1:5 *I will not fail you nor forsake you*- We may boldly say that we will not be fearful, as Joshua was, because God has addressed to us the very words which He did to Joshua: “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb. 13:5,6). In this especially, Joshua is our example. When Heb. 13:13 speaks of *us* going forth outside the camp, perhaps there is a reference to Joshua who dwelt with Moses outside the camp (Ex. 33:11)- thus making Joshua symbolic of us all.

1:6 Joshua is repeatedly made parallel with Israel; his victories were theirs; what he achieved is counted to them. In the same way, the people of the Lord Jesus are counted as Him. Joshua was to be strong and possess the land, just as they had been told to do, using the same Hebrew words (Dt. 11:8). Indeed, Israel and Joshua are given parallel charges, to be strong and of good courage to take the land (Dt. 31:6,7). Both Israel and Joshua are given the same charge to keep the words of the covenant, that they might “prosper” (:7 cp. Dt. 29:9).

1:7 *Courageous*- The language of military courage is applied here to the real battle- within the human mind, to obey God’s laws. An element of bravery is required to do what God wants, to go against the grain of our natures and against the flow of our environment.

*That you may prosper*- God’s servant Joshua [the same Hebrew name as the Greek name ‘Jesus’] was intended to “prosper”; but in the end it was the Lord Jesus through His death who was the servant who would ‘prosper’ [Is. 52:13, same Hebrew word]. And so, in His foreknowledge, God spoke of “another day” when His begotten Son would fulfil what Joshua could potentially have achieved, and so much more (Heb. 4:8). The lesson for us is that so much has been potentially prepared for us to achieve. Our salvation may not necessarily depend upon achieving all those things, but all the same, so much potentially is possible which we refuse to reach up to, because we are petty minimalists, like Israel, satisfied with their little farm in the valley, rather than seeking to possess the fullness of the Kingdom prepared for them. In Ps. 1:1-3, David makes several allusions to Joshua. He speaks of how the man who meditates in God’s word day and night will prosper in his ways; and he uses the very same Hebrew words as found in Josh. 1:8 in recounting God’s charge to Joshua. But David’s point is that the man who does these things will not “walk in the counsel of the ungodly”- he won't give in to peer pressure. The fact that Joshua was wrongly influenced by his peers in later life would indicate that he didn’t fully keep the charge given to him.

1:13 After the pattern of the Reubenites, we have been given the promised rest of the Kingdom here and now (1:13 cp. Heb. 4:3); but we will, like them, only take possession of that inheritance after we have ensured that our brethren have received their possession (:15). So we have a paradox: the Reubenites were given their "rest", but they would only get their “rest" once their brethren had. Those Reubenites really were symbols of us: for this passage is surely behind the reasoning of Heb. 4, where we are told that we have entered into rest, but that we must labour if we want to enter into it.

1:13-15 Joshua didn’t give the people rest (Heb. 4:8); but he said he had (Josh. 22:4). He failed to fulfil the potential spoken of here- that he would lead the people to “rest”. The Messianic Kingdom could, perhaps, have come through Joshua-Jesus; but both Joshua and Israel would not. Dt. 1:38 states clearly that Joshua would cause Israel to inherit or posses the land. Yet by the end of Joshua’s life, Israel were not inheriting the land in totality. He didn’t live up to his potential. God’s prophecy here was conditional, although no condition is actually stated at the time. God’s opening commission to Joshua was that the people were to possess the whole land promised to Abraham, right up to the Euphrates (1:4). But Joshua ended up drawing up the borders of the land far smaller than these; he didn’t even seek to subdue the territory up to the Euphrates, even though God had promised him potential success and even commanded him to do so. Joshua was to divide up the whole land promised to Abraham amongst the tribes of Israel (1:6). And yet in the extensive descriptions of Joshua dividing up the land, we don’t find him dividing up that whole territory up to the Euphrates. He seems to have lacked that vision, and fallen into the mire of minimalism, just content with a utilitarian, small scale conquest, rather than seeing the bigger picture of the potential Kingdom which God wanted to give His people. We can so easily be the same.

1:18 The repeated encouragement to be strong and of a good courage and not be fearful (:6,7,8,18; Dt. 31:23) could imply that Joshua was timid and in great need of encouragement.

2:1 *Secretly*- The sending out of the 12 spies about 40 years earlier was essentially a lack of faith- in the fact that God's Angel had gone ahead of them anyway to spy out the land, and Yahweh Himself had told Israel how good the land was. Perhaps the secrecy involved a sense that this was in fact not really a very spiritual decision and Joshua was somehow furtive about it.

*Came into the house of a prostitute*- Israel had never known urban life nor perhaps even seen walled cities like Jericho. The spies entered the city at evening time (:2), and the gate was shut (:5). Strangers always attract attention in such places- let alone when the city was in the direct line of attack of the Hebrews. The language / accent of the two spies would've given them away. It seems they entered the city gates at dusk, the gates were shut, and they'd have perceived that they were being watched and had been noticed as suspicious strangers. And so they used some desperate initiative, and dived into a whorehouse near the gate. This was the sort of place strangers would go to, as it would be today. We imagine them entering the house, and meeting the madame of the house. "What do you want?" was as dumb a question as the doctor asking the patient "How are you feeling today?". Rahab was a smart woman, accustomed to strangers, and knew what was going on. Within the first couple of sentences, she'd have figured who they were. And it seems they spoke for a short time, maybe an hour or so, realized they were busted, understood they were in a death trap within that walled city, and threw themselves on her mercy. And there, providence kicked in. James 2:25 calls those men "messengers", with a message Rahab believed. They hardly had an hour to tell her the message, before men were knocking on the door enquiring what Rahab knew about the spies. In that brief time, she believed a very sketchy and incomplete Gospel of the Kingdom. And her works reflected that faith, in telling the men [whom local culture would've barred from entering the house of a single woman] that the spies had come and gone. They and their message were 'welcomed in peace' by Rahab (Heb. 11:31), she 'received' their message and justified herself by works by protecting them (James 2:25).

