

AN OUTLINED COMMENTARY ON

# JOSHUA

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**GOSPEL  
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## INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA

### A. Author and Time.

1. Although the author's name is not given in the text of the book, many scholars think that Joshua is the writer.
  - a. The author speaks of himself as having been present when some of the events depicted in the book took place.
  - b. Joshua 5:1: "And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel."
  - c. Joshua 24:25-26: "So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the LORD." This could be the Book of Joshua.
2. There are, however, some statements in the book which indicate that someone else participated in the writing.
  - a. Joshua 16:4: "So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance." Joshua descended from Joseph, through Ephraim.
  - b. The account of Joshua's death was not likely recorded by Joshua before the fact, although such an account could have been made. More likely, some other unidentified penman recorded that event.
3. The book was doubtless inscribed during and shortly after the events described, during the lifetime of Rahab. "And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho" (Josh. 6:25).
4. The events in Joshua detail "the history of about seventeen years, or, according to some chronologers, of twenty-seven or thirty years" (Horne, p.37).

### B. The Purposes of the Book.

1. One obvious design of the book of Joshua is to relate the fulfillment of the promises God had originally made to Abraham, and later repeated to Isaac and Jacob.
    - a. Genesis 12:1-3: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
    - b. Genesis 26:4: "And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."
    - c. Genesis 35:12: "And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land."
    - d. Genesis 50:24: "And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."
    - e. Exodus 3:8: "And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites,
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and the Hivites, and the Jebusites."

2. Another purpose served by the book is to show the division of Canaan among the tribes.

C. Background of the Book.

1. The Israelites had been freed from Egyptian slavery about forty years earlier (1450 B.C.).
2. Following forty years in the wilderness, and the death of Moses, Joshua was appointed as Israel's leader.
3. Under Joshua's leadership, the cities of Jericho and Ai were conquered, and Israel entered into the land of promise.

D. Outline of the Book.

1. Joshua 1: Joshua is appointed as the new leader of Israel.
    - a. The land promise: 1:1-4.
    - b. Conditions for Joshua's success: 1:5-9.
    - c. Joshua's first command: 1:10-11.
    - d. Request of the tribes east of Jordan: 1:12-18.
  2. Joshua 2: Spies sent to Jericho.
    - a. The difference between their report and that of the ten spies of Numbers 13.
    - b. New Testament lessons:
      - 1) Hebrews 11:30-31: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace."
      - 2) James 2:25: "Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way?"
  3. Joshua 3-4: Crossing of Jordan.
    - a. The miracle: chapter 3.
    - b. The memorial: 4:2-7.
  4. Joshua 5: Events at Gilgal.
    - a. Effect of Israel on Canaanites: 5:1.
    - b. Circumcision and Passover; manna ceases: 5:3-15.
  5. Joshua 6: Jericho.
  6. Joshua 7: The problem of Ai.
  7. Joshua 8: Mountains of blessing and cursing.
  8. Joshua 9: Covenant with Gibeon.
  9. Joshua 10: Battle at Beth-horon; the long day.
  10. Joshua 11-12: Battles with Jabin and the other kings.
  11. Joshua 13-19: The land divided among the tribes of Israel.
  12. Joshua 20: The cities of refuge.
  13. Joshua 21-22: Levi provided for; admonitions to the tribes east of Jordan.
  14. Joshua 23-24: Joshua's farewell address.
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# JOSHUA 1

## A. Joshua 1:1-4: Joshua is Appointed as the New Leader of Israel.

1. Verses 1-2: "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, 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."
  - a. Just prior to his death, Moses was permitted to behold a panoramic view of the promised land (Deut. 34:1-3). "And the LORD said unto him, This *is* the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see *it* with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither" (Deut. 34:4). The death of Moses is then related. Following the announce-ment of his death, Israel mourned his passing for thirty days. The book of Deuteronomy closes with a tribute to the greatness of Moses.
  - b. Life must go on, so God gave leadership of Israel into the capable hands of Joshua. "And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses" (Deut. 34:9).
  - c. It was not Moses' lot to enter the land of promise on account of his disobedience in the matter of smiting the rock instead of only speaking to it (Num. 20:1-13). Joshua was given that privilege and challenge.
2. Verses 3-4: "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. 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."
  - a. The vast extent of the promised land is outlined by the Lord's description to Joshua. Every part within the confines of the limits he named was to be Israel's. That land was presently occupied by the Canaanites, but these idol worshipers were to be dispossessed.
  - b. The territory God outlined was bounded on the west by the Mediterranean Sea, and extended north and northeast to the Euphrates River. Israel did not take possession of that much land when they first entered Canaan; they did obtain control if it during the time of David. "David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates" (2 Sam. 8:3).
  - c. Every inch of the land belonged to Israel, but God never intended for them to take immediate possession of it all. "I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land" (Exod. 23:29-30).

## B. Joshua 1:5-9: Conditions Which Would Insure Joshua's Success in Conquering the Land.

1. Verse 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."
    - a. God gave Joshua a firm promise that the enemies in the land would be unable to withstand the invasion Israel was to mount. Every general would enjoy having that kind of assurance of success before a major battle!
    - b. He is assured that his triumphs would extend throughout his life, as he invaded Canaan, and as he fought the series of battles to subdue the people inhabiting the land. There were some conditions attached to the promise (see verses 7-8).
    - c. God assured him that he would do his part and would never forsake Joshua; he would always be at hand to help.
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2. Verse 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."
    - a. If God had done everything for Joshua in conquering the violent people of Canaan, there would have been no need for Joshua to be strong and courageous.
    - b. Since he would have to prepare himself for the battle, including formulating a practical battle plan and steeling his nerve for the fighting, he needed to be strong and brave.
  3. Verse 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 whithersoever thou goest."
    - a. Once more Joshua is called on to be strong and courageous; the reason cited is that he might be able to do those things required in the Law God gave by Moses. It was essential that he be obedient to God's will in order to accomplish his duty to conquer the land.
    - b. If he was strong and full of courage, he would do God's will, and consequently would prosper in his various excursions and endeavors. Lying before Joshua was a period of several years of intensive struggle and warfare.
    - c. Joshua is warned against turning aside from God's word, either to the right hand or to the left hand. One can violate the law of God by binding what God did not bind, or by loosing what God has bound. We should not seek to be known as *Conservatives* or *Liberals*, but as faithful children of God who turn neither to the left nor to the right.
      - 1) Deuteronomy 4:2: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."
      - 2) Matthew 16:18-19: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
      - 3) Revelation 22:18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."
  4. Verse 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 shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."
    - a. God's law was to remain in his mouth. If it was in his mouth, it must first be in his heart and mind.
      - 1) Matthew 15:19: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."
      - 2) Proverbs 4:23: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life."
      - 3) Joshua was to "feed" on God's word, keeping it ever in his heart by regularly feasting on its truths.
    - b. The Mosaic Law required its adherents to teach the precepts and requirements of the Law to their children. Due to the nature of the law, the Israelites were not expected to seek the conversion of the Gentile world to Judaism.
      - 1) Deuteronomy 6:6-12: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine
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heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates. And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, And houses full of all good *things*, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; *Then* beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage."

- 2) Jeremiah 23:28: "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What *is* the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD."
- c. We have the requirement today to instruct our children and all mankind, in the truths of the gospel. It is our duty to hear and do all of God's will; such is the obligation of every accountable person. In order for Joshua and Israel to be successful in their forthcoming efforts, it was essential that they keep God's word in their hearts and mouth. Joshua was to mediate on God's law day and night. Whenever he had opportunity, he was to think about and seriously contemplate it. He was to fill his mind with its truths. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so *is* he..." (Prov. 23:7).
- d. There was to be regularity in his meditation on God's word.
  - 1) Psalms 1:2: "But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."
  - 2) Psalms 119:97: "O how love I thy law! it *is* my meditation all the day."
- e. If Joshua was to expect success in the great work before him, it was necessary that he duly consider God's word, for God's blessings are upon the obedient. "For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil" (1 Pet. 3:12). This principle is still applicable.
  - 1) 1 Timothy 4:13-16: "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine....Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."
  - 2) Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things."
- f. Joshua was to do according to the teachings of the Mosaic Law; this was the purpose of having God's word in his mouth and to be diligently contemplated in his heart. There is no benefit to the soul if we merely put the truth in our minds, if we have a knowledge of it but do not believe it in our hearts and sincerely obey it in life. The written word had authority over the Israelites and the written New Testament has authority over all accountable people who live on this side of Calvary.
  - 1) Ecclesiastes 12:13: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man."
  - 2) Matthew 4:4: "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."
  - 3) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right

- to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
- g. Provided the foregoing conditions had been fully met, Joshua could expect good success in his great mission. The success and prosperity here promised would result only after Joshua's faithful obedience to the instructions given in God's word.
- 1) Psalms 1: "Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly *are* not so: but *are* like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish."
  - 2) Exodus 23:29-30: "I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land."
  - 3) 2 Peter 1:5-11: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
  - 4) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
  - 5) Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
  - 6) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
5. Verse 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."
- a. God had commanded Joshua to be strong and brave; hence, he expected him to have no significant fear or dismay. Joshua had every reason to be fearless and strong in the work, and no reason to be filled with terror.
  - b. Fear and faith are opposites. If we believe the promises God gives us in his word, we will be strong and relatively fearless as we perform our God-given duties. "*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me*" (Heb. 13:5-6).

C. Joshua 1:10-11: Joshua's First Command.

1. Verse 10: "Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying."
    - a. Joshua took to heart the instructions given to him by the Lord. He asserted his leadership. One must be humble in the Lord's service, but he must be courageous; he must avoid timidity as
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much as possible; he must likewise avoid “lording” it over others.

- b. 1 Peter 5:1-4: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."
  - c. Joshua issued his first orders to the people through the officers. These officers were likely military leaders, or perhaps heralds. The people were already organized: "And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. And when Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What *is* this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even? And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God: When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make *them* know the statutes of God, and his laws. And Moses' father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest *is* not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that *is* with thee: for this thing *is* too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place *such* over them, *to be* rulers of thousands, *and* rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, *that* every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear *the burden* with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee *so*, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace. So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves" (Exod. 18:13-26).
2. Verse 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."
    - a. These officers were to circulate through the people, passing on the instructions they were given. The people were to prepare victuals (food) and otherwise be ready to cross Jordan and enter Canaan proper. The marching before them would leave scant time for preparation of food; with food already prepared, they would waste little time enroute.
    - b. Within three days, the crossing of Jordan would be effected. The Jordan was at flood-stage at this season of the year: "And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,) That the waters which came down from above stood *and* rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that *is* beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, *even* the salt sea, failed, *and* were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho" (Josh. 3:15-16). Undoubtedly, the crossing was one that was impossible under ordinary circumstances; its roiling waters naturally would pose a daunting obstacle to the fainthearted.
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- c. However, they had the Lord's promise that they would pass over Jordan and begin to take possession of the land which God had given them as an inheritance. This first order was anxiously awaited by Israel, and carried with it a sure promise of triumph in the endeavor before them.

D. Joshua 1:12-18: Joshua Speaks to the Tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh.

1. Verse 12: "And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying."
  - a. Numbers 32 records the original request of these tribes to receive the territory east of Jordan as their portion. See also Deuteronomy 3:12-17: "And this land, *which* we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which *is* by the river Arnon, and half mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites and to the Gadites. And the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, *being* the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half tribe of Manasseh; all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants. Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob unto the coasts of Geshuri and Maachathi; and called them after his own name, Bashanhavothjair, unto this day. And I gave Gilead unto Machir. And unto the Reubenites and unto the Gadites I gave from Gilead even unto the river Arnon half the valley, and the border even unto the river Jabbok, *which is* the border of the children of Ammon; The plain also, and Jordan, and the coast *thereof*, from Chinnereth even unto the sea of the plain, *even* the salt sea, under Ashdohthpishgah eastward."
  - b. Only a half of Manasseh would reside there; the other half would have their portion west of Jordan. Reuben and Gad were also on the east side.
  - c. These tribes wanted the eastern side of Jordan because it was a land offering good pasturage for the flocks and herds of these tribes. They wanted to reside there, but that request entailed a potential problem. "And Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here? And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them?" (Num. 32:6-7). Joshua's instructions given in this context settled the issue before it arose.
  - d. It was all right for them to receive that land, but they still had an obligation to assist the rest of the nation to conquer Canaan proper. The land east of Jordan had already been subdued.
    - 1) Numbers 21:21-35: "And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, Let me pass through thy land: we will not turn into the fields, or into the vineyards; we will not drink *of* the waters of the well: *but* we will go along by the king's *high* way, until we be past thy borders. And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel into the wilderness: and he came to Jahaz, and fought against Israel. And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon: for the border of the children of Ammon *was* strong. And Israel took all these cities: and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all the villages thereof. For Heshbon *was* the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab, and taken all his land out of his hand, even unto Arnon. Wherefore they that speak in proverbs say, Come into Heshbon, let the city of Sihon be built and prepared: For there is a fire gone out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon: it hath consumed Ar of Moab, *and* the lords of the high places of Arnon. Woe to thee, Moab! thou art undone, O people of Chemosh: he hath given his sons that escaped, and his daughters, into captivity unto Sihon king of the Amorites. We have shot at them; Heshbon is perished even unto Dibon, and we have laid them waste even unto Nophah, which *reacheth* unto Medeba. Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites. And Moses sent to spy out Jaazer, and they took the

villages thereof, and drove out the Amorites that *were* there. And they turned and went up by the way of Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan went out against them, he, and all his people, to the battle at Edrei. And the LORD said unto Moses, Fear him not: for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land; and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon. So they smote him, and his sons, and all his people, until there was none left him alive: and they possessed his land."

