

## What Changes & What Needs to Stay the Same? Joshua

- What do you do if/when you discover that your definition of God doesn't align with what you read about Him in Scripture?
- What do you do when the instructions/commands of God, in Scripture, go against what you believe is right (or good)?

The book of Joshua will test our understanding of who God is, and how we perceive that He works! But remember that God, & His ways, are above us!

I won't lie to you, or shelter you! If you read Scripture, you will encounter difficult things that will make you question what you thought you believed!

I don't have all the answers, but I'm here to help. And I choose to start with, & believe, Scripture as the standard of truth, even if I don't understand it!

- In the book of Joshua, God commands His people to invade Canaan & take the land for themselves by destroying everything & everyone in it! Josh. 6:17-18

- In the book of Joshua, God spares the life of a pagan prostitute, along with her family, but allows 36 Israelite soldiers die b/c of the sin of another! Josh 7:5

- In the book of Joshua, Achan & His family are stoned/burned b/c they kept for themselves the things in battle that were devoted to the Lord! Josh. 7:25-26

There is much we may not fully understand, or even like, about the ways of God found here in this book, but God continues to show Himself faithful to His covenant promise and to His people!

We also see in this book of Joshua:

- God allowing His people to cross through the Jordan river on dry ground as they entered the promised land, just as He did at the Red Sea! **Joshua 3**

- God bringing victory at the battle of Jericho, by simply having the people walk around the city walls, blow their horns, and shout! **Joshua 6**

- God confusing their enemies & putting them in a panic, bringing down large stones upon them, and causing the sun to stand still for a whole day until the people of God defeated their enemies! **Joshua 10:9-14**

How do we reconcile the things of God in our minds? How do we understand Him and His ways? **We don't!** Some things we will never have

answers for until heaven! The question is will we trust/love/serve Him?

The themes of this book are trust, obedience, and submission to God! And there is much that we can apply of these themes to our context/lives today!

As the people of God crossed over the Jordan River, defeated their enemies, and settled into this new land, **they had to wrestle with change** – what needed to change in this new land and what needed to stay the same!

As we, the people of God today, cross over a 2 yr threshold of medical, political, racial hysteria, we too need to wrestle with these same questions of change!

### What can change, and what needs to stay the same?

- **Our location changes, but who our God is does not!** From Egypt, to the desert, to the promised land; from within the walls of this building, to our homes, to online... Where we are can change, God stays the same!
- **Our leaders may change, but our primary Leader never does!** Joshua replaced Moses! I replaced Pastor Don! President Biden replaced President Trump... Human leadership changes, but God remains on the throne!
- Who the people of God are changes over time, but **who we are as God's covenant people never does!** The descendants of Abraham, the nation of Israel, a pagan prostitute & her family, the Church... We may look, talk, & act a little different, but if God has made a promise to us, He will be faithful!
- **The threats we are up against may change, but God's presence, power, & deliverance remains constant!** The Jordan River, the walls of Jericho, the inhabitants of Canaan, the setting sun; Covid-19, racial disunity, political division, theological separation, etc. Our God is greater!
- **The task may change, but the need for obedience remains the same!** Take possession of the land, destroy the inhabitants, stone the transgressor; forgive the sinner, love your enemies, make disciples, be witnesses for the Kingdom of God throughout the world – obedience is a non-negotiable!

In every era of time, the people of God are faced with the same question – **"Who will you serve?"** - The God of our fathers... or the gods of this world?

**Joshua 24:14-28** – **"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."** How do we, how will we, answer that same question today? Who will we serve? No matter what changes in our world, may Joshua's response be our own!

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