2:9,10 When she says that she was aware that God had "given you the land" (2:9), she uses the same two Hebrew words used repeatedly in Deuteronomy regarding God's promise to give Israel the land of the Canaanites. "The fear of you is fallen upon us" is likewise an allusion to Ex. 15:16; 23:27 [the same Hebrew word is used by Rahab]. Rahab speaks of how her people are "melting" in fear- quoting Ex. 15:15 about how the inhabitants of Canaan would "melt” because of Israel. Knowing all this, she has the ambition to request the impossible- that she would be the exception, that with her a covenant would be made. When she says that "we have heard" about the Exodus (:10), she may be referring to the prophecy of Ex. 15:14: "The people shall hear and be afraid". In this case, her emphasis would have been upon the word "have"- 'yes, we have heard indeed, as Moses sung, and yes, we are afraid'. Spiritual ambition of the type Rahab had lifts us far above the mire of mediocrity which there is in all human life under the sun.

2:10 Where did she, a whore in Jericho, get that knowledge from? How had she come to know about Yahweh? Presumably from her clients, who would've been travellers who had heard these things and passed them on to her. All this is wonderful encouragement for all sinners- that God has a way of working through sin to His glory, and He doesn't give up so easily with human weakness.

2:12 *Deal kindly*- Heb. 11:31 comments that it was by faith that Rahab did not perish; Rahab's faith was faith in God's grace. For Rahab was an Amoritess and according to the law of Moses there was to be no pity or covenant with them- only death (Dt. 7:2).Rahab had the spiritual ambition to ask that they make a covenant with her- she requests hesed, the common term for covenant relationship ("deal kindly", cp. 1 Sam. 20:8). And the spies made a covenant with her. Grace, like love, finds a way. Remember that she was also aware of what Israel had done to their enemies on their way to Jericho- and she appears to allude to Moses' commands to destroy utterly and not make covenant with the peoples of the land (Dt. 2:32-37; 7:1-5; 20:16-18).

2:18 Rahab was told to bind the scarlet cord in her window "when we come into the land". But Rahab bound it there immediately when they left- as if she recognized that her land was already in Israel's hands (:21). Considering the whole town was wondering how the spies had escaped, and she was under suspicion, to leave the escape rope dangling there, indeed to take it up and then place it there again immediately (so 2:21 implies), was really stupid. She didn't need to do that at that stage. But the joy of the Gospel should make us fools for Christ's sake. But does it, in our postmodern age? When was the last time the joy of the good news we know, lead you to do something humanly foolish? It could be gathered from Heb. 11:31 that Rahab preached to others the message she had received from the spies- for Rahab did not perish with those "that believed not"- apeitheo suggesting disbelief, a wilful refusal to believe. What message did Jericho not believe? There was no particular message for them from the words of Moses or Joshua. The message was presumably an appeal from Rahab, to repent and accept the God of Israel as she had done- to cast themselves upon His mercy. And in any case, as a prostitute estranged from her family, either due to her profession or because estrangement from them had led her to it, she must have gone to her estranged family and preached to them, bringing them within her despised house. If people with a far less complete understanding of the Gospel could risk their lives for it... what does our understanding and faith convict us to do for the sake of witnessing to it? Our knowledge of the Gospel of the Kingdom is far more detailed than that of Rahab, who picked up snatches of it from her clients, and had at most an hour's pressured conversation with the spies before she had to show whether or not she believed it. If it motivated her to do all she did- what about us?

3:1 There is a much repeated characteristic of God's servants: that they 'rose up early in the morning' and did God's work. In each of the following passages, this phrase is clearly not an idiom; rather does it have an evidently literal meaning: Abraham (Gen. 19:27; 21:14; 22:3); Jacob (Gen. 28:18); Job (1:5); Moses (Ex. 8:20; 9:13; 24:4; 34:4); Joshua (Josh. 3:1; 6:12; 7:16; 8:10); Gideon (Jud. 6:38; 7:1); Samuel (1 Sam. 15:12); David (1 Sam. 17:20; 29:11); Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:35; 2 Chron. 29:20). This is quite an impressive list, numerically. I 'm not suggesting that zeal for God is reflected by rising early rather than staying up late; but it wouldn't be too much to suggest that if we are men of mission, we won't waste our hours in bed. Get up when you wake up.

4:1-3 This is a summary of what happened; the rest of the chapter explains how that situation came about. This is a common feature of Biblical writing; we note that the Greek, linear, strictly chronological approach of European languages isn’t at all the same as Hebrew thought or writing, which presents themes and explanations at the cost of apparently ‘jumping around’ in chronology.

4:14 *Yahweh magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel*- As they entered Canaan, witnessing the waters of humanity held back (hence the reference to the waters stopping at a place called Adam, 3:16), they must have looked at Joshua with huge gratitude and reverence. When our wilderness journey ends and we enter the promised land of God’s Kingdom, all our eyes and hearts will likewise be focused upon Jesus, and we will spend eternity magnifying Him. But we should begin that Christ-centred existence now.

4:23 Subsequent generations were to understand that this is what God had done *for you*; the Biblical record thus becomes alive for us who are God’s people; it becomes a living word, with us as it were standing there on the banks of Jordan or the Red Sea, participating in the wonder of salvation which occurred then. If we grasp this, then any apparent lack of dramatic action by God in our lives today becomes easier to bear with; for He has done so many great things *for us* in what He did for His people historically.

5:2 Everything about the battle plan was somehow humanly foolish- to yet again attempt to teach Israel, old and new, that victory comes from following God's way, and His way is humanly foolish. The warriors were circumcised before the battle (:2). We know from the Biblical record of Shechem how this would've physically weakened the men- for this was only a week or so before the battle. The manna wasn't phased out- it stopped abruptly just before the battle of Jericho (:12). The people would likely have been short of food, and would've been dealing with the problems associated with a new diet- after 40 years! Walking around the city seven times, starting at dawn, would've made the people tired. There was no advantage of shock or surprise by doing this. Planning the final assault for late afternoon was hardly smart either- humanly speaking! But all this was- and is- to teach God's people that victory His way involves shedding our human strength, just as Gideon was likewise taught so dramatically.

5:5,6 The extent of spiritual despair, despondency and apostasy amongst the condemned generation in the wilderness cannot be overstated. By neglecting the circumcision of their they showed their rejection of the Abrahamic covenant with them.

