



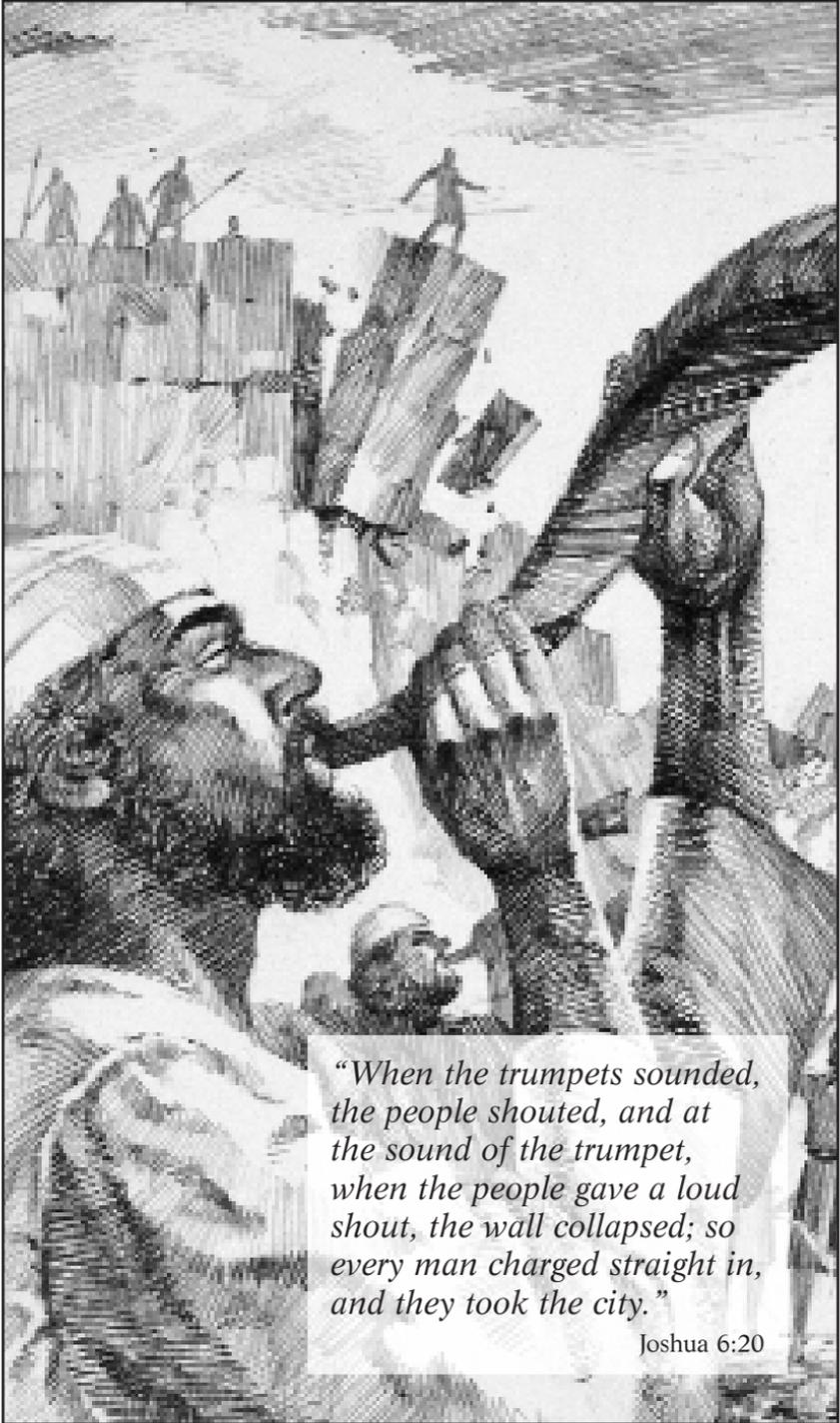
CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

JOSHUA

Week 2



“When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city.”

Joshua 6:20

The Walls Come Tumbling Down

Joshua 5:13–6:1–27

Is there a “battle plan” to which you believe God may be calling you? How are you responding?

