

# JOSHUA



Joshua | Bathurst Presbyterian Church 2025

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# Introduction

The story of how Israel end up in the promised land (Canaan) is a significant part of the whole Bible. The Bible begins with a beautiful picture of God's people living in God's place under God's rule. It is what we were made for! But tragedy strikes when sin enters the world in Genesis 3. The humans reject God, wanting to be their own gods, and this sin results in God placing his creation under a curse. One of the most tragic consequences is in Genesis 3:23, the man and the woman are banished from the garden of Eden (which means 'delight' in Hebrew). They are cut off from the tree of life and destined to a life of toil until they die. From Genesis 3 onward, we begin a quest to see if there will be a time when God's people will again live in his place under his rule.

Soon enough in Genesis 12, a nomadic herdsman named Abram is chosen by God to receive the incredible promise of being the one through whom the curse will be undone. God tells Abram (later to become Abraham) to go to the land that he will show him, and he tells Abram that through him all the nations of the earth will be blessed. So begins the journey to the promised land. Abraham gets a clear promise in 12:7 that his offspring will be given the land of Canaan. It is not quite the garden of delight, but it is called a land flowing with milk and honey (Exodus 3:8). Canaan from this point forward is known as the promised land—and the hope is that through Abraham's offspring God's people will again be living in his place, under his rule. Abraham's descendants eventually become the nation Israel.

Israel don't end up in the promised land initially. They end up as slaves in Egypt! It seems at this point as though God's promise has failed. Except, in the book of Exodus, God in his mighty power, through his servant Moses, rescues Israel from slavery in Egypt. Then he brings them to Mount Sinai and under the leadership of Moses enters into a covenant with them (a deal, an agreement). The deal is, they will be his people, he will be their God and he will lead them to live a long and prosperous life in the land flowing with milk and honey if they are willing to obey him (Deuteronomy 6:3).

From Mount Sinai through the rest of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, things get a bit rocky. It becomes clear that sin is still prevalent in the lives of the people of Israel. Because of their sin, the whole generation of Israel that came out of Egypt, including Moses, are condemned by God to die outside the promised land. Only their children and two faithful elders, Joshua and Caleb, will enter the promised land.

In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses is still leading the Israelites as they sit on the East bank of the Jordan river. After 40 years in the wilderness since leaving Egypt they are about to go in. Deuteronomy is a long speech by Moses reminding Israel of God's faithfulness despite their unfaithfulness. It is a reminder to Israel of what it will look like to live obedient lives in the land. It is a warning of what will happen if they disobey. Deuteronomy also contains a narrative account of the death of Moses and the naming of his successor Joshua, who will lead Israel into the promised land (Deuteronomy 31).

Finally, in Joshua chapter 1, Israel are set to enter and take the land. God, in faithfulness to his promises, charges his new leader to lead the people in to take the land he has promised. And as people who have been following the story since Genesis 1, we ask ourselves, is this it? Is Joshua the one God is going to use to restore his people, to his place, living under his rule? Is Joshua the one God will use to deal with the problem of sin and give his people a long and prosperous life of rest? Is Joshua the leader who ultimately reveals God's perfect faithfulness to his promises? Or... will there need to be another? We've got 24 chapters to work that out!

I pray that God would help us to see his faithfulness in the book of Joshua. And I pray that we would see, and trust, that in his faithfulness he has given us the perfect leader who enables us to find perfect rest with him.

# 1 A new leader

Joshua 1:1-18

## Getting started

Who's the best boss you've worked under?

## Explore

### Read Joshua 1:1-6

1. What shocking news do we read in the first two verses? Discuss some of the reasons this might be troubling for Israel.
2. What impact does the death of Moses have on God's promise to give the people the land?
3. Joshua is the one the Lord calls to take over from Moses (see also Deuteronomy 31:1-7 and 31:23). What assurances does God give Joshua in these verses?
4. The end of verse 6 gives a very good reason for Joshua, and those he leads, to be strong and courageous. What is the main reason Joshua and Israel can have courage as they enter the land?