5:10 The Lord told them in Jn. 6 that the true manna was His flesh, which He was to give for the life of the world. Some have supposed from Josh. 5:10-12 cp. Ex. 16:35 that the manna fell for the first time on the eve of the Passover, thus adding even more poignancy to the Lord’s equation of the manna with His death.

5:13 As Israel were called to follow the Angel after their Red Sea baptism, so we too follow where the Angel leads. The conquest of Jericho is a classic example of following the Angel. The Angel who was the commander of Yahweh's army appearing to Joshua, the commander of God's human army on earth, and standing "opposite him". Joshua was being shown that he had an opposite number in Heaven, a representative there before the throne of God- just as each of us do.

5:14 Note how the Angel answers Joshua's question- 'Are you for me, or against me?'. God has no interest in taking sides in human arguments, demonizing the one side and glorifying the other. The response was simply that the Angel stood for God and was His representative. Religious people so easily fall into this trap of demonizing their enemies, on the basis that "God is with me, and therefore, not with you my opponent, in fact, He hates you because I hate you". The true God and His Angelic servants are far above this kind of primitive, binary dichotomy.

5:13,14 This can be read as presenting Joshua in a negative light, wanting to boil everything down to black and white, wanting to see God as either personally for him or against him; when the essence is to seek to discern and do God’s will. Joshua was very good at obedience to clear commandments (4:10,17; 8:27; 10:40). But when he had to articulate his faith in God in unexpected situations, e.g. when the ambassadors from Gibeon arrived, or when the first attack on Ai failed, he seems to have performed poorly. Legalistic obedience is no use in those cases when principles need to be applied. He very strictly adhered to God’s commandments with legalistic obedience, e.g., about how to approach and deal with Jericho, or how to cross the flooded Jordan and build an altar; and time and again, we read in Joshua of how he strictly relayed and obeyed the Divine commandments given by Moses (8:31,33,35; 11:12,15,20; 14:2,5; 17:4; 21:2,8).  Yet as with any literalistic or legally minded person, it was hard for Joshua to apply the principles behind the laws to situations which weren’t specifically addressed by Divine revelation, where legalistic obedience wasn't what was required.

5:14- see on 14:8. In prospect the Angels drove out every tribe that was in the land; the people of Israel had to just go in and possess the work which the Angels had done. So when they failed to drive out certain tribes, this was an example of human failing to be "workers together with God". Thus in prospect, the Angels led them to the promised "rest"- Dt. 25:19; Josh. 1:13; Is. 63:1; although in practice they did not enter that rest because of their faithlessness (Heb. 3:11-4:11), despite the Angel promising He would give them that rest (Ex. 33:4). Man is not alone, we have huge numbers of Angels working to create amazing potentials for us; but we have the choice as to whether we march with them to achieve them.

5:14,15 The Angel that met Joshua described Himself as "the captain of Yahweh’s army", or “host”- the army of Angels that would go before Joshua and Israel to fight their battles. Therefore “Yahweh of armies” or “hosts” is a title often referring to the Angels.

5:15 The command to remove his shoe from holy ground is evidently reminiscent of the command to Moses in a similar situation. Shouldn’t Joshua have perceived this, seeing his life was so clearly framed after that of Moses?

6:2 Following the Angel is the theme that lies behind God's statement that because He had already given Jericho to Israel, therefore they should arise and take it. So many victories have been prepared for us in prospect- against addictions, engrained weaknesses of character, habits, impossible situations. Israel had to follow the ark, where the Angelic presence of God was (:2 cp. :8). The people were to go up into Jericho ‘straight before them’ (:5,20), just as the Cherubim-Angels have "straight feet" (Ez. 1:7,9,12). They were to follow in the Angel's steps.

6:5 *Shout*- The command to "shout" was a reflection of the belief Israel were to have in the fact that God had already given them the city- for the Hebrew for "shout" usually refers to a shout of victory. The word is translated "triumph" in Ps. 60:8; 108:9. The same idea of shouting in victory over a city which has been given to God's people recurs in Jer. 50:15- "Shout against her round about [cp. compassing the walls of Jericho]... her foundations are [present tense] fallen, her walls [cp. Jericho's] are thrown down" (AV). And this speaks of our latter day victory against Babylon- thus making this whole account of earnest relevance to us who live in the last days, and who will see Babylon fall by faith. Notice how literal Babylon fell by the water of the river being dried up, and the walls being opened- just the same sequence of events that occurred at Jericho.

6:10 “Until the day I tell you, ‘Shout!’” implies that the people didn't know the battle plan- each day they would've walked around the city in silence, and nothing happened. The command to "Shout!" didn't come- for six days. The whole exercise was surely to develop their faith. Again, this was the most crazy of battle plans, in human terms. Heb. 11:30 associates the circling of the walls with faith: “by faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been circled seven days”. 2 Cor. 10:3-4 is an allusion to the way that Jericho was taken with such a humanly weak battle plan. The point of the allusion is for us to see ourselves as those nervous Israelites desperately clinging on to their faith in God's victory rather than human strength. And we each have our Jerichos- habits, life-dominating patterns of thinking, that seem so impossible to shift. The deliverance at the Red Sea had been intended to teach Israel these very lessons. The account of the fall of Jericho is recorded in similar language, in order to teach the same lesson. Rahab's house had to be identified by a scarlet cord- like the blood of the Passover lamb sprinkled on the two doorposts and lintel of the Israelites' homes in Egypt. The silence demanded of the people was surely to recall Ex. 14:14, there the people standing before the Red Sea were assured: “The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent". Compare the command to keep silent whilst Yahweh fought, with the common practice of yelling war cries as an ancient army approached their enemy. All human convention, wisdom and strength, was placed in purposeful opposition to what seemed quite counter-instinctive- to be utterly silent whilst God did the fighting.

6:11 One wonders whether the comment that "So he caused the ark of Yahweh to go around the city" could imply that the entire fighting force of Israel didn't bother doing as commanded on the first circuit of the city- possibly they just sent the ark around it. Likewise the people were to shout when the trumpets sounded (:10). But in reality, like a Sunday School play gone wrong, the people shouted, the trumpets sounded, and then the people again shouted (:20). There's a distinct theme in the record that actually, God's people didn't do according to His ideal plan, and yet still He gave them the victory. According to Heb. 11:30, “by faith the walls of Jericho fell down”. Whose faith? What faith? Was Joshua-Jesus' faith counted to the people? Or was their very weak, hope-for-the-best faith all the same accepted as faith by God's grace?

