

## Study Guide for Joshua 7-9

### 1. Read Joshua 7-9 and mark the following words or phrases in some distinctive way . . . \*

(As you have time, it's always good to read chapters multiple times so you can look for just one thing at a time)

- **the LORD your God** (or **the LORD**)
- **the land** -- when it refers to **the land** that the LORD is giving to Israel. Mark, in the same way, any pronouns that refer to that land (such as **it** or **which**).
- **under the ban**
- **utterly destroyed, destroyed, no one was left**
- **until this day** or **to this day**
- **therefore** \*
- **contrasts** and **comparisons** \*

Hints: 1) In the interest of time, mark all signal words but only "diagram" the ones that seem significant or reveal something important.

2) Contrasts and comparisons aren't always made obvious by the presence of a signal word.

Sometimes they are hidden in plain sight! There is at least one very important contrast in these chapters that does not have a signal word.

### 2. Read Joshua 7 again and look for any lists. \*

Hint: Keep in mind that the items in a list can be people, or things, or actions. They can also be steps leading to an end goal or an end result.

### 3. Read Joshua 8 again and mark the following words or phrases in some distinctive way

- **ambush**
- **as Moses commanded** or any variation of this phrases
- locations including **the north side of the city** and **the west side of the city**
- the following three groups of people . . .

(Mark each group in a different way. Mark pronouns also. Makes notes about any place where it's hard to determine which group is in view.)

- the **warriors** doing the ambush
- **Joshua and the people**
- **the men of Ai**

### 5. Read Joshua 9 again and mark the following phrases in some distinctive way . . .

- **make a covenant**
- **we are your servants**

### 6. Read Joshua 7-9 one more time and do the following . . .

- Make a list of everything you learned about the LORD from these chapters. Include the verse number where you found each bit of information. Use exact words from the text as much as possible but do a little bit of interpreting, if necessary, to avoid just re-writing everything the LORD says. Also, don't feel like you need to write something for every occurrence of the word **LORD**. If the text is simple reporting what the LORD said, feel free to skip over that occurrence unless the LORD's words clearly reveal something about His character or how He interacts with man.
- Decide where you think the paragraph divisions should be, summarize each paragraph in 25 words or less. Also give each chapter a title (10 words or less). \* See examples below.

\* Indicates that there are additional instructions on the last page of this handout on how to do this step.  
Text below is from the New American Standard Bible (1995)

## Joshua 7

actions where they  
didn't act faithfully  
what they did with the  
things under the ban

actions of Israel at Ai  
where they acted faithfully  
everything in 6:20-25

1 **But** the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully in regard to the things under the ban, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, took some of the things under the ban, **therefore** the anger of the LORD burned against the sons of Israel.

2 Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-aven, east of Bethel, and said to them, "Go up and spy out the land." So the men went up and spied out Ai.

3 They returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up; only about two or three thousand men need go up to Ai; do not make all the people toil up there, for they are few."

4 So about three thousand men from the people went up there, but they fled from the men of Ai.

5 The men of Ai struck down about thirty-six of their men, and pursued them from the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them down on the descent, so the hearts of the people melted and became as water.

6 Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until the evening, both he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads.

7 Joshua said, "Alas, O LORD God, why did You ever bring this people over the Jordan, only to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? If only we had been willing to dwell beyond the Jordan!

8 O LORD, what can I say since Israel has turned their back before their enemies?

9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it, and they will surround us and cut off our name from the earth. And what will You do for Your great name?"

10 So the LORD said to Joshua, "Rise up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face?

11 Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. And they have even taken some of the things under the ban and have both stolen and deceived. Moreover, they have also put them among their own things.

12 Therefore the sons of Israel cannot stand before their enemies; they turn their backs before their enemies, for they have become accursed. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy the things under the ban from your midst.

13 Rise up! Consecrate the people and say, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, for thus the LORD, the God of Israel, has said, "There are things under the ban in your midst, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you have removed the things under the ban from your midst."

14 In the morning then you shall come near by your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the LORD takes by lot shall come near by families, and the family which the LORD takes shall come near by households, and the household which the LORD takes shall come near man by man.

15 It shall be that the one who is taken with the things under the ban shall be burned with fire, he and all that belongs to him, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has committed a disgraceful thing in Israel.”

