

¹³ the king of Debir	one
the king of Geder	one
¹⁴ the king of Hormah	one
the king of Arad	one
¹⁵ the king of Libnah	one
the king of Adullam	one
¹⁶ the king of Makkedah	one
the king of Bethel	one
¹⁷ the king of Tappuah	one
the king of Hopher	one
¹⁸ the king of Aphek	one
the king of Lasharon	one
¹⁹ the king of Madon	one
the king of Hazor	one
²⁰ the king of Shimron Meron	one
the king of Akshaph	one
²¹ the king of Taanach	one
the king of Megiddo	one
²² the king of Kedesh	one
the king of Jokneam in Carmel	one
²³ the king of Dor (in Naphoth Dor)	one
the king of Goyim in Gilgal	one
²⁴ the king of Tirzah	one
thirty-one kings in all.	

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Warnings From Israel's History

10 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. ² They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. ³ They all ate the same spiritual food ⁴ and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. ⁵ Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

⁶ Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. ⁷ Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: “The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.” ⁸ We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. ⁹ We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. ¹⁰ And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

¹¹ These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. ¹² So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

There are **Bibles** in front of you

And a sermon **outline**

Please have your **Bibles opened** up at **Joshua chapter 12**

Let me pray first...

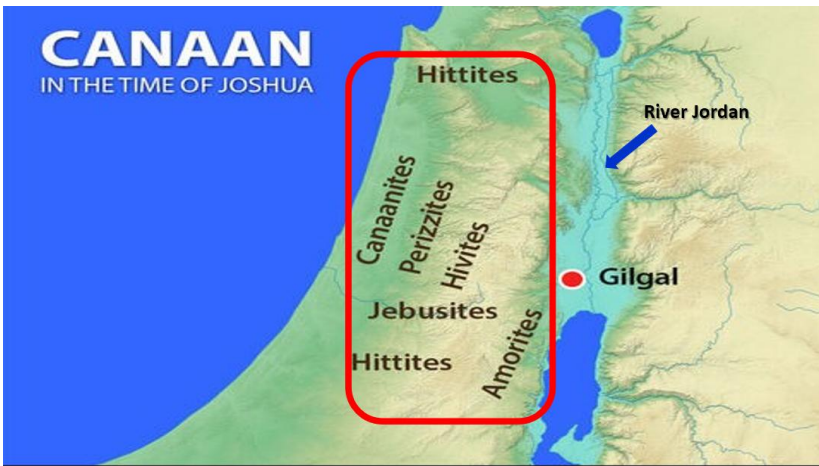
Context

Before we begin this morning –

We just need to get the **context**.

About 2000BC – God promised Abraham that Abraham would have many descendants and would one day be a great nation – that would occupy a land called **Canaan**.

[Slide-Map]



The Bible calls this land – the **Promised Land**.

And it's promised to God's people the Israelites.

The problem is - this land of Canaan was already occupied by other nations - the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites and Jebusites (see Joshua 3:10; 12:8).

These nations did NOT believe in the One True God of Israel – YHWH -and worshipped many false gods and idols.

God's plan was to use the less than perfect Israelites as His **instrument of Judgment** on the nations living in Canaan.

[Slide-Area Taken]

In chapters 1 to 11 of Joshua – we have seen how Joshua and the Israelites with God's help have systematically wiped out these nations and taken control of all the land on the **Western side of the River Jordan**

And we said last week that the various wars/battles that were fought and the victories God gave over the existing occupants of Canaan – took about 7 years. And it's now roughly 1400 BC – so it's taken 600 years or more for the promise that God made to Abraham to be fulfilled!

And we finished up last week at the end of Joshua 11:23 – where it says “*the land had rest from war*”

Which brings us to this chapter – chapter 12

And this chapter takes stock of exactly what God has achieved and shows **God's faithfulness** to His people.

And the heading for today's talk is “**Great is Thy Faithfulness**” – we sang that Hymn earlier.

My first point this morning is – **Great is Thy Faithfulness: Be Thankful – For What God has done** – that's Joshua 12 – verses 1 to 24

[Slide-1st Point]

Great is Thy Faithfulness: Be Thankful For What God Has Done (Joshua 12:1-24)