6:18 The riches of Jericho are described with a Hebrew word which means both a curse, and something devoted (to God). This teaches a powerful lesson: such riches of this world as come into our possession will curse us, unless they are devoted to the Father. Mammon is an “abomination” (Lk. 16:13,15)- a word associated in the Old Testament with idol worship. We are to not only be free of such idolatry, but despise materialism.

6:24 1 Cor. 3:12-15 likens all the faithful to material which can pass through the fire of judgment- and this surely is a reference to the way that Jericho was burnt with fire, and only the metals along with Rahab and her family came through that fire to salvation. Thus according to the allusion, Rahab and her family represent all the faithful.

7:3-5 Shouldn’t Joshua have led them into battle in person (1:5)? He did the second time they attacked Ai (8:15).

7:7,8 Joshua here lost faith in the promise of 1:5-7,9.

7:10,11,13 Joshua is being reminded not to just see himself as part of a community, but to remember his personal relationship with God, and not to have such a low self image.

7:11 All we have, are, were, shall ever be, is purely His gift. Therefore to take for ourselves what is God’s is to play God. Materialism and selfishness are in this sense playing God. This was Achan’s sin- to take what was devoted to God for himself. And this was why he is described as having ‘stolen’. But from whom? From God (cp. 6:18). The fact God owns everything means that there can be no distinction between what is ours and what is God’s. To think like that is to steal from Him. And hence the power and force of Mal. 3:8: “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me”. Have we robbed God in this way, especially in our attitudes and perceptions?

7:13 “Get up!” is repeated twice (:10), as if Joshua was so easily discouraged that he was still lying on the ground, disobedient to God’s encouragement.

7:19 Joshua correctly perceived that repentance is a giving of glory to God’s Name.

7:21 A condemned man having hidden God’s money in the ground is clearly the basis of Christ’s parable about the man who was given one talent, who hid it in the ground and did nothing with it (Mt. 25:25). But in the parable, the man didn’t steal it; he was given it by Jesus, but didn’t do anything with it. The connection is to perhaps teach us that passively doing nothing with God’s wealth is the same as actively stealing it from Him; the sin of omission is just as bad as that of commission.

8:1 Joshua’s dismay was a loss of lost faith in 1:3,9.

8:2 God told Israel to totally destroy the spoil from the cities they attacked. But when they failed to do this with Jericho, God told them that with Ai, the next city on the agenda, they were allowed to keep the spoil; even though Dt. 20:14-16 said that this was how they should treat their distant enemies, but not cities like Ai which were part of their inheritance. This was an undoubted concession to human weakness. The same concession to human weakness applied to other cities apart from Ai; it became a general policy that Israelites took all the spoil of the Canaanite cities for themselves; and yet following straight on from this we are told that Joshua "left nothing undone of all that Yahweh commanded Moses" (11:14,15). God accepted those concessions to human weakness, this living on a lower level, as total obedience. The grace of all this is marvellous.

8:5 *We will flee before them*- Fleeing before their enemies was perhaps a recognition of the truth of Dt. 28:25. This was included in the battle plan in order to show recognition that they had sinned and deserved to flee. God gave them, and us, victory on the basis they recognized that they deserved to be defeated.

8:18 The glint of the sun on the javelin would’ve been the signal for the ambushers to come and attack the city.

8:26 Given the similarities with the battle against Amalek, were Joshua’s arms held up in fervent prayer? Prayer is commonly associated with upheld arms. Earlier, Moses had held his hands up whilst Joshua led the army into battle, succeeding because Moses had his hands held up in prayer (Ex. 17:10). Now, Joshua is the one holding his hands up in prayer, whilst Israel are in battle. Lesson: We go through experiences which later repeat; and we are in the position of those who had before prayed for us, and are expected to replicate their examples.

9:7 One gets the sense that the Gibeonites’ deception was somehow guessed by the elders of Israel, but against their better judgment they disregarded the telltale signs. We all have a tendency to go against our better judgment.

9:10 Because a word or phrase means something in one context doesn't mean it always means this in any context. Thus "yeast" can be a symbol of both the Gospel and also sin. Another simple example is in Dt. 3:20; the land "beyond Jordan" refers to land on the West of the river; but in Josh. 9:10 the same phrase refers to land on the East. That same phrase "beyond Jordan" means something different in different contexts. We can't always assume, therefore, that the same phrase must refer to the same thing wherever it occurs.

9:14-18 Joshua here was too influenced by his ‘committee’, acting against his better judgment, it seems, because of the pressure of others upon him.

9:23 *The house of my God*- Paralleled with “the congregation” (:21). God’s house is His people rather than any physical building.

10:8 Was this a lack of faith in 1:5?

10:10 It was due to Joshua’s faithfulness to the Gibeonites that this great battle and victory occurred. We see how God worked through the Gibeonites’ deception and Israel’s unwisdom- to bring about a situation whereby His people could take possession of the Kingdom. He does things like this all the time; rather than turning away from human failure in disgust, He works through it; just as we should when confronted by it in ourselves and in others.

10:11 Joshua’s conquest of the Canaanite tribes looks forward to the work of his greater namesake, Jesus, at His return. Adoni-Zedek, king of Jerusalem and the counterpart of Melchizedek, is representative of the latter day anti-Christ figure who will rule there in the last days. He leads a confederacy of Arab nations against Joshua-Jesus, and is destroyed with hailstones (:11)- an event which is the basis for the latter day prophecy of Rev. 16:21. Joshua’s men placing their feet upon the necks of their enemies (:24) is the prototype of all enemies being subdued under the Lord in the last day; and the way “the God of Israel fought for Israel” at this time (:42) is the basis of many latter day statements to the same effect.

10:12 This is amazing faith in prayer; Joshua commanded things to happen, so sure of the prayer being heard.

