans 2:4-8**

*Romans 2:4-8, describes God as patient and kind, giving opportunity for repentance, however, persistent rebellion eventually leads to judgment and punishment.*

### **1 Corinthians 11:27-32**

*The Apostle Paul warns the people of Corinth about carelessly sinning as it will lead to God’s discipline and will ultimately lead to heaping judgment on*

*themselves. This is what Achan failed to recognize – that his sin heaped judgment upon himself.*

### **Hebrews 12:10-11**

**God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. <sup>11</sup> No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.**

*Just like taking medicine which might taste yukky but is good for us; God's discipline is painful but intended to produce holiness and righteousness.*

### **2 Peter 3:9**

*God is patient, not wanting people to perish but to come to repentance.*

What's the **BIG IDEA** of Joshua 7:1-8:29?

**Hidden sin brings defeat and judgment, but repentance restores God's presence and leads to victor**

**OR**

**A holy God will not ignore hidden sin among His people.**

**OR**

**God calls His people to holiness before He grants them victory.**

**OR**

**Sin must be judged before God's people can move forward in blessing.**



**What light globe moment did you have?**

What **questions** do you have about the passages in this study?

**Share the verse** that had a special meaning to you in this study?

**"Be sure your sin will find you out." (Numbers 32:23)**

**OR**

**“The LORD turned from his fierce anger.” (Joshua 7:26)**

**Finish in prayer:** Heavenly Father, you see what is hidden and you judge rightly. Guard our hearts from secret sin, and keep us from hardening ourselves against you. Give us honesty to confess, humility to repent, and faith to trust in your mercy. Thank you that you do not leave us in judgment, but restore and lead us forward again. Help us to walk in obedience, as your people, for your glory. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

**Study 4 – Covenant Renewal****Joshua 8:30-35*****(Sermon on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2026)***

1. **Before we begin:** What is a *covenant*?
2. Remind yourself what happened in the last study on Joshua 7-8.
3. **Read Deuteronomy 11:29-30.** What was Moses' instructions?
4. **Read Deuteronomy 27:1-26.** What was Moses' instructions (summarize)?

**Read Joshua 8:30-35**

5. Where does Joshua build the altar? Why? (v30)
6. What kind of stones are used and why? (v31)
7. What offerings are made and why? (v31)



8. What does Joshua write on the stones and why? (v32)
  
9. How is the assembly arranged and why? (v33) – see Deuteronomy 11:29; 27:12-13 and Deuteronomy chapters 28-29.
  
10. The mountains, **Ebal and Gerizim** sit on either side of the valley where **Shechem** is located. Why is **Shechem** important? (cf. Genesis 12:6-7; 33:18-20; 35:2-4)
  
11. What is read aloud? (v34)
  
12. Who hears the reading? Why is this moment important after the victory at Ai? (v35)
  
13. **Ponder:** As Christians, are we under the Old Testament curses? (Ephesians 1:3, 7-8a)

14. Where is **JESUS** in **Joshua 8:30-35**?

15. How do the following New Testament passages relate to **Joshua 8:30-35**?

**Matthew 5:17**

**Luke 11:28**

**Luke 22:20**

**Galatians 3:10-14**

**1 Timothy 4:13**

**Hebrews 8:1-13**

**Hebrews 10:1-18****James 1:22–25**

What's the **BIG IDEA** of Joshua 8:30-35?



**What light globe moment did you have?**

What **questions** do you have about the passages in this study?

**Share the verse** that had a special meaning to you in this study?

**Finish in prayer:** Thank you for your Word and for your covenant with your people. As Israel stood under your old covenant, we thank you that in Jesus Christ you have brought us into the new covenant by grace. Help us not only to hear your Word, but to obey it. Forgive us where we fail, and write your Word on our hearts. Shape us to live as your faithful people, for your glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.