



LIBERATING
FAITH STUDIES

THE SOUL OF A NATION

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LIBERATING FAITH STUDIES SUNDAY SCHOOL QUARTERLY

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The Order of Service

- I. Bell tap or organ voluntary
as a signal for silence
- II. Singing
- III. The Apostles' Creed
- IV. Prayer, closing with the
Lord's Prayer in concert
- V. Singing
- VI. Calling roll of officers and teachers
- VII. Responsive reading
of the lesson text by school
- VIII. The Decalogue

The Lesson

- I. Organ interlude while
the classes are being arranged
- II. Class study of the lesson
- III. Warning bell — 5 minutes
- IV. Closing bell — silence

The Closing

- I. Singing
- II. Review and application
of the lesson
- III. Secretary's report
- IV. The Church School Creed
- V. Singing
- VI. Benediction

Editorial Staff

Rev. Roderick Belin, Publisher

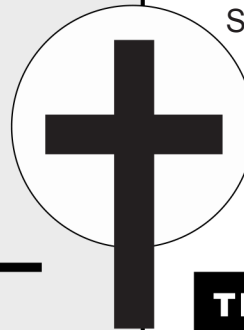
Rev. Garland F. Pierce, Editor

Rev. Dr. Cynthia Parnell McDonald,

Lessons

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He arose from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Church Universal, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.



The Church School Creed

I believe my A.M.E. Church School must grow and grow; and that I must make it a top priority to make it so. Every member a Christian, every Christian a worker, every worker trained so that a worker need not be ashamed. This we ask in Jesus' name.

A.M.E. Discipline

Hello, AME Church School Member!

Don't Forget to join us on Zoom and Facebook to facilitate our weekly Connectional Church School with teachers (lay and clergy) from around the AME Connection. They generously share their knowledge, talents, and expertise with a weekly average of 500 participants viewing via Zoom and 1500 on Facebook.

The blessings from the teachings of the virtual AME Connectional Church School have been immeasurable. We convene the Connectional Church School on Sundays at 9:00 a.m. EST. Join us! Zoom Meeting ID: 829 9325 1894. Visit our website- www.iamame.org- to find worship and study resources to empower you and enhance the life of the church.

Like our Facebook page so you will be informed about programming and important announcements from the Publishing House and *The Christian Recorder*. www.facebook.com/amecpublishing.

Join our Facebook group to continue conversations after Church School and share ideas, thoughts, and best practices with other AME Church School members and teachers: www.facebook.com/groups/amechurchschool.

Thank you for purchasing *Liberating Faith Studies*. We are working every day to fulfill our mission to provide high quality resources to empower us to spread Jesus Christ's liberating gospel, pursue justice, and enhance the social development of all people.

And, always remember, I am praying for you.

Roderick D. Belin
President/Publisher



HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

August 31–September 6

Monday	Romans 8:31-39 (More Than Victorious)
Tuesday	Genesis 13:14-18 (See What God Has Promised)
Wednesday	Deuteronomy 34:1-12 (The Promised Land Revealed)
Thursday	Hebrews 4:1-10 (God's Promised Rest)
Friday	Hebrews 10:14-18 (God's New Covenant)
Saturday	Psalms 27 (Whom Shall I Fear?)
Sunday	Joshua 1:1-11 (Be Strong and Courageous)

The Covenant Continues

Lesson Scripture: Joshua 1

Focus Scripture: Joshua 1:1-11

Key Verses: *(The Lord said,) "I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9*

JOSHUA 1:1-11 (NRSV UE)

1 After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses's assistant, saying,

2 "My servant Moses is dead. Now proceed to cross the Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the Israelites.

3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, as I promised to Moses.

4 From the wilderness and the Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, to the Great Sea in the west shall be your territory.

5 No one shall be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you.

6 Be strong and courageous, for you shall lead this people to possess the land that I swore to their ancestors to give them.

7 Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to act in accordance with all the law that my servant Moses commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you may be successful wherever you go.

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to act in accordance with all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you

JOSHUA 1:1-11 (KJV)

1 Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,

2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them.

7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper withersoever thou goest.

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou

shall be successful.

9 I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people,

11 “Pass through the camp and command the people, ‘Prepare your provisions, for in three days you are to cross over this Jordan, to go in to take possession of the land that the Lord your God gives you to possess.’”

shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying,

11 Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it.

KEY TERMS

- **Nomad** – A person historically associated with a tribe, with no permanent home but who moves from place to place, often seasonally, to find food, pasture for livestock, or work.
- **Succession** – The order and conditions under which one person after another succeeds to a property, dignity, title, or throne.

INTRODUCTION

This quarter begins with Joshua’s appointment into

leadership as a replacement to the lawgiver, Moses, following his death. The book of Joshua centers on the

major events in Israel’s history. However, scholars do not believe Joshua himself wrote it. The book launches the reader into the next stage of Israel’s narrative. This phase presents a people empowered to espouse themselves as a unique and formidable nation established on their monotheistic belief in one true God, Jehovah. The initial chapter of their history also transitions them from a nomadic people to a sovereign nation, under the new leadership of Joshua. It juxtaposes the nature of God with Joshua’s response of effective

leadership that willingly undergoes the process of the calling. It displays this through Joshua’s demonstration of

This quarter begins with Joshua’s appointment into leadership as a replacement to the lawgiver, Moses, following his death.

courage, obedience, and confidence in God's abiding presence. Joshua chapter 1 opens at a critical moment of passing the prophetic mantle as well as transitioning the power of leading the Israelite people to the Promised Land. The chapter does not begin with ceremonial displays that validate and establish the reassignment of power. Nor does this chapter open with the descriptions of military planning and strategies.

