

## **Dr. David Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 9, Joshua 6-8**

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This is Dr. David Howard in his teaching on Joshua through Ruth. This is session number nine, Joshua 6-8, Jericho and Ai.

Okay, hello. In this segment, we're going to launch now into the second major section of the book. I would include chapters six to twelve in this section and many commentators would talk about this as the conquest of the land, the battles. I choose to call this section Inheriting the land, following my understanding of what's the major thrust of the book, God's gift and the inheritance, and so on.

But yes, these are the chapters, six to eleven at least, where Israel is engaged in the conflicts against the Canaanites. It begins rather slowly with the first military-style encounter with the Canaanites at Jericho and then we have the, and that's a great victory, God gave the victory of course, but then we have the stumble as Israel acts unfaithfully and they are defeated and then they have to address that issue and then come back and take the second city, Ai. Then there's the issue of the Israelites being deceived by the Gibeonites in chapter nine.

There's a silver lining there though because those are Canaanites who are spared and, in a sense, become part of Israel in the same way that Rahab in a more straightforward manner became part of Israel. Chapter ten is kind of a summary, in summary fashion tells about one specific battle in its aftermath and then many of the other battles in the southern section, and then chapter eleven is about the battles in the northern part of the land. Chapter twelve is kind of, just the summary, the list of the kings who were conquered and that ends this section.

So we'll begin, well before we go on, an important backdrop to this section is the commands that God gave earlier that all the Canaanites should be destroyed. So, if you want to just write these references down, we won't look them up right now, but in Deuteronomy chapter twenty verses sixteen to eighteen, God says this to the Israelites how they are to treat the cities in Canaan when they get there. Deuteronomy twenty verse sixteen says, In the cities of the nations that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, notice that language again, do not leave alive anything that breathes.

Completely destroy them, Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, six of them here, as the Lord your God has commanded you. Otherwise, they will teach you to follow all the detestable things they do in worshipping their gods, and you will sin against the Lord your God. Joshua himself reiterated those things, particularly in chapter six here.

So, we'll just jump in the middle here for a second. In verses seventeen and following, Joshua says, The city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute, all who are with her, shall live, because she hid the messages that were sent.

But you yourselves keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction. And so, it goes. So again, in another segment, we'll address more head-on the issue of the ethics of how can God command these things.

But we can't get around the fact that it is God who's commanding them, and Joshua's passing on the commands on the Lord's behalf. And so that's one of the things that gives us pause about the book. But right now, we'll just talk about what the book itself is telling us, and then address those other issues in another segment.

So, chapter six is the chapter about the actual destruction of Jericho. And the story of the first victory in the land is told in exquisite detail. I would make an analogy to the story of the stopping of the waters in chapter three.

The author slows down the narrative. He kind of goes over it and savors it over and over again, because it's such a great thing. Here, the lead-up to this is slow and exquisitely kind of building to a climax through the six days and the seventh day of circling Jericho.

I think because the author wants us to remember this. We should say that in a very poor map of the Near East here, let's remember Israel is here, and they've just crossed over. Jericho is kind of the gateway city in the valley here.

And there's a main transportation highway here, as well as one across here and over here. And so, it's in a crucial place. It's not that far from Jerusalem, which is about here.

And so, Israel coming in to capture Jericho, it's one of the great fortified cities that was in Canaan. Archaeologically, Jericho has been excavated, and there are great walls of that city. Archaeologists have gone back and forth as to exactly how to date and when to date the books.

You will read that there was an early scholar named John Garstang who found the walls and attributed them to Joshua. In the 1950s and 60s, a British archaeologist named Kathleen Kenyon disputed that and dated them and said that no, there's no evidence at all of the Israelites taking Jericho. And then, more recently, in the 80s and 90s and following, another scholar named Bryant Wood has argued, no, that Kenyon's methods of dating were incorrect.

And he was very detailed in kind of rebutting that. And I would say that Wood's word is sort of the final word at this point. And that, yes, there is very plausible evidence that, yes, Jericho was destroyed by Joshua in the time that is discussed.