*The Bible is clear that it is God who puts leaders in place and we ought to be subject to them—both the good and the bad ones (see Romans 13:1). We need to be really clear though, when we recognise and submit to our God given leaders, we are not putting our trust in them, but we are putting our trust in the promises of God. We're trusting that if we do what God says, it will ultimately work out for his glory and our good. We're to trust in God's promises—not people.*

5. How might remembering we are to trust in promises, not people, help us to submit to harsh leaders? And not idolise good leaders?

**Read Joshua 1:7-9**

6. What kind of leader does God want for his people as they begin their life in the land?

7. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God in Genesis 3, they were cut off from the tree of life and banished from living in God's place. Joshua is called to obey God's word with strength and courage here. What will be the result of that for him?

*God doesn't just want obedience from his people because he's on a power trip. We learn in verses 7 and 8 that God wants them to be obedient because it will be the best thing for their life! Sometimes we think obeying God is onerous and will make our life worse—so we disobey.*

8. Share with the group a time/s you've chosen to disobey God because you thought it would make your life better in the short or long term? What would have helped you not disobey?

9. The idea of obeying the law of Moses and not looking aside to the right or to the left sounds a bit hard/terrifying! Why can Joshua be obedient with strength and courage according to verse 9?

10. What reason do we have for being courageously obedient? See Matthew 28:20; John 14:15-18 and Galatians 5:25.

**Read Joshua 1:10-18**

*Two and a half of the twelve tribes of Israel (Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh—*

*often referred to as the 'Transjordan tribes') have been graciously allowed to live in the land on the East side of the Jordan river. This is on the proviso that they help the rest of the tribes take the promised land on the West side of the Jordan (read Numbers 32 if you would like the full background and details of the arrangement). Here, as they are about to cross the Jordan, it's crunch time. As we read this we are meant to be wondering, 'Will they follow through on their commitment to fight for their fellow Israelites or not?'*

11. How do they respond to Joshua's reminder of their commitment in verses 16 to 18?

*We get a little reminder here that the physical border of the promised land (the Jordan river), isn't the barrier for who does and doesn't belong to the people of God. As we go through Joshua we will see the bar for belonging is obedience to/trust in his covenant.*

12. As we finish chapter 1, what's your initial assessment of Joshua's leadership of God's people? Has this chapter given you any reason to feel optimistic/pessimistic that he will be the one God uses to keep his promises?

*The most negative thing in this passage is right at the beginning. Israel's greatest leader, God's servant, Moses, has died. Sin and death prevented him from entering the land—it was his great undoing as the one who would give God's people rest. This is the 6th book of the Bible. There are 60 to go. Even though we don't have any major red lights about Joshua here in chapter 1, we know that just like Moses, sin and death are going to mean he and the people he's leading fall short of the rest they were made for.*

**Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-4**

13. What makes Jesus the perfect leader for us/the leader we need?

14. Jesus has been strong and courageously obedient on our behalf, guaranteeing us eternal success and prosperity. What will it look like for you to be courageously obedient in the different spheres of life that you're part of (e.g. at home, school, work, etc)?

**Pray**

# 2 The fear of the Lord

## Joshua 2:1-24

### Getting started

What things are people in our world scared of/anxious about today?

### Explore

**Read Joshua 2:1-3 and Numbers 25:1-3 and Joshua 22:17**

1. Shittim (where the Israelites are currently camping) and foreign women don't have particularly great memories for the Israelites. What concerning information are we given in verse 1?

2. Put yourself in Rahab's shoes in verse 3. How do you think she is feeling? How would you respond to the king of Jericho's command?

**Read Joshua 2:4-13**

3. How does Rahab respond to the King of Jericho's command?

*It's worth noting that the narrator doesn't condemn or commend Rahab's lie. The ethical issue isn't the concern of the narrative. We can't use this to justify lying to serve a greater good! The lie is included in the narrative because it makes the risk of Rahab being exposed and punished by the king of Jericho for hiding the Israelites even greater!*

4. What reason does Rahab give for taking such a great risk? What evidence does she recount that backs up her reason?

5. Even though Rahab's heart melts in fear at the power of the Lord, where does she turn for salvation?

6. The book of Proverbs tells us the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov 9:10). What wisdom has Rahab's fear of the Lord given her?