- 2) Deuteronomy 1:4: "After he had slain Sihon the king of the Amorites, which dwelt in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, which dwelt at Astaroth in Edrei."
2. Verses 13-15: "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land. Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them; Until the LORD have given your brethren rest, as *he hath given* you, and they also have possessed the land which the LORD your God giveth them: then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD'S servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrising."
    - a. Forestalling any possible rift between these and the other tribes, Joshua reminded them of Moses' words. They could have and enjoy the area they requested as an inheritance, however they must accompany the rest of Israel into the main part of Canaan. Their help was essential if those violent nations then occupying the land were to be displaced.
    - b. When they went over Jordan with the other tribes, their families and possessions could be left on the eastern side. Only after the entire land was subdued would they be allowed to settle down in their new homes. This was fair.
    - c. Nothing is stated here about how their families and possessions would be protected from possible attack during the absence of the men, but doubtless God would supervise them; perhaps a sufficient guard would stay behind to protect them. God promised to guard the families and possessions of all the men who went to worship at the tabernacle once they were established in the land. "For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year" (Ex. 34:24).
  3. Verses 16-18: "And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go. According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses. Whosoever *he be* that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage."
    - a. The people responded favorably to the counsel of Joshua, affirming their intention to hearken to all of his instructions. As they followed Moses, so would they follow Joshua. Remember that this was a new generation; of the men who were twenty or above at the time Israel had left Egypt, only Joshua and Caleb remained (Num. 14:26-38; Deut. 1:34-39); the rest died in the wilderness.
      - 1) Numbers 14:26-38: "And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, How long *shall I bear with* this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. Say unto them, *As truly as I live*, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: Your carcases shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, *concerning* which I swear to make you dwell

therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But *as for* you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, *even* forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, *even* forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise. I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die. And the men, which Moses sent to search the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land, Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the LORD. But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, *which were* of the men that went to search the land, lived *still*."

- 2) Deuteronomy 1:34-39: "And the LORD heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and swore, saying, Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I swore to give unto your fathers, Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD. Also the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither. *But* Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it."
  - b. Their prayer for Joshua was that the Lord would ever be with him as he had been with Moses, and that Joshua would be strong and of good courage. They vowed that those in Israel who would not heed Joshua, they would surely put to death.
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## JOSHUA 2

### A. Joshua 2:1-7: Rahab Hides the Two Spies.

1. Verse 1: “And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there.”
  - a. Joshua selected two men to enter Canaan and bring back a report. Only two spies were sent since their prime objective was the city of Jericho. Two could do as creditable a job as twelve, and were less likely to be detected. It may have been the case that Israel did not know about the mission of the spies.
  - b. Joshua used good military judgment in dispatching the spies, even though God had promised to assist Israel in gaining the victory; God would do his part, but Joshua and Israel had their functions to perform in the operation. Jericho was the obvious place to enter Canaan. By gaining control of that city, Israel could divide Canaan, separating the nations in the north from those in the south, thus weakening the opposition.
  - c. Jericho was situated about 17 miles northeast of Jerusalem, a short distance west of Jordan, in a fertile valley. The city was located on trade routes, and was strongly fortified. If Jericho fell, the Canaanites would likely lose much of their will to fight.
  - d. Entering the city, the two spies came into the house of Rahab, who is styled *a harlot*. Although she clearly was a harlot at the time of these events, she changed her profession. Later, she married an Israelite named Salmon (Matt. 1:5), and became an ancestor of Jesus. Clarke says that harlots and innkeepers were known by the same Hebrew word (p.10f). However, James speaks of her as *a harlot* (Jas. 2:25), and uses the Greek term *porne* which describes a prostitute (cf. Matt. 21:31-32). When Rahab changed her way of life, she was received into the Lord's approval. "Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him" (Matt. 21:31-32).
  - e. Rahab's house was on the wall of the city, it was a public place, it was a place where strangers might be expected to visit, and God's providence likely led the spies to her house. These were good reasons why the spies went there.
2. Verses 2-3: “And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country. And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country.”
  - a. Israel's presence in the country did not pass unnoticed, and the entrance of the two spies into Jericho was likewise noted. A report was brought to the king of Jericho, evidently with information about their entering into Rahab's house.
  - b. The king sent word to Rahab for her to bring the men forth from her house. If they had been captured, no doubt they would have been tortured and slain. The king was well aware of their purpose for coming to the city.
3. Verses 4-5: “And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they *were*: And it came to pass *about the time* of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them.”
  - a. Rahab hid the two spies, and reported to the king's men that men had come to her house, that

she did not know where they came from, or where they had gone. She claimed that they left her establishment about dark, just before the gates of the city were closed. Her advice to the search party was that if they hurried, they were sure to overtake them.

- b. Of course, the information she gave was mostly untrue. Two men had come to her house; this she admitted. But her report that they had left was false. Some have thought that her example of lying shows that if the reason is good, telling a lie is acceptable to God. Others use the case as an example of Biblical contradiction.
  - c. Rahab was justified because she believed in the ultimate fulfillment of God's purposes; she helped the spies because of this belief. She was not justified because she lied, but in spite of it. Sarah made a hurtful substitution in a misguided plan to help God provide a son for Abraham; she later was included in inspiration's Hall of Fame (Heb. 11:11), not because of her substitution, but because of the faith she showed at other times. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).
  - d. God did not approve of Rahab's lie; nor did he approve of Sarah's substitutions; he did not approve Jael's scheme (Judg. 4:17ff); neither did he approve of Jephthah's foolish vow (Judg. 11). Rahab refused to obey the king of Jericho; rather she chose to do what she could to assist the purposes of the God of Israel; her lie was due to her ignorance of God's law; the help she gave the spies was due to her faith in the final triumph of God.
4. Verses 6-7: "But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof. And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate."
- a. Rahab had taken the spies to the roof of her house, and hid them among the stalks of flax which were stored there. We are told in verse fifteen that her house was constructed on top of the city wall.
  - b. The men sent to arrest the spies believed Rahab's lie, and quickly left the city, going toward the place where the Jordan was commonly forded. The gate of the city was closed as soon as the band exited Jericho, in pursuit of the spies.

#### B. Joshua 2:8-14: Rahab Shows Her Faith in the God of Israel.

1. Verses 8-9: "And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; 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."
  - a. After the king's men had left, and before the spies on the roof had "laid down," Rahab came up to them to obtain their word that she and her family would be spared when Israel took the city. The reference to "laid down" probably refers to their going to sleep for the night. Compare: "But before they lay down, the men of the city, *even* the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter" (Gen. 19:4).
  - b. In verse nine, Rahab plainly affirms her belief that God had given Israel the land. She had beheld the terror the report of Israel's deliverance from Egypt and their other God-given victories had wrought in the hearts of the Canaanites. The people in the land were filled with fear on account of Israel. Rahab did not pass off the stories she had heard as mere hearsay.
2. Verses 10-11: "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. 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."
  - a. Reports had been brought to Jericho of Israel's miraculous crossing of the Red Sea. If the

crossing had been only across a swampy marsh, as modernists would have us believe, there would have been no terror produced among the pagans of Canaan. This great event had taken place forty years earlier, but the people of Canaan still remembered it and fully believed it. Our question is: Why did they not all accept the Living God since they believed the reports?

- b. In more recent events, they had learned of Israel's destruction of the powerful kingdoms of Sihon and Og on the eastern side of Jordan. A nation that could successfully attack and defeat these kingdoms was a nation to be feared.
  - c. Rahab stated further that when the people of Jericho heard of these momentous events, that their hearts melted within them; there was no courage to resist Israel. Because of what God had done in Israel's behalf proved to Rahab, and all others who duly considered the significance of the events indicated, that the God of Israel was God of both heaven and earth. Her faith led her to help the spies, and brought about for her a state of justification before God: "Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way?" (Jas. 2:25).
3. Verses 12-13: "Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have showed you kindness, that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token: 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."
- a. She asked the spies to give her a promise that when they took Jericho, that they would spare her life and the lives of her family. She had showed kindness to them, and desired that they return the favor.
  - b. Her request again demonstrated her faith in God and the ultimate triumph of his purposes. She knew that neither Jericho nor any of the other nations of Canaan could withstand the power of Israel's God. Her faith led to her family members having their lives spared.
4. Verse 14: "And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee."
- a. The spies readily agreed to the request. If she would not reveal their presence, when Israel attacked Jericho, Rahab and her family would be spared. They committed Israel to the vow.
  - b. Ecclesiastes 5:4-5: "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for *he hath* no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better *is it* that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay."
  - c. The spies expressed their faith in the success of God's purposes for Israel when they promised to spare Rahab. She had dealt kindly toward Israel's representatives (the two spies), and Israel would deal kindly with her.

#### C. Joshua 2:15-22: The Spies Escape from Jericho.

1. Verses 15-16: "Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house *was* upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall. And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way."
- a. Her house was situated on top of the city's wall. She advised the men to go into the mountains and hide there for three days, until the searchers had returned to Jericho. They could then rejoin Israel on the far side of Jordan.
- b. She lowered the men through a window, down the wall, by means of a cord (a rope). They made good their escape. Paul escaped from Damascus by a similar means when the authorities sought to apprehend him. "In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: And through a window in a basket was

I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands" (2 Cor. 11:32-33).

2. Verses 17-20: "And the men said unto her, We *will be* blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. Behold, *when* we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. And it shall be, *that* whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood *shall be* upon his head, and we *will be* guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood *shall be* on our head, if *any* hand be upon him. And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear."
  - a. Before leaving, the spies told Rahab to display the scarlet thread (the rope by which they were lowered from her house) in the window; she was to bring her family into her house when Israel approached the city. The spies did not know the details of God's plan by which he would cause the walls to fall, but their plan perfectly meshed with the plan.
  - b. The spies told Rahab that she would have to follow these instructions or else they could not be held accountable for the safety of her family. Further, they denied any responsibility for her deliverance if she reported any of this business.
  - c. Rahab and her family were to be delivered from the destruction of Jericho, but there were certain conditions they must meet.
3. Verses 21-22: "And she said, According unto your words, so *be* it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window. And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned: and the pursuers sought *them* throughout all the way, but found *them* not."
  - a. Rahab sensibly accepted the terms, and sent the men on their way safely. She bound the scarlet line in the window; this she may have done at the time, or perhaps later.
  - b. The men heeded the counsel Rahab gave them, and went into the mountain where they remained for three days. This gave their pursuers time to decide the spies had escaped, and to return to Jericho.

D. Joshua 2:23-24: The Spies Give Their Report to Joshua.

1. Verse 23: "So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all *things* that befell them."
    - a. The spies descended from the mountain, crossed Jordan, and delivered their report to Joshua. The historian did not tell how they crossed the swollen river, although a small boat or raft might have been used. A small party could make the crossing by boat, but it would not have been feasible for a whole nation to cross that way.
    - b. We are not told that the report was made public at this time throughout the whole camp. A wise general keeps his plan and preparation secret from those who have no need to know.
  2. Verse 24: "And they said unto Joshua, Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us."
    - a. The spies stated their assessment of the report: "God has truly given us the land." Everything had worked out so well on their intelligence-gathering mission that they could be sure that God was really with them in the endeavor. Learning from Rahab of the fear in the hearts of the Canaanites gave them reason to believe their invasion would be successful.
    - b. It was necessary for those people back then to walk by faith; God did not speak with them face-to-face on a daily basis, keeping them fully apprised of his activities. God gave them a job to do, either shown to them plainly or which was easy for them to perceive on their own; and there was a part God would do.
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## JOSHUA 3

### A. Joshua 3:1-6: Israel Arrives at the Jordan River.

1. Verse 1: “And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over.”
    - a. Israel was encamped at Shittim (Abelshittim: Num. 33;49). It was at this place that the Israelites had committed fornication with the women of Moab (Num. 25), which resulted in the death of twenty-four thousand of their number.
    - b. After the spies had given their report, Joshua arose early in the morning (evidently the next morning), and led the nation to the banks of Jordan. The impending invasion of Canaan was one of the greatest days in Israel’s history; it was an occasion that demanded prompt action. We read of Joshua rising early on other occasions (6:12; 7:16; 8:10). Other great men and women of the Bible are said to have risen early:
      - 1) Abraham: Genesis 19:27; 21:14; 22:3.
      - 2) Jacob: Genesis 28:18.
      - 3) Moses: Exodus 8:20; 9:13; 24:4.
      - 4) David: 1 Samuel 17:20.
      - 5) The women who went to anoint the Lord’s body: Mark 16:2.
      - 6) The apostles: Acts 5:21.
      - 7) Christ: "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mark 1:35)."And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them" (John 8:2).
    - c. Israel set up camp on the eastern banks of the Jordan River, preparatory to crossing the river and entering Canaan.
  2. Verse 2: “And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host.”
    - a. After three days of rest, the officers went through the camp to give instructions to the people. Three days would give the people time to rest and prepare themselves mentally and otherwise for the great conquest.
    - b. The land promises God had given to Abraham hundreds of years earlier, and repeated on numerous later occasions, were on the threshold of fulfillment. Think of the excitement that coursed throughout the encampment! Careful plans and preparations were needed to insure Israel’s part in the great drama would be successful.
  3. Verse 3: “And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it.”
    - a. The plan of action included the ark of the covenant preceding the orderly movement of the people. The ark of the covenant was the most sacred article of furniture within the tabernacle; it was at the mercy seat, the covering of the ark, that God met with the high priest on the day of atonement; this was the only day in which the high priest was permitted to enter the most holy place in the tabernacle.
    - b. Only certain ones in the tribe of Levi were permitted to be priests; and certain ones of their number were selected to bear the ark in transit. The officers instructed the people to follow the ark which would lead them.
  4. Verse 4: “Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure:
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come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed *this* way heretofore.”

- a. Israel was to follow the priests who carried the ark, but they were not to follow any closer than about two thousand cubits. Reckoning a cubit as eighteen inches, two thousand cubits would be three thousand feet, or about three-fifths of a mile. This distance was presumed by the Jews to be the maximum distance one under the Mosaic Law ought to travel on the Sabbath day.
- b. The ark would guide them in the way to go. If they followed too far off, they might lose sight of the ark; if they got too close, they might encroach on God’s majestic holiness. God demands reverence from his subjects. When men lose this deep respect for the Almighty, they soon plunge into rebellion. When Israel camped at the foot of Sinai forty years earlier, God’s majestic presence was manifested. Exodus 19.
  - 1) Psalms 89:7: "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him."
  - 2) Hebrews 12:18-21: "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which *voice* they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, *that* Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake)."
- c. God demands reverence from all of his subjects. Without reverence, there can be no acceptable worship or service. God is the Almighty; he deserves our reverence.
  - 1) Ecclesiastes 5:1-2: "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."
  - 2) John 4:23-24: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
  - 3) Hebrews 12:28-29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God *is* a consuming fire."
- d. When people of ancient days were in close proximity to some manifestation of Divine presence, they feared and trembled.
  - 1) Isaiah 6:1-5: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."
  - 2) Daniel 5:1-6: "Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which *was* in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the

house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another."