10:13 There are a number of references in Scripture to books like the book of Jashar which we no longer have available to us. Whether they were inspired or not, we don't know; but the point is, they are no longer available to us because God knows that we do not need them. By contrast, the books in the Bible have been preserved for us; God would not have inspired and preserved books like Leviticus or the Chronicles genealogies unless they were important for us in some way.

10:14 The sun standing still could mean that a different dimension of time was entered into- see on :42. But in the midst of a very literal record, it could equally well be understood literally. This would’ve meant that the entire solar system was affected; for no one part of it can stop dead in its tracks without affecting the whole planetary system. And perhaps the effects of that would have been felt even further… possible the entire cosmos stopped. All because of the fervent prayer of a man standing on planet earth. Such is the power of prayer. And further, Joshua didn’t just ask for this just in case God might hear it. He prayed the prayer of command, so intense was his faith that God would do this mighty act so that His work could go ahead.

10:25- see on 14:8.

10:28 *On that day*- A huge amount happened that day and over the next two days; see on 10:42.

10:42 The events around Christ's return were prefigured by those at the time of Joshua's conquest of the land. Some of the records of his campaigns require a huge amount to have been achieved by his soldiers within around 36 hours. The comment that so much was achieved "at one time" may hint at a compression of time to enable it. "The sun stood still" may well be intended to teach that the meaning of time was collapsed by God, rather than that the sun literally stood still (:12,13). And the sun standing still over Gibeon is mentioned in Is. 28:21 as typical of the time when Yahweh will do "His strange work, and bring to pass his act, his strange act" in the last days. The same may be true when the shadow went back for Hezekiah. The movement of the planets need not have been altered; the meaning of time was simply suspended. This collapsing of time would also explain why it is impossible to construct a chronology of events in real time for the coming of Christ; the various prophecies of the last days just don't seem to fit together in chronological sequence. If indeed time is collapsed, this would enable all these prophecies to come true, but not in time as we know it. Babylon is to be punished with famine in one day; yet famine is a process (Rev. 18:8). In one day her judgments come, and yet also in one hour (18:10). Surely the lesson is that time is compressed. Rev. 8:12, also speaking of the last days, says that “the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise”. Could this mean that one day and one night last only two thirds of their usual length, whilst the judgments of the fourth Angel are poured out upon the land? This collapsing of time will enable us each to be judged individually without having to wait our turn in line.

11:4 *As the sand that is on the seashore*- The same phrase used about Israel (Gen. 32:12). The kingdoms of this world masquerade as the kingdom of God. The world is set up as a fake people of God, and this will lead to the final conflict between the real Christ and the imitation or anti-Christ at His return.

11:6,14 Can this be considered a lack of faith in 1:9?

11:9 This made no human sense, to destroy the latest military technology which had fallen into their hands. But this is the way of faith.

11:11 The word “soul” here doesn’t refer to anything inherently immortal within us. It refers to the human person. All the people (*nephesh*) that were within the city of Hazor were killed by the sword (cp. 10:30-39). The “soul” is therefore not immortal.

*He burnt Hazor with fire*- A destruction of Hazor by fire at this time has been confirmed by archaeological exploration there.

11:15- see on 8:2.

11:22 Samson went to Gaza conscious that his people had failed to drive out the tribes. Judah had captured it in Joshua's strength (1:18), but had let the Philistines return. We too must do our part to retain the victory for us which has been won by Joshua-Jesus.

11:23 Much land was still not possessed (13:1; 16:10; 18:3; 23:4); does 11:23 therefore imply that the land had been possessed only in the perceptions of Israel? How responsible was Joshua for this? Or was it that Joshua destroyed the leadership structure of the Canaanites, but Israel failed to go and possess what he had secured for them, just as we fail to appropriate to ourselves all the victory of Christ?

12:1,7 *The kings of the land* – The Hebrew word *eretz* refers to both the land promised to Abraham, and to the whole planet. When we read of “the kings of the earth / land” in Revelation, these likewise refer to the rulers within the territory promised to Abraham, from the Nile to the Euphrates.

12:7 *Joshua gave it to the tribes of Israel for a possession according to their divisions*- The comment of Ps. 136:17,22 is that the 31 kings were slain as an act of God’s grace, in order to give the land to Israel for a heritage or possession. Israel didn’t deserve these victories, they were by God’s grace.

12:8 *The mountains… the slopes… the wilderness*- The conquests of Joshua-Jesus were extensive. Yet when Israel took the land, they settled just in the fertile areas and let the Canaanites live in those infertile areas, rather than completely destroy them (Jud. 1:34). We too can as it were take possession of those parts of the Kingdom life which are convenient to us, rather than in the spirit of Jesus-Joshua take full possession

12:9 The list of kings which follow appear to be in the order in which they were defeated. Not all these battles and victories are recorded, in the same way as not all the struggles and victories of Jesus are known or perceived by us.

13:1 *There remains yet very much land to be possessed*- Joshua, like Jesus, had won all the battles; but God’s people failed to go and possess what could so easily have been theirs. Defining what exactly hadn’t been possessed was a good idea psychologically; it also helps us if we set ourselves specific spiritual objectives, no matter how limited, so that we can tackle them.

13:14 The Levites had no material inheritance because "the sacrifices of Yahweh... are his inheritance... Yahweh… was their inheritance" (:14,33). Notice how "Yahweh" is put for what is sacrificed to Him. His very existence is an imperative to sacrifice to Him, despising all material advantage in doing so.

13:22 *Among the rest of their slain*- The impression is given that Balaam suffered their punishment and was counted amongst them. Yet it would seem that he was an Israelite, at one time a prophet of Yahweh, and in touch with the true God. Yet he died with the Midianites. If we side with this world in this life, then we will share their condemnation at Christ’s return and not inherit the Kingdom; we will be “condemned with the world” (1 Cor. 11:32).

13:30 *Sixty cities*- Christ’s parable of Lk. 19:12-18 likes our rewards in God’s future Kingdom as being given varying numbers of cities to rule over. This confirms that Israel’s entry to Canaan was seen by Him as typical of our entry into God’s Kingdom on earth when Christ returns.