1. Would you walk up to a man with a weapon drawn and ask him a question (5:13)? What does that act say about Joshua? What did Joshua ask the man? What was the answer and how did Joshua respond?
 2. What directions for Jericho’s destruction were given to Joshua?
 3. How many perished in the conquest of Jericho? Who was spared?
 4. Joshua 6:21 shocks many Christ-followers: “They devoted the city to the Lord and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.” Can this apparent cruelty be explained? Or is it just the nature of the limited understanding of God possessed by the Old Testament authors and editors?
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1. Are you facing any “walls” in your life? Are you relying on your own efforts or on Christ living in you to demolish them?
 2. Think about Rahab, who was spared. Have you been saved, spared or helped because of Someone else’s work on your behalf?
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*The Old Testament explains that the flood constituted God’s judgment on Noah’s generation, and in a similar way it explains the **destruction of Jericho** as God’s judgment on the corrupt and perverted Canaanite civilization. Without diminishing the clear New Testament warning about God’s judgment, a Christ-centered understanding of the Bible will help Christ followers reconcile brutal massacres and genocide attributed to God in the Old Testament with the non-violent “turn the other cheek” teachings of Jesus.*

DAY 8

OPENING
up to the Word

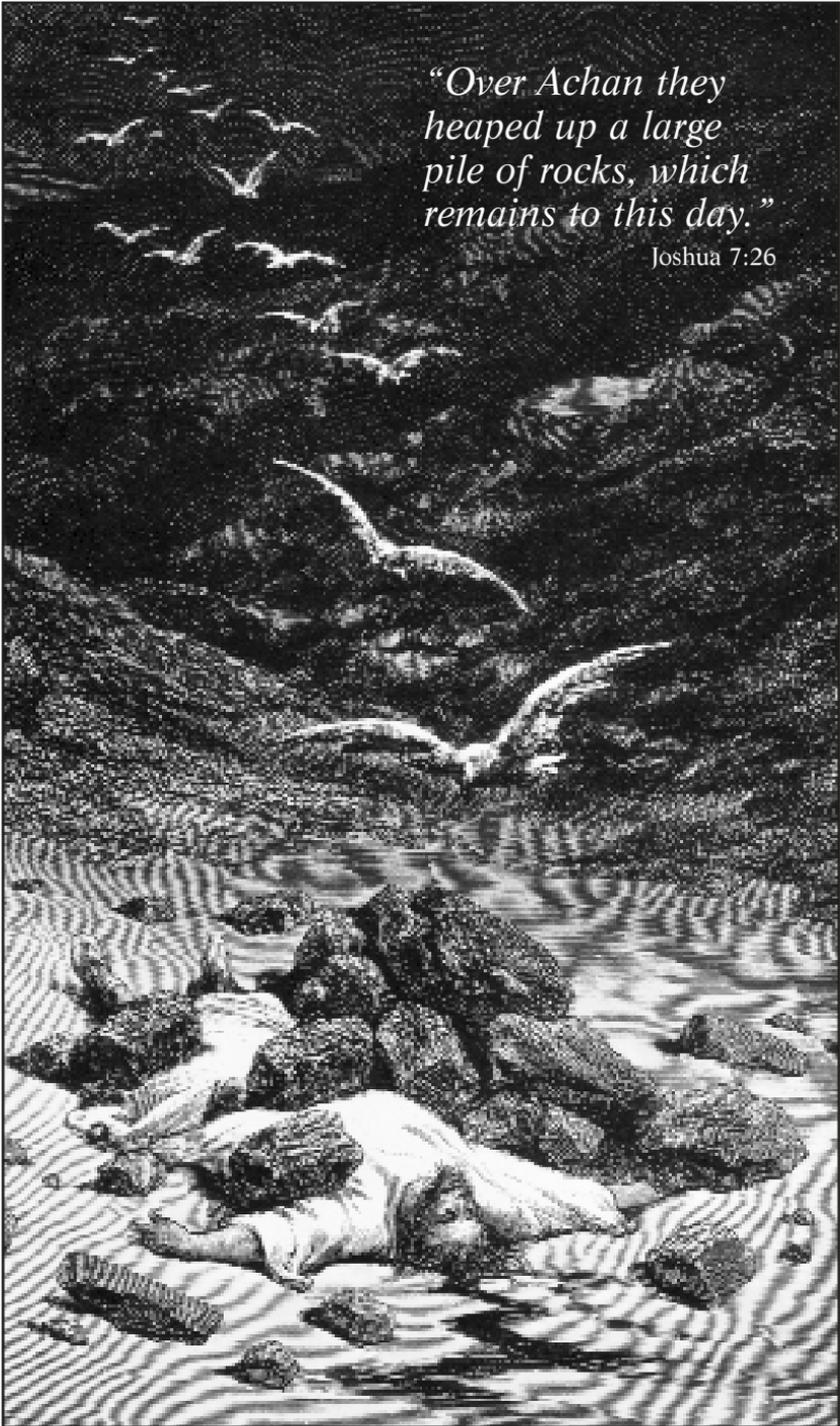
DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word