Instead, it begins with the affirmation of God's presence, and a reminder of God's continued divine instructions are required for the accomplishment of a divine contract. It is through faithful obedience that Joshua steps into the divine path and direction of God's fulfillment of the

Promised Land. Leadership evolves through the creator's succession plan, and not through human self-promotion. The result is the manifestation and realization of God's Word.

TELLING THE BIBLE STORY

We see in the very first verses of Joshua chapter 1, that leadership of God's people

must be determined by God. It is God who explicitly commissions Joshua: "Moses, my servant is dead. Now proceed..." (Josh. 1:2). Therefore, as it was with Moses, Joshua's authority flows from divine calling, not from personal ambition or popularity. Through prophetic gifting, Joshua hears God's voice, responds with obedience, and recognizes his responsibility to lead the people forward.

Leadership evolves through the creator's succession plan, and not through human self-promotion. The result is the manifestation and realization of God's Word.

This mandated charge requires courage and determination. Three times God tells Joshua to "be strong and courageous" (Josh. 1:6-9). Courage is not an optional choice, but it is an essential element of faith. Joshua's future effectiveness as a leader not only comes from the experiences and mentoring of

Moses, but also the understanding of who called him and why. His calling from God gave clarity and legitimacy to the daunting task of leading the massive population of Israelite migrants. He could not stand on his own self-confidence, but Joshua had to trust in the immeasurable power of God.

In addition, Joshua is called to a life of obedience to God's law. God promises that their obedience can anchor Joshua and God's people in their future success. The path to that obedience is to meditate on the law "day and night" and to act according to it (Josh. 1:8). The commitment to a faithful walk in God's commands aligns them with the promise. God's instruction is meant to build strong leaders who are disciplined and consistently grounded in the godly values that sustain long-term success and prosperity.

Furthermore, Joshua is promised that God's presence remains with him. "I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you" (Josh. 1:5). This gives the assurance of the ongoing power and provision of God that leads to unquestionable success. The same God that was with Moses is with Joshua. Although Moses has passed away, God is eternal, everlasting, and always present. God will not forsake the people nor recant on his promise. Joshua grows in confidence knowing that he has

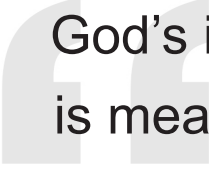
not been abandoned with this immense responsibility.

SANKOFA

Just as Joshua stood at the edge of the Jordan facing an unknown future, leaders today often inherit complex situations they did not create. God's message to Joshua affirms that leadership is not about replacing greatness, but about faithfully

continuing the mission. There are many stories that are told, passed down from generation to generation, to encourage the younger family members to continue the legacy passed down to them. Such stories may build traditions called folklore, the beliefs, customs, and stories of a community.

Eventually they are written down, to memorialize the strength and endurance of the ancestors. Some survived over the decades, centuries, or even millennia after they were recorded. It is particularly important to keep these stories and critical historical events regarding people of African ancestry. It is not simply to honor the great leaders of the past, but to learn



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from them and acknowledge the role God played in their lives. Harriet Tubman, for instance, is not simply the great conductor of the Underground Railroad. She is a pillar in which all African Americans can look towards as a model prophet and leader in the black community during the cruel, bitter, and oppressive times of slavery. Her intentional will to lead the people out of slavery

is undeniably one of the greatest stories of black history. Yet being a black woman who had physical weaknesses did not stop her determination to free God's people. Her actions took courage and confidence, with relentless faith and determination. Even as a spy and warrior in the

Even as a spy and warrior in the Civil War, she demonstrated that God's presence remains with those he calls, leading to great triumphs for those who believe in him.

Civil War, she demonstrated that God's presence remains with those he calls, leading to great triumphs for those who believe in him.

CASE STUDY

Succession planning is considered the strategic process of identifying and developing future leaders to ensure the smooth transition of organizational

leadership. An example of this can be seen during the Civil Rights Movement, during the time Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was the established leader. Dr. King had a good friend and confidant by the name of Reverend Ralph David Abernathy. Reverend Abernathy was a Baptist minister, with a B.S. degree from Alabama State University

in mathematics. Later, he shifted his interest to sociology, and he earned an M.A. degree from Atlanta University. That same year he became pastor of the First Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama and met Dr. King a few years later. His common interest in the Civil Rights Movement led to their collaboration. In

1961 Abernathy relocated his pastoral activities to Atlanta, and that same year he was named vice president at large of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and King's designated successor. Reverend Abernathy was considered Dr. King's "spiritual right-hand man" and lieutenant throughout the Civil Rights Movement. Following the assassination of Dr. King

on April 4, 1968, Reverend Abernathy assumed the presidency of SCLC as unanimously requested by the SCLC board of directors. Within a week of the assassination, Abernathy led the march that King had been planning to support striking sanitation workers in Memphis. In May 1968, he assumed leadership of the Poor People's Campaign in Washington, D.C., which included the construction of "Resurrection City." This project was a shantytown on the National Mall intended to highlight economic inequality. Abernathy led the SCLC for nine years (1968 to 1977). During this time, he expanded activism to include labor struggles, such as the 1969 Charleston hospital workers' strike, as well as international diplomacy, as demonstrated in his address to the United Nations in 1971.

LIFE APPLICATION

Joshua's transition into leadership after Moses' death provides a timeless model for leaders facing change, uncertainty, and responsibility. It teaches

that leadership success is not measured by control or charisma, but by courage, faithfulness, and confidence in God's presence. Leaders who trust the call, follow the instruction, and rely on God's promises can lead boldly into uncertain futures.

Questions

Leaders who trust the call, follow the instruction, and rely on God's promises can lead boldly into uncertain futures.