14:8 Joshua and Caleb were earlier characterized by the comment that they “wholly followed the Lord” when they went to spy out Canaan, and urged Israel to go up and inherit it (:8,9,14; Num. 14:24; 32:11,12; Dt. 1:36). This refers to the way that the Angel had gone ahead of them, and they faithfully followed where the Angel had gone, and believed that Israel could follow that Angel wherever it led. When Israel finally did go into the land, they were told that Joshua would ‘go before’ them, and they were to follow him and thereby inherit the land (Dt. 31:3). From this we see that circumstances repeat in our lives. As Joshua had been told to be strong good courage in order to take the land, so he had to tell others (10:25). Joshua had faithfully followed, and now he became the leader who was to be faithfully followed. We must walk in step with the Spirit / Angel in our lives; and yet no matter how much we’ve walked in step with Him, we can always allow pressure of circumstances to let us fall out of step with Him.

14:12-14 On one level, we can quite rightly ask for material blessing, and the Father is pleased that we should. But there is a higher level we can live on, where requesting physical blessings doesn't figure so largely. We can be like Caleb, who conquered Hebron (his part in the Kingdom) for himself and then gave it to others. In any case, Hebron became a priestly city for the Levites to live in. He gave his place in the Kingdom to others, reflecting the grace he had received- that was the level of love this great man reached. Moses reached a similar height of loving devotion to God’s people in Ex. 32:32-34.

14:14 This is in the context of the Angel going before the people. Caleb zealously followed the Angel which went before him, and therefore he obtained his inheritance which in prospect the Angel had prepared for him. Our guardian Angels are preparing victories in prospect for us too. ‘Caleb’ means ‘dog’ and so the language of faithful following is a play on his name.

15:8 In the New Testament there are two Greek words translated ‘hell’ in many Bibles. The Greek *hades* is the equivalent of the Hebrew *sheol* which refers to the grave. ‘Gehenna’ is the name of the rubbish tip which was just outside Jerusalem, where the refuse from the city was burnt. As a proper noun - i.e. the name of an actual place - it should have been left untranslated as ‘Gehenna’ rather than be translated as ‘hell’. ‘Gehenna’ is the Aramaic equivalent of the Hebrew ‘Ge-ben-Hinnon’. This was located near Jerusalem (15:8; 18:16), and at the time of Christ it was the city rubbish dump. Dead bodies of criminals were thrown onto the fires which were always burning there, so that Gehenna became symbolic of total destruction and rejection. What was thrown onto those fires did not remain there forever- the bodies decomposed into dust.

15:13 Joshua had taken Hebron (10:36) but Israel had not followed up his victory, and the Philistines had returned; and so Caleb then took it. Joshua / Jesus has won great victories for us against every barrier which might stop us entering the Kingdom- but we have to do our part in making good that victory.

15:18 Such examples of spiritual ambition are inspirational; just as soldiers inspire each other by their acts of bravery. Achsah followed her father Caleb’s spiritual ambition in specifically asking for an inheritance in the Kingdom (14:12); and this in turn inspired another woman to ask for an inheritance soon afterwards (17:4). And so it ought to be in any healthy congregation of believers.

15:33-36 Zorah, Samson's home town, was originally Judah's inheritance, but they spurned it, and passed it to Dan (19:41), who also weren't interested; for they migrated to the north and took over the land belonging to the less warlike Sidonians (Jud. 18:2,7-10). Those who don’t want an inheritance in the Kingdom won’t have it; those who truly love Christ’s appearing and the things of the Kingdom will be given it (2 Tim. 4:8). Yet from such a weak, spiritually disinterested background, a man of faith like Samson came.

15:60 *Kiriath Baal (the same is Kiriath Jearim)*- Often in the lists of place names we are told that the name was changed; in this case, from “Baal” to “Jearim”. All restimulations of and associations with paganism, idolatry and the old life are to be erased.

15:63 They, like us, could have driven them out, because Joshua-Jesus had won the victory; but they failed to follow up on it.

16:9 God redefined the boundaries of the land in accordance to what Israel had the strength to subdue; He made account for their weakness as He does for us. Thus Ephraim were given some cities within the inheritance of Manasseh, presumably because Manasseh wouldn’t drive out the tribes living there. And the Lord Jesus seems to have alluded to this by saying that we will be given cities, the number of which depends upon our zeal to possess them. God had clearly promised that He would expel the tribes and “You shall possess their land” (23:5). But this promise was conditional upon them making the effort, even though that condition is not specifically mentioned. Ultimately, God will “enlarge all the borders of the land” (Is. 26:15 RV) because Israel will finally rise up to the spiritual ambition He desires of them.

17:1 *Because he was a man of war, therefore he had Gilead and Bashan*- These areas were where resistance was strongest. God will give us a unique place in the Kingdom appropriate to our personality.

17:4 We note the spiritual ambition of these women, bravely pushing forward their desire for personal inheritance in the Kingdom in a male world which generally ignored them.

17:13 One reason why Israel failed to drive out the tribes, and thereby lost the Kingdom, was simply because they wanted to take tribute from them. Ez. 7:19 defines “silver and gold” as Israel’s stumbling block- moreso than idols. Wealth and the easy life have been the most common form of spiritual destruction in the history of God’s people.

17:14 *Why have you given me just one lot*- The people were lazy to inherit the Kingdom, and lacking in real faith. So they blamed their lack of full inheritance on Joshua. The lazy and faithless will always seek a human scapegoat to excuse themselves for things which are solely their fault.

17:18 *You shall drive out the Canaanites* – This is an example of what appears to be prophecy being actually a command, not a prediction. For those tribes proved too strong for lazy, minimising Israel. And so in that sense the ‘prophecy’ wasn’t fulfilled. Israel failed to be inspired by it. They waited for its fulfilment rather than went out to fulfil it. And we can do likewise.

18:3 One simple reason why Israel failed to inherit the Kingdom in the time of Joshua / Judges was that they were simply "slack", lazy, to drive out the tribes (the same Hebrew word is used in Ex. 5:8 regarding how the Egyptians perceived them to be lazy; and also in Prov. 18:9). They were happy to receive tribute from them, and to enjoy what blessings they received. They were satisficers, not men of principle or mission; not real bond slaves. And for this, God rejected them and they never really inherited the Kingdom prepared for them.