*“Over Achan they
heaped up a large
pile of rocks, which
remains to this day.”*

Joshua 7:26



Artwork by Gustav Doré

One Step Forward, Two Steps Back

Joshua 7:1-26

Have you had any setbacks recently? Were they a result of your own actions or from events out of your control?

1. Before moving on from Jericho, Joshua took precautions by sending spies ahead. What was their report? Was it realistic and accurate? What was the end result? What emotional impact did defeat have upon the people? Upon Joshua?
2. Describe Joshua's response to this setback. What instructions did he receive from God?
3. How did Joshua find the guilty party? Did the punishment fit the crime? Why or why not? Compare this account with the one in the New Testament concerning Ananias and Sapphira (Ac 5:1-11).

1. Was there a time when you were confident and satisfied with your own spiritual condition? Did your confidence come from your own efforts or Jesus?
2. Have you ever done something wrong that affected other members of your family? Conversely, has a family member ever done something wrong that had a direct, negative impact upon you?

***Achan** is remembered in the Bible as an Israelite who stole some of the forbidden spoils of Jericho. In 1 Chronicles 2:7 there is a terse comment about Achan, describing him as one "who brought trouble on Israel by violating the ban on taking devoted things." By plundering for himself and his family some silver, gold and clothing, Achan defiled the whole nation. The Old Testament explains that since God believed that each person's sin weakened the entire nation, God allowed Israel's army to be defeated by a much smaller force from the town of Ai.*

DAY 9

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

*“So Joshua burned
Ai and made it a
permanent heap of
ruins, a desolate
place to this day.”*

Joshua 8:28



Artwork by Harry Clow

From Setback to Comeback

DAY 10

Joshua 8:1-29

Do you believe God has ever brought you back from a loss, defeat or disappointment? Did you fully appreciate how God helped you—or was it only after the fact when you realized what God did for you?

1. In the previous chapter Israel was defeated. They were instructed to try again. What was different this time around?

2. What was the signal for attack used by Joshua? How many people were killed? What happened to the king of Ai?

1. At Ai, Joshua's raised javelin was the sign of God's power—that God would help them defeat the enemy. What symbols do Christians have today that are signs of God's power—that Christ has defeated and will defeat the enemy? How does the cross of Christ explain the radically different way that victory is achieved and given, contrasted with the violence described in the Old Testament?

2. The victory of chapter 8 was preceded in chapter 7 by earnest prayer on the part of Joshua. What connection do you believe prayer has with the victory we can receive, by God's grace?

*In this passage, God instructed Joshua: "You shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king, except that you may carry off their plunder and livestock for yourselves" (v. 2). **Why did God allow the Israelites to plunder** one time but not another? Once again we must consider the limited understanding as well as possible misunderstanding of God and his nature of those who recorded their impressions of such events.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

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out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

Renewing Vows

Joshua 8:30-35

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever renewed your wedding vows? Why do you think people who have been married several decades would do this?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Following such a decisive victory, what was the first thing Joshua did? What did this tell the people of Israel about their leader?
2. Who was present for the renewal of the covenant? Why was it important for everyone to be there?
3. Why make another copy of the law?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Look back over your life to a time of success or achievement. Immediately following that event, did you take time to worship and thank God? Why or why not?
2. According to verse 35, Joshua read every word Moses had written. How long would that take? At that time, the writings of Moses constituted the only "Bible" the Israelites had. Bear in mind that only a few Israelites could read, and few copies of the law were extant. Hearing and learning the law was rare. Consider the spiritual benefits of reading the entire Bible.