7. How can the fear of the Lord be the beginning of wisdom for us?

*We can be afraid of everything from the dark to dying. Some things are terrifying! There is no doubt that defying the king of Jericho would have been terrifying for Rahab. Yet her fear of God displaced/relativised that fear.*

8. Think about the things you are scared of. How can the fear of God displace/relativise those fears for you?

**Read Joshua 2:14-21**

9. How is Rahab's plea for mercy responded to in verses 14 to 16?

10. What will Rahab and her family members need to do to be saved?

11. Even though Rahab and her family aren't Israelites—they're outsiders, is there any similarity between the way Rahab and her family will be saved from God's judgment and the way Israel will be saved? Try to explain your answer.



**Read Romans 3:22-24 and Hebrews 11:31**

12. According to these passages what do we have in common with Rahab and the Israelites?

**Read Joshua 2:22-24**

*It seems like the gentiles/Canaanites have witnessed to the Israelites and given them confidence in the power of the Lord their God! When we consider God's mighty power through history, we can have every confidence that no matter who we are or what we've done, if we turn to him in faith for mercy, we will be saved. Our future is secure—we can be assured of that.*

13. Share with one another some of things that undermine the confidence you should have in your salvation. Then, help each other to come up with ways to remember that if you turn to the all powerful God, you have nothing to fear.

14. There is lots of fear and anxiety in our country and our world today. Rahab gave comfort and confidence in the face of fear to the Israelites. How can we help our anxious world to have comfort and confidence?

15. Give some practical examples of things you might do to help someone who shares with you that they've been feeling anxious or afraid.

**Pray**

# 3 The Lord has done it

## Joshua 3:1-5:12

### Getting Started

What's the most powerful/awesome thing you've seen someone do?

### Explore

#### Read Joshua 3:1-5

1. There is a strong sense of anticipation in this part of the narrative. Who will be responsible for leading Israel into the land and how does this part of the narrative draw that out?

#### Read Joshua 3:6-17

2. What will the events of this chapter do for Joshua's standing with Israel?

3. What are the similarities between this water crossing and another significant water crossing in Israel's history (see Exodus 14:21-31)?

4. The Lord's authority over the waters has been well established so far in the Bible. In Genesis 1 the Spirit of the Lord hovered over the waters, he punished the earth with the mighty waters of the flood in Genesis 6 to 9, he delivered Israel from the Egyptians through the waters of the Red Sea in Exodus 14, in Numbers 20 he brought forth water from a rock. What does this tell us about the Lord and how we should respond to him?

**Read Joshua 4:1-18**

5. What is the purpose of the rocks?

*The Israelites have the words of the law that they are to not turn aside from the right or the left of (see Joshua 1:7-8), but scattered throughout Joshua are these piles of 'memorial' rocks. They are given by God to help Israel remember God's faithfulness and his saving power. Christians have the scriptures to remind ourselves of these things.*

6. Do you think the Lord has explicitly given us other ways of remembering his faithfulness and saving power? Warning—there may well be differences of opinion in your group on this. That's okay!

7. What do you find helpful for reminding you of God's faithfulness and saving power?

8. What reason are we given for the people standing in awe of Joshua?

9. The Lord exalted Joshua and Moses. Last term we learned that Philippians 2:6-11 tells us that Jesus was exalted too. What is different about the exaltation of Christ?

10. We're told the people stood in awe of Joshua. Would you say you stand in awe of Jesus? In practical terms, what does it look like for us to stand in awe of Jesus?

**Read Joshua 4:19-5:1**

11. What impact ought the crossing have on the Israelites?

12. What impact does it have on the non-Israelites?

**Read Joshua 5:2-12**

13. Since Genesis 3 the people of God have not lived in his place under his rule. What indications does this passage give us that all of that is about to change?