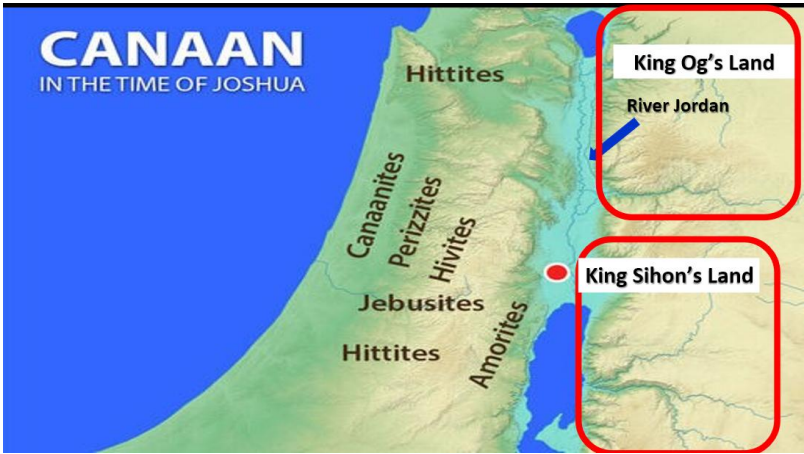
In verses 1 to 3 – we go back to the time of Moses – before Joshua and the Israelites had even crossed the River Jordan and entered the Promised Land. You can read about this in Numbers 21:21-35.

[Slide-Map]

The brief history is that the Israelites were on their way from the wilderness to the Promised Land and they wanted to pass through the area on the Eastern side of the Jordan – and Sihon the King of the Amorites – wouldn't let the Israelites pass through his land.

Therefore God gave King Sihon and his land over to the Israelites!

[Slide-Map – King Sihon's land!]



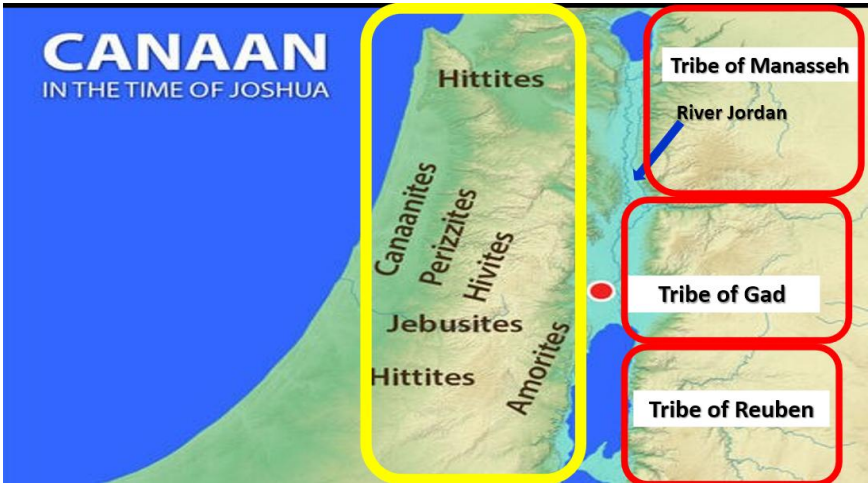
Then in verses 4 to 6 – again in Moses’ time – the Israelites also took the land belonging to King Og of Bashan as well.

[Slide Map – King Og’s land]

And verse 6 tells us that Moses then gave the land that belonged to King Sihon and King Og – to the Israelite tribes of –

[Slide-Map-Allocation]

Reuben and Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh.



(pause)

The question is – why is it important that Joshua and the Israelites remember what happened under the leadership of Moses and how there was land given to some of the tribes of Israel on the EASTERN side of the River Jordan?

Well – it’s recorded here – so that the Israelites in Joshua’s generation and future generations know that God gave victories on the eastern side of the Jordan – not just the western side. And also to remind them ‘don’t forget, Israelites live on the east side as well!’ – in case some Israelites think that the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh don’t belong to Israel too or are somehow inferior!

This sort of thing can even happen within a church where some believers might feel others don’t belong because of their socio-economic circumstances (see James 2:1-9 which warns against favouritism).

Also, remembering the victories under Moses - before listing Joshua’s victories - shows that a) the occupation of the land had begun a long time ago and the conquest was one continuous work by God; and b) The conquest, occupation and the victories did not depend on a particular leader but depended fully on God's faithfulness to His promises!

(pause)

Then in verses 7 to 24 – we are given a description of the land occupied on the western side of the River Jordan.

[Slide-Map-Western side]

And this is followed by a list of **31 Kings** who have been defeated and whose land has been taken!

When we are reading our Bibles and we come across a passage like this with a list of names or a huge genealogy – that’s usually when our eyes glaze over – or we skip reading them altogether.

[Slide-1st Point]

But commentator Dale Ralph Davis reminds us these verses are listed so that the Israelites can be thankful for what God has done. He says:

These verses do not drip with boredom, they tingle with excitement, “The King of Jericho, one; the king of Ai one; (v9) – those words are not an excerpt from a dull archive; they are the lyrics of a song! Verses 7-24 are like Israel’s version of the hymn “Great is Thy Faith Faithfulness”.

You see these verses – fulfil the promise made to Abraham 600 years earlier.