18:8 When Joshua told the spies “Go walk through the land…”, they ought to have perceived that he was asking them to walk in the faith of Abraham- to believe that this land truly had been promised to them, as his seed. God sometimes sets us up in situations in which we are intended to perceive the similarity with some incident in Biblical history, and to thereby be encouraged to act appropriately and in faith. For this to ‘work’ it requires a sensitive familiarity with Scripture; hence the advisability of daily Bible reading.

18:16 *The valley of Hinnom*- See on 15:8.

18:28 All these names would likely have been listened to by the tribes with the same attitude as we have when we hear or read them- they are places unknown to us, and so we tend to indifferently let them pass us by. But the tribes, in this case Benjamin, should’ve been paying careful attention and perceiving the extent of their inheritance, and what exactly was required of them. Instead they were satisfied with their farms and didn’t want to see the bigger picture of what was possible for them. They could’ve not only possessed their own land allocation to its fullness, but also inherited the territory right up to the Euphrates. God conceded to their smallness of vision by trying to get them to concentrate on the land between the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea; but they didn’t want to even exploit that area as God enabled them to. We too can read the descriptions of God’s Kingdom and not be really motivated by grasping the reality of the fact that this is really our land, our inheritance, our eternal destiny that’s being described.

19:1 The inheritance of Simeon and Judah was merged because of their inability to expel the Canaanites. The boundaries of the promised land and indeed the individual possessions of the tribes were changed by God in accordance with the weakness of Israel to actually drive out the tribes and take the inheritance. Thus He “changed the portion of My people” (Mic. 2:4).Right up to our own day we see the same Divine sensitivity to the weakness of His people and His eagerness to work with them at whatever low level they relate to Him on.

19:9 We see a lot of grace in how the Biblical records are written, in how God perceives history. “The portion of the children of Judah was too much for them" almost implies God made an error in allocating them too much; when actually the problem was that they lacked the faith to drive out the tribes living there. Likewise the extension of Dan’s border by them in :47 overlooks the fact that actually the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountains, and Dan wasn’t strong or faithful enough to live in the valley areas (Jud. 1:34). When Dan fought against Leshem, this one act of obedience is so magnified in :47 to sound as if in their zeal to inherit their territory they actually found they had too little land and therefore attacked Leshem. But actually it was already part of their allotted inheritance. Yet God graciously comments that "all their inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel" (Jud. 18:1).

19:50 This is an example of spiritual ambition. Note the huge breadth in attitude amongst the children of God at this time; some were so indifferent to their inheritance that they gave it to other tribes or never even went there to try to possess it; others took their inheritance and had the initiative to ask for more land. This breadth in commitment levels within the people of God can be very discouraging, but thus it has always been. Joshua and Caleb must have found the negative, faithless attitude of the others hard to live with, but they didn’t let it take away from their own zeal for God.

20:4 Heb. 6:18 invites us to see ourselves as this person who had committed sin worthy of death and yet, as it were, without his conscious, wilful desire to do so; and our city of refuge is the Lord Jesus.

20:6 Final deliverance for the manslayer was given at the death of the High Priest, when his case was judged. This pointed forward to the final freedom achieved for us by Christ’s death, which was in a sense our judgment (Jn. 12:31; 16:11). Christ’s death on the cross is repeatedly presented as our judgment; hence in remembering His death in the breaking of bread we have a foretaste of our future judgment, and are in a sense judged there.

20:7,8 The cities of refuge were in inaccessible areas- up mountains or in the desert. There had to be a conscious effort to go there, just as we don’t drift into Christ but must take the conscious decision to be baptized into Him, which is the counterpart to entering into the city of refuge (:4).

21:2 The implication could be that the people had been slack to give the Levites their cities. We get the impression that once they entered the land, it was every man for himself; very few saw the wider, larger picture of possessing the entire land and establishing a nationwide worship system whereby the Levites would teach the people about God. The people of God today can likewise be very self-centred rather than thinking what would be best for the community as a whole. The Levites’ request for an inheritance to be given them can be seen in continuity with Joshua, Caleb and Caleb’s daughter asking for a specific inheritance and being given it; whoever really wants to be in the Kingdom will be there, all who truly love Christ’s appearing (with all that true love implies) will be given salvation (2 Tim. 4:8). Maybe Jesus was alluding to these passages in Joshua when He taught that whoever asks will receive (Mt. 7:7). This isn’t a blank cheque promise, but rather saying that whoever really wants salvation and an inheritance in the Kingdom will receive it.

21:41 The Levites were one of the smallest tribes and yet were given 48 cities, far more cities than some of the larger tribes. This was perhaps because it was God’s intention to dramatically increase the number of the Levites if they were faithful (Ps. 115:12-14) in order to spiritually strengthen Israel yet more. But again, a great potential was set up by God, in some detail, but wasn’t realized because of human weakness.

21:43,44 The Lord gave them the land, i.e. potentially, but they failed to possess it. Yahweh gave them rest, and yet Heb. 4:8 says that Joshua did *not* give them rest, and therefore there remains this “rest” to be received by God’s people at Christ’s return. Is this therefore an implied criticism of Joshua, or of Israel?

21:44 *Not a man of all their enemies stood before them* - But their enemies did stand before them, they didn't possess all the land. Yet God puts it over so positively, as if it's a story with a happy ending- when actually it's a tragedy. Even when rebuking them, God sees Israel as in some ways perfect (Num. 23:21; Is. 42:18-20). We stand related to the same grace, and should reflect it in being positive and gracious in our view of our brethren.

21:45 *All came to pass*- The promises by the Angel at the exodus came true in prospect; but tragically Israel did not make them good, so that in reality only a fraction of the blessings were realized. All of God’s people today have in a sense been given the Kingdom; but not all will possess it because not all want to.

22:2-4 This seems an over positive view of Israel, an exaggeration of their true spiritual position- cp. 23:4; 24:14,23. Or is this rooted in Joshua’s love for them, not seeing iniquity in Jacob? Moses had told the Reubenites and Gadites that they could return to their possessions when God had given rest unto the other tribes and they had also possessed their lands (Dt. 3:20). But Joshua tells them to go to their possessions simply because their brethren were now at “rest”; although Heb. 4:8 says that they did not inherit the “rest” at Joshua’s time. He significantly omits the proviso that their brethren must also possess the land- because much of the land wasn’t possessed. Was this Joshua getting slack, thinking that the main thing was that people were living in peace, even though they weren’t possessing the Kingdom? Or is it a loving concession to human weakness? Indeed, the conditions of Dt. 3:20 were in their turn an easier form, a concession to, the terms of the initial agreement in Num. 32:20-32.