- 3) Matthew 28:2-5: "And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified."
- e. Israel needed God's help in order to find the best way into Canaan, and without his supernatural help, they could not have even crossed Jordan at the present time. They had not "passed this way heretofore." As we near the end of our earthly life, we need the Lord's help to be prepared for death; death is the great unknown, for "we have not passed this way before." However, our Lord has paved the way for us, and has furnished us with information that gives us a glimpse of the world of eternity.
5. Verses 5-6: "And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you. And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people."
  - a. Part of the instructions given the people were these words from Joshua. He told them that they were to sanctify themselves because of the great wonders they were to behold on the morrow. Possibly the kind of things required of Israel in Exodus 19:10-15 were also required of the present Israelites for them to be sanctified. At Sinai (Ex. 19:10-14), they were told to wash their clothes and "come not at their wives." Their preparation would at least include prayer.
  - b. To the priests charged with transporting the ark, Joshua commanded that they take up the ark, and proceed ahead of the nation to Jordan.

#### B. Joshua 3:7-8: God Encourages Joshua.

1. Verse 7: "And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee."
    - a. Moses had much natural ability, education, and experience to become a great man. "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds" (Acts 7:22). However, without God's guidance and miraculous power, Moses could not have accomplished the great things he did for Israel.
    - b. God here promises to magnify Joshua in the sight of all Israel. He did this by guiding and empowering Joshua in every necessary way. The Almighty had firmly established Moses' leadership in Israel by enabling him to cross the Red Sea by miraculous act; he would establish Joshua's leadership by enabling him to lead Israel in crossing the swollen Jordan River by miraculous means.
  2. Verse 8: "And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan."
    - a. God instructed Joshua to have the priests who were to carry the ark of the covenant to lead the way into Jordan, and stand still after entering the river. They would not be standing in water, but on dry ground. Evidently, the priests with the ark were to enter Jordan, and stand upstream
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from where Israel would cross; if they could not follow any closer than two thousand cubits, it would seem that they should not get any closer when they crossed Jordan. The priests were to stand in Jordan (verse 13). The waters of the flood would be stopped upstream from the ark, while the flood below ran on down toward the Dead Sea. Israel would have a wide stretch of the dry river bed over which they could pass into the land. The crossing could be accomplished in a short time.

- b. A miracle of grand proportions was in the offing; one that would be as awesome as the crossing of the Red Sea. The great encouragement this miracle would create in Israel's heart would move them on to the great task of conquering Canaan. Without God's help they could not have crossed Jordan, and without their direct, dedicated effort, they could not conquer the land.

C. Joshua 3:9-13: Joshua Offers Encouragement to the People.

1. Verse 9: "And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the LORD your God."
    - a. Joshua urges the people to draw near so they could hear the word of the Lord their God. What he spoke to them was not his word, but the message that originated with God.
    - b. If the plan had been of Joshua's design, the power to execute it would also have been his to provide. In that case, it is certain that no miracle would have occurred, and the Jordan would not have been crossed at that time. But the plan was from God, and they could be sure that there was more than sufficient power to bring it to a successful fulfillment.
    - c. Israel could see the flooded Jordan River valley. They would need great persuasion to believe they could cross it at this season of the year. Joshua's statement here would provide them reason to have confidence: it was God who developed the plan and who would execute it.
  2. Verse 10: "And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God *is* among you, and *that* he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites."
    - a. When they beheld the awesome power of God demonstrated before their very eyes, they would know with certainty that they would be able to take possession of the land of promise.
    - b. Since they would see God's power to open the waters of the flooded Jordan to allow them to pass safely across on dry ground, the battles to come with the Canaanites would be successful; there was no earthly power that would be able to withstand the power of heaven.
  3. Verse 11: "Behold, the ark of the covenant of the LORD of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan."
    - a. The ark of the covenant, their most valued possession, would precede them into the waters of Jordan. This fact of itself would offer much hope to Israel, for neither God nor Joshua would put the ark in jeopardy. If the plan was so certain that the ark of the covenant would be safe, there was no reason for the Israelites to be terrified.
    - b. The plan was the essence of simplicity. The ark would lead the way; Israel had but to follow. They would be in no more peril than the priests and the ark, which was none.
  4. Verse 12: "Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man."
    - a. This passage does not reveal the purpose for which these twelve men were selected. One man from each of the twelve tribes was picked; the tribe of Levi was excluded.
    - b. These twelve men were to serve a good purpose, which is revealed in Joshua 4:2-3: "Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night."
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5. Verse 13: "And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, *that* the waters of Jordan shall be cut off *from* the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap."
  - a. Assurance is given the Israelites that as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who carried the ark touched the waters of Jordan that the river would be stopped.
  - b. God is described as the God of all the earth; he created the earth, and it is by his power that the earth is sustained. If the Lord were suddenly to remove his control over the earth, it would fall into immediate ruin.
    - 1) Colossians 1:15-17: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
    - 2) Hebrews 1:3: "Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."
  - c. God's promise is that when the priests entered the water, he would cause the flood waters to stop and begin to pile up, as if dammed with an invisible barricade. There would be no reason for the waters downstream from the priests to remain where they were at the instant of the miracle; these waters would harmlessly continue their journey southward, to the Dead Sea, leaving a dry riverbed behind.

D. Joshua 3:14-17: Israel Crosses Jordan.

1. Verse 14: "And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people."
    - a. The plan having been revealed, the Israelites packed their possessions, and began their journey. The priests bearing the ark preceded them toward the river, and the people following behind at the prescribed distance.
    - b. The Jordan River valley is an unusual geographic feature. The river begins near Caesarea Philippi; at this point it is about 1200 feet above sea level. The surface of the Dead Sea is about 1292 feet below mean sea level. The valley of the Jordan is guarded on the east and west by mountains, which are from 2 to 15 miles apart. The plain of Jericho just to the north of the Dead Sea is 14 miles wide.
  2. Verse 15: "And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest)."
    - a. Could not God have timed the entry into Canaan at a season when the river would have been at its normal level, and thus to have negated the need for a miraculous crossing? He could have done so, but it was in the best interests of his plan for a miraculous entrance to be made. This would enliven the faith and zeal of Israel, and at the same time cause the hearts of the Canaanites to be proportionately weakened. The time of harvest was present, so Israel would be able to begin quickly to partake of the fruits of the land.
    - b. Another passage speaks of the Jordan flooding at harvest time. "These *are* they that went over Jordan in the first month, when it had overflowed all his banks; and they put to flight all *them* of the valleys, *both* toward the east, and toward the west" (1 Chron. 12:15). These were warriors from the tribe of Gad; they braved the flood waters of Jordan to cross over to David. No miracle was involved here, but the courage of the men is emphasized. A crossing could be effected by boat or by swimming, but in either case, great strength, skill, and fortitude were necessary.
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- c. The melting snows on the mountains at this time of the year (April-May) caused the Jordan to flood. The statement of the text, that the river overflows all its banks at this season, is accurate. The river bed itself has banks; there is a wider area adjacent to the river bed, covered with vegetation, which also is flooded; this strip of land also has banks. Then there are the banks of the Jordan valley. The entire valley was not flooded, but the waters overflowed the river bed and extended out over the swath of land on either side of the river on which grew the vegetation.
    - d. The river would be much too deep and swift for wading or to attempt to cross by other means by so many. It was totally impossible for the entire nation, with their flocks and herds, their children, and their possessions, to make the crossing by common means. A miracle was essential.
  3. Verse 16: "That the waters which came down from above stood *and* rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that *is* beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, *even* the salt sea, failed, *and* were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho."
    - a. Completing the statement of verse fifteen, we are told here that as soon as the feet of the priests touched the brim of the water, that the flood immediately stopped and began to pile up, allowing the waters downstream to run on down to the Dead Sea naturally.
    - b. It would be as if a great invisible hand had been suddenly placed into the river, damming up the waters, holding the flood upstream, while the waters below continued their normal journey down-stream.
    - c. The dammed-up waters extended upstream to the city of Adam, which is said to be near Zaretan. The location of the city of Adam is unknown, but Zaretan is said to have been near Jezreel and Bethshean (1 Kings 4:12), and near Succoth (1 Kings 7:46). The waters would be backed up to a point just south of the Sea of Galilee (known in the Old Testament as *Chinnereth* or *Gennesareth*).
    - d. The point at which Israel crossed Jordan was near the city of Jericho.
  4. Verse 17: "And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan."
    - a. In a short time, the waters downstream from the point the waters above were stopped would run off and the riverbed would be dry. Israel could make the crossing quickly, using as long a stretch of the dry riverbed as they needed.
    - b. During the crossing, the priests bearing the ark of the covenant stood in the midst of the riverbed. The operation would have to be done within a reasonable period of time, or else the priests would have to be relieved occasionally; the ark had a considerable weight.
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## JOSHUA 4

### A. Joshua 4:1-9: The Memorial Stones are Gathered.

1. Verses 1-3: “And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying, Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night.”
  - a. These twelve men had been selected earlier (Josh. 3:12) for the job they performed now. Verse four shows that these men had already been instructed in the special mission they were assigned to do. The present passage gives the report of their work; it is placed at the proper point in the narrative.
  - b. These men are to go into the river bed, before God releases the water being held upstream, and take up the stones on which the priests had stood while Israel crossed Jordan.
  - c. There were twelve stones and twelve men. This was more than a coincidence; God knew the location and number of the stones the priests were to use, and picked out the number of men needed to transport the stones out of the riverbed.
2. Verses 4-5: “Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man: And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel.”
  - a. Calling the selected men to him, Joshua sends them forth to bring the stones from the river. The priests and the ark remained in the river until the stones had been removed.
  - b. The number twelve is used in several special instances in the Bible. There were twelve tribes which constituted the nation of Israel; Levi was an additional and special tribe. There were twelve apostles of Christ, with Paul being an extra and special apostle to the Gentiles. Heaven is described as having twelve foundations, and measuring twelve furlongs along its four sides; its height is twelve furlongs; it has twelve gates.
3. Verses 6-7: “That this may be a sign among you, *that* when your children ask *their fathers* in time to come, saying, What *mean* ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.”
  - a. The twelve stones were to be arranged into a memorial at Gilgal (4:19-20). This memorial was to serve as a constant reminder to future generations in Israel of how they entered into the Promised Land by means of God's great miraculous power. The miracle was not only to enable Israel to enter the land, but served as a sign to them and to all their descendants that the Living God is the God of Israel.
  - b. Miracles always had more significance than the obvious. The lame man of Acts three was healed, not merely for the benefit the miracle had for him, but as a sign to unbelievers that the message the apostles preached was truly from heaven.
  - c. God set up several memorials in the past.
    - 1) The Passover—Exodus 12.
    - 2) The Memorial Stones—Joshua 4.
    - 3) Memorial Anointing—Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:1-9; John 12:1-9.
    - 4) Memorial Supper—Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24-25.

4. Verses 8-9: “And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the LORD spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day.”
  - a. God’s word was respected and obeyed in this matter of the memorial stones. The twelve men took up the twelve stones from Jordan and carried them to the place the people encamped that night. The passage speaks of the “children of Israel” doing this; the nation did it through the work of the twelve men who actually did the job.
  - b. The historian notes quietly that Joshua erected twelve other stones in the midst of Jordan, at the very place where the priests stood who bore the ark. He further states that those stones were still in place at the time of the writing.
  - c. Not only would future generations see the memorial at Gilgal, but they could see the very place where the priests stood when Israel made their crossing of Jordan. These stones would be visible most of the year when the river was at its normal depth.

B. Joshua 4:10-13: Israel Crosses Jordan.

1. Verse 10: “For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until every thing was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua: and the people hasted and passed over.”
    - a. The priests maintained their station in the midst of Jordan as Israel passed over into the land of promise. There may have been a measure of uncertainty, if not fear, on their part as they approached the river, but as the waters ceased their mad rush downstream as soon as their feet touched the water, and as the water piled-up and backed-up northward, these priests would become steadier and fearless.
    - b. The steadfastness of the priests, who stood in the very mouth of the flood, would encourage Israel. They had either seen or heard of the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea by Israel under Moses; this great occasion would give them personal faith in the greatness of the Almighty, and thus serve to motivate and calm them as they went forth to conquer the land. They did not waste any time in making their way across Jordan.
  2. Verse 11: “And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over, that the ark of the LORD passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people.”
    - a. Only after the nation had crossed, and the stones had been gathered by the twelve men, and Joshua had arranged the other twelve stones in Jordan, did the priests bring the ark up out of the water.
    - b. The ark of the covenant was the only article of furniture in the most holy place of the tabernacle. Upon its cover, called “the mercy seat,” the high priest presented to God the annual atonement offering. The ark represented the presence of God.
    - c. On seeing the miracle at Jordan, which focused on the ark, it is easy to see why unthinking Israelites in future years came to think of the ark as a talisman having magical powers. During the day of Eli, when the Philistines attacked Israel, someone thought that if the ark was brought forth, sudden destruction would befall the invaders. Instead, the Philistines captured the ark (1 Sam. 4).
  3. Verses 12-13: “And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spake unto them: About forty thousand prepared for war passed over before the LORD unto battle, to the plains of Jericho.”
    - a. These tribes had requested of Moses that they be permitted to take their portion of the land on
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the east side of Jordan (Num. 32). Moses had elicited from them a commitment to enter Canaan with the rest of the nation, and help them in subduing the pagans, before they took up their residence on Jordan's east side. The tribes were Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh.

- b. In keeping with their promise, the men of these tribes sent an army across the river. Verse thirteen puts the number of soldiers at forty thousand. It may be that these men were all from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh; if not, then a significant part of that army was of their number.
- c. The historian shows that the priests bearing the ark entered the river first, and then the nation crossed over. This passage tells us that the armed force of forty thousand men preceded the nation. This, of course, was logical for the men of Jericho might otherwise have attacked Israel when they were vulnerable, as they came up out of the river.