WINDOW
on the Word

*Joshua erected an **altar of uncut stones** (v. 31). This seemingly irrelevant detail is interesting. In Exodus 20:25 the use of cut stones for an altar is expressly prohibited. The reason for the prohibition was that surrounding nations built altars to false gods with intricately designed stones. Israel, as a people chosen by God, was to be different from the surrounding nations.*

Success Has Its Own Problems

DAY 12

Joshua 9:1-27

“Pray that success will not come any faster than you are able to endure it,” advised author Elbert Hubbard. Success, while enjoyable, creates new stresses and strains. Has this happened to you?

1. What happened immediately after the Israelites’ stunning victory (vs. 1-2)?
2. Who approached Israel on friendly terms? What did they want?
3. How was the deceit uncovered? How did some Israelites react? Do you feel the Gibeonites were: (a) highly resourceful or, (b) completely deceitful?

1. The Israelites decided to make peace with the Gibeonites, but the people of Israel “did not inquire of the Lord” (v. 14). Do you feel it’s important to carefully pray and counsel about all potential ramifications of a critical decision before making it?

2. The Gibeonites tried to resolve a potential conflict through diplomacy. What is your approach to conflict resolution? Are you (a) confrontational, (b) diplomatic, (c) evasive, (d) devious?

3. Even though Joshua mistakenly made an alliance with an enemy, he kept his word to the Gibeonites in spite of objections from other Israelites. Have you ever made a promise that became hard to keep?

*The **Gibeonites** were a tribe who lived a little to the southwest of Bethel and Ai and slightly north of Jerusalem. Their territory was in the very heart of the Promised Land. They reappear later in 2 Samuel 21. At that time David sought a spiritual explanation for a serious three-year famine. Within the context and limited perspective of God’s nature, as given within the old covenant, David was told there was blood guilt on Saul and his house, because Saul had put some Gibeonites to death, despite Joshua’s earlier oath to spare them.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

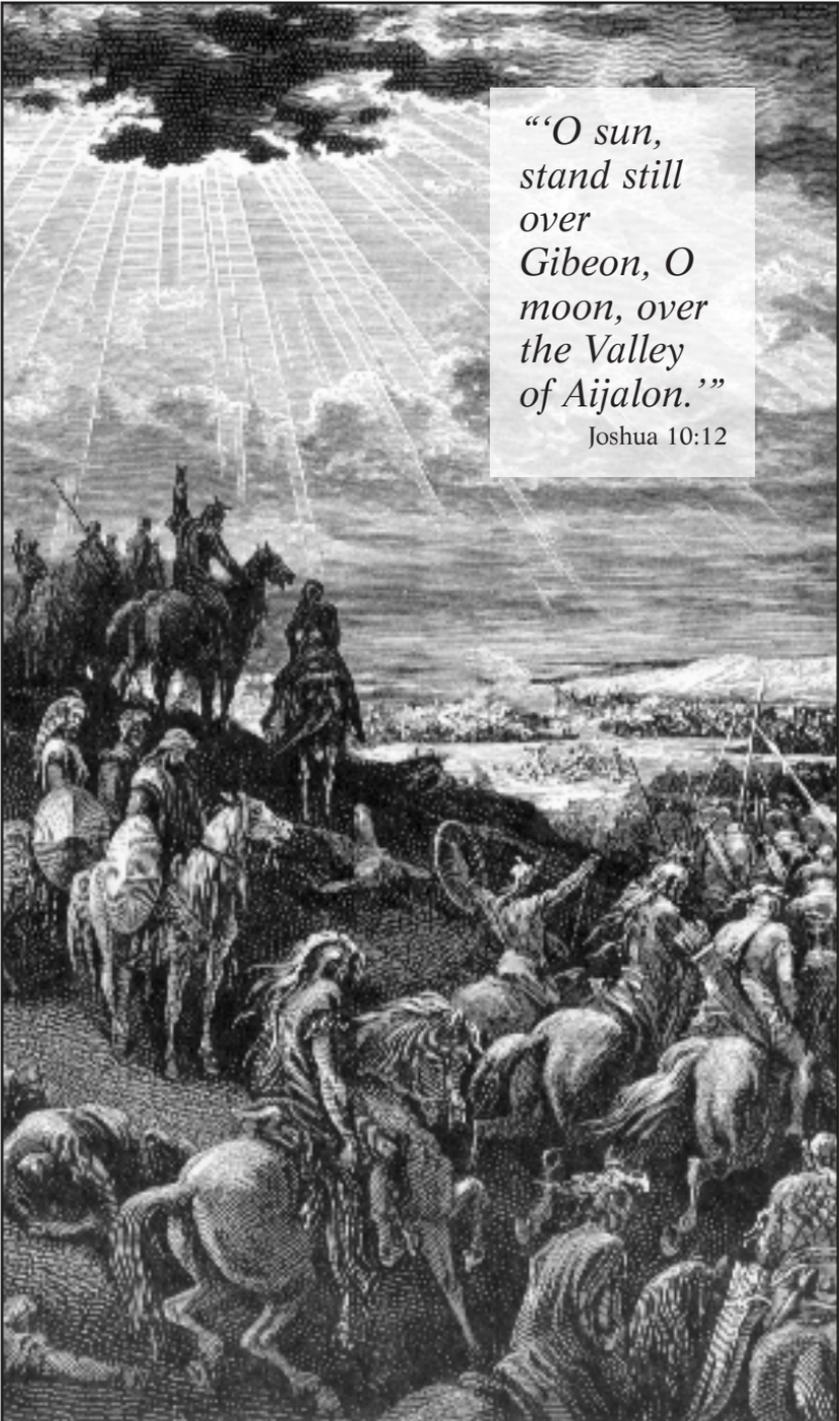
into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word