14. How does the narrator cast a shadow of doubt on the prospect of Israel staying in the promised land?

15. What does this passage teach us about the character of God?

*The New Testament paints a picture of a God who is faithful and merciful, but also powerful enough to forgive sin, defeat death and seat his people with him in glory for eternity (see Ephesians 2:6 and 1 Cor 6:14).*

16. Are you convinced of God's power to bring you into his forever place?

17. How might you be able to grow in confidence in God's power to bring you in to his eternal kingdom?

**Pray**

# 4 The power of God

## Joshua 5:13-6:27

### Getting Started

What's the most humiliating thing you've been asked to do?

### Explore

#### Read Joshua 5:13-6:5

1. In what way does the commander of the army of the Lord humble Joshua?
2. What about Joshua's interaction with the commander of the army of the Lord should give him confidence?
3. Who do you think the commander of the army of the Lord is (see Exodus 3:4-6; Deut 8:19; Isaiah 6:1-5 and Ezekiel 1:28)? What does this tell us about Joshua?
4. We know from chapter 2 that the king of Jericho and Rahab knew Israel were in the region. Rahab responded by turning to the Lord. How would you describe the king of Jericho's response?
5. What is the strategy the Lord gives Joshua for breaking the secure fortress of Jericho? How could this strategy possibly succeed?

*Often when God gives victory to his people he does it through the opposite of conventional worldly wisdom and power. He spoke to Balaam through his donkey, he defeated the powerful warlord Sisera with a humble house wife, he defeated a giant through a small boy with a sling shot.*

6. When God gives victory to his people in these ways, what does it tell us about God's power and what does it tell us about worldly power?

### **Read Joshua 6:6-16**

7. How would you describe Joshua's response to the Lord's instructions?

8. What do you think the people Joshua was commanding and the people of Jericho thought when Joshua was taking the people through this weird process day after day?

*Paul is really clear in 1 Corinthians 1 that the wisdom of God can seem like foolishness to the world. This is absolutely evident on the cross where the crucified Messiah redeems his people and defeats death. Jesus was mocked and humiliated as he humbled himself, indeed Joshua may have been here too.*

9. How should we expect our obedience to God to be perceived by the world?

10. How can we remind ourselves when we feel humiliated in our obedience that God's foolishness is greater than the world's wisdom and God's weakness is greater than the world's strength?

### **Read Joshua 6:17-25**

11. What reason does God give in v 18 for ensuring everything in the city is devoted to him (Deuteronomy 7:1-6 may help with your answer)?

12. We don't live in a 'theocracy' today where everyone in the nation has pledged to obey a covenant with God. God's people are scattered among the nations longing for a better country—a heavenly one (Heb 11:16). What are some things we can do to help us be holy as we live among so many who are not fully devoted to the Lord?

13. The difference between life with God's people and destruction is a matter of faith. How can we help each other hold on to the faith while we wait for the Lord Jesus?

## Pray

### **Totally destroy???**

Passages like this often trouble us—the notion that 'men and women, young and old' are to be destroyed with the sword at God's instruction is troubling! It's right for us to be troubled by this. God himself says twice in the book of Ezekiel that even he takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 18:23; 33:11). There are a number of ways Christian commentators try to soften the blow of this, and it may be helpful for us to consider them:

1. It's possible (but not certain) that the cities devoted to destruction were military forts and that most non-combat citizens lived outside the cities in villages.
2. It is far more common for the Lord to instruct his people to 'drive out' the inhabitants first before they totally destroy those who remain.
3. Comparative reading of non-biblical Ancient Near Eastern conquest accounts from this period in history uses similarly strong language of total destruction, but it's almost always 'hyperbolic'. That is, it is exaggerated to give emphasis to the dominance of the victors. This helps explain why in Joshua 13:1-7 (and in the book of Judges) there are clearly many surviving Canaanites in the land. Conquest accounts were their own literary genre at this time in history.
4. While God is accused of genocide here, Rahab and her family, later on the Gibeonites and others show us it is not one basis of race that people are to be destroyed, but acceptance or rejection of the Lord.
5. Even though Christians are called to live at peace with everyone, God in the New Testament also has substantial punishment in store for those who reject him (see Mark 9:47-49).