C. Joshua 4:14-18: Joshua is Magnified by the Lord in the Eyes of Israel.

1. Verse 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."
    - a. An army needs to have respect for its leader; a nation must have respect for its leader. In the face of great opposition, without respect for the leader, the army or the nation might break up in confusion.
    - b. Israel had profound respect for Moses, except during those cases when rebellion exploded in the camp. God always put down those rebels with quick and decisive action. The nation learned through its experiences with Moses, to hold that great man in high esteem; he was God's agent, and acted in their own best interest.
    - c. As Israel respected Moses, God now placed Joshua in a similar exalted position before the nation. Israel could see that God had been with Joshua in the supernatural fording of Jordan. In this fashion did God exalt Joshua before Israel. He received their respect all the remainder of his life.
  2. Verses 15-17: "And the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying, Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of Jordan. Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, Come ye up out of Jordan."
    - a. God was communing in some direct way with Joshua during this highly perilous time. He instructed Joshua to issue the order for the priests to bring the ark from the river. He did so.
    - b. The ark is called the ark of "the testimony" here. This expression is used eleven times in the Bible; it is called "the ark of the covenant" forty-three times. This chest-like container held the tables of the Law which Moses had brought from Sinai, Aaron's rod which had budded, and a pot of manna. It contained the very covenant which God made with Israel, and was itself a testimony of God's presence with the nation.
  3. Verse 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."
    - a. God's control over the forces of the river was so precise that when the soles of the priests' feet first touched the water, the flood was stopped; as they came up from the river bed, the moment their soles of their feet touched the dry ground on the river bank, the waters returned to their normal course. The water overflowed the banks as they had done before.
    - b. Countless times through his dealings with the ancients, God exercised his power over the forces of nature using supernatural power. During his personal ministry, Christ likewise showed his
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authority over nature. God and Christ created the universe, the earth, and all its life; they ordained the laws of nature, and retain final authority over all. It should not seem impossible for Deity to manage natural forces through supernatural means. We have no reason to doubt Bible miracles, but the so-called miracles of modern errorists are as flawed as the theology of their perpetrators.

D. Joshua 4:19-24: The Memorial Stones.

1. Verse 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."
  - a. The tenth day of the first month was the date of their miraculous entrance into the land of Canaan. Exodus 12:3 set the tenth as the day when each family of Israel was to select the passover lamb; the passover was to be eaten on the fourteenth (Ex. 12:6).
  - b. We stand amazed at the timing of God! He brought them to the brink of Jordan just in time to enter the land at the precise time which would enable them to eat the passover there. They thus commemorated their deliverance from Egypt which took place forty years earlier.
  - c. Their first encampment in Canaan was at Gilgal, which lay between the Jordan River and Jericho. The next chapter reports the grand events that transpired there during their stay. Centuries later, Gilgal became the site of idolatrous worship by the descendants of these Israelites.
    - 1) Hosea 4:15: "Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, *yet* let not Judah offend; and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Bethaven, nor swear, The LORD liveth."
    - 2) Hosea 12:11: "*Is there* iniquity in Gilead? surely they are vanity: they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal; yea, their altars *are* as heaps in the furrows of the fields."
    - 3) Amos 4:4: "Come to Bethel, and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, *and* your tithes after three years."
    - 4) Amos 5:5: "But seek not Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beersheba: for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nought."
2. Verse 20: "And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal."
  - a. Here the specific report is given about Joshua arranging the twelve stones into the memorial. This stone memorial no doubt became the source of great encouragement to countless Israelites through the centuries that followed.
  - b. It may be that this very memorial later was misappropriated by the idolaters in Israel, and used as a place where false gods were honored and where the people corrupted themselves in more than one way. These stones were intended to be a means of reminding Israel of God's powerful help, and consequently their responsibility to keep his law. It is strange that mankind is so quick to forget!
  - c. It is often the case that men will so pervert a God-given requirement or function so as to make it become a means of sin and rebellion. Later Israelites perverted Gilgal so that it became symbolic of the idolatry of the nation. Men have so perverted the Lord's Supper to make it to be a mystical re-crucifixion of Christ, and thus a sinful practice.
    - 1) Matthew 15:7-9: "*Ye* hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men."
    - 2) Mark 7:6-13: "He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments

- of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is Corban*, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free*. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."
- 3) John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
  - 4) Galatians 1:6-9: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."
  - 5) 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
  - 6) Revelation 22:18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."
3. Verses 21-23: "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? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. 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."
    - a. So important was the memorial that the inspired historian repeated the purpose it was to serve. He had earlier made the same point (4:3-7). God saw the need for such a memorial, and was very specific in announcing its purpose.
    - b. It was not intended to serve as some kind of shrine, but as a memorial. The purpose of a memorial is to remind. There was nothing magical about the site or the stones. If Israel had used this stone memorial as it was meant to be used, they would not have gone so quickly into idolatry. It was the God of heaven, not the so-called "gods" of the pagans, who had made it possible for the nation to cross Jordan on dry land.
  4. Verse 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."
    - a. This verse states the purpose God had in mind for the memorial. He knew that if Israel did as they were instructed in regards to this memorial, each generation would be taught and motivated to faith-fulness to God.
    - b. It would keep alive in the memory of Israel and the Gentile nations of the area what God had done for Israel at Jordan, and would produce fear and obedience on the part of God's people. God never required anything that was senseless or arbitrary; everything has a purpose.
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## JOSHUA 5

### A. Joshua 5:1: The Effect of God's Miracle on the People of the Land.

1. Verse 1: "And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which *were* on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which *were* by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel."
2. God had accomplished several things when he led Israel across Jordan in the fashion he used and at the time he chose. They entered the land just in time to partake of the harvests that were then ripening; and they crossed Jordan just in time to make ready for the passover (Ex. 12; Josh. 4:19; 5:10-12).
3. The pagans in the land were well aware of the means by which Israel was able to cross the flooded Jordan, and they were in shock because of it! They knew full well that the God who could stop the swollen Jordan, could also bring about their own destruction. Rahab had correctly read and reported the heart of the people of the land. These pagans were in a state of panic! "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. 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. 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" (Josh. 2:9-11).
4. Some of the Amorites were on the east side of Jordan; these had already been defeated by Israel. Other Amorites lived on the west side of Jordan, as did the other nations of the Canaanites. All of them were idol worshipers who fully deserved the treatment they received.
5. Notice that the inspired historian includes himself as being part of the company to cross the Jordan: "...until we were passed over...."

### B. Joshua 5:2-9: Circumcision of Israel.

1. Verses 2-3: "At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time. And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins."
    - a. For some reason, the Israelites had not practiced circumcision while in the wilderness. During these forty years, they were being punished for their unwillingness to enter into Canaan at the first opportunity (Num. 13-14). Since circumcision was a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham's descendants, and the nation of Israel was being punished by God for their unbelief, perhaps circumcision was inappropriate for them at the time.
    - b. However, the rebels from the wilderness days had by this time died, and a new generation had arisen. As they entered into the land of promise, it was necessary and timely that those born in the wilderness be circumcised. At the Lord's word, Joshua made sharp knives and circumcised Israel while they were at Gilgal.
    - c. Although the actions are attributed to Joshua, we ought not to understand that he personally made the knives and did the surgery. What is done in response to instructions, can be attributed to the one giving the orders as well as to those who carry out the instructions. Undoubtedly, there were scores of thousands of males who had not been circumcised.
  2. Verses 4-5: "And this *is* the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of
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Egypt, *that were* males, *even* all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt. Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people *that were* born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, *them* they had not circumcised.”

- a. The Israelites who left Egypt had received circumcision, but all of these had died in the wilderness; Joshua and Caleb were the only exceptions. Notice that the historian states that he only describes the men of war who exited Egypt; he did not include those who were under twenty years of age at the time of the exodus.
  - b. Those males who were born in the wilderness were yet uncircumcised; these received this operation at Gilgal. The number of males must have been great.
3. Verse 6: “For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people *that were* men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD swore that he would not show them the land, which the LORD swore unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey.”
- a. Because Israel had been too full of fear to enter Canaan shortly after leaving Egypt, God required them to remain in the wilderness for forty years, until such time that all the men of war (except Joshua and Caleb) had died.
  - b. Forty years was determined as the proper time factor because the twelve spies had spent forty days searching out the land. "After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, *even* forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise" (Num. 14:34).
  - c. This was a national tragedy! Many of those who died in the wilderness, died natural deaths. It is only to be expected that in the span of forty years, most of those who were adults at the beginning of that time span, will die by its end. Many others died of calamities and in direct punishment from God. That generation faced a most discouraging destiny: they were sentenced to live the rest of their years in that desolate wilderness! Their choice had been so simple at the first! They learned the hard lessons that God is true his word, and means what he says.
4. Verses 7-8: “And their children, *whom* he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way. And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole.”
- a. The male children born in the wilderness had not been circumcised; these were the ones who now received it. They had entered into the borders of the new land; it was fitting and proper that they begin their new life here with the will of God fully met.
  - b. Since circumcision is not a pleasant experience, especially for an adult, they remained in the camp at Gilgal until such time as they were all healed. It may have been that the operations were concluded prior to the time they ate the passover on the fourteenth.
5. Verse 9: “And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.”
- a. This was the place and occasion when God took away the reproach of Egypt. It was after Abraham was circumcised that Sarah bore Isaac to him. Following the circumcision of Israel at Gilgal, they had the reproach of their Egyptian experience removed. They were now ready to enter into a new land and a new relationship with God.
  - b. The name *Gilgal* means “rolling.” That place bore that name for many years, long past the time the book of Joshua was written.

C. Joshua 5:10-11: Israel Observes the Passover.

1. Verse 10: “And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth
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day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.”

- a. While encamped at Gilgal, they ate the passover on the prescribed day: the fourteenth day of the first month. This was a solemn occasion, as well as a happy time. They ate the passover lamb with bitter herbs, in remembrance of the bitter bondage their forebears had endured in Egypt. It was a happy occasion since they were on the brink of a new life in a prosperous land.
  - b. The promises God had at first made to Abraham hundreds of years earlier were now to be fulfilled to his descendants. The richness of the land was beyond compare. The Lord described it frequently as a land that flows with milk and honey, an expression denoting the great fertility and productivity of the land. "And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and *they brought* of the pomegranates, and of the figs" (Num. 13:23).
2. Verse 11: “And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched *corn* in the selfsame day.”
- a. The day after the passover, they ate of the old corn of the land. They prepared unleavened cakes and parched corn. The cakes were unleavened because the days of unleavened bread were in progress, in connection with the passover. Parched corn must have seemed a delicacy after their forty years of eating manna.
  - b. The old corn evidently refers to the crops of the previous growing season. Possibly the new crop was not yet ready to be harvested. They would have had ample opportunity to obtain the grain the pagans had already reaped and stored; they would soon take possession of the other bounties found in the land which was now theirs.

D. Joshua 5:12: The Manna Ceases.

1. Verse 12: “And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.”
2. For forty years, God had showered Israel with a daily supply of food. It was a type of bread, which obviously contained all the vitamins and minerals to keep them healthy and strong. "And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it *was* like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it *was* like wafers *made* with honey" (Ex. 16:13).
3. After eating the passover on the fourteenth, and the old corn of the land on the fifteenth, the manna ceased on the next day. However, a pot of manna had been stored in the ark of the covenant.
  - a. Exodus 16:33: "And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations."
  - b. Hebrews 9:4: "Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant."

E. Joshua 5:13-15: Joshua is Met by a Heavenly Being.

1. Verse 13: “And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, *Art* thou for us, or for our adversaries?”
    - a. While Israel was encamped near Jericho, Joshua saw a *man* with his sword drawn in his hand. Joshua asked the man if he was a friend or foe to Israel.
    - b. It will be clear in the next two verses that this person was not a mere man. The person was in the form of a man, but he was not a man. To say the least, he was an angel; however, there is evidence he may have been someone greater than an angel.
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2. Verse 14: "And he said, Nay; but *as* captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?"
    - a. The being affirmed that he was captain of the Lord's hosts; therefore, he was not a foe, but a friend. This being had come as captain of the Lord's host.
    - b. When Joshua heard this introduction, he fell on his face to the earth before this person, and worshiped him. In other cases where a man offered worship to an angel, the angel rebuked the man.
      - 1) Revelation 19:10: "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."
      - 2) Revelation 22:8-9: "And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God."
    - c. That this being did not rebuke Joshua may indicate he was not a mere angel, but one of the Godhead members in human form.
  3. Verse 15: "And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy. And Joshua did so."
    - a. This person, who is identified as "the captain of the Lord's host," instructed Joshua to remove his shoes because the place where he stood was holy. This is similar to the experience Moses had on the mountain when the Lord spoke to him from the burning bush. "And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy ground" (Ex. 3:5).
    - b. This is further indication that the speaker was not a mere angel, but may have been Christ. Christ was with Israel in the wilderness. "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4).
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## JOSHUA 6

### A. Joshua 6:1-5: The Plan for Taking Jericho.

1. Verse 1: "Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in."
  - a. This verse gives a transitional statement which connects Joshua's preceding encounter with the heavenly being with the instructions he is given by this same great person.
  - b. Jericho was "straitly shut up." The margin shows that the statement is emphatic: "did shut up, and was shut up." The city was tightly secured against the impending Israelite attack. The gates were closed and closely guarded so that no one was able to enter or leave.
2. Verse 2: "And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, *and* the mighty men of valour."
  - a. The Lord spoke to Joshua. The chapter division does not break the continuity of the episode reported at the end of chapter five. The spokesman is the same person before whom Joshua bowed and worshipped; this person is identified as "the Lord." The ASV renders the term as "Jehovah." "And Jehovah said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thy hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor" (ASV).
  - b. Abraham had a similar experience in Genesis 18-19. One of the three persons who communed with the patriarch is referred to as "the Lord." This person is probably Christ.
  - c. The Lord plainly told Joshua that he had given Jericho into his hand, with all the fighting men within it. However, Israel had to put forth certain efforts in order to take possession of the city.
    - 1) The city was shut up against Israel (verse 1); God had given the city to them; but before they received the city, they had to follow the directions God gave by which it fell into their hands.
    - 2) The grace of God provided the bounty; Israel obtained it by faith; the faith Israel had was demonstrated by their obedience to God's instructions. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days" (Heb. 11:30).
  - d. The process is parallel to the manner by which we obtain God's spiritual blessings today.
    - 1) We are saved by God's grace.
      - a) Titus 2:11: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men."
      - b) Ephesians 2:4-7: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."
    - 2) We appropriate the benefits God's grace provides by our faith.
      - a) Romans 5:1-2: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."
      - b) Ephesians 5:8-9: "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth)."
      - c) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."
      - d) Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

- 3) Our faith is expressed in obedience to the instructions God has given in the gospel.
  - a) Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."
  - b) Titus 3:4-7: "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."
  - c) James 2:17,24, 26: "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.... Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.... For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."
- e. Israel did not take possession of Jericho by grace alone, or by faith alone, or by obedience alone; all three of these essentials were present. We are not saved by God's grace alone, or by faith alone, or by obedience alone; all three of these essentials must be present.
  - 1) God's grace provides man with food to sustain his physical life, but man must work to obtain the food (Matt. 6:11; 2 Thess. 3:10). We believe that God will do his part and we do our part: we plant the crop and patiently await the harvest; we harvest the crop and enjoy the benefits.
  - 2) God's grace is God's love in action; he provides the blessing by grace (i.e., out of the goodness of his heart); we obtain the blessing promised on the condition of our faith, when our faith leads us to comply with the instructions God gave.
3. Verses 3-4: "And ye shall compass the city, all *ye* men of war, *and* go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets."
  - a. Verse two expressed God's grace in giving Jericho into Israel's hands. This passage gives the directions by which they would obtain the promise. Israel was to believe the promise and follow the directions; they showed their faith when they obeyed (Heb. 11:30).
  - b. The instructions required Israel to circle the city once a day for six days. The men of war were to lead; the seven priests with the trumpets were next; then the priests who carried the ark of the covenant (verse six); the people were to follow the ark (verse seven).
  - c. On the seventh day, they were to pass around the city seven times, after which the entire company was to raise up a great shout. God promised that the walls would fall down *flat*.
  - d. There is nothing in the plan itself that could cause the walls to fall down; no military leader would ever concoct such a plan! Clearly, the plan was of such a nature that the results could only be attributed to the awesome power of God! The Israelites would only follow the plan if they had strong faith.
    - 1) The people of Jericho would be perplexed at first when they beheld Israel going around their city; but then their fear would naturally give way to incredulity, and incredulity would turn into derision. One can well imagine that hoots of mockery might have been heard from Jericho's defenders.
    - 2) Nothing can impede faith or courage more quickly than mockery. Before long, those in Israel who were weak in faith would begin to question the wisdom of the plan. Since there is no reference to any weakness of faith among the Israelites, evidently they were still full of faith from their crossing of Jordan.