Again, around 1400 B.C. in the earlier dates. But the detail told in this chapter kind of attests to the importance of the city and, of course, to the importance of the first time, the first event. Later events are more summarizing fashion.

But chapter 6, verse 1 begins, sets the stage for the beginning of the story, and presents us with a problem. The problem is that Jericho is shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. Now, remember, in chapter 5, verse 1, all the people of the land were afraid of Israel, but they had shut up the city defensively.

So, none went in, none came out. And you can understand that from the Jerichoites' point of view. But from the Israelites' point of view, that's going to be a problem.

How are they going to get in? How are they going to take the city when it's fortified and shut up like this? So, God, chapter 6, verse 2, says to Joshua, look, I have given. There's that verb of giving in the past time again. Now, obviously, they're not in there yet.

They haven't taken it. But yet God says, I've given you the city. So, it kind of illustrates the point that we made back in chapter 1, verse 3. It's, in a sense, a done deal in God's hand.

Israel has legal title to it. I've given Jericho into your hand, and its king, and mighty men of valor, and shall march around the city. All the men of war for six days, the seventh day, do it seven times, blow the trumpets, and ultimately the walls are going to come down.

Great detail in these verses here. It kind of tells us that story. It kind of gets repetitive.

It kind of makes our eyes glaze over after a while, perhaps, the repetition of Hebrew narrative. But I think it's kind of to remind us of the rituals in the Pentateuch. It's almost as if it's presenting the destruction or the capture of Jericho in the same way as the celebration of the festival of the harvest or the festival of the other kinds of things with the days marked and the calendar marked.

And it's setting this off as its own kind of ritual, an offering, like a burnt offering to the Lord. And I think that's indicative of the way it's told here and the way it unfolds. Otherwise, obviously, God could have said, go around at once and the walls will come down.

But God makes them go through this elaborate ritual to build on the rituals in Chapter 5 and to remind them that this is not just a military thing. It's a sacrifice to the Lord, and it's to be devoted to the Lord. You're not to keep the spoils.

You're to give it to God sort of as the first fruits, as you give the first fruits of the land whenever you harvest things. This is, in a sense, the first city and the first fruit. And you remember later when Achan takes, disobeys that and takes things, he is told later that, I'm sorry when he's killed and then the people go in Chapter 8, God gives instructions to the people that they should take of the spoil of Ai.

And so, if Achan had just waited, he could have had some of the spoil himself. But anyway, back here, so there's a slow buildup. And then in the seventh day, look what it says in verse 15.

They rose up early at the dawn of the day. They're getting up early a lot in the book of Joshua. Joshua gets up early himself in Chapter 3, verse 1. And here they're doing this.

They're ready to go. And everything is to be devoted to destruction, verse 17. And only let Rahab live, et cetera.

Don't take the things for yourself. The silver and gold, verse 19, are holy to the Lord. They shall go into the treasury.

And so, in verse 20, the people shouted and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted, and the wall fell down flat. And the people went up into the city, every man straight before him.

They captured the city. The reason I pause here is because I think it's really interesting to see the contrast between the way the miracle is described in Chapter 3. Slow buildup and savoring it, repeating over and over again the verbs, and looking back at it, Chapter 4, the waters were stood up, and so on. A long stretch of emphasis and attention was paid to that miracle.

Here, it's almost like, bang, God did it. And effortlessly, the wall falls down, and that's the end of it. There's no further, the narrative goes right on.

So, there are interesting different ways. These are the first two miracles in the book, and it's interesting how they're both treated, one a little bit differently than the other. So then, in verses 22 to 26, we have Joshua instructing the men who had gone to see Rahab to go find her and her family and bring them out, and they otherwise burned everything in the city.

With fire, verse 24. And they saved Rahab and the prostitute, verse 25, and her father's household, everybody belonged to her. She has lived in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers.

So there's the reference we mentioned earlier. Rahab herself, physically, did she live in Israel to this day? Well, maybe, or maybe it's her household, her descendants. We see Rahab in the genealogy of Jesus in the New Testament, of course.