*“O sun,
stand still
over
Gibeon, O
moon, over
the Valley
of Aijalon.”*

Joshua 10:12

The Sun Stands Still

DAY 13

Joshua 10:1-43

In the movie *Groundhog Day*, actor Bill Murray plays the part of a man for whom time stands still. The same day is repeated over and over, giving him time to correct his life. If the sun stood still in your life how would you use the time? What actions would you take? What changes would you make?

1. What were other groups hearing about Israel? Who was battling whom?
2. How was Joshua's confidence heightened? How did God make the weather cooperate? How would longer daylight help the Israelites?
3. Where did the five kings find temporary shelter? What happened when their location was discovered? Were they treated justly and fairly? Why did Joshua invite his commanders to put their feet on the necks of the kings?
4. List the cities conquered in verses 29-42. Why were the Israelites so successful?

1. When the Gibeonites learned they were targeted for attack, they turned to Joshua for help. Where do you turn when you need assistance?
2. Joshua's quick, positive response reveals great integrity on his part. Does integrity characterize you? Can others turn to you for help?

*Putting **feet on the necks of defeated enemies** was a common military practice in ancient times. It symbolized complete victory. The **Book of Jashar** was a non-biblical book—probably a collection of various historical events. It is also mentioned in 2 Samuel 1:18.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

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on the Word

Defeat of the Northern Kings

Joshua 11:1-15

OPENING
up to the Word

God battled alongside and on behalf of Israel. Is there a challenge you are facing right now where God is fighting on your behalf?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What did Jabin, king of Hazor do when he received reports of the Israelite victory in the south?
2. Who were the parties involved in a new alliance against Israel?
3. What were God's instructions to Joshua? What phrase is repeated in verse 12 and 15? What does that phrase tell you about Joshua?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Had you been one of the northern kings, how would you have felt about the presence of Israelites in the area?
2. Have other people ever joined together and targeted you? How did you respond?
3. Is there an area of your life that you need to hear God say "Do not be afraid of them" (v. 6)?

WINDOW
on the Word

*Instructions given by God to Joshua include: "You are to **hamstring their horses**" (v. 6). The Israelites could just as easily have killed the horses. Instead, the Old Testament says that God directed them to cut a tendon in the horse's leg. This would cripple the horse, rendering it unfit for military use, but still keeping it alive for future breeding.*

*“Yet Israel did not burn
any of the cities built
on their mounds—
except Hazor, which
Joshua burned.”*

Joshua 11:13