4. Verse 5: “And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long *blast* with the ram's horn, *and* when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.”
  - a. Following the great shout, the walls would fall, and Israel’s army could straightway climb over the rubble and capture Jericho. Not only were the Israelites required to compass the city thirteen times over seven days, but they must also enter Jericho and conquer the inhabitants by force.
  - b. In the place of *flat*, the margin gives “fall down *under it*.” Findings at the site show a remarkable fulfillment of this pronouncement. As already noted, the New Testament affirms that Jericho’s wall did indeed fall down. “By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days” (Heb. 11:30).

B. Joshua 6:6-11: The Plan Initiated.

1. Verses 6-7: “And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD. And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the LORD.”
    - a. Joshua executed the plan the Lord had given him. Calling the priests, he instructed them to take up the ark of the covenant, and directed them to select seven other priests, with each carrying a trumpet, to precede the ark in the march around Jericho.
    - b. The first group, leading the entire procession, was the army. The strategy is impeccable. The armed men of Israel, numbering in the thousands, would melt the enemy’s will to resist; the priests with the trumpets and the arks would add a further degree of fear. The great company of Israel would certainly strike terror in the hearts of these pagans, making the outcome of the ensuing battle a foregone conclusion.
    - c. When nothing happened after several days of activity, the people of Jericho would likely regain their confidence, and begin to mock Israel for their seemingly foolish efforts.
  2. Verse 8: “And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them.”
    - a. The instructions apparently were immediately put into effect. The seven priests passed before the Lord, going on ahead of the ark, blowing their trumpets.
    - b. It appears that the person called “the Lord” was still present with Joshua; at least he witnessed the great procession, and provided the power for the great miracle which followed the final circuit of Jericho on the seventh day.
  3. Verse 9: “And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rearward came after the ark, *the priests* going on, and blowing with the trumpets.”
    - a. The armed men preceded these priests who had the trumpets and the other priests who bore the ark. The rest of the company followed after the ark. In the absence of information to the contrary, the two thousand cubits of distance between the ark and the people was still maintained (3:3-4). The priests blew their trumpets throughout the march around the city.
    - b. The faithfulness of the present generation of Israelites is in contrast to the weak faith on the part of their predecessors in the wilderness. There is no hint of hesitancy on their part.
  4. Verse 10: “And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall *any* word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.”
    - a. At the first, this command seems to be strange. However, the wisdom of the plan becomes apparent when one considers the effect the silence of the Israelites would have on Jericho, as
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they quietly made their way around the city.

- b. The time for a shout would come following the thirteenth circuit of Jericho. At that time, they were to raise up a mighty roar, in concert with the trumpets.
5. Verse 11: “So the ark of the LORD compassed the city, going about *it* once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp.”
- a. With the armed men leading the way, the ark and its entourage, followed by the people, passed around the city once. Only the ark, being the focal point of the plan, is named here, but the context shows that the whole body of Israel was included in the strategy.
  - b. How long would it have taken for this entire assembly of people to walk around Jericho? Not very long, for on the seventh day, they passed around it seven times.
  - c. This verse reports the activities of one day; it summarizes the operation. The same procedure was followed for each of the first six days. Following their circuit around the city, they went back into camp for the rest of the day and night. How confusing this operation must have been to the people of Jericho!

C. Joshua 6:12-16: The Plan Completed.

1. Verses 12-13: “And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the rearward came after the ark of the LORD, *the priests* going on, and blowing with the trumpets.”
    - a. We are now given the actual report of the campaign. Rising early in the morning, the priests who were to carry the ark readied themselves for the day's activities; the seven priests who were to blow the trumpets took their place in front of the ark, and the armed men took their station at the forefront. The rest of the company followed the ark.
    - b. The seven priests blew their trumpets throughout the march.
  2. Verse 14: “And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.”
    - a. The plan is carried out meticulously. The Israelites may not have understood the plan clearly, but they fulfilled their part completely and without any reported complaint.
    - b. We are not privy to the intricate, unrevealed workings of God's mind, but it is clear that his strategy for conquering Jericho included a strong test of Israel's resolve and faith. It was by faith that the walls fell (Heb. 11:30). The plan would have seemed powerless and futile to an unbelieving mind. The only motivation the Israelites had for marching around the city day after day was their firm belief that God would somehow open the city to them.
    - c. A Christian's daily activities of service to God may seem to be powerless to change our world for the better. We pray and study, we help others by encouraging words and bearing their burdens, we try to teach the lost and weak, we assemble with the saints on every occasion they come together for worship, and we endeavor to keep ourselves pure from the taints of the world. We do not expect any miraculous work from God for our faithfulness, and none has been promised. It would be easy for us to grow weary and give up. Our faith must be kept strong; it must not be allowed to diminish, or else we will fail.
  3. Verse 15: “And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times. 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.”
    - a. The seventh day started as did the previous six. Israel rose early, at daybreak, and began their usual march around the city, but they made seven circuits.
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- b. By the beginning of the seventh day, the people of Jericho had grown used to the daily marches, and likely had settled into a degree of lethargy. This fateful day appeared to be just like the previous days, but this was the day of doom for the pagans in Jericho. The day Noah entered into the ark and the rain began to fall was otherwise a normal day. The day of our Lord's return will begin just as others days.
  - c. Matthew 24:37-39: "But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."
  - d. The seven days of marching would include the Sabbath Day. How may we reconcile the fact that God had forbidden Israel to work on the Sabbath with this plan which required them to do so on the Sabbath? This was God's plan! If Israel was attacked on the Sabbath, it would be their obligation to defend themselves. This present operation was ordained by God, and could not be construed as a violation of the Sabbath restrictions.
4. Verse 16: "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."
- a. Israel had marched around the city thirteen times, and aside from the trumpets and the necessary sounds of many feet, their circuits had been made in silence.
  - b. When the heroic company completed the last pass around the city, Joshua called on the people to raise a great shout. God had given to them the city, but the walls still stood; there was one more act of obedience the nation must do before the walls fell.
  - c. The shout they were to raise would be a tremendous sound! Its immensity doubtless struck fear into the heart of the inhabitants of Jericho. The shout did not cause the walls to fall: that power came from God; but without the shout, the walls would not have collapsed. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days" (Heb. 11:30).

D. Joshua 6:17-25: Jericho is Taken.

1. Verses 17-19: "And ye, in any wise keep *yourselves* from the accursed thing, lest ye make *yourselves* accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, *are* consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD."
  - a. Joshua related to Israel the instructions he had received from the Lord. The city was "devoted" to the Lord. "And the city shall be devoted, even it and all that is therein, to Jehovah: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent" (Josh. 6:17, ASV). Certain valuables within the city were to be taken into the Lord's treasury; the city itself was to be destroyed, along with its population; only the family of Rahab was to be spared. Israel was not to spare the city, for God had determined its destruction; it was his to do with as he chose.
  - b. Rahab and her family were to be delivered from the forthcoming destruction because she had hidden the men sent into Jericho to obtain military intelligence. Her house was located on the city walls; she and her family could escape from the city in the same way as the two spies had been able to leave undetected.
  - c. The Israelites are directly warned against taking anything from Jericho for personal uses. This first city in Palestine proper to be conquered by Israel was to be used as an example for the rest of the pagan kingdoms. If the Israelites took any of the possession left after the capture, they would bring a curse upon their own camp.
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- d. All the silver, gold, and vessels of brass and iron were to be taken into the Lord's treasury. God was not being selfish about this, for he has no use for such material things.
    - 1) However, Israel would need this wealth in getting set up in the land once it was conquered. If the Israelites were allowed to take these spoils for personal profit, they might lose sight of their greater purposes; they were to take the entire country of Canaan, and establish a great nation there, so that God could fulfill his promises made through the past centuries.
    - 2) Also, if they began to enrich themselves through the spoils of war, they would soon lose their zest for conquering the land. There would be many troubles they would face if they did not utterly destroy the pagan civilization in Canaan.
  2. Verses 20-21: "So the people shouted when *the priests* blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that *was* in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword."
    - a. In response to Joshua's command, the entire company of Israel raised a tremendous shout, in concert with the blowing of the trumpets.
    - b. The Lord kept his commitment to Israel, and when they met the conditions he had set, he brought the walls of Jericho down! The men of war were then able to climb up over the ruins of the walls, and capture the city and slay the people.
    - c. It seems cruel to some today that God commanded that the entire population be put to death. However, for the moral good of mankind in general, the evils of pagan society must be destroyed.
      - 1) It is often necessary that drastic surgery be done on our body in order to remove a cancerous organ; if it is not removed, the entire body would soon be affected.
      - 2) In order to preserve the society of mankind, it was necessary for God to exterminate those whose corrupting influences posed a grave threat to the whole.
      - 3) The instant a person commits an act of sin, by which he rebels against God, he forfeits the right to live. All the men and women of Jericho had violated God's will; this is so because they were idolaters (cf. Rom. 1:20ff). All of the younger ones who had reached an accountable age had likewise corrupted themselves. The little ones, who did not know the difference between right and wrong, would have followed the footsteps of their parents and contemporaries. To die in a state of innocence would be better to be desired than to live to a ripe old age, and die in sin.
      - 4) The story of Jericho's fall is preserved in holy writ for the purpose of serving as an object lesson for those who live in the Christian Age. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).
    - d. Excavations have been made at ancient Jericho, revealing the accuracy of the Bible record of its overthrow. Large stores of grain were discovered, indicating that the city did not undergo a long siege, but was quickly taken before the food supplies could be consumed. The record we have studied thus far shows that the city was conquered after only a few days of siege.
  3. Verses 22-23: "But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye swore unto her. And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel."
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- a. Notice the past tense of the command Joshua gave the two spies. Prior to moving against the city, he had instructed these two men to rescue Rahab and her family from her house on the wall. This they did before the walls of the city were demolished, else Rahab's house and all in it would have been destroyed. The two spies had escaped from her house by means of a rope; evidently Rahab and her relatives used the same means of leaving the city.
  - b. The two spies are described as *young men*. They had given their word to Rahab that she would be delivered; their word of promise bound Israel, which Joshua rightly fulfilled. Verse twenty-three says that these two young men went in and delivered Rahab and her family, indicating that they returned to her house and assisted the family in making their escape. After safely leaving Jericho, Rahab and her family were left outside Israel's camp.
  - c. The text says that they not only saved Rahab and her kindred, but also *all that she had*. Those possessions which she wanted to take with her, were also brought out. How was this possible! Her house was situated on top of the wall, giving direct access to the outside. The citizens of Jericho either could not interfere or did not choose to interfere.
4. Verse 24: "And they burnt the city with fire, and all that *was* therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD."
    - a. The only items taken from the city were the silver, gold, and vessels of brass and iron. Of course, as we later learn, Achan took some valuables for which he paid the supreme penalty.
    - b. Everything else was burned. Significantly, archaeological evidence shows that the city had been burned, verifying again the Biblical record.
  5. Verse 25: "And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel *even* unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho."
    - a. Joshua is given credit for delivering Rahab, her father's household, and all that she had. He did not deliver them personally, but he did so by issuing the instructions to the two young men to bring them out.
    - b. The inspired historian reports that Rahab still dwelled in Israel at the time of the writing of Joshua. This is added reason to attribute the authorship of the book to Joshua. Cf. Joshua 24:26: "And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that *was* by the sanctuary of the LORD."
- E. Joshua 6:26-27: Curse on Him Who Would Rebuild Jericho.
1. Verse 26: "And Joshua adjured *them* at that time, saying, Cursed *be* the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest *son* shall he set up the gates of it."
    - a. Following the destruction of Jericho, Joshua issued a solemn warning and a prophecy concerning the rebuilding of the city. His statement warned against rebuilding it, but did not say that it would never be rebuilt.
    - b. His prophecy carried the prediction that the man who rebuilt Jericho would "lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it." Many years later, a misguided man learned the awful lesson that God's warnings are to be heeded. "In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest *son* Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun" (1 Kings 16:34).
    - c. Countless individuals, families, cities, kingdoms, and civilizations have learned to their dismay, that God means what he says! His word is truth. Those who disregard his instructions and shun his warnings must face the Creator and Judge of us all.
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2. Verse 27: "So the LORD was with Joshua; and his fame was *noised* throughout all the country."
    - a. When the population of Palestine learned of the dreadful fate of Jericho, and knowing of the miraculous crossing of the Jordan, Joshua would be greatly feared.
    - b. It was not by virtue of any great power or wisdom or goodness on the part of this great man that he was able to subdue Jericho and strike fear in the hearts of the pagans. Rather, the awesome power of the Almighty was demonstrated in behalf of Israel, and Joshua was God's chosen leader of his chosen people. "What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?" (Rom. 8:31).
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## The Saga Of Ancient Jericho

by Wayne Jackson

After having spent forty hard years in the wilderness of Sinai, the children of Israel were stationed on the eastern bank of the Jordan River, just north of the Dead Sea. The challenge was now before them; they were to take the land of Canaan which Jehovah had promised to Abraham five centuries earlier. The first obstacle in Israel's path was the fortress city of Jericho. Joshua sent spies across the Jordan to survey the situation. When the presence of these Hebrews was detected, a Canaanite woman ( Rahab the harlot) befriended them. Doubtless she saved their lives, and in turn, the spies promised that she and her family would be spared during the coming invasion (Joshua 2).