16 So Joshua arose early in the morning and brought Israel near by tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken.

17 He brought the family of Judah near, and he took the family of the Zerahites; and he brought the family of the Zerahites near man by man, and Zabdi was taken.

18 He brought his household near man by man; and Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, was taken.

19 Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, I implore you, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me.”

20 So Achan answered Joshua and said, “Truly, I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel, and this is what I did:

21 when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I coveted them and took them; and behold, they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it.”

22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and behold, it was concealed in his tent with the silver underneath it.

23 They took them from inside the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the sons of Israel, and they poured them out before the LORD.

24 Then Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the mantle, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent and all that belonged to him; and they brought them up to the valley of Achor.

25 Joshua said, “Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day.” And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.

26 They raised over him a great heap of stones that stands to this day, and the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the valley of Achor to this day.

## VICTORY AT AI

### Joshua 8

The LORD told Joshua to go up to Ai again, assured him he would take it this time and told him to set an ambush.

1 Now the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not fear or be dismayed. Take all the people of war with you and arise, go up to Ai; see, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land.

2 You shall do to Ai and its king just as you did to Jericho and its king; you shall take only its spoil and its cattle as plunder for yourselves. Set an ambush for the city behind it.”

3 So Joshua rose with all the people of war to go up to Ai; and Joshua chose 30,000 men, valiant warriors, and sent them out at night.

4 He commanded them, saying, "See, you are going to ambush the city from behind it. Do not go very far from the city, but all of you be ready.

5 Then I and all the people who are with me will approach the city. And when they come out to meet us as at the first, we will flee before them.

6 They will come out after us until we have drawn them away from the city, for they will say, 'They are fleeing before us as at the first.' So we will flee before them.

7 And you shall rise from your ambush and take possession of the city, for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand.

8 Then it will be when you have seized the city, that you shall set the city on fire. You shall do it according to the word of the LORD. See, I have commanded you."

9 So Joshua sent them away, and they went to the place of ambush and remained between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai; but Joshua spent that night among the people.

10 Now Joshua rose early in the morning and mustered the people, and he went up with the elders of Israel before the people to Ai.

11 Then all the people of war who were with him went up and drew near and arrived in front of the city, and camped on the north side of Ai. Now there was a valley between him and Ai.

12 And he took about 5,000 men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city.

13 So they stationed the people, all the army that was on the north side of the city, and its rear guard on the west side of the city, and Joshua spent that night in the midst of the valley.

14 It came about when the king of Ai saw it, that the men of the city hurried and rose up early and went out to meet Israel in battle, he and all his people at the appointed place before the desert plain. But he did not know that there was an ambush against him behind the city.

15 Joshua and all Israel pretended to be beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness.

16 And all the people who were in the city were called together to pursue them, and they pursued Joshua and were drawn away from the city.

17 So not a man was left in Ai or Bethel who had not gone out after Israel, and they left the city unguarded and pursued Israel.

18 Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Stretch out the javelin that is in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand." So Joshua stretched out the javelin that was in his hand toward the city.

19 The men in ambush rose quickly from their place, and when he had stretched out his hand, they ran and entered the city and captured it, and they quickly set the city on fire.

20 When the men of Ai turned back and looked, behold, the smoke of the city ascended to the sky, and they had no place to flee this way or that, for the people who had been fleeing to the wilderness turned against the pursuers.

21 When Joshua and all Israel saw that the men in ambush had captured the city and that the smoke of the city ascended, they turned back and slew the men of Ai.

22 The others came out from the city to encounter them, so that they were trapped in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side; and they slew them until no one was left of those who survived or escaped.

23 But they took alive the king of Ai and brought him to Joshua.

24 Now when Israel had finished killing all the inhabitants of Ai in the field in the wilderness where they pursued them, and all of them were fallen by the edge of the sword until they were destroyed, then all Israel returned to Ai and struck it with the edge of the sword.

25 All who fell that day, both men and women, were 12,000—all the people of Ai.

26 For Joshua did not withdraw his hand with which he stretched out the javelin until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.

27 Israel took only the cattle and the spoil of that city as plunder for themselves, according to the word of the LORD which He had commanded Joshua.

28 So Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, a desolation until this day.

29 He hanged the king of Ai on a tree until evening; and at sunset Joshua gave command and they took his body down from the tree and threw it at the entrance of the city gate, and raised over it a great heap of stones that stands to this day.