And then the wrap-up of this is that Joshua pronounces a curse on the city. You see it in verse 26. Cursed before the Lord be the man who rises up and rebuilds the city.

At the cost of his firstborn shall he lay his foundation. At the cost of his second son shall he set up his gates. So, there's the curse on Jericho.

And it really was never occupied in any significant way after this. But there's a very dramatic fulfillment to this curse, or this episode, in the book of 1 Kings. So I'll turn to it, if you want to turn to it as well, 1 Kings 16.

And this is in the days of Ahab, maybe 600, 500, 600 years later. Ahab was the most wicked king up to that point in time. And look at 1 Kings 16, verse 33.

It says Ahab made an asherah, a pole in honor of the wife of Baal. He did more to provoke the Lord the God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. And then verse 34.

In his day, the El of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundations at the cost of Abiram, his firstborn, and set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son, Segub, according to the word of the Lord which he spoke by Joshua, son of Nun. Really interesting, dramatic, tragic fulfillment, an echo of the passage here in Joshua 6. Tragically, someone did this, and he suffered because of it.

So that's the story of the taking of the city. And the city is being devoted to the Lord for destruction. Nothing was to be taken.

It's like offering the first fruits of your animals or your crops, whatever it would be. And in the land itself, Jericho was to be sort of the tithe of the things, and they were not to benefit from it in any way materially. And, of course, things go just the opposite direction in the next chapter.

So, chapter 7 tells us about the defeat of Israel at the next city, which was just nearby Jericho. We're not exactly sure of the exact location of Ai or Ai. A lot of discussion and debate about where exactly it was located.

For our purposes, we're not going to worry about that. It's just immediately to the west, 5, 10 miles somewhere within that vicinity. And so, in this chapter, chapter 7, I would call this section, refer to it as the covenant disobedience.

And we see it right from the beginning in verse 1. Chapter 7, verse 1. The people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things, these things that were to be devoted to destruction. And two things to note here. One is to say, notice that it's the people of Israel who are indicted in verse 1. But we're going to find out that it's really one person, Achan.

They broke faith in regard to the devoted things of Israel. For Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, et cetera, took some of the devoted things and the anger of the Lord and burned against the people. So, here's this kind of interplay between the individual and the nation.

And this idea that the sins of one person affect the nation and, of course, vice versa. And that's kind of a theme that we see much through much of the Old Testament. So that's the first thing.

Notice the sin of one person affected the larger group. But secondly, notice that the term in my version says broke faith. I think some versions say something like acted unfaithfully, something to that effect.

And so, what is the Hebrew word there? The word is used in Numbers 5 to talk about the way a wife would act toward her husband by committing adultery. In other words, breaking the covenant of marriage, and acting unfaithfully. There, that's the same word used here.

It's a betrayal of trust between two parties. So, in this taking of these forbidden things from Jericho, Achan was breaking the trust of the covenant that Israel had made with God. And remember back in Chapter 1, Israel had committed itself to obeying Joshua, who was God's representative.

And yet here we have a spectacular example of disobedience. So, verse 11 makes that explicit. Let's look at verse 11.

So, he, namely Achan, caused the ark of... I'm sorry, I'm in Chapter 6. I want to look at Chapter 7, verse 11. Let me find that. Actually, I want to... Yeah, verse 11 says a number of things.

Look, so God says to Joshua, verse 10, Chapter 7, Get up! Why have you fallen on your face? Because Joshua, of course, has prayed this prayer of kind of complaint against the Lord and lament. But God says, Israel has done a bunch of things. Now

notice Chapter 7, verse 1. It said that Achan broke faith by taking some of the devoted things.

So, there are two verbs there. Breaking faith, is kind of the more general abstract breaking the covenant. Taking devoted things, and that's it.

But God's indictment in verse 11, teases out a whole bunch of different aspects of that breaking faith. Verse 11, Israel has sinned. How so? Number one, they have transgressed my covenant.

So, there's the covenant, this idea of breaking the covenant. That I've commanded them. They have taken, number two, some of the devoted things.

They have stolen, number three. They have lied, number four. They have put them out on their own belongings.