Shortly thereafter, Joshua led Israel against Jericho. The procedure for capturing the city was strange indeed, according to military standards. The Hebrews were to encompass the walls of the city once a day for six days, then, seven times on the seventh day. A blast was to be made on the priests' trumpets, the people were to give a great shout, and the city would be theirs for God had given it to them (Joshua 6:2,16). When the Hebrew people, by faith, followed this plan, the walls of Jericho fell down.

According to divine instructions, the Israelites then destroyed the inhabitants of the city (with the exception of Rahab and her kinsmen), both man and beast. They were charged to confiscate the gold and silver and the vessels of brass and iron for Jehovah's treasury, but they were prohibited from taking any personal booty. The city was then burned. Finally, a prophetic curse was placed upon any who attempted to refortify Jericho (Joshua 6).

It is important to note at this point that the chronology of the Bible indicates that the Israelite conquest of Canaan took place near 1400 B.C. Upon the basis of archaeological data, we know that Solomon commenced his reign over the united kingdom of Israel about 970 B.C. Additionally, I Kings 6:1 states that from the fourth year of Solomon's reign, back to the time of the exodus from Egypt, was a period of 480 years. This would suggest that Israel's departure from Egypt occurred circa 1446/5 B.C. Since the invasion of Canaan commenced about forty years later (after Israel's sojourn in the wilderness), this would put the conquest of Canaan at approximately 1406/5 B.C. It is important to remember this because liberal scholars, rejecting the chronology of the Bible, date these events 150 to 200 years later!

There are several important elements in this account worthy of consideration.

### IS THE ACCOUNT HISTORICALLY ACCURATE?

The historical accuracy of the fall of Jericho has lain under a cloud of doubt in the minds of many for more than three decades. John Garstang, a professor at the University of Liverpool, excavated Jericho between 1930 and 1936. Garstang identified a destruction level at the ancient site which he called City IV. He concluded that this was the occupation level which paralleled the city of Joshua's day, and that the biblical account was accurate. Jericho had fallen to Israel about 1400 B.C. He wrote: "In a word, in all material details and in date the fall of Jericho took place as described in the Biblical narrative" (1937, p

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1222). For several years, scholars generally accepted Garstang's conclusions. However, that was to radically change.

From 1952 to 1958, Kathleen Kenyon, of the British School of Archaeology (daughter of famed archaeologist, Sir Frederic Kenyon) supervised an expedition at Jericho. Her work was the most thorough and scientific that had been done at this site. Her team unearthed a significant amount of evidence, but surprisingly, Kenyon's interpretation of the data was radically different from Garstang's. She contended that City IV had been destroyed about 1550 B.C. and therefore there was no fortress city for Joshua to conquer around 1400 B.C. She suggested that the archaeological evidence discredited the biblical record! And, not surprisingly, a sizable segment of scholars fell dutifully into line. Whenever there appears to be an apparent conflict between the Bible and other data, there is always a certain group that immediately calls the Scriptures into question.

They never have the patience to wait for the more complete picture. Comments like those of Magnusson are typical: "...on a purely literary level, the Book of Joshua reads more like an adventure story than history...there is no archaeological evidence to support it" (1977, p 96).

One of the most curious elements of this whole matter, however, is the fact that, prior to her death in 1978, Kathleen Kenyon's opinions regarding Jericho had been published only in a popular book (Kenyon, 1957), in a few scattered articles, and in a series of preliminary field reports. The detailed record of her work was not made available until 1982-83, and an independent analysis of that evidence is bringing to light some startling new conclusions.

The March/April, 1990 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, certainly no "fundamentalist" journal, contains an article titled, "Did the Israelites Conquer Jericho? A New Look at the Archaeological Evidence," authored by Dr. Bryant G. Wood. Dr. Wood is a visiting professor in the department of Near Eastern studies at the University of Toronto. He has served in responsible supervisory positions on several archaeological digs in Palestine. In this scholarly article, Wood contends: "When we compare the archaeological evidence at Jericho with the Biblical narrative describing the Israelite destruction of Jericho, we find a quite remarkable agreement" (1990, p 53, emp. added). The professor emphasizes several major points of agreement between the archae-ological evidence and the record in the book of Joshua. We summarize as follows:

The Bible indicates that Jericho was a strongly fortified city. It was surrounded by a "wall," and access to the fortress could only be obtained through the city "gate" (Joshua 2:5,7,15; 6:5,20).

*Biblical Archaeology Review* notes: "The city's outer defenses consisted of a stone revetment wall [some 15 feet high] at the base of the tell [hill] that held in place a high, plastered rampart. Above the rampart on top of the tell was [the remnant of] a mudbrick wall [about 8 feet high at one point] which served as Jericho's city wall proper" (see Wood, 1990, p 46).

According to the Old Testament, the invasion occurred just following the 14th day of Abib (March/April) (Joshua 5:10), thus in the springtime, or in the harvest season (3:15). Rahab was drying flax upon her roof (2:6). Both Garstang and Kenyon found large quantities of grain stored in the ruins of Jericho's houses.

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In a very limited excavation area, Kenyon found six bushels of grain in one digging season. “This,” as Wood comments, “is unique in the annals of Palestinian archaeology” (1990, p 56).

The biblical record affirms that the conquest was swiftly accomplished in only seven days (6:15). The people of Jericho were confined to the city with no chance to escape (6:1). The abundance of food supplies, as indicated above, confirms this. Had the citizens of Jericho been able to escape, they would have taken food with them. Had the siege been protracted, the food would have been consumed. The Old Testament record is meticulously accurate.

When the Israelites shouted with a great shout on that seventh day, the “wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city” (6:20; cf. Hebrews 11:30). Kenyon’s excavations uncovered, at the base of Jericho’s tell, a pile of red mudbricks which, she said, “probably came from the wall on the summit of the bank” (Kenyon, 1981, p 110; as quoted in Wood, 1990, p 54). She described the brick pile as the result of a wall’s “collapse.”

Professor Wood states that the amount of bricks found in the cross-section of Kenyon’s work area would suggest an upper wall 6.5 feet wide and 12 feet high (1990, p 54).

According to the Scriptures, Jericho was to be a city “devoted” to God, hence, the Hebrews were to confiscate the silver and gold, and the vessels of brass and iron for Jehovah’s treasury. However, they were to take no personal possessions (6:17-19). The archaeological evidence confirms this. As indicated earlier, a considerable amount of grain was found in Jericho. Grain, in biblical times, was exceedingly valuable, being frequently used as a monetary exchange (see I Kings 5:11). It is therefore unthinkable, unless by divine design, that the Israelites would have taken Jericho, and left the grain intact. The Bible is right!

The Scriptures state that during the destruction of Jericho, the city was set on fire (6:24). When Miss Kenyon dug down into the city she discovered that the walls and floors of the houses were “blackened or reddened by fire...in most rooms the fallen debris was heavily burnt” (Kenyon, 1981, p 370; as quoted in Wood, 1990, p 56).

The Bible indicates that Rahab’s house was built “upon the side of the wall, and she dwelt upon the wall” (2:15). A number of houses were found just inside the revetment wall, which could have abutted the wall [see point (1) above], thus easily accommodating an escape access from the city (Wood, 1990, p 56). The evidence indicates that this area was the “poor quarter of the city” just the type of residence that one might expect a harlot to have.

Whereas Kathleen Kenyon contended that Jericho (City IV) had been destroyed about 1550 B.C., and abandoned thereafter, hence, there was no city for Joshua to conquer in 1400 B.C. (according to the biblical chronology), the actual evidence indicates otherwise. A cemetery outside of Jericho “has yielded a continuous series of Egyptian scarabs [small, beetle-shaped amulets, inscribed on the underside, often with the name of a pharaoh] from the 18th through the early-14th centuries B.C.E., contradicting Kenyon’s claim that the city was abandoned after 1550 B.C.E.” (Wood, 1990, p 53).

Other evidences indicate a harmony with the biblical chronology as well. There is absolutely no reason to contend that the book of Joshua is in error in its description of the conquest of Jericho.

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## MORAL DIFFICULTIES

Some have argued that the account of Jericho's destruction places the Bible in a morally compromising position. It is alleged that Rahab's lies (Joshua 2:4-5) condone situation ethics, and that the slaughter of the city's women and children (Joshua 6:21) is reprehensible" a reflection upon a benevolent God. These objections simply are not valid.

First, one should note that the Scriptures do not attempt to conceal Rahab's falsehood. Her weakness is bluntly revealed. This evidences the impartiality of the divine record and is an indirect suggestion of inspiration. Too, one should understand that this woman was from a pagan environment. Her concept of morality and her personal lifestyle (she was a harlot) needed considerable refining. In spite of her sordid background, she had developed a sincere faith in Israel's God (see Joshua 2:9ff). Consequently, when the spies approached her, she was not "disobedient" as were the others of Jericho. She received the spies and sent them out another way. It was by these "works" of faith that she was delivered (Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25). She was not "justified" by lying; rather, she was justified by her faith and her works, in spite of her ignorance and/or weakness. It would be a gross misuse of this narrative to employ it as proof that there are occasions when it is divinely permissible to lie.

We must not pass from this point without noting that the case of Rahab demonstrates the wonderful harmony between faith and works in the divine plan. The writer of Hebrews states that Rahab perished not, as a result of her faith; James declares that she was justified by her works. These two requirements are not mutually exclusive of one another.

Second, while the extermination of an entire population may seem excessively cruel when viewed as an isolated incident, other factors shed light on that situation. Consider the following: (a) The destruction of Canaan's heathen tribes was justified in view of their utter abandonment of moral restraint. The ancient evidence indicates that they practiced child-sacrifice, religious prostitution, sodomy, etc. A people can reach a state of such deep depravity that the justice of God demands punishment. (b) Their destruction had not been rendered impetuously. Jehovah had been patient with them for more than 500 years; finally, their cup of iniquity ran over and the time for judgment came (see Genesis 15:16). (c) This type of punishment was implemented on a rather limited basis" principally, upon the tribes of Palestine. This was due to the fact that God had chosen Canaan as the place where the Hebrew nation was to be cultivated in view of the coming Messiah, the Savior of the world. It was an example of moral surgery for the benefit of all mankind. (d) Finally, it is still true that these Old Testament narratives illustrate the fact that innocent people (e.g., infants) frequently have to suffer the consequences of evil acts which others generate, due to the kind of world in which we live. This should motivate us to want a better state wherein wickedness does not exist. And so, though such cases as the fall of Jericho may entail some difficulty, the problem is not insurmountable.

## THE PROPHETIC CURSE

Following the destruction of Jericho, Joshua pronounced an imprecation upon the ancient city, saying: "Cursed be the man before Jehovah that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: with the loss of his firstborn shall he lay the foundation thereof, and with the loss of his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it" (Joshua 6:26).

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Some writers have assumed that this prophecy failed, for not many years after Jericho's fall, one reads of people living in Jericho (see Joshua 18:21; Judges 3:13; II Samuel 10:5). In fact, it is specifically called "the city of Jericho." And yet, there is no record of the "cursed" being fulfilled in those times proximate to Joshua's invasion. In response to this charge, several factors need to be noted. First, the prophetic curse did not state that Jericho was never to be inhabited. It does not even indicate that the city was never to be rebuilt. The divine prediction was simply this: The man who attempts to rebuild Jericho, as a fortress city (cf. "set up the gates of it," 6:26) would be the recipient of the divine curse (see Coslinga, 1986, p 73). The fact of the matter is, five and a half centuries later, during the reign of Ahab of Israel, Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho as a fortress. And, precisely as Joshua had declared, he lost his oldest son when the foundation was laid, and his youngest son when the gates of the city were set up (see I Kings 16:34). The prophecy was fulfilled. There is no discrepancy in the Bible record.