# 5 The ever present problem

## Joshua 7:1-8:35

### Getting Started

How do you think your average resident of Bathurst would define sin?

### Explore

#### Read Joshua 7:1-13

1. What has Achan done (see also Joshua 6:18)?

*It is important to note that while the narrator has told us about Achan's sin, Joshua and the people of Israel are not aware of it yet.*

2. So far in Joshua we have seen the Canaanites melting in fear at the power of the Lord (2:11; 2:24; 5:1). Who is melting in fear here and why?

3. How would you describe Joshua's behaviour in verses 6 to 9 (see also Exodus 32:11-14)?

4. How would you describe God's response to Joshua?

5. What do we learn here about the power of sin and its impact on our relationship with God and each other?



6. Share a time when your sin has impacted those around you. Do you think you have a grasp on how destructive your sin is?

7. Like Moses, Joshua was able to act as a mediator between the people and God. Do we need a mediator for our sin today? Why or why not? See 1 Timothy 2:5-6.

**Read Joshua 7:14-23**

8. Consider the process of identifying Achan in verses 14 to 18. It is quite a prolonged and elaborate process. Why do you think it is like this? What impact do you think this would have on the people?

9. It is nice that Achan confesses in verse 20 to 21. But, how could he have handled things differently?

10. Have you ever found yourself in a position where it seemed inevitable that your sin was going to eventually be found out, but you still didn't confess until you were caught? How did you feel through that process? How could you have handled things differently?

**Read Joshua 7:24-26**

11. There is an incredible irony here—a Canaanite woman and her family were saved in chapter 6, but an Israelite man and his family are destroyed in chapter 7. What does this tell us about God?

12. Here we have another memorial pile of rocks in Joshua. What do these rocks stand as a reminder of?

13. How can we ensure that we remember the costliness of our sin?

### **Read Joshua 8:1-2**

14. What impact does sin being paid for in full have on Israel's relationship with God?

### **Read Joshua 8:30-35**

*This section is a beautiful act of obedience from Joshua and the people. They are doing what Moses commanded them in Deuteronomy 27. While this is a neat fulfillment of a narrative arc that began in Deuteronomy 27, there is something soberingly ominous about this ceremony coming just after the sin of Achan.*

15. Why do you think verses 34 and 35 labour the point that the law was read in full and it was read to everyone?

*Hebrews chapter 4 verses 12 to 13 stress how we will all be held inescapably accountable to the word of the God:*

*"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account"*

*In one sense this is a terrifying reading. The word of God searches us—it knows our heart and our sin. But in another sense, it is comforting, because the word of God reveals God's grace to us in Jesus, who pays in full for our sin on the cross.*

16. How has this study helped you to see the goodness of Jesus, and the importance of holding on to him?

### **Pray**

# 6 Imperfection, desperation & grace

## Joshua 9:1-10:27

### Getting Started

Have you ever tricked your way into somewhere you don't belong?

### Explore

#### Read Joshua 9:1-15

1. Describe the difference in attitude to the Israelites between the kings in verses 1 and 2 and the people of Gibeon?
2. Why do you think the Gibeonites pretended that they came from far away (see Exodus 34:11-16; Deuteronomy 7:1-2)?
3. There is lots of deception going on from the Gibeonites. But they do tell the truth about something. What are the reports they have heard and how might this explain their ruse?
4. What did the Israelites/Joshua not do and what did they do?
5. It's interesting that there's no explicit rebuke of Joshua or the Gibeonites here. It's almost as though the narrator expects the reader to understand how bad this is. What do you think the Lord would think of this treaty (see Jeremiah 10:21)?