So, God takes this one sin and teases out the different aspects of it and shows that it's a whole multitude of sins that have been committed here. And again, he's indicted the nation, not just this one man. So therefore, in verse 12, Therefore the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies.

That's an ironic statement because remember that's the same word found in Chapter 1 and when God says to Joshua, No one will be able to withstand you here. Israel cannot withstand against their enemies. And they turn their back before their enemies because they themselves have been devoted for destruction as opposed to the Canaanites who were devoted to destruction.

Now Israel is becoming the subject of the same thing. So God says, I will be with you no more. And we can just kind of read through that and not catch the import of that.

But remember, over and over again, God says, I will be with you to his people, to leaders, and so on. And here, God says, I'm not going to be with you. I will withdraw.

And some of you know that later in 1 Samuel 4, when the ark is captured by the Philistines, God's presence is gone and there's somebody named Ichabod and the Hebrew there is Ichabod. The glory is not there. It's God's absence.

And that's horrible, should be a heavy thing for the faithful in Israel. So God's instructions, verse 13, are get up, consecrate the people, consecrate yourselves for tomorrow because thus says the Lord, these are the devoted things and something has to happen. It's an echo of chapter 3, verse 5, when Joshua says, consecrate yourselves because something important is going to happen, namely the crossing of the Red Sea, the miracle, the crossing of the Jordan.

Here, something's going to happen. It's more negative, which is namely identifying Achan and dealing with him. But they also, it's a solemn occasion.

They need to consecrate themselves for that. And so, it goes on. So, chapter 7, verse 16, Joshua again gets up early in the morning, and brings Israel tribe by tribe.

And here we have an interesting kind of, from the outside, if we're interested in sort of the sociology of Israel, of ancient Israel and the social construction of the nation, we see a good example here. So, he brings Israel together tribe by tribe. And they're doing something.

Sounds like casting lots. But somehow, verse 16 says, the tribe of Judah was identified, was taken and brought near all of the clans of this tribe and the clan of the Zerahites was taken. He brings the clan of the Zerahites man by man and Zabdi was taken.

And he brings near the household man by man. Achan, the son of Zerahites, son of Zabdi, was taken. So, we see the social organization of the nation, the tribes, the clans, the household, and then the individual.

And that kind of shows us a little bit about the stratification of the society there. And so, Joshua addresses Achan and tells him four things, commands him four things. He says in verse 19, My son, number one, give glory to the Lord, God of Israel.

Number two, give praise to him. Number three, tell me now what you have done. The flip side of that, don't hide it from me.

So, there are four verbs there, four commands. My view, however, it's two groups of two. And the first is to give glory to the Lord and give praise to him.

And the second two are the manifestation of that. In other words, by telling the truth, you're giving glory to God, you're praising God. So, tell me now what you've done, don't hide it from me.

That's how you're to praise God in this critical moment in your life. Don't launch into one of the Psalms, just tell me the truth. That's what he's saying here.

I think that's a lesson for today. As we tell the truth, we are living a life of integrity, but in the process, in a sense, we are giving glory to God and praising God. Especially, of course, in our culture where truth seems to be not nearly highly as valued as it should be.



So, Achan answers and he does confess. And he sees, he talks about the spoil and how wonderful it was and how he wanted to take it. So, they went and found the stuff in his tent.

Sadly, Achan's whole family suffered because of this. The whole nation wasn't destroyed, but his family was destroyed. They stoned him with stones, and they burned him with fire, verse 25.

And they raised over him a great heap of stones that remains there to this day, whenever that book was written. The name is called the Valley of Achor. And the word Achor means trouble.

So, this is a valley where there was great trouble. So this is a really sad episode in Israel's history. And certainly, in the book of Joshua, it's the low point of the book.

For most of the book, it's a book of happiness. And as we said earlier, it's a sense in which the Israelites are saying, We're finally here. And life is good.

Fulfillment of promises. We're going to do everything right by the book. Promises are being kept.

Commands are being fulfilled. And so on. And yet, this is the low point of the book, because one individual breaks the covenant, and does these things, God sees it in a whole different light, and the nation suffers.