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## JOSHUA 7

A. Joshua 7:1-5: Israel’s Defeat at Ai.

1. Verse 1: "But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel."
  - a. The chapter begins with a word of contrast—BUT. Chapter six presents the glorious victory of Israel at Jericho; this chapter gives the discouraging details of their first setback in Canaan.
  - b. The presence of Satan is not named, but his evil hand was behind Achan’s avaricious transgression. He could not prevent Israel’s miraculous entry into the land, and he could not keep the walls of Jericho upright. However, if he could rouse God’s wrath against Israel, perhaps they would be destroyed and God’s great plan would come to nought.
  - c. The narrative relates that the sinful deed was Achan’s work, but the whole nation was charged with the crime. It seems unlikely that he could have taken the items he stole without someone seeing the theft; if someone saw and failed to report this violation of God’s word, he aided the crime.
    - 1) The whole nation had to be unified in obeying God in order to partake of the glory God intended for them. The whole body must be pure; if one part was corrupted, the contamination affected the rest. Israel was blamed for the crime to impress upon them all the importance of following God’s word.
    - 2) Blame was directed to the entire nation until such time that the guilty party was identified. Of course, God knew that it was Achan; he knew when the deed was done, knew what had been taken, and where the items had been concealed. He identified the culprit in the way he chose, so as to impress upon Israel that a guilty person could not hide from the Almighty. "The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3).
  - d. The identity of the offender is stated at the beginning of the chapter; the details of his sin, the consequences of it, and the process by which he was exposed and executed are given afterward. Achan was of the tribe of Judah, having Zerah and Zabdi in his ancestral lines; his father was Carmi. Zerah was the twin brother of Pharez; these boys were born to Tamar, the daughter-in-law of Judah; Judah was their father (Gen. 38). Jesus was of the lineage of Judah, through Pharez.
  - e. Coffman (p.65) draws some interesting parallels between the sin of Achan and the sin of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5). These comparisons are set forth in the following table:

ACHAN	ANANIAS & SAPPHIRA
Success at Jericho followed by Achan’s sin	Success on Pentecost followed by their sin
Secret sin exposed, brought reversal in fortune	Secret sin exposed, brought reversals
Capital punishment was quickly enforced	Capital punishment was quickly enforced
Punishment executed in sight of all	Punishment done before the church
Success resumed after the episode	Success of church resumed after episode
Covetousness was the cause of the offense	Covetousness was the cause of their offense

2. Verse 2: “And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which *is* beside Bethaven, on the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.”
  - a. Joshua, knowing nothing about Achan’s theft, sent some men to obtain information about Ai which would be useful in planning the battle for this little city. He knew that plans for conquering Canaan lay mostly in his hands, for what man can do, man is to do in carrying out the purposes of God. Only in those special cases which require special power or information would God exercise his supernatural power.
  - b. Joshua was a good general. He did not trust to luck in mounting an attack of Ai, but sent some men to collect data that would assist him in drawing up a proper order of battle. Regardless of the soundness of the plans he would develop, the operation against Ai was doomed to failure—because of the selfishness of one man.
  - c. According to our author, Ai was situated near Bethaven, to the east of Bethel. To this time, Israel had only established a beachhead in the land; many villages and defended cities were yet to be captured, until the entire land of promise was brought under their control.
3. Verse 3: “And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; *and* make not all the people to labour thither; for they *are but few*.”
  - a. The scouts returned from their mission at Ai, and reported that the enemy was not powerful enough for the entire army of Israel to get involved. Verse seven shows that the people of Ai were Amorites.
  - b. They recommended that only two or three thousand soldiers be sent against this weak force. It appears that these men were overconfident. If there had been no sin in the camp, no doubt their suggestion would have been correct, but they knew nothing of Achan’s sin or the effect that act of rebellion would have on the impending operation.
4. Verse 4: “So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai.”
  - a. In a terse report, we are told that about three thousand soldiers went up to take Ai, and fled before the men of that place soon after the battle was joined. Few details are furnished, as if the author is deeply ashamed of the outcome.
  - b. This was their first defeat since entering the land. Unless this problem could be solved, the entire campaign would be in jeopardy. Satan had his *foot in the door*.
5. Verse 5: “And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them *from* before the gate *even* unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.”
  - a. Why were the Israelites so easily routed? Somehow God’s hand was involved—or perhaps not involved in a positive way. With his blessing, Israel’s attack would have certainly succeeded; without his aid, their efforts were sure to end in defeat; with his power opposing them, Israel’s defeat was predetermined.
  - b. Thirty-six men suffered because of one man’s sin. These men apparently died in the battle. The over-confidence of the Israelites dissipated; they were filled with terror as they broke and ran. The men of Ai pursued them to Shebarim. The loss of life was relatively light, but the toll on Israel’s morale was severe.

B. Joshua 7:6-9: Joshua Cries Unto the Lord.

1. Verse 6: “And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.”
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- a. Joshua and the elders understood the seriousness of this setback. Joshua rent his clothes, fell to the earth on his face, and put dust on his head, showing extreme grief and agitation. The elders followed his example.
- b. In a time of national crisis, how would we feel if the president and congress did as Joshua and the elders? In our case, we Americans might panic, but in Israel's situation, it was a sign of penitence and sorrow, which would lead to God's help.
2. Verse 7: "And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!"
  - a. In his great dismay, Joshua asked God why he had brought Israel into Canaan, only to allow them to fall into the hands of the pagan Amorites. He stated that it would have been better if they had all remained on the east side of Jordan.
  - b. He would not have made such statements if he had not been so agitated, or if he had a better comprehension of the whole picture. Apparently, he thought the war was lost because one minor engagement had resulted in defeat.
  - c. Many of us think the same way. If we encounter opposition or problems for which we do not find an immediate and facile solution, we tend to panic.
    - 1) Israel should have kept in mind the fact that God had promised to give them the land; nothing had changed God's plan. They knew that they would have to fight many battles before the land was theirs; even if they suffered an occasional setback, that did not destroy God's promise!
    - 2) We must keep God's basic promises firmly seated in our minds. Although we know that there will be many encounters with the enemy, and that we may meet with an occasional setback, that does not nullify God's promises.
    - 3) Additionally, difficulties and defeats are necessary to spiritual maturity. As sweat-producing and muscle-soring exercises are essential to our physical strength, so hardships and sorrows are vital to our spiritual development.
  - d. In our shortsightedness, we often are overwhelmed by stress and blurt out emotional overstatements.
3. Verses 8-9: "O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear *of it*, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?"
  - a. Joshua was deeply ashamed for the cowardly conduct of Israel. The greatest mortification a military commander can experience is to have his men put to flight by an inferior force.
  - b. Joshua was at a loss for words to explain adequately the conduct of his men. At the time, he did not know that sin in the camp had brought about this defeat. He had jumped to a wrong conclusion as to why his men fled.
  - c. As a wise commander, he understood the effect this defeat would have on the enemy; they would be greatly encouraged to think that Israel was not invincible. The effect it would have on his own people was to the opposite extreme.
  - d. In making an appeal to God, Joshua expressed his fear that the entire nation of Israel would be destroyed by their more numerous enemies, and asked God what that would do to the name of the God of Israel. When God's people are shamed, God is shamed; when they are defeated, a blow is thereby dealt to the purposes of God.

C. Joshua 7:10-15: The Lord Answers Joshua.

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1. Verse 10: "And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?"
    - a. Joshua was so overcome by grief and dismay, he had fallen on his face in despair. Prostrating one's self before God is nothing to be ashamed of; it can indeed lead to strength and success.
    - b. Why did God offer this rebuke to Joshua? Joshua had not failed God; the nation of Israel itself was not at fault; the sin of Achan had led to their current predicament. Israel's leader should not have given up to despair over this small setback; he could have investigated to learn the source of their defeat. He should have known that there must have been some logical explanation.
    - c. There is a time when prayer and contrition are needed more than anything else; however, there are other times when obedience and action are more pressing than prayer. Saul of Tarsus delayed his obedience to the gospel while he fasted and prayed. If a child is about to be run over by a truck, it is time for quick action—not for prayer! Prayers of thanksgiving can be offered after the emergency is over.
    - d. Exodus 23:22: "But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries."
      - 1) As long as Israel followed the will of God, they had no reason to be fearful of any enemy; God would fight on their side, insuring their ultimate victory.
      - 2) The current defeat, in the light of this promise, should logically be traced to some disobedience on the part of the people. Instead of searching for some act of rebellion, Joshua was on his face, taking no action to find the problem and solve it.
  2. Verse 11: "Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put *it* even among their own stuff."
    - a. Plainly stating the problem, God announces to Joshua that there is sin in Israel's camp, and that this is the cause of their defeat at Ai.
    - b. The violation of God's word by one man had evil consequences on the entire nation. That is one of the usual effects of sin. Many often are made to suffer when one person commits sin.
      - 1) When a man robs a bank and gets away with a significant amount of money, someone must pay the bill. The insurance organization protecting the bank raises its rates, which the bank's customers pay in higher fees and lower interest rates they receive for their investments. The bank has to hire more guards and buy more expensive protective devices, with the customers footing the bill.
      - 2) A wife has an affair with someone who is not her husband; her marriage and home are destroyed. The husband suffers greatly from this betrayal, and the children are dealt irreparable wounds.
      - 3) A gospel preacher begins to preach religious error, instead of proclaiming only the whole counsel of God; he commits sin in so-doing. Not only does he taint his own soul, but he leads many precious souls away from God; perhaps many generations of people will be influenced into error.
    - c. God's word is clear about what is right and wrong. In the present case, God had plainly forbidden the Israelites to take any of the wealth of Jericho for their own use. Everything was to be destroyed, with the exception of those items God specified that were to be placed in the national treasury. Everyone had obeyed that directive except Achan.
    - d. The primary sin had been accompanied by dissimulation. This part of verse eleven suggests that the offending party had been questioned about the crime, and had lied about his involvement. Although Achan had denied having stolen anything, God knew his guilt and was aware where
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- the stolen merchandise had been concealed.
3. Verse 12: “Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, *but* turned *their* backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.”
    - a. Isaiah 59:1-2: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear." The only way we can know that God is with us is by his written word; we cannot *feel* his presence.
    - b. Because they were contaminated by sin, God did not assist their efforts at Ai. He vowed never to have anything to do with them in the future if they did not “destroy the accursed from among you.” They must search out the guilty part, and destroy this contamination.
    - c. Israel counted too much on their own strength at Ai. They failed to comprehend the power God added to their efforts when he was with them. This may be one of the prime reasons for our lack of success today.
      - 1) Do we think that our efforts can be successful if they are planned, begun, and ended with only our own wisdom, strength, and prowess being employed? If we leave God out of our plans and programs, they are doomed to ultimate failure, regardless of the natural skills and strengths of the parties involved.
      - 2) We are to be commended when we busy ourselves in the Lord’s work, doing those things that are proper for the accomplishment of his will. But as we do so, let us make very sure that God is working with us, that we consult him from start to finish, asking his help and seeking his providential guidance, as we format our plans by the principles established in his inspired word.
  4. Verse 13: “Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *There is* an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.”
    - a. During this exchange, Joshua was prostrate upon the ground before the ark of the covenant. At this point, the Lord told him to stand up. He was to prepare himself for action.
    - b. The Lord instructs him to tell the people to sanctify themselves against the morrow. Cf. Joshua 3:5: "And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you." This likely included washing themselves (cf. Ex. 19:10); it involved making preparations for the events to take place the next day, when the Lord would direct their removal of the “accursed thing” from their midst.
    - c. A successful attack against the enemies could be possible only after the sin in the camp was removed. They could expect God’s help only if they were pure from the contamination of sin.
  5. Verse 14: “In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, *that* the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families *thereof*; and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man.”
    - a. Scholars report that the word *taketh* can be understood to mean *to indicate by lots*. Casting lots was an ancient method of deciding certain issues.
      - 1) Numbers 26:55: "Notwithstanding the land shall be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit."
      - 2) 1 Samuel 14:41-42: "Therefore Saul said unto the LORD God of Israel, Give a perfect *lot*. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: but the people escaped. And Saul said, Cast *lots* between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken."
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- 3) Acts 1:26: "And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles."
  - 4) In cases involving the will of God, it is manifest that God superintended the outcome.
  - 5) Proverbs 16:33: "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof *is* of the LORD."
  - b. God chose a method of identifying the offending party by having the whole nation to appear before him by tribe. Israel was organized according to tribe, which pertained to their encampments and their marches. Using the lot, or perhaps some other means, God narrowed the great company down by the process of elimination.
  - c. The nation was to be assembled, and the Lord would choose the tribe; the selected tribe was to appear before him by family, and he would choose the family; the family group would be brought before him, and the Lord would choose the right household; the household would be brought before him, and the offending individual would be identified.
6. Verse 15: "And it shall be, *that* he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel."
- a. In this manner, God would expose the guilty person before the nation. He could have named the man without any of this method being followed, but perhaps for the effect this procedure would have on Israel, he chose it. Think of the effect this selection process naturally would have on Achan. He would feel fairly secure at the beginning, for the nation was comprised of perhaps two or three million people. When his tribe was chosen, he might still feel a measure of security, for Judah was a populous tribe. From this point on, he would feel an increasing dismay.
  - b. God announced in this verse that the guilty one was to be burned, along with all that he possessed. How important was it back then for God's word to be obeyed? It made the difference between life and death for Achan! Is it less important today? "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*" (Heb. 2:1-3).
  - c. God did not destroy this man arbitrarily or without proper cause. The man had flagrantly violated God's word. He could not plead ignorance of the law; he could not claim that it was too difficult for him to understand; he could not assert that everyone else wanted to do the same but he alone had the courage to do so. There was nothing that could excuse his sin; there was no way he could avoid the penalty. No one living today will be able to avoid the penalty for their sins, except those who obey the gospel and live a faithful Christian life.

D. Joshua 7:16-21: Achan's Sin is Uncovered.

1. Verses 16-17: "So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken: And he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarhites: and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man; and Zabdi was taken."
    - a. Joshua began the elimination process early in the morning. The first selection was among the tribes: Judah was taken. The second choice was to pick the right family: the Zarhites were taken. The family of the Zarhites was examined, and the household of Zabdi was taken.
    - b. The family of Zabdi included Achan, the guilty party. He had brought sin into Israel's camp, and thus caused God to give no help during the attack against Ai. The thirty-six men who died
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there were slain because of Achan's sin!

2. Verse 18: "And he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken."
  - a. Having narrowed the selection down to the family clan of Zabdi, each man of this group was examined, and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was selected.
  - b. This whole process might have taken several hours. Certainly, the tension mounted with each selection. Finally, when Achan was picked out, the rest of the nation could begin to relax; but the ordeal for Achan was not over. The wheels of God's justice often grind slow, but the outcome is certain.
3. Verse 19: "And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide *it* not from me."
  - a. There is no vindictiveness indicated on Joshua's part, even though he has suffered much agony over the affair. Speaking to this man with kind words, Joshua calls on him to give glory to God and make confession to him; and openly to admit to the transgression.
  - b. His guilt has been undeniably established by the selection procedure; the time for obstinate denial of wrongdoing was long past, indeed there was never any possibility that he would get away with his transgression. By owning up to his misdeed, confessing it to God, and giving God glory, he could perhaps obtain pardon, even though his life was condemned.
4. Verses 20-21: "And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they *are* hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it."
  - a. No one would be willing to defend the sinful conduct of Achan, but we can admire his willingness to confess his guilt. Without any effort to explain his sins away, he openly acknowledged his fault. "Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel."
  - b. He admits that he saw a fine Babylonish garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight; he coveted them, and took them. He hid them in the ground covered by his tent.
  - c. "Garments from Babylon were famous for the pictures and beautiful colors that were woven into the material. Some versions call this a purple garment, giving the idea that it had royal properties. Josephus called it a royal garment, wholly interwoven with gold. Perhaps it was, as some strongly suggest, the robe of the king of Jericho, for the same word is used in Jonah 3:6 to express the royal robe of the king of Nineveh, which he laid aside in order to humble himself before God" (William Cline, *Firm Foundation Lectures*, pp.124f).
  - d. The silver and gold he took would be of great value, estimate to equal \$150,000 or more. The crime would not have been less severe if he had stolen only some small item of little worth.
  - e. Since he confessed his, does this mean that God forgave him and that we can meet him in heaven?