1. What leadership positions are you being called into? Consider personal, spiritual, and professional areas of leadership.
2. What fears, doubts, or barriers limit the progression or the advancement of others?
3. How does grounding your leadership in values of faith strengthen your decisions?
4. Encourage others in your group, family, or community to identify one leadership responsibility where they will intentionally practice courage and obedience this week.

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Closing Hymn: AMEC Hymnal #390,

“I Am on the Battlefield for My Lord”

Closing Prayer: Heavenly Father, our lives are often a myriad of complex issues and concerns, muddled by the oppressive and overwhelming injustices that continue to plague our society. We find ourselves burdened by grief and often face insurmountable odds that suggest we cannot win. But Lord, we

believe in your divine hand and presence that fulfils the promises to never leave us nor forsake us. Build up our leaders and those who follow to obey your Word and have courage in times of trouble. May our paths and steps be ordered by you and may our faith never waiver. This we pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

September 7-13

Monday	2 Thessalonians 2:13-17 (Hold Fast to the Traditions)
Tuesday	Exodus 14:21-31 (Victory at the Sea)
Wednesday	Numbers 10:29-36 (The Lord Goes Before Us)
Thursday	John 6:15-21 (“Do not be afraid”)
Friday	Psalms 77:11-20 (Remember God’s Mighty Deeds)
Saturday	1 Corinthians 11:23-27 (Remember Jesus’ Saving Work)
Sunday	Joshua 4:14-24 (Crossing Into the Promised Land)

Remember God's Actions

Lesson Scripture: Joshua 4

Focus Scripture: Joshua 4:14-24

Key Verses: *(Joshua said) "When your children ask their parents in time to come, 'What do these stones mean?' then you shall let your children know, 'Israel crossed over the Jordan here on dry ground.'" Joshua 4:21b-22*

JOSHUA 4:14-24 (NRSV UE)

14 On that day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and they stood in awe of him, as they had stood in awe of Moses all the days of his life.

15 The Lord said to Joshua,

16 "Command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant to come up out of the Jordan."

17 Joshua therefore commanded the priests, "Come up out of the Jordan."

18 When the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the Lord came up from the middle of the Jordan and the soles of the priests' feet touched dry ground, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks, as before.

19 The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho.

20 Those twelve stones that they had taken out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal,

21 saying to the Israelites, "When your children ask their parents in time to come, 'What do these stones mean?'

22 then you shall let your children know, 'Israel crossed over the Jordan here on dry ground.'

23 For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you crossed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we crossed over,

24 so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty and so that you may fear the Lord your God forever."

JOSHUA 4:14-24 (KJV)

14 On that day the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life.

15 And the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying,

16 Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of Jordan.

17 Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, Come ye up out of Jordan.

18 And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before.

19 And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho.

20 And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal.

21 And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones?

22 Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land.

23 For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over:

24 That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever.

KEY TERMS

- **Ark of the Covenant** – The Ark of the Covenant, Ark of God, or “chest of the covenant,” was a sacred, gold-plated wooden chest holding the tablets of the Ten Commandments given to Moses by God on Mount Sinai. It also symbolized God’s presence and represented the moral laws that bound God’s relationship with Israel.
- **Gilgal** – Served as the Israelites’ first campsite in the Promised Land and acted as their primary military and spiritual headquarters during the conquest of Canaan.

INTRODUCTION

In the Bible, the Levitical priests were the male descendants of Aaron from the tribe of Levi. They were specifically set apart by divine command to serve as mediators between God and the people of Israel. Their primary importance lay in maintaining the nation’s holiness through the sacrificial system and teaching the Mosaic law. In the book of

Joshua, we see the priests also serve to carry the Ark of the Covenant. In this passage, they become the bearers of the law, the sign of Israel’s obedience to God, and the physical bearers of the key covenant responsibility of the Israelites. This moment establishes the priests as intercessors for the people as they transition into their new status of a sovereign nation. With Joshua as the new leader, the Israelites now see the

Joshua serves as the prophet leader who carries the mantle passed on by Moses but most importantly instituted by God.

continued presence and power of God manifest in miraculous events that defy the laws of nature. Joshua serves as the prophet leader who carries the mantle passed on by Moses but most importantly instituted by God. This event is memorialized as the turning point for the people. They are now entering into a new stage

of freedom that is noted by nations across the region.

TELLING THE BIBLE STORY

This migratory moment of the Israelites served as validation of Joshua’s leadership (Josh. 4:14). The miracles performed through the Ark’s priestly

procession through the Jordan River served to promote Joshua in the eyes of the people, confirming that God was with him as he had been with Moses. The Ark of the Covenant is primarily known as the physical manifestation of God's presence among the Israelites. It serves as the focal point for miraculous events that facilitated the conquest of the Promised Land. It replaced the pillars of cloud and fire that led the nation into the wilderness, becoming the primary guide for their movement and a symbol of divine leadership. When the priests carrying the Ark stepped into the Jordan during its flood stage, the waters upstream stopped flowing, piling up in a heap near the city of Adam. The priests stood in the middle of

the riverbed with the Ark, allowing the entire nation to cross on dry ground (Josh. 3:14-17). This phenomenal event mirrors the conquest over the Pharaoh of Egypt as the Israelites crossed the Red Sea. As the priests carrying the ark caused the Jordan River to part, the people passed through safely. Upon Joshua's command,

the priests came out of the river and as their feet touched dry ground, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place (Josh. 4:18). Stones were placed as a memorial for the children of future generations to see (Josh. 4:22). These markers would represent the divine sovereign will and power of God as well as God's care over the people. God's orchestration of this event was executed through Joshua's obedient leadership and further

displayed through God's authority over nature. With God, nothing could stand in their way. In addition, the presence of the Ark represented God's covenant faithfulness. Since the ark housed the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments it also functioned as a reminder of the required obedience to

the law, and their legal and spiritual bond with God.