22:4- see on 1:13-15.

22:12 There is no record that they first of all attempted to ascertain the truth or otherwise of the accusation. The two and a half tribes had been fighting for them, helping them get their possessions, and had now returned home. The ten tribes should have been grateful to them; but instead they accuse them of apostacy on hearsay evidence alone, and seem eager to kill them. It so often happens that those we help the most, later turn against us. This is rooted in pride; we don’t like to accept help, we like to think we have what we have because of our own efforts rather than the kindness of others; and so we like to find fault with our helpers. All the tribes should’ve been helping each other secure their inheritance, but it seems most of them just grabbed some land for themselves and didn’t see the bigger picture of helping and enabling their brethren to also possess their inheritances. When we see others doing what we have failed to do and ought to be doing, we tend to want to pull them down to our level, eagerly listen to gossip against them, imagine the worst about them, condemn them and even destroy them. The Biblical record of this kind of thing happening is a comfort to us.

22:16 *Thus says the whole congregation of Yahweh*- It was unlikely that these hypocritical heresy hunters [see on :18] had actually got consent from every single person in Israel to say this; so often, divisive heresy hunters falsely claim to be speaking on behalf of all God’s people.

22:18 *Since you rebel today against Yahweh*- This was hypocritical, for the prophets repeatedly declare that Israel as a whole were persistently rebellious against Yahweh from the day that He had entered covenant with them at Sinai (Dt. 31:27; Ps. 78:8; Is. 63:10; 65:2; Ez. 2:3; 20:8). They were still themselves worshipping idols (24:14). Such hypocrisy is understandable in psychological terms; on a subconscious level, sinners know they have sinned and rebelled against God, and so they transfer this on to others and eagerly give them punishment for it. By facing up fully to our sins, repenting and accepting as just whatever judgment God gives us, we are saved from this tendency. We will not be hypocrites.

22:19 It seems they perceived the land to the East of Jordan as “unclean” (see :25 too)- even though right up to the Euphrates had been promised to them. They were told that if they considered it unclean, then they could inherit on the West of Jordan. According to Israel’s perception of the land, so it was defined for them. And so with us- as we define God’s working, so, in some ways, will it be unto us (Lk. 19:22,23). Note how they ended up playing God: “rebel against Yahweh… rebel against us”, and went madly ahead quoting lots of ‘Biblical’ history which was irrelevant to the case in hand to try to justify their own anger.

23:6 As God had charged him to be courageous and obedient to the book of the Law (1:7,8), so Joshua on his deathbed charged his people. In spiritual maturity, our concern will be for the things of God’s people rather than ourselves. We will encourage others from our own experience and example. See on 14:8.

23:7 This command not to make mention of other gods is alluded to in Eph. 5:3; the various ways of the flesh equate with the idols of Joshua’s time.

23:9,14 Was Joshua being too positive, seeing things as achieved that hadn’t been (cp. Jud. 1:1)? He seems to have tried to perceive the promises, which were conditional upon obedience, as having been fulfilled fully when they hadn’t been. Solomon made the same mistake. See on 24:14.

23:12,13 To marry back into Egypt or Canaan, the non-Kingdom people, is to despise the covenant, to reverse the redemptive work which God has wrought with us, to not *love* God (:11). In the context of marriage out of the Faith, we read that God will destroy ‘him that *hates* Him’, and repay him to his face (Dt. 7:2-11). On the other hand, not marrying Gentiles was part of loving God. Wilful marriage out of the faith is a very wrong and sad thing, although God will seek to work through it as He does with all human failure.

24:2 Righteous Abraham was “gathered to his people” (or ancestors), on death (Gen. 25:8); and they were idolaters. Believers and unbelievers all go to the same place at death; it’s not true that the good go to Heaven and the bad to ‘hell’. The separation between sheep and goats happens at the day of judgment at Christ’s return.

24:10 Balaam, in his heart, didn't want to bless Israel; he wanted to curse them so he could get his hands on the riches Balak promised him if he did so (Num. 22,23). Balaam knew if God had told him to bless Israel, there was no way of changing things. But God here says that He refused to hear Balaam's prayer to curse Israel. It seems that Yahweh read Balaam's latent, unexpressed desires as prayer to Him. When we are too weak or sick to pray, God still reads our situations as prayer, even if unexpressed in so many words.

24:12 Jacob’s last words claim that he had taken Shechem from the Amorites “with my sword and with my bow" (Gen. 48:22). These very words are alluded to here and in Ps. 44:1-6, where the Spirit says that the land was given to Israel not on account of their bow and sword. Even at the end of his life, Jacob's old self-reliance was still not totally gone; his sense that through his own effort he could bring about the fulfilment of God's promises for Him. In this area, the weakness of Jacob remained. This gives us patience with our fellow believers who never seem to ‘get it’ in some spiritual areas; and comforts us in our own failures to achieve perfection in other aspects of spirituality.

24:14 Compare Joshua’s earlier over positive statements (see on 22:2; 23:9). Now in his spiritual maturity it seems he came to a final sense of realism about sin, obedience and Israel’s failure.

24:15 *As for me… we will serve*- Joshua realized that Israel, whom he had seen as so obedient (see on 22:2; 23:9), actually weren’t serving God at all.

24:16 *Far be it from us*- The kind of hypocrisy of 22:18 [see note there].

24:19,23 Joshua at the end of his life came to a final realism as to the real nature of sin, and the ultimate demands which God makes upon human life in practice.

24:24 *We will listen to His voice*- The people don’t respond to the command to throw away their idols by saying ‘Yes OK, we shall do so’; instead they say that they will hear God’s word. Interest in the Bible, reading it and even enthusing about it, can be done whilst at the same time still serving idols.

24:30 *Buried him in the border of his inheritance*- As if they expected him to be resurrected and then enter into it at Messiah’s coming.