*Joshua comes off fairly squeaky clean in this book. But here we find out he's not perfect. This is part of the growing trajectory in the Old Testament of the need for a perfect leader for the people building up to Jesus.*

6. What did Jesus do when someone was attempting to deceive him (see for example Matthew 4:1-11; 26:39-42)?

### **Read Joshua 9:16-27**

7. What were the consequences for the Gibeonites?

8. How do they explain the motivation for their actions in verses 24 to 25?

*In Psalm 84:10 the psalmist says that he would rather be a door keeper in the house of the Lord than dwell in the tents of the wicked. The Gibeonites obviously felt the same way. They knew where they stood and would do anything to receive mercy. In the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector in Luke's gospel the tax collector recognizes that he is desperate and simply stands at a distance from the temple and begs the Lord for mercy (see Luke 18:13). Jesus says it's this man that went home justified before God. The message is the same in the parable of the shrewd manager in Luke 16. Desperation to secure the mercy of God is the key to entry to the Kingdom.*

9. Would you describe yourself as desperately in need of God's mercy? How does this express itself in radical/risky/humble behaviour in your life?

### **Read Joshua 10:1-15**

10. Here we see God actively intervene for the first time since the Gibeonites arrived on the scene. How has God responded to the Gibeonite deception? Why do you think he has responded this way?

*Both the Israelites and the Gibeonites have failed to measure up to the perfect standard God requires in these chapters. Yet, he redeems them both. This gives us an insight to the character of God and it foreshadows his plans for the nations. Romans 3:22-24 tells us:*

*“This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”*

*Through faith in Jesus, knowing that we’ve fallen short, we can all come to God with confidence to be redeemed. The grace that he demonstrated to the Israelites and the Gibeonites here in chapter 10 is the same amazing grace he demonstrates to us.*

11. Write down/share your memories of when you first realised that God has been gracious to you through the Lord Jesus

**Pray**

# 7 The God of rest

Joshua 10:28-21:45

## Getting Started

What was the worst part of your best holiday (apart from it being over!)?

## Explore

### Read Joshua 10:28-43

1. This is a systematic account of the conquering of the southern cities. What are some of the recurring statements in this section?

2. How would you sum up what we're being told in this section?

### Read Joshua 11:1-23

3. How would you describe the attitude of the northern kings?

4. Why, according to the narrator, did none of the cities make a treaty of peace with Israel (see v19-20)?

5. How does Deuteronomy 9:4-6 help us to understand the way the Lord is dealing with these nations?

6. According to verse 23 the conquest is now complete. What are we told about the land now?

*The importance of rest is etched in the pages of scripture from the very beginning. Genesis 2:2-3 picture a very good seventh day/Sabbath. God entered his rest. Somehow, even though they were to 'work' the garden, the man and the woman entered that rest with God. That rest was lost when sin entered the world. The Lord gave Israel the Sabbath day as a way of remembering the rest they were created for, but it would only ever be a shadow. Here we're told the land had rest from war. Maybe this could be the beginning of people experiencing the kind of life God made us for in the Garden of Eden. We'll have to keep reading to find out.*

### **Read Joshua 13:1-7**

*In study 4 we talked about Ancient Near Eastern conquest narratives being a genre that used exaggeration of total annihilation to emphasise the dominance of the deity. We've seen lots of annihilation so far in Joshua. We've just heard that the land had rest from war.*

7. What do we learn here about the actual progress of the total annihilation of the inhabitants of the land?

8. If you're familiar with Israel's history from this point forward in the Bible, what are some examples of the consequences of Israel failing to take over the land completely?

9. What instruction is Joshua given here?

*Chapters 13 to 21 give an account of the allocation of the land according to God's instruction to Joshua. Feel free to read this section during the week. You will notice that several times in the allotments the narrator will say, 'they did not dislodge' or they were 'not able to occupy' or 'were not able to completely drive them out'. There's a lingering presence of the 'wicked' Canaanites.*

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

10. According to the author of Hebrews, had Joshua given God's people rest? Explain your answer.

11. What is the Sabbath rest that remains for the people of God to enter today and how do we enter it (see Hebrews 4:3)?

*There will be a more tangible experience of rest for believers on the other side of the grave. You get a picture of this rest in the 23rd Psalm. But, this Hebrews passage tells us we who believe 'enter' that rest. The word 'enter' is present tense in the Greek it was originally written in.*

12. In what sense do we who believe enter that rest right now?

- theologically?

- experientially?