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SANKOFA

Inanimate objects and relics often serve as reminders of important events and future commitments. This practice appears throughout the Bible and

continues today. One common example in the Old Testament is the use of stones. In Joshua, stones marked significant events, symbolized promises or vows (Josh. 24:7), and commemorated God's miraculous acts (Josh. 4:7). Families use similar memorials through photo albums, quilts, t-shirts, tokens, portraits, and heirlooms. Today, technology also allows memories to be preserved digitally, with photos restored or animated to tell a family's story across generations. In earlier times, parents might mark a wall to record a child's growth and milestones. Family trees and household keepsakes also help preserve the memory of people and events. These traditions create moments of remembrance that honor loved ones, recognize their faith, and affirm a commitment to carry their hopes into the future. A familiar example is the headstone, which marks the life of a loved one who has died. Even as church attendance declines and traditions are challenged, many still deeply value honoring their ancestors

through gravesites and family burial grounds. Churches around the world also remain places where history is made and remembered. These stones tell stories, preserve history, and renew vision. May we remember the stones laid in our own lives, churches, and Zion.

CASE STUDY

Placing the names of trustees on the cornerstones of African Methodist

Even as church attendance declines and traditions are challenged, many still deeply value honoring their ancestors through gravesites and family burial grounds.

Episcopal (AME) churches is a long-standing tradition. It is rooted in the necessity of compliance to doctrine and discipline, establishment of legal authority, and recognition of community leadership. It also serves as a reminder of the historical struggle of African Americans to secure property rights.

Trustees in the AME tradition are the legal custodians of church property, holding deeds and titles "in trust" for the denomination.

Legal ownership and proper stewardship in the 19th and early 20th centuries was crucial to clearly identify who held the legal title and rights to church

property. This was particularly important for black congregations operating in a racially charged and discriminatory environment that was known for dismantling and literally destroying the progress of Negroes. The physical cornerstone of church property served as a public, permanent record that the church trustees, who were usually free black men, held the deed and proof of ownership for the church. The laying and dedication of the cornerstone was an act to recognize the congregation and the community leaders. It is laid during a formal dedication ceremony, which memorializes the individuals responsible for the “temporal affairs” of the church, including building construction, securing funds, and land purchase. Listing their names honored their service and established the structure as a permanent place of worship, education, and community service. The cornerstone may also contain documents from the date of the building’s construction, with some similarities to a time capsule. The

cornerstone and other markers may also list the names of the pastor(s), builders, and architects, ensuring that the history is protected and shared for future generations.

LIFE APPLICATION

Joshua’s rise to leadership and his actions that followed presents an image of balancing vision, action, and deep spiritual dependence on God. His example offers a model for leadership in any context, whether in the ministry or secular environments. There are times when we face barriers and daunting obstacles that suggest the vision is unattainable. Yet, the Bible presents the faith found in Joshua, who is called by God to carry out the work begun by his predecessor and mentor, Moses. There comes a time when

you may be called upon to carry on the legacy started by a tremendous and well-known trailblazer. The mission may seem overwhelming. But those who believe in the Lord must trust in God’s

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plan and walk by faith in Jesus Christ. This does not negate careful preparation but instead suggests that God is always preparing the next leader in line. You must have courage when given these special assignments. Just as the warriors were prepared for battle, you must also be. Joshua led the people to the promise of a sovereign nation. His life illustrated completely that nothing is impossible with God.

Questions

1. Reflect on the great achievements of family members, ministry leaders, political figures, or historical figures who had to follow a great leader. What positive aspects stand out in their leadership role?
2. What has God called you to do in the past, and is sending you out to do in the future that requires faith and obedience?
3. What spiritual battles do you expect

to face in the future and how are you equipping yourself for them?

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Closing Hymn: AMEC Hymnal #513, "Time Is Filled with Swift Transition"

Closing Prayer: Dear Lord, we your people are often faced with overwhelming odds against us. Whether we face them in our homes, our jobs, our communities,

and our countries, we need you to guide us through. These are times when we must rely on your presence and your power to take us through troubled waters and unknown destinations. But just as you have led those before us, we trust you, God, to lead us through to the promises you gave our ancestors and

the destiny you promised to all of us. May our hearts align with your Word, your commandments, and be enhanced and revealed in truth through the Gospel of Jesus the Christ. All this we pray in Jesus' matchless and precious name. Amen.

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to the promise of a
sovereign nation.
His life illustrated
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HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS**September 14-20**

Monday	Deuteronomy 7:1-11 (Live as God's Treasured Possession)
Tuesday	Deuteronomy 7:12-26 (God Will Love, Bless, and Multiply)
Wednesday	Philippians 4:10-19 (Strengthened in Every Circumstance)
Thursday	2 Corinthians 10:1-5, 15-18 (Armed for Spiritual Warfare)
Friday	John 16:23-33 (Christ Has Conquered the World)
Saturday	Joshua 10:40–11:5 (God Fights for God's People)
Sunday	Joshua 11:6-9, 16-23 (God Brings Victory)

God's Complicated Promise

Lesson Scripture: Joshua 6; 8:26; 10:28-43; 11:1-23; Deuteronomy 7:1-26

Focus Scripture: Joshua 11:6-9, 16-23

Key Verse: *It was the Lord's doing to harden their hearts so that they would come against Israel in battle, in order that they might be utterly destroyed and might receive no mercy but be exterminated, just as the Lord had commanded Moses. Joshua 11:20*

JOSHUA 11:6-9, 16-23 (NRSV UE)

Joshua 11:6-9

6 And the Lord said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them, for tomorrow at this time I will hand over all of them, slain, to Israel; you shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire."