We'll see that in chapter 8. But Achan and his family suffer, sadly, in chapter 7. So as we go to chapter 8, we have the I'm sorry, I need to go back, because I've been not quite chronologically going through, and I want to take you to the beginning of chapter 7 to point this out as well. Before Achan is found out, obviously this chapter is talking about the defeat of the nation at Ai. Great victory at Jericho.

Now a defeat here at Ai. But I think it's interesting to notice in chapter 6, we see God speaking to Joshua in verse 2, chapter 6. The Lord said to Joshua, I've given Jericho into your hand, etc., etc., etc. Everything in chapter 6 is clearly from God.

And the ritual and all those things. Notice in chapter 7, when the people go out to attack Ai, God's not involved. In chapter 7, verse 2, Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, and said to them, go spy up the land.

They went and spied, they came back, and said, ah, don't worry about it. We don't need to send everybody, send two or three thousand, and go attack Ai. So, the three thousand went, and they got defeated.

Thirty-six people died, verse 5. And this is treated as a crushing defeat. And through all the rest of the book and the battles in the Pentateuch, we don't really know the number of people that are defeated. But an army of three thousand, thirty-six is a pretty small number.

And yet this is treated as a crushing defeat. But notice again, God is nowhere here. And it seems to me that's part of the message of the author of the book, trying to tell us the presence of God is not there.

And that's why they were defeated. Get to chapter 8, and now God's back in the picture. In chapter 8, verse 1, the Lord said to Joshua, don't be afraid, don't be dismayed.

Again, echoing chapter 1, take the fighting men with you, go up to Ai, and I've given into your hand the king of Ai, and so on. So, all that vocabulary echoes chapter 1, echoes chapter 6, but not chapter 7. Chapter 7 is the outlier, and it's because of the sin. So, they go back, and this time there's of course a great victory.

There's the, it's told in great detail. It's a rather long chapter, and there's thirty thousand men of valor that go out at night, and they're going to set an ambush to the west of the city. And Joshua spends the night there.

There's a little bit of confusion as to how many times things were happening, or what the different groups were. So, for example, in chapter 8, verse 12, it mentions Joshua with a group of five thousand men, and in chapter 8 verse 3, it mentions thirty thousand men. And so, you know, what's happening here? It would appear that verses 11 to 13 are kind of a flashback, and it would also appear that perhaps there's a slipping in the numbers, and maybe there was an inscribable mistake as to one of, so that five, in my view, the five thousand and thirty thousand are the same group.

And there may be, just a copying error there. There's not a group of thirty thousand and a separate group of five thousand. So, that's what's happening here.

So, then when the morning comes, and they, you know, Joshua spends the night a couple different times, or mentions it twice, in verse 9 and verse 13. But then, in verse 14 and following, it shows how the king of Ai sees this small group, this group out to the west, and hurries out that way, and the main army comes in behind them, and takes the city. So, in verse 17, no man was left in Ai or Bethel who didn't go after Israel, and the city is left open.

So, Joshua, God tells Joshua to hold up his javelin in his hand, he's going to give everything to his hand, and he does it, and the Israelites go in. And, verse 20, I'm sorry, yeah, verse 20, the men of Ai look back, see the smoke of the city coming up,

and they realize they're defeated. They take the king of Ai, verse 23, bring him to Joshua, and it's all, basically, a great victory for the Israelites.

The Israelites killed, what looks like, 12,000 people, in verse 25. But Joshua did not draw back his hand, which he stretched out the javelin until he destroyed all the inhabitants, and then he burned the city, verse 26, hanging the king. So, it's a great victory.

Again, it may cause us to feel a little bit queasy, and make us uncomfortable in our sensibilities today, but that was the great victory in response to them purging the evil from their midst, in chapter 7. Now, they're doing things by the book again, God's telling them to do this, and it's working out. That section ends, then, with a great heap of stones that, again, stands there to this day, whenever that happened to be. So, this section, 6, 7, and 8, tell us the story of the two or maybe three greatest earliest battles, the great victory at Jericho, the defeat at Ai, and then the victory at Ai, and they're told in exquisite detail to help us get that feeling.