**Pray**





# The true people of God

Joshua 21:43-22:34

## Getting Started

How many people in Bathurst do you think are non-Christian?

## Explore

### Read Joshua 21:43-45

1. Just before everyone heads home to settle in their new places, the narrator gives us a summary of where things are up to so far. Where are things up to?

2. What does this tell us about the character of God?

### Read Joshua 22:1-12

3. What very clear instructions does Joshua give the eastern tribes?

4. How has the Lord treated the eastern tribes according to Joshua?

5. What language is used to describe the tribes on the western side of the Jordan in verses 11 and 12? This language continues through the rest of this chapter. Why do you think the narrator is referring to them like this?

6. What have the eastern tribes done to incite 'the whole assembly of Israel' to war? Read Deuteronomy 12:1-5 to help with your answer.

7. Why do you think the Lord is so concerned about alternative altars?

8. How do you 'flirt' with idolatry today?

9. What would it look like for you to 'flee' from idolatry instead of 'flirt' with it (see 1 Corinthians 10:14)?

**Read Joshua 22:13-34**

10. What was the 'sin of Peor' and where are the Israelites up to with it (see Numbers 25:1-3)?

11. What reason do the eastern tribes give for the making of the altar (see particularly v 24-27)?

12. Notice the language the narrator uses from verses 30 to 33. Do you think the concern of the eastern tribes was valid?

*While the wisdom of building an altar to get their point across is questionable, the eastern tribes are trying to be faithful to the Lord here and ensure they are always a part of the people of God. The narrator has conveyed the eastern tribes as faithful from the very first*

*chapter of the narrative.*

13. What does this passage remind us the real boundary is for whether or not you belong to the people of God?

14. Think back over what we have learned in Joshua so far. What are some of the ways that the narrative has shown us that it is not your family background or postcode that determines whether or not you're part of the people of God?

15. We've seen throughout Joshua, and the journeys that we've made to the gospel in the New Testament along the way, that God is faithful and he offers refuge to all people who come to him in faith. How can we remind ourselves each day that the Lord wants every person in Bathurst to turn and put their faith in his Son?

16. The western tribes seemed to have a view of the people of God that ended at the border of the Jordan. We can be like that sometimes too. We can be content that every one who comes inside the walls of church belongs to God and no one else needs to. What are some things we can do to help each other keep looking outside the walls to help others come and worship the Lord Jesus?

**Pray**

# 9 God is faithful

## Joshua 24:1-33

### Getting Started

Can you think of an example where you promised something and followed through?

### Explore

#### Read Joshua 24:1-13

1. What are some of the things that the Lord reminds Israel he has done for them?
2. From what the Lord has told Israel here, how ought they think about him?
3. What part have Israel played in God keeping all his promises?

#### Read Joshua 24:14-18

4. What command does Joshua give the people here?
5. How do the people respond?

#### Read Joshua 24:19-28

6. How does Joshua think Israel will go at following through on their promise?

7. We get our last pile of rocks in Joshua here. What purpose will these rocks serve? Explain what this means.

8. Can you think of times in your life where you've made a commitment to wholeheartedly obey the Lord and then failed? Maybe with one particular sin? Write it down—and if you're up to it, share it with the group.

9. What are the consequences of the Israelites not wholeheartedly serving the Lord according to Joshua in verse 20?

### **Read Joshua 24:29-33**

10. In what way has the book come full circle from chapter 1 verse 1?

11. What does the incident with Joseph's bones tell us about the Lord (see Gen 50:22-26)?

*The Lord has faithfully provided leaders for his people to bring them into the promised land, but the book ends with no mention of a potential future leader. Two significant issues for Israel's leaders throughout the Old Testament are that they sin, and they die. The quest for a perfect leader consumes the rest of the Old Testament. In one sense it's a depressing quest. But in another sense, God's faithful commitment to his people is relentless and the prophets look forward to this perfect leader coming. Remember looking at Philippians 2:5-11 last term? This is where we find our perfect leader.*

12. Read Philippians 2:5-11 and discuss what makes Jesus the perfect leader for us, and the perfect display of God's faithfulness to his promises.

### **Pray**