7 So Joshua came suddenly upon them with all his fighting force, by the waters of Merom, and fell upon them.

8 And the Lord handed them over to Israel, who attacked them and chased them as far as Great Sidon and Misrephoth-maim and eastward as far as the valley of Mizpeh. They struck them down until they had left no one remaining.

9 And Joshua did to them as the Lord had commanded him; he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire.

16-23

16 So Joshua took all that land: the hill country and all the Negeb and all the land of Goshen and the lowland and the Arabah and the hill country of Israel and its lowland,

17 from Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir, as far as Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. He took all their kings, struck them down, and put them to death.

18 Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.

19 There was not a town that made peace with the Israelites except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon; all were taken in battle.

20 For it was the Lord's doing to harden their hearts so that they would come against Isra-

JOSHUA 11:6-9, 16-23 (KJV)

Joshua 11:6-9

6 And the Lord said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them: for to morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.

7 So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly; and they fell upon them.

8 And the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon, and unto Misrephothmaim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward; and they smote them, until they left them none remaining.

9 And Joshua did unto them as the Lord bade him: he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire.

16-23

16 So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same;

17 Even from the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even unto Baalgad in the valley of Lebanon under mount Hermon: and all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them.

18 Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.

19 There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle.

20 For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts,

el in battle, in order that they might be utterly destroyed and might receive no mercy but be exterminated, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

21 At that time Joshua came and wiped out the Anakim from the hill country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with their towns.

22 None of the Anakim was left in the land of the Israelites; some remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod.

23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had spoken to Moses, and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war.

that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses.

21 And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities.

22 There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained.

23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.

KEY TERMS

- **Jericho** – The first city the Israelites encountered and conquered after crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Its miraculous fall served as a definitive demonstration of divine power over human strength.
- **Inheritance** – The passing of physical property/land within families and the spiritual blessings, promises, and covenantal rights bestowed by God upon his people.
- **Plunder (shalal, bizah)** – Goods, livestock, or people taken by force during war or conquest, representing both material spoils and divine

judgment.

- **Allotment**—A division of the conquered land of Canaan among the tribes of Israel as an inheritance.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as a significant crux in the book, transitioning from the phase of military conquest to the phase of permanent tribal settlement. Israel is now a nation. What was once a community who wandered in the wilderness is no longer simply a populous collection of migrants. They have become a governed people possessing a mighty army comprised of the twelve tribes of Israel. Previously led by the prophet, Moses they have been

transformed into a massive, empowered social order. They are entrenched in a faith belief that the sole deity of the universe has selected them and granted them the privilege of a Promised Land, upon which they are steadily encroaching. Israel's historic conquests and Joshua's evolution and affirmation into leadership must not be ignored. His willingness for accountability is just as important as his rise to power and fame.

As the wars proceeded, Joshua and the Israelite armies were once again victorious. The process of allotting land to each tribe in an equitable manner provided assurance that each tribe received a portion corresponding to their size and needs.

TELLING THE BIBLE STORY

The Israelite people encamp east of the Jordan River in a region known as the plains of Moab. This position gives them the perspective of overlooking the northern end of the Dead Sea and the Southern Jordan Valley. They have accomplished the military victory over Jericho (chapter 6), which is interpreted

as God's authorizing act. But the narrator also reveals the turmoil that followed. After a decisive win over Jericho, Joshua and the people realized a terrible defeat at the hands of the people of Ai. This defeat was due to the disobedience of one man, named Achan. In Joshua chapter 7, the "devoted things" (Hebrew: *herem*) refer to items from the city of Jericho that were set apart exclusively for the Lord,

either for destruction or for his treasury. The Israelites were able to plunder the defeated nation which signified a transfer of wealth. But the disobedience of one individual resulted into a major setback for God's people. Achan confessed to secretly taking and hiding treasures comprised of a Babylonian robe, 200 shekels of silver,

and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels. After Joshua realized the sin against God that was affecting all of the people, he bowed down in remorse, begging for forgiveness. God was merciful and instructed Joshua to have the people consecrate themselves and prepare for the battles ahead. God's wrath was also

Israel's historic conquests and Joshua's evolution and affirmation into leadership must not be ignored. His willingness for accountability is just as important as his rise to power and fame.

found in the inflection of bitterness held by Israel's adversaries. The kings and rulers were said to have hardened hearts (Josh. 11:20). Scholars interpret God's hardening of the Canaanite kings' hearts as a judicial act of judgment following centuries of persistent wickedness and rebellion. Rather than an arbitrary act of divine force, this hardening is seen as God ratifying the kings' existing choices,

strengthening their resolve to wage war so they could be justly destroyed. This story is not simply about God's power wielded over foreign lands. This illustrates the consequences that people face due to the poor choices of their leaders and those who follow evil. It recalls the need for repentance from sin and

commitment to a new life with God. How difficult this was for the people and still is today. Yet, humanity has been given a Savior, through Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God that the poor choices and mistakes due to temptation and human frailty have been resolved through God's son, Jesus the Christ.

SANKOFA

Continuous victories may lead to arrogance and conceit, sloppy behavior, and disregard for discipline. Most people see fighting wars and battling in competition as the natural order of survival. Encouraging a spirit of competition, winners and losers, is perceived as training and preparation for life. But most

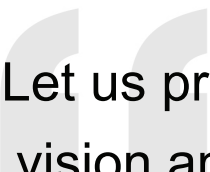
trainers and coaches will advise that the greatest challenge is maintaining a clear mind, focused on a broader vision. One must be committed to the survival of the community and be faithful to the purpose and plan that not only supports the individual but the community at large. Despite the harsh reality of wars

during ancient times, it poses a reality check of the divide throughout humanity today. The desire to have peace among all people has become increasingly distant as humanity vies for the natural resources and rulers of all nations appear to hunger for more power. Countless actions by the United States of America

This story is not simply about God's power wielded over foreign lands. This illustrates the consequences that people face due to the poor choices of their leaders and those who follow evil.