Now, later, we're going to have much more summary kind of statements, but before we get to the next episode, in terms of interaction with the Canaanites, at the end of chapter 8, we have a section where Joshua builds an altar to the Lord, chapter 8, verses 30-35. That's an interesting section. It's in fulfillment of the command that God had made back to his people in the days of Moses.

When God spoke to them, before they came into the land, they were told to build an altar here at this place. So, I want to take you to that passage, which is in Deuteronomy, chapter 27. So, if you'd please turn there.

At the beginning of that chapter, Moses instructs them that when they get into the land, they are to build an altar of large stones. So, we'll just look at that and review that. So, Deuteronomy 27, verses 1 and following.

Moses commanded the people, keep the command that I'm offering you today, verse 2, on the day that you cross over the Jordan to the land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall set up large stones and plaster them with plaster. You shall write on them all the books of this law when you cross over to enter the land that the Lord your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey. When you cross over the Jordan, you shall set up these stones concerning which I command you to this day on Mount Ebal.

So, these are not the stones that they erected by the Jordan River. As you come into the land, they came into the land here, but Mount Ebal and Gerizim are up the land about 25, 30 miles north. And that's where they were to do this.

And again, they were to take stones and cover them with plaster and then write on the plaster the words that God commands them. And verse 5, built an altar to the Lord, you shall wield no iron tool in them. In other words, these are to be uncut stones, offer burnt offerings there, sacrifice peace offerings, and rejoice.

Write the words on the stones of this law very plainly. So, that's the instructions here. Now, if we take literally the command in verse 2 that on the day that you cross the Jordan, the land your God is giving you, you shall do this, then we see that Israel did not do this right away.

Either God meant literally on that very day here to go up there 25, 30 miles, thousands of people, or maybe it means at the time when you cross, make sure you get up there. We're not sure about that, but obviously, they battled their way through the central part of the land, which is Jericho and Ai, and then turned north to go up to that. So, they're delaying slightly to get up there, I guess we'd say, but it's good that they did.

And in chapter 8, verses 30 to 35, we have that episode described. There's so much that is almost word for word in this section, fulfillment of Deuteronomy 27. So, I'll just kind of read some of it.

Joshua 8, verse 30. At that time, Joshua built an altar to the Lord, the God of Israel, on Mount Ebal, just as Moses, servant of the Lord, had commanded the people of Israel. Notice, just by the way, to reiterate a point made earlier in the introduction, Moses is called servant of the Lord here, Joshua's not.

He's not called a servant of the Lord until the end of the book. Moses is the servant of the Lord all the way through. Just as Moses, servant of the Lord, had commanded, as is written in the book of the Law of Moses, back in Deuteronomy, an altar of uncut stones.

They offered burnt offerings on it, peace offerings, verse 31, verse 32. He wrote stones that copied the Law of Moses, which would be written. And now I want to point out something new.

It says, all Israel, sojourners as well as native-born, with all their relatives and officers, etc., stood on the opposite sides. I want to pause here and talk about who this sojourner was. In my version, it reads sojourner.

In some versions, it's a stranger or alien, a foreigner. There are a number of different words in Hebrew for people who are not Israelites. Some are very general, the people, the nations.

Some are more like a foreigner whom Israel never really knew, but came into passing contact with, like a caravan of traders going by. This word is a very specific word, and the word is ger. And the ger was a foreigner who was not born an Israelite, but who had taken up residence in and among Israel.

The ger was a foreigner who was not born an Israelite, but who had taken up residence in and among Israel. The ger is mentioned a number of times in the book, usually in a grouping of three or four others, which Israel was to pay special attention to. It is the widows, orphans, aliens or foreigners, the ger, and the poor.

And all of these were, in a sense, marginalized in society. And they were all, in a sense, helpless, or they needed help. So, the widows obviously had no husband to support them.

Orphans, no parents. The poor, they had no means to support themselves. And the ger was an outsider, a foreigner, not born from the line of Abraham, and yet who had opted to take up residence in and among Israel.