30 Then Joshua built an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, in Mount Ebal,

31 just as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the sons of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of uncut stones on which no man had wielded an iron tool; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings.

32 He wrote there on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written, in the presence of the sons of Israel.

33 All Israel with their elders and officers and their judges were standing on both sides of the ark before the Levitical priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, the stranger as well as the native. Half of them stood in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, just as Moses the servant of the LORD had given command at first to bless the people of Israel.

34 Then afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law.

35 There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel with the women and the little ones and the strangers who were living among them.

## Joshua 9

1 Now it came about when all the kings who were beyond the Jordan, in the hill country and in the lowland and on all the coast of the Great Sea toward Lebanon, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, heard of it,

2 that they gathered themselves together with one accord to fight with Joshua and with Israel.

3 When the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai,

4 they also acted craftily and set out as envoys, and took worn-out sacks on their donkeys, and wineskins worn-out and torn and mended,

5 and worn-out and patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and had become crumbled.

6 They went to Joshua to the camp at Gilgal and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us."

7 The men of Israel said to the Hivites, "Perhaps you are living within our land; how then shall we make a covenant with you?"

8 But they said to Joshua, "We are your servants." Then Joshua said to them, "Who are you and where do you come from?"

9 They said to him, "Your servants have come from a very far country because of the fame of the LORD your God; for we have heard the report of Him and all that He did in Egypt,

10 and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon and to Og king of Bashan who was at Ashtaroth.

11 So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, 'Take provisions in your hand for the journey, and go to meet them and say to them, "We are your servants; now then, make a covenant with us.'"

12 This our bread was warm when we took it for our provisions out of our houses on the day that we left to come to you; but now behold, it is dry and has become crumbled.

13 These wineskins which we filled were new, and behold, they are torn; and these our clothes and our sandals are worn out because of the very long journey."

14 So the men of Israel took some of their provisions, and did not ask for the counsel of the LORD.

15 Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live; and the leaders of the congregation swore an oath to them.

16 It came about at the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they were neighbors and that they were living within their land.

17 Then the sons of Israel set out and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon and Chephirah and Beeroth and Kiriath-jearim.

18 The sons of Israel did not strike them because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD the God of Israel. And the whole congregation grumbled against the leaders.

19 But all the leaders said to the whole congregation, "We have sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we cannot touch them.

20 This we will do to them, even let them live, so that wrath will not be upon us for the oath which we swore to them."

21 The leaders said to them, "Let them live." So they became hewers of wood and drawers of water for the whole congregation, just as the leaders had spoken to them.

22 Then Joshua called for them and spoke to them, saying, "Why have you deceived us, saying, 'We are very far from you,' when you are living within our land?

23 Now therefore, you are cursed, and you shall never cease being slaves, both hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God."

24 So they answered Joshua and said, "Because it was certainly told your servants that the LORD your God had commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land before you; therefore we feared greatly for our lives because of you, and have done this thing.

25 Now behold, we are in your hands; do as it seems good and right in your sight to do to us."

26 Thus he did to them, and delivered them from the hands of the sons of Israel, and they did not kill them.

27 But Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, to this day, in the place which He would choose.

the LORD

7:1 was angry with the sons of Israel because Achan  
took some of the things under the ban

7:11 not doing what He commanded was a transgression  
of His covenant

## Additional Instructions

Good Bible study involves three steps:

1. Careful and detailed observation of exactly what the text says.
2. Accurate interpretation of what the text means based on a thorough observation of the text as well as an understanding of the Bible as a whole and of the culture in which it was written. The goal in this step is to determine what the author meant when he spoke or wrote the words that have been preserved. *The text can't mean what it never meant.*
3. Appropriate application of the text to one's personal life based on careful observation and accurate interpretation.

Careful observation generally leads to one interpretation but many possible applications.

The following study questions are designed to assist you with the first step only: observation. As you work through the questions provided, you are encouraged to mark up the text that follows. Good Bible study inevitably involves reading a passage more than once. Marking up the text enables you to build on what you learn with each successive reading.

Be creative when marking key words or phrases. Key words or phrases could simply be underlined or double-underlined or circled or boxed with a pen. Or you could be colorful and use highlighters or colored pencils. Symbols above the words work also. Do whatever suits your fancy! The idea is just to make the words stand out so that when you read the passage a second time you will notice that particular word again and begin to see its significance within the passage.