CASE STUDY

have been questioned and condemned as lacking evidence of upholding not only our democracy and civil rights, but lack of demonstrating integrity and upholding human rights. The commands of God that are being repositioned in schoolhouses and courthouses may appear to be no more than plaques of art and artifacts of the vision of the past. The hypocrisy is exasperated by the belief that tax dollars are better spent on deportations and wars rather than provisions for food, housing, and affordable health care. The past teaches us that our greatest resources are human resources, young and old, able bodied or other abled. What we learn from the book of Joshua is not simply that God is able to bring victory to God's people. We also learn that war brings death and destruction, and even the victor is held accountable for fairness and justice. Let us pray that our vision and desired legacy for the next generation is that war will not be the first option but instead be the last resort.



Let us pray that our vision and desired legacy for the next generation is that war will not be the first option but instead be the last resort.

Throughout history, the loss of human life due to mass conflicts is incalculable. Reflecting on the costs of war over the past century is daunting and immeasurable when recognizing the wholesale global impact on ethnicities, societies, economies, and the environment. In the 20th century the world witnessed over 260 wars or major conflicts across the globe. Most notable to people are the two massive world wars, the Russian Civil War, the Cold War, Korean War, Vietnam War, Arab-Israeli War, Iran-Iraq War, and the Gulf War. These do not include the wars and conflicts that have occurred since the beginning of the new millennium.

The Vietnam War (1955–1975) represents one of the most significant demographic shocks of the 20th century. Total death toll estimates vary widely but most scholarly figures range between 1.3 million and 3.8 million total deaths. In addition to the toxic herbicides from Agent Orange and unexploded ordnances (UXO) left

behind, the Vietnam War resulted in a tremendous refugee crisis. The United Nations estimates that between 200,000 and 400,000 died at sea due to storms, piracy, and overcrowding. The war in Afghanistan (2001–2021) resulted in an estimated 176,000 to 212,000 deaths. When including related conflict in North-West Pakistan, the estimated death toll rises to approximately 241,000 people. These figures primarily represent

direct deaths from violence (bombs, bullets, and fire). However, hundreds of thousands more Afghans died from indirect causes such as hunger, disease, and the destruction of infrastructure. As of early 2026, the Russia-Ukraine war has resulted in a devastating death toll, with total casualties across both

sides estimated to exceed 1.8 million. As of October 3, 2025, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health, 67,075 people have been killed and 169,430 people have been injured. Recent analysis by public health experts suggests that the number of fatalities reported by the Gaza Ministry of Health may be

significantly undercounted. Regarding the War of Iran, the most recent conflict involving the U.S., the numbers are still being compiled. As of late April 2026, reports stated that over 3,600 people had been killed in Iran, with estimates including 1,701 civilians. Wars are also expensive. In the few years since the Hamas attack on Israel, the costs of the U.S. government support to Israel have exceeded \$31 billion. The U.S. spent an

estimated \$28 to \$35 billion on the war against Iran, in the three-month span between February and April 2026. Although some would focus on the monetary cost of war, the human toll and impact to human welfare, social structures, generational advancement, and the environment is a far greater loss. Conflict

resolution, peace negotiations, building alliances and promoting unity among diverse groups offer a less costly price. It is incumbent upon believers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to call for alternatives to war and work towards stronger leadership that will work towards options to resolve conflicts globally.

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LIFE APPLICATION

There is significant concern of the messaging from Christian leaders who reject or avoid opportunities to promote peace and welfare for all people. The ideology of having a “Christian” nation has no biblical foundation. Jesus often corrected the disciples to understand that the Messiah is not a military leader, but a God-inhabited Savior, spreading a message of love and understanding for all people. The parables that Jesus used to illustrate the definition of loving our neighbors, was effectively done through the Good Samaritan. It served as an illustration of the prejudice and bigotry that prevent love and compassion from reaching all people. The book of Joshua is often used as the justification of privileged and more powerful groups to condemn others. But God’s promises and plans are more complex and cannot be defined by narrow minded prejudicial practices. The true battle is against sin. God’s greatest promise is the redemption

The parables that Jesus used to illustrate the definition of loving our neighbors, was effectively done through the Good Samaritan. It served as an illustration of the prejudice and bigotry that prevent love and compassion from reaching all people.

from sin we receive through Jesus Christ. The fight has already been won. We must share this with others, so that we all can be victorious through Jesus Christ.

Questions

1. What are the greatest concerns surrounding wars in the 21st century?
2. What messages (if any) should the church share in the 21st century regarding human rights and welfare?
3. How can the church become a stronger advocate for human rights, especially in times of war?