Israel was to treat them well. And I think the idea is that Israel was to treat the disadvantaged in society, both native-born or foreigners, especially the foreigners, so that a watching world could see how Israel's God wants his people to treat others, and that the foreigners would want to embrace the God of Israel. So, this is another example of Gentiles, in a sense, becoming part of Israel.

Here's a very interesting fact. The Greek translation of the Old Testament was done, if we think of the Old Testament writings maybe finishing around 400 B.C., or a few decades after the time of Ezra Nehemiah at the end. It was about 400 years when there was no real new revelation, in the same sense we think of the Old and New Testaments.

But during that time, the Greeks conquered the known world, and Greek was becoming the language that people spoke. And so, even Jews were speaking Greek, not Hebrew. Hebrew was the language of the Old Testament.

So, it came to be that Jews couldn't read the Old Testament. Everyday Jews, they were speaking Greek. So the Jewish leaders convened in Alexandria, Egypt, and decided to translate the Old Testament into Greek.

This version is called the Septuagint, and probably around 250 B.C. The reason I paused to mention this is because it's very interesting the word used in the Septuagint to translate Ger. I'll just remind you that the Septuagint was written by Jewish scholars, not Christians. But here's the Greek word taken to translate the Hebrew word Ger.

Proselytes. And we get English words like proselyte, and proselytize, from that Greek word. And I hope you understand that a proselyte essentially is a convert.

We talk about Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons going through the neighborhoods, knocking on doors, and they are proselytizing. They want us to convert and embrace their faith. And so, the Jewish leaders understood that the Ger was a proselyte.

The Ger was a foreigner, not born from the line of Abraham, but who had embraced the faith of Abraham. And so, the Ger was someone who essentially was an Israelite, not by birth, not by blood, but by faith. So, one of these dichotomies that I learned growing up, that salvation is by works or sacrifice in the Old Testament versus faith in the New, again is broken down by many avenues of evidence, one of which is this.

The Ger was mentioned in the Ten Commandments. The commandment about the Sabbath, it says remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, you, your wife, your son, your daughter, your manservant, your maidservant, and the Ger who is within your gates. So, the Ger, the foreigner, is expected to observe the Sabbath.

And in Exodus 12, when it's talking about the celebration of the Passover, it talks about everybody is to celebrate the Passover who is circumcised, whether native-born or Ger. Same thing. So here we have a Ger is expected to be welcomed into the holiest of Israelite ceremonies, the Passover, as long as he's circumcised.

Well, what does it mean if a foreigner is circumcised? It means they're embracing the faith of Israel. They want to become part of the family of Israel. So, the term Ger is never used for Rahab, but I would include Rahab as one of the Ger.

We see it here. So that's, I think that's really interesting. So back to the text here in Joshua chapter 8. So, verse 33 again.

All Israel, Ger as well as native-born, should participate in this covenant renewal ceremony. They stand, the priests are there, they carry the ark. Half of them stand on Mount Gerizim, and half of the others on Mount Ebal.

They're back in Deuteronomy 27-28. There's blessings and curses that are read between those two mountains, or they're supposed to be read. Here they're doing that, and then they're blessing the people, end of verse 33.

Joshua reads the words of the law, the blessings, and the curse, again from Deuteronomy 27-28. According to all written in the book, so there's not a word of all that Moses commanded, verse 35, that Joshua did, I'm sorry, there's not a word that all that Moses commanded that Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel. The men, the little ones, the Ger, who lived among them.

So, we see Israel faithfully executing the commands from Deuteronomy 27. Whether the timing was immediate or not, I'm not completely sure, but they're trying to do things by the book, as we've seen already all the way through the book. This is certainly a response, undoubtedly a response to the sin and the defeat at Ai, the sin of Achan, and now the victory, and they pause to do this, and again the attention to the Ger, sojourner, illustrates a point that again, the God of the Old Testament is the God of all the Gentiles as well as just the Jews.

So that will be all I want to say about chapters 6-8.

This is Dr. David Howard in his teaching on Joshua through Ruth. This is session number nine, Joshua 6-8, Jericho and Ai.