Keep in mind that the goal of observation questions or exercises is simply to spend time handling the text. We want to turn it over, view it from every possible angle, hold it at arm's length, and also examine the details, sort of like what a geologist would do upon picking up a rock for the first time. The more we handle the text, without specifically trying to decide what it means, the better prepared we will be to interpret it and apply it when the time comes to do that. Observation can seem tedious at first: sometimes it may even feel like busy work, but rest assured – its rewards are great!!

### Contrasts and comparisons

**but, yet, however, only** – these words often signal that a contrast is being made; two things are being compared and the two things are different in some way. In the margin beside each occurrence of any of these words, note the two things that are being compared and what is different about them.

**as, just as, like, so, or also** – these words often signal that the writer is comparing two things that are similar in some way. In the margin beside each occurrence of any of these words note the two things that are being compared and what is the same about them. When **as** or **just as** are used in a question, they can actually seem to point to a contrast rather than a comparison! The text seems to be saying “Is there any B that is really like A? If the answer is “no,” then the two things are actually being contrasted! If you find places where this seems to be true, feel free to mark the **as** or **just as** in the same way that you marked **but**.

### Why-phrases

**for** -- often signals that a why-question is about to be answered. When you see the word **for**, try substituting the word because and see if the result makes sense. If it does, mark that word in some distinctive way and write the why-question that is being answered in the margin to the left. **For**-phrases usually explain the motive behind the main action. The why-phrase always follows the word **for**. The word **since** sometime functions in the same way as **for**.

**that, so that** -- can also introduce a why-phrase but substituting the word because usually doesn't work. Try substituting the phrase in order that and see if the result makes sense. If it does, mark that word in some distinctive way and write the why-question that is being answered in the margin to the left. **That**-phrases usually tell what will be the result of the main action. Again, the why-phrase always follows the word **that**.



**therefore** -- typically signals another kind of why-phrase. However, this time the why-phrase is typically before the word **therefore**. It could be immediately before or it could be many verses back! The phrase that follows the word **therefore** is typically a statement-of-fact or a command. The reason why the writer can make this statement or give the command is because of something he just said. The idea is . . . "because of A, **therefore** B." When you see the word **therefore** it's important to identify A and B and mark them in some way so that you will be reminded of the connection each time you read the passage. One possible way to mark this would be to put a box around **therefore**, highlight the A-phrase and the B-phrase and then draw arrows from **therefore** back to the A-phrase and forward to the B-phrase

### Time Phrases

Any word or phrase that answers the question, "When did it happen?" or "How long did it go on?" The following words often introduce a time phrase: **then, when, until, while, throughout, before, after, at that time, today, on the first day, regular, for seven days, at twilight**. Don't overlook the word **then**! It might seem like a throw-away word but in the OT especially it often signals *when* something happens, i.e. what follows is the next step in a progression of events. In some passages of the Bible there are quite a few time phrases so whatever marking you choose needs to be something pretty simple or the text will get so cluttered that you can't read it! A pale highlight or a single underscore would be good choices.

### Geographical Locations –

Any word or phrase that answers the questions "Where did it happen?" This would include both proper nouns, like **Horeb**, and general terms like **the wilderness** or **in any of your towns**. Again, there can sometimes be quite a few geographical phrases in a particular passage so whatever marking you choose needs to be something pretty simple to keep the text from getting so cluttered that you can't read it! A pale highlight or a single underscore would be good choices. Just make sure you choose something different than what you use for time phrases.

### Lists

Put a number over each item in the list and note what is being enumerated in the margin to the left -- in others words, give the list a title. Keep in mind that lists can be contained within a verse or they can be spread out over an entire chapter.

### Paragraph summaries

Draw a line between verses where a new topic is introduced. Feel free to consult the paragraph divisions in your own personal Bible as a starting place, but don't be bound by what you find there. Try to summarize each paragraph in 25 words or less using exact words from the text as much as possible. If there are any key, repeated words in a particular paragraph, try to include one or more of them in your summary statement.

### Chapter Titles

Try to do this in 10 words or less. Try to use some exact words from the text, but feel free to use others words or phrases such as "Instructions about . . ." or "Warnings about . . ."