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Closing Hymn: AMEC Hymnal #453, “I Trust

in God”

Closing Prayer: Dear Lord, we humbly come before you this day with grateful hearts, thanking you for our basic needs being met and for the protection you provided that has kept us from harm. But we know that everyone does not

experience the same blessings. We pray for peace and prosperity to replace now for those who are in harm's way, disease, death, and despair. Heal our facing war and conflict, sickness and land, oh Lord. This we pray in Jesus' disease. We pray for healing of the land, name. Amen.
for righteous and honorable leadership,

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS**September 21-27**

Monday	Joshua 2:1-7 (Welcoming Strangers)
Tuesday	James 2:18-26 (Faith Without Works Is Dead)
Wednesday	Psalms 67 (May the Nations Know God's Salvation)
Thursday	Hebrews 11:1-2, 29-31 (Faith to Live by)
Friday	Acts 10:34-48 (God Shows No Partiality)
Saturday	Joshua 2:8-14 (Rahab's Faith in Israel's God)
Sunday	Joshua 6:6-17 (Rahab Is Spared)

God's Compassion for Rahab

Lesson Scripture: Joshua 2; 6:16-25; Matthew 1:5; James 2:25; Hebrews 11:31

Focus Scripture: Joshua 2:8-13; 6:16-17

*Key Verse: "The city and all in it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live because she hid the messengers we sent."
Joshua 6:17*

JOSHUA 2:8-13; 6:16-17 (NRSV UE)

Joshua 2:8-13

8 Before they went to sleep, she came up to them on the roof

9 and said to the men, "I know that the Lord has given you the land and that dread of you has fallen on us and that all the inhabitants of the land melt in fear before you.

10 For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed.

11 As soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no courage left in any of us because of you. The Lord your God is indeed God in heaven above and on earth below.

12 Now then, since I have dealt kindly with you, swear to me by the Lord that you in turn will deal kindly with my family. Give me a sign of good faith

13 that you will spare my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them and deliver our lives from death."

6:16-17

16 And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout! For the Lord has given you the city.

17 The city and all that is in it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live because she hid the messengers we sent."

JOSHUA 2:8-13; 6:16-17 (KJV)

Joshua 2:8-13

8 And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof;

9 And she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

10 For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.

11 And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

12 Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:

13 And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.

6:16-17

16 And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city.

17 And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the Lord: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

KEY TERMS

- **Inhabitants** – Those who occupied the land at that time; best interpreted as the “rulers” of the land.
- **Spy** – To gain advantage by discovering secrets about an enemy’s plans or defenses. Other stories of spies are found in Numbers 13, Joshua 8:2-3, Judges 18:2-16.
- **Prostitute** – A person who engages in sexual activity for money, sexual desire, or survival, predominantly viewed negatively as immoral under Mosaic law.

INTRODUCTION

This portion of the narrative specifically highlights the significance of Rahab, a woman, a prostitute, and a Gentile, who otherwise would be considered expendable and of no importance. Yet God has designed this segment of Israel’s history to use an incredibly brave and clever woman to not only protect and deliver her family from harm, but to be the ancestor of the

Messiah. As a “hero of faith” in Hebrews 11 and James 2, she represents the inclusion of outsiders. She is evidence that God’s work of redemption is not limited to human bloodlines but is ignited by the actions flowing from belief in God. This is the opening presentation for the invasion that could only be orchestrated by God. The strategy incorporates the use of a liturgical procession depicting a ceremonial act, with a combined

atmosphere of solemnity and worship. The imagery depicts the realization that a battle will soon ensue with an unseen commander of arms, namely the Holy Spirit. There is no fortress, no barrier that can stand against the God of the heavens.

“There is no fortress, no barrier that can stand against the God of the heavens.”

TELLING THE BIBLE STORY

The kingdoms of Sihon and Og in central and northern Transjordan had already been conquered under Moses’ leadership (Numbers 21; Deut.1–2). Spies, espionage, and a reinforced Jericho wall present the imagery of the strategies for any impending battle or

attempted takeover. But this chapter of Joshua presents an unlikely champion for the people of God. A woman and prostitute named Rahab rises as the negotiator and ally to the Israelite spies. This is a dramatic shift from traditional roles of women. The biblical account of women from the time of Joshua to Nehemiah portrays a patriarchal, male-dominated culture in which women were seen as peripheral to society. However, in Joshua 2:8-13, Rahab aids the spies in their mission and their escape. Rahab offers them a secure hiding place as well as directs them westward to the high country, the safest direction to hide from the king of Jericho (Josh. 2:15-16). She provides them intel of the current morale

of the people and Jericho's army by disclosing that the reputation of Israel is widespread. She informs them that the people of Jericho are intimidated by the Israelite warriors' fighting skills, chariots, and their numbers (Josh. 2:11). She offers her silence and support in return

She offers her silence and support in return for her family's safety. In Joshua 2:14 the spies respond, "Our life for yours!" Rahab agrees and provides them with the best route and strategy for escape. In Joshua 6:22-23, the commitment made by the men was upheld.

for her family's safety. In Joshua 2:14 the spies respond, "Our life for yours!" Rahab agrees and provides them with the best route and strategy for escape. In Joshua 6:22-23, the commitment made by the men was upheld. Their promise was considered a sworn oath, and Joshua commands the two spies to personally escort Rahab and her family from harm's

way. Joshua displays his commitment to the spies' agreement, and to the secure passage of Rahab and her family. Generations continue to hear the story of the mighty battle and victory over Jericho. And the name of Rahab continues to be respected and honored to this day.

SANKOFA

Women of color have redefined the identity of women through the lens of Womanist Theology. Womanist Theology is a theological framework rooted in the experiences, voices, and agency of black women, analyzing how race, gender, and class create a "triple oppression."