These verses - legitimize to the Israelites in Joshua’s generation and beyond – why they are living in the land!

And that is because God – in His faithfulness - has kept His promise to Abraham – AND – God has fought and defeated those 31 Kings – so that the Israelites can live there.

It’s a bit like when we remember Anzac Day – and all who fell – so that we have the peace we enjoy in Australia and New Zealand today!

This list of Kings – also encourages the Israelites to continue to have faith in God. If God has brought them to the land – helped them occupy the land – fought the battles for them - then He will surely sustain them in that land too!

The list of Kings – also reminds them – success in these military battles only occurred because they obeyed God. We’ve seen a few times in Joshua already – when the Israelites fully obeyed God’s instructions – things went well – but

when they disobeyed – things quickly went pear-shaped. This would encourage the Israelites to continue in obedience to God.

Application

Applying Joshua 12 to us...

God is faithful to us too!

When was the last time – we stopped and took stock of God’s faithfulness to us – and actually thanked Him properly?

Just pause for a moment – and reflect and ask yourself this question:

“What has God done in my life to get me to where I am today – sitting in Church at Toukley?”

For me – somehow – God has brought a little Irish Catholic boy born in Dublin – to be a Presbyterian Minister in Toukley, NSW, Australia.

Now - it would take me a long time – to fill in all the gaps between my birth in Dublin – to reach today! But if I did that – there would be so many examples of God’s faithfulness to me – examples of God’s grace – many kindnesses from God which I barely deserved – and many things to be thankful for.

Joshua chapter 12 is meant to give the Israelites perspective – and to give us perspective!

Joshua 12 talks about specifics – the land taken – the Kings defeated.

It should teach us to be specific in our prayers of thanks to God.

Again, a quote from commentator Dale Ralph Davies – He says: *“We should get rid of some of the nonsense in our prayers like ‘thank you for our many blessings’ and name one or two of those blessings instead! Why do we use such general ‘lingo’ in our prayers and worse still, teach it to our children?”*

For example – if you went up to someone at morning tea and said “Thank You”

What would they reply?

I presume they would say something like “Thank you – for what?”

If Joshua 12 teaches us anything, it teaches us that God's people should be able to answer that question.

"Thank you, Lord—for what?"

Well, let's start making our own list.

Thank God for His saving grace

- He loved us when we were still sinners.
- He sent His Son to die in our place.
- He forgave our sins.
- He rescued us from judgment.
- He gave us eternal life.

Thank God for His daily faithfulness

- Every day He has sustained us.
- He has provided food, shelter, work, strength, and health.

- He has carried us through many trials.
- He has answered prayers—often in ways we didn't notice at the time – or in ways beyond our imagination!

Thank God for His presence

- He did not save us and then leave us on our own.
- He gave us His Holy Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit is with us in sorrow, temptation, uncertainty, and joy

Thank God for His Holy Word

- His Holy Word – Jesus – became flesh and lived amongst us
- Through His Word - we have guidance, correction, encouragement, and promises.
- Thank God that the Old Testament always points to or foreshadows Jesus.

For example in Joshua 12...

- Joshua led God's people to inherit the land – Jesus leads His people into eternal inheritance in Heaven
- Joshua defeated earthly kings- Jesus defeats sin, Satan, death and every spiritual enemy – and one day every enemy will be finally placed under Jesus' feet (1 Corinthians 15:25)

Thank God for His people

- Our Husband – our wife – our Family.
- Our Christian friends.

- Our church family.
- Our Ministers, elders, youth teachers, mentors, and fellow believers whom God has used to encourage us

Thank God for His providence

This is where we can become very personal.

Think of all the people God brought into our lives.

Think of the doors He opened and the doors He closed.

Think of the dangers He protected us from.

Think of the mistakes He overruled

Think of the times when, looking back, we can now see God's hand guided us even when we couldn't see it at the time.

Joshua 12 contains **thirty-three kings** – including the two on the East side of the Jordan.

Every name is a reminder that God did exactly what He promised.

If we were to write our own Joshua 12, what would be on the list?

- Not defeated kings, but answered prayers.
- Not conquered cities, but countless evidences of God's faithfulness
 - The day He saved us.
 - The day He restored us.
 - The trial He carried us through
 - The friend He provided
 - The prayer He answered

- The husband or wife He gave us
- The church family He gave us

Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.

(pause)

Joshua 12 is a chapter full of victories. It is a chapter that celebrates God's faithfulness.

But whenever we look back at Israel's history, there is a danger. We can focus on God's faithfulness and forget Israel's unfaithfulness.

That is precisely what Paul refuses to let us do in our NT reading from 1 Corinthians 10

God's faithfulness did not automatically guarantee Israel's faithfulness.