Developed in the 1980s, it focuses on God's liberation, survival, and quality of life for black women. This concept was coined by Alice Walker and developed by theologians like Delores Williams, Katie Cannon, and Jacquelyn Grant. It emerges from the lived experience of black women, particularly in the U.S. Womanist Theology interprets Rahab as a survivor who used her marginalized position to secure the survival of her community. By analyzing her through the "tripartite" lens of race, class, and gender, Womanists challenge the "harlot" label. Through this lens, Rahab's sex work is considered likely stemming from poverty and debt slavery rather than moral failure. When describing her home as living "on the

wall," it suggests a physical location on the outer areas of the city, symbolically and physically on the margins. Rahab used her knowledge of local politics to negotiate a covenant of safety for her family, mirroring the "strong rescue" (*ezer*) found in Genesis 14. Joshua reminds us that

God's promises to Israel also anticipate the coming Messiah. In Matthew 1:5, Rahab is the non-Jewish heroine of the family lineage. Instead of portraying her as an unclean outsider, Rahab emerges as a model of faithfulness and a recipient of God's grace. Although Rahab is a sex worker, she is also a leader and a negotiator. Ultimately, she becomes the ancestral matriarch of the line of David

and the promised Messiah. People will seek wisdom, guidance, and sound leadership but often overlook the character traits of an individual due to her gender, class, or background. Throughout history, women were overlooked and dismissed, portrayed only through a maternal role. Yet women,

particularly black women, have offered much more, often being the foundational pillars and strategists within the church and society. This text is a reminder that women have enabled the survival of God's people and the fulfillment of God's plan.

People will seek wisdom, guidance, and sound leadership but often overlook the character traits of an individual due to her gender, class, or background.

CASE STUDY

The list of the black heroines that are dimly highlighted throughout history are sadly too numerous. However, they must be acknowledged. Examples, of course, include the heroine and Underground Railroad engineer Harriet Tubman. But, many are unaware of other skillful and

brave women who placed their lives in jeopardy for the good of their country and their people. For instance, iconic singer and dancer Josephine Baker is best-known for her entertainment career that spanned five decades. She was also an agent for French intelligence during World War II. Historical accounts state that Nazi guards were so star-

struck by Baker, known in various circles as the “Black Pearl,” that they let her slip across the border without trouble. Soldiers were unaware that Baker carried secret messages written in invisible ink on her sheet music. After the war, Baker was awarded the French Legion of Honor for her service. The National Order of the Legion of Honour, formerly the Imperial

Order of the Legion of Honour, is the highest and most prestigious French national order of merit, both military and civil. Baker aided the French Resistance during World War II, and also worked with the British Secret Intelligence Service and the United States Office of Strategic Services. The extent of her work as a spy

was not publicized until 2020, when French documents were declassified. After the war, she was awarded the Resistance Medal by the French Committee of National Liberation, the Croix de Guerre by the French military, and was named a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour by General Charles de Gaulle. When

When performing in the United States she refused to perform for segregated audiences. She is noted for her contributions to the Civil Rights Movement and was even offered a leadership role in the movement.

performing in the United States she refused to perform for segregated audiences. She is noted for her contributions to the Civil Rights Movement and was even offered a leadership role in the movement. Some would have considered her vocation as a singer and dancer as scandalous during the early 20th century. But she performed for a higher calling for justice that crossed

national and international borders.

Questions

LIFE APPLICATION

When reading about Canaanites (Matthew 15:22), there is speculation whether the ancient Israelites committed genocide by killing all of the inhabitants of Canaan. As African Methodists, there is a responsibility to carefully analyze scripture through a social justice lens. We must not respond to Joshua's conquest narrative as a sign of God's disregard of select people nor support the modern-day acts of aggression and war that threaten to eradicate civilizations. We must be sensitive to current geopolitical realities, such as the

pressures facing many countries today in wars over land and oil. Jesus reminds us in John chapter 10 that he is the good shepherd who has come for all sheep, all ethnicities, Jews and Gentiles. People of God are called not to raise up earthly kings, but the King of Kings, which is Jesus Christ.



We must be sensitive to current geopolitical realities, such as the pressures facing many countries today in wars over land and oil.

1. What would you consider the best method(s) to assess whether a person is suited for leadership in the church? Do the requirements differ if a person seeks leadership in a secular role?
2. Are people too dependent on images of heroic leadership rather than considering the strengths and contributions of everyday individuals in their midst?

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Closing Hymn: AMEC Hymnal # 378, "Lead Me, Guide Me"

Closing Prayer: Dear God, Heavenly Father, creator and sustainer of heaven and earth, we

praise and glorify your holy name and thank you for your continued grace and mercy. Thank you, Lord, that you see the potential in us when others may not. Thank you, that you gave your Son for all of us and that you have no respect of persons. You see each of us as what we become through your grace and mercy and aligned with your purpose. Reveal your plan for us and strengthen us for

the work you have assigned to each of us, man, woman, or child. May your Holy Spirit strengthen us to break down walls and build new bridges towards your kingdom. May your mercy abound and your promises be revealed through our obedience and faith in Jesus Christ. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

September 28–October 4

Monday	Joshua 23:1-11 (Hold Fast to the Lord)
Tuesday	Joshua 24:1-13 (Reaffirming the Covenant)
Wednesday	1 John 1:8–2:5 (Obey Christ's Commandments)
Thursday	Luke 9:57-62 (No Turning Back)
Friday	Matthew 22:34-40 (The Greatest Commandments)
Saturday	Psalms 25:12-22 (God, Redeem Your People)
Sunday	Joshua 24:14-27 (We Will Serve the Lord)

DECALOGUE

Superintendent—And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

School—Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Superintendent—Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

School—Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Superintendent—Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

School—Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Superintendent—Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord hath made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it.

School—Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

My soul be on thy guard;
Ten thousand foes arise:
And hosts of sins are pressing hard
To draw thee from the skies.

Superintendent—Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

School—Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Superintendent—Thou shalt not kill.

School—Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Superintendent—Thou shalt not commit adultery.

School—Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Superintendent—Thou shalt not steal.

School—Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Superintendent—Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

School—Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Superintendent—Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

School—Lord, have mercy upon us, and write these laws upon our hearts.

Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee!
Nearer to thee!

Superintendent—Hear what Christ, our Savior, saith: thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great Commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two Commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All—Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

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