And so the second point – this morning is – **Great is Thy Faithfulness: God Teaches us From Israel's History** – that's 1 Corinthians 10:1-11

[Slide-2nd point]

[Please turn there now]

Great is Thy Faithfulness: God Teaches us From Israel's History (1 Corinthians 10:1-11)

The Apostle Paul here writes to the Church in Corinth

And he warns them and us

That even though the Israelites were led each day in the wilderness by a cloud provided by God and even though God miraculously parted the Red Sea for them to cross safely (v1) and even though this crossing was like a baptism – leaving their old life of slavery behind and following God's servant Moses (v2) –

and even though God provided both physical and spiritual food and drink in the wilderness (v3 & v4) – they still disobeyed God and many were left for dead in the wilderness (v5)

Paul's point is that the stories of the Israelites in the OT are written down as examples for us to learn from – so that our hearts don't get corrupted toward evil like the Israelites did (v6)

And Paul recalls a few of the Israelites disobedient episodes – which the people of Corinth and us – are meant to learn from!

V7 – they became **idolaters** and made a golden calf to worship (Exodus 32) because Moses spent too much time with God on Mount Sinai. But we're not like the Israelites here in Australia – we would never worship idols – like sport, money, entertainment, property and possessions – would we?

V8 – They indulged in sexual immorality (Numbers 25:1-9) and as a result of this sin – 23,000 Israelites died! But we're not like the Israelites here in Australia – we wouldn't indulge in things like homosexuality, pornography or transgender ideology – would we?

V9 and v10 – They tested Christ (and God) by complaining about God and Moses, so God sent a plague upon the people (Numbers 16) and a plague of fiery snakes (Numbers 21). But we're not like the Israelites we'd never complain about God and tell Him He doesn't know what He's doing – nor would we complain about our church leaders – would we?

(pause)

Paul's point in v11 – These things happened to the Israelites as examples for us – and they were written down as warnings for us!

God has given us Israel's history as a warning sign. We don't have to discover every danger for ourselves. We are meant to learn from those who have gone before us.

There's a scene in the movie *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* where John Hammond insists that he has learned from the mistakes of the first Jurassic Park. Dr Ian Malcolm, played by Jeff Goldblum, is unimpressed. His response is basically: "No you haven't learnt. You'll make all new mistakes this time!"

The point is that human beings have a remarkable ability to ignore the lessons of history. We look at the failures of others and think, "I would never do that." Then we go and fail in a different way.

But Paul says that should not be true of Christians.

The history of Israel has been preserved for us precisely so that we don't repeat their mistakes—or invent new ones.

One of God's great acts of faithfulness is that He has recorded these failures in Scripture so that His people might avoid them.

Which brings us to the **third point** – **Great is Thy Faithfulness: God Provides a Way of Obedience** – that's 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

Great is Thy Faithfulness: God Provides a Way of Obedience (1 Corinthians 10:12-13)

After warning us about Israel's failures, Paul gives us one of the Bible's greatest promises:

"God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it." (v.13)

Notice where the emphasis lies. Not on our faithfulness—but on God's faithfulness.

God does not promise that we will never be tempted – even Jesus Himself was tempted. Rather, God promises that temptation will never have the final word. He always provides a way of obedience.

Think back to the Garden of Eden. When the serpent tempted Eve, there was a way out. Imagine if Adam had stepped forward and said, "No, Eve! God said we must not eat from this tree." There was a path of obedience available. There was a way to trust God's Word rather than the serpent's lies.

The tragedy was not that there was no escape. The tragedy was that God's way was rejected.

And that is often the case with us.

When temptation comes, the way out may be to walk away from the conversation, turn off the screen, refuse the invitation, seek help from a Christian friend, open God's Word, stop and pray, or simply say "No" because God said not to do that!

The way out is not always easy. But God promises it is there.

That means no Christian can ever say, "I had absolutely no choice."

God's faithful provision always comes before our sinful decision.

The same God who faithfully led Israel through the wilderness, and faithfully gave them the Promised Land, is faithful to His people today. He not only warns us through Israel's failures; He helps us to stand when temptation comes and offers a way out.

We just have to take that way out!

Let's pray...

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your faithfulness to Your people throughout every generation. As we reflect on the victories You gave Israel, help us to remember Your goodness, power, and grace in our own lives. Strengthen us for the spiritual battles we face, and help us to trust in Jesus, our victorious King, who has overcome sin and death for us. Keep us faithful, thankful, obedient and persevering until we enter Your eternal rest. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Benediction – 2 Timothy 2:2

It is our Christian duty and responsibility and calling to remember what God has done and pass it on to the next generation

Let me finish with 2 Timothy 2:2

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. AMEN.