E. Joshua 7:22-26: Achan is Executed for his Crime.

1. Verses 22-23: "So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, *it was* hid in his tent, and the silver under it. And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD."
  - a. To verify Achan's story and to recover the merchandise, Joshua sent messengers to Achan's tent. They found the items just where they were said to be.

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- b. This verified his confession, and established his guilt. Only the execution remained before the sad episode could be put aside.
  2. Verse 24: "And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor."
    - a. Joshua, with the nation with him, took Achan and the items he had stolen out to the valley of Achor. They brought with him his sons and daughters, his animals, his tent, and all of his possessions.
    - b. This was a very solemn occasion; a man's life and property were about to be destroyed, partly in punishment for the crime committed, and partly as an object lesson for the rest of the nation.
  3. Verse 25: "And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones."
    - a. Achan had brought much trouble upon the nation by his violation of God's word. Because of his guilt, God would bring trouble upon him now. The penalty was not of Joshua's invention; it was not brought upon him out of hatred or anger, but as proper retribution for his crime.
    - b. Israel stoned him to death and burned him and his property. The plural pronoun *them* probably does not include Achan's sons and daughters; it may refer to the animals and property that belonged to Achan.
      - 1) Deuteronomy 24:16: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin."
      - 2) God would not have violated his own law which forbade the innocent to be punished for their father's sins. Only the guilty ones were to be put to death. From this one truth alone, it appears conclusive that God did not command the execution of the sons and daughters of Achan.
      - 3) However, Joshua 22:20 seems to indicate otherwise: "Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? and that man perished not alone in his iniquity." Those who perished may have included the thirty-six men who died in the battle at Ai.
  4. Verse 26: "And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day."
    - a. The place where Achan was executed was marked by a large pile of stones, which was still in place at the time of this writing. The heap of stones served as a solemn warning to any who might be contemplating a violation of God's word.
    - b. The valley where this took place was given its name on this occasion. *Achor* means *trouble*. Achan had brought trouble upon Israel by his sin, and the place of his execution and burial was aptly named The Valley of Trouble.
    - c. Romans 15:4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."
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## JOSHUA 8

### A. Joshua 8:1-2: God Instructs Joshua to Capture Ai.

1. Verse 1: “And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land.”
  - a. In view of the terrible setback of the previous chapter, God knew that Joshua needed encouragement. The contact he made with Joshua in this passage served to bolster the great man’s determination. Despite the problem Achan had precipitated by his covetousness, God had not abandoned Israel.
  - b. From a human standpoint, there was much for Joshua to fear. There was the tremendous challenge of defeating the superior military forces of the Canaanites, if they should unite. He had to contend with the daily routine of governing Israel, providing for their food and other supplies, plus keeping them in an orderly and contented disposition. Matthew Henry observed that the treacherous Israelites were more to be dreaded by the righteous than the malicious Canaanites (see Coffman, p.78).
  - c. Isaiah 41:10: "Fear thou not; for I *am* with thee: be not dismayed; for I *am* thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Joshua is reassured by God’s similar admonition in our text.
  - d. Joshua is told to take all the men of war and go up to Ai. The fighting forces of Israel numbered about 600,000; that was their number during the wilderness days (Num. 1:45-46). The little city of Ai was situated on a hill. God assures Joshua that the city is theirs for the taking; this time, since God would be with them, they would be successful.
2. Verse 2: “And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king: only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves: lay thee an ambush for the city behind it.”
  - a. The king of Ai was to be slain just as the king of Jericho had been slain. However, the plunder of the city was theirs. Why was Israel forbidden from taking the wealth of Jericho for themselves but allowed to take what was in Ai? It may be that Jericho, the first city in Canaan to be captured by Israel, served as a kind of *firstfruits* of the campaign. Also, this plunder might give Israel added incentive to prosecute the invasion.
  - b. God gave Joshua the key ingredient to the battle plan: place men in ambush behind (on the west side of) Ai. He may have provided the full details of the plan, but all that is given here is this integral part of the strategy. He could have overcome Ai by the direct application of supernatural power, but it was important that Israel be primarily involved in the conflict; success would give them stimulus to continue the general operation.
  - c. Was God right in using deception in order to defeat Ai? Is it less worthy of God to overcome an enemy by clever stratagem than to overcome him by force? If one is right, the other is equally right. Neither God nor any wise commander would put his men to an unnecessary peril. If a frontal assault against an enemy would likely result in the loss of thousands of his men, but an ingenious subterfuge could achieve the same success with only a minimal loss of life, which would be the better plan?

### B. Joshua 8:3-8: The Order of Battle.

1. Verses 3-4: “So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai: and Joshua chose out thirty thousand mighty men of valour, and sent them away by night. And he commanded them, saying, Behold, ye shall lie in wait against the city, *even* behind the city: go not very far from the city, but be ye all ready.”
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- a. There is disagreement concerning the details of the plan.
    - 1) Skeptics of the Bible assert that there is a plain contradiction in the report. They say that the *redactor* combined two different stories to give us the present narrative. If that is the case, and there is a discrepancy between the number of Israelites sent out, why did not this imaginary editor smooth out the alleged contradiction? This view cannot be held by anyone who respects the integrity of the Scriptures; it is also an unreasonable interpretation.
    - 2) Others allege that there is a scribal error in the text, that the 30,000 is erroneously written when 5,000 was the correct figure. However, if such an error occurred, it would have been made in writing 30,000 when 3,000 should have been inscribed. This position undermines respect for the Scriptures, and is also unreasonable.
    - 3) Some view the operation to have involved only 30,000 men, with the 5,000 men who were placed in ambush coming from the 30,000. See Clarke, p.34.
    - 4) Another view is that 5,000 men were placed in hiding to the west of Ai, with the 30,000 situated on the north side of Ai. See JFB, p.20.
    - 5) Still another view has the 5,000 lying in ambush on the west, the 30,000 on the north, and rest of the fighting men approaching the city from the east. See Coffman, p.78.
  - b. McGarvey gives the following detailed picture of the area where these events took place: “Immediately east of Bethel is a higher ridge, separated from the one on which Bethel stands by a narrow valley which descends toward the south, deepening rapidly as it goes. This is the ‘Mountain east of Bethel’ on which Abraham pitched his tent....Beyond this mountain to the southeast, and separated from it by a shallow depression, is another, with a rounded top covered with ruins. This appears to be the site of Ai. It corresponds to the description in Genesis xii.8, which states that Abraham removed to a ‘mountain on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west and Ai on the east, and there he builded an altar to the Lord.’ With his tent on the spot above mentioned Bethel was almost due west from him, and Ai southeast. This site also corresponds to the account of the capture of Ai given in Joshua vii.9-19. Just north of it, separated from it by a valley with a gentle slope on each side, is a ridge on which Joshua’s army may have been drawn up, while west of it, sufficiently near the direction of Bethel to be described as ‘between Bethel and Ai,’ is a deep valley in which the 5000 men in ambush could lie hid from both cities. Joshua may have stood on a hill nearly due east of Ai, in full view of the city and of his own army, yet also visible to the right flank of the detachment in ambush, and have given the signal to the latter by lifting up his spear. No other spot in the vicinity answers so completely the demands of the Scripture narrative, so here we must suppose that Ai stood. With Ai and Bethel in full view, while Beeroth is only two miles away, and Gibeon only three or four miles farther, we are in the midst of stirring scenes connected with the careers of men as far apart in history as Abraham, Jacob, Joshua, David, Jeroboam, and Josiah” (*Lands of the Bible*, pp.239f).
  - c. The plan for the disposition of the troops and the order of battle was wisely-produced. We may have some difficulty in answering every question that may be raised, but the basic plan of action was well-conceived.
2. Verses 5-6: “And I, and all the people that *are* with me, will approach unto the city: and it shall come to pass, when they come out against us, as at the first, that we will flee before them, (For they will come out after us) till we have drawn them from the city; for they will say, They flee before us, as at the first: therefore we will flee before them.”
    - a. Joshua’s words may be intended to place a limit on the number of people who were with him. The plan called for the 5,000 men to conceal themselves in the valley to the west of the city under attack, being hidden from the view of both Bethel and Ai.
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- b. Joshua would feint a frontal attack, which was intended to draw the forces of Ai out of the city to engage Israel in battle. The Israelites would quickly begin to fall back, as they had in the initial fight (Josh. 7:1-6).
  - c. When the men of Ai pursued Israel, the 5,000 Israelites in concealment west of Ai were to capture the city.
3. Verses 7-8: “Then ye shall rise up from the ambush, and seize upon the city: for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand. And it shall be, when ye have taken the city, *that* ye shall set the city on fire: according to the commandment of the LORD shall ye do. See, I have commanded you.”
- a. The men in ambush were to rush into Ai, which they would be able to capture without serious opposition. The plan took advantage of the enemy’s overconfidence. The first engagement had begun the same way, but when Israel fled in fear from the men of Ai, there was no one to attack the city during the rout. God’s plan gave the people of Ai the idea that Israel was too weak to stand and fight. American Indians used this tactic against the U.S. Cavalry with great success.
  - b. When Ai was taken, they were to burn it to the ground; this was in keeping with the command of the Lord. Verse two shows that the Israelites were to take whatever plunder they wished from Ai; God did not reserve it to himself.
  - c. The plan has been given in broad terms to this point; nothing has been said about 5,000 men being placed in concealment to the west of the city. The following verses will give the details of the strategy.

C. Joshua 8:9-13: The Battle Plan Set in Motion.

1. Verse 9: “Joshua therefore sent them forth: and they went to lie in ambush, and abode between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai: but Joshua lodged that night among the people.”
    - a. The men to lie in ambush were dispatched during the night. Their movement would not be detected by the enemy, and the place of concealment was in a valley between Ai and Bethel, which was about three miles away. They could not be seen from either city.
    - b. Verse seventeen indicates that the men of Bethel had joined with the men of Ai at the latter city. Evidently, Ai was more suited for defense than Bethel, or perhaps it was the bigger of the two.
  2. Verse 10: “And Joshua rose up early in the morning, and numbered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai.”
    - a. Early in the morning, Joshua arose and set the plan in motion. He numbered the people “to be furnished with a clear evidence afterwards, that the work had been done without any loss of men, whereby the people’s confidence in God would be strengthened, and encouragement give them to prosecute the war of invasion with vigour” (JFB, p.20).
    - b. Joshua and the elders of the nation placed themselves in the forefront of the people. They did not hide in the crowd, but were where all good leaders will be found.
    - c. The sketchy nature of the narrative is explained by Coffman’s comment: “In this connection, we begin to get a glimpse of what kind of book Joshua really is. It is not a detailed record of everything that happened in the conquest. The events narrated are given for specific reasons, the *religious* meaning of each one being the principal reason for its inclusion. We became familiar with this characteristic of the Hebrew Bible in Numbers especially, where the history of an entire forty years for a whole nation covers only a few pages” (p.81).
  3. Verse 11: “And all the people, *even the people* of war that *were* with him, went up, and drew nigh, and came before the city, and pitched on the north side of Ai: now *there was* a valley between them and Ai.”
    - a. The men Joshua had with him were 25,000 of the number allotted to the battle (subtracting the 5,000 who were sent to mount the ambush. The number with Joshua might be the 30,000, with
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the ambushers being selected separately. Perhaps, as some think, the entire fighting force of Israel was involved in the ensuing battle.

- b. The text affirms the existence of a valley between the place where Joshua's men were stationed and Ai. McGarvey found this to be true in his survey of the site in 1879.
4. Verse 12: "And he took about five thousand men, and set them to lie in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city."
    - a. This is not an additional force, separate from the reference of verses two and three. The whole force numbered thirty thousand, with five thousand being given the ambushing mission.
    - b. It seems that the remainder of the thirty thousand took up a position north of Ai. The larger part of the force occupied the place indicated to the north, the smaller part went to the west of the city.
  5. Verse 13: "And when they had set the people, *even* all the host that *was* on the north of the city, and their liers in wait on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley."
    - a. When all the preparations had been made and all the men were in place, Joshua and those with him descended the hill into the valley and approached Ai.
    - b. "The fighting force of Ai combined with Bethel probably amounted to no more than six or eight thousand at the most. It would seem utterly irrational for a fighting force of this size to go out against five hundred to six hundred thousand armed men which all Israel would have" (Pledge, Vol. 2, p.29).

D. Joshua 8:14-29: The City is Captured and Destroyed.

1. Verses 14-17: "And it came to pass, when the king of Ai saw *it*, that they hastened and rose up early, and the men of the city went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at a time appointed, before the plain; but he wist not that *there were* liers in ambush against him behind the city. And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness. And all the people that *were* in Ai were called together to pursue after them: and they pursued after Joshua, and were drawn away from the city. And there was not a man left in Ai or Bethel, that went not out after Israel: and they left the city open, and pursued after Israel."
    - a. The king of Ai perceived the attack; he readied his men to sally forth to do battle. When the agreed-upon signal was given, his army erupted from the city to engage Israel. He knew nothing about the ambushers concealed behind (west of) Ai. He was not a good general, or he would have sent out scouts to obtain information. It may be that this was the first time in history that such a stratagem had been employed in Canaan.
    - b. Making a token attack, or perhaps only pretending to attack, Israel quickly began to fall back, giving the false notion that they were giving up the fight. They took to their heels, fleeing toward the wilderness.
    - c. The commanders of Ai called on their men to pursue Israel, which they did, without giving thought to the defense of Ai. This shows the gross over-confidence of these pagans.
    - d. Apparently they never considered the vulnerability of Ai, as they hastened to pursue their supposed advantage. Verse seventeen includes the men of Bethel, clearly indicating that the two cities had joined forces against a common enemy. The entire army left the city, chasing the Israelites.
  2. Verses 18-19: "And the LORD said unto Joshua, Stretch out the spear that *is* in thy hand toward Ai; for I will give it into thine hand. And Joshua stretched out the spear that *he had* in his hand toward the city. And the ambush arose quickly out of their place, and they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand: and they entered into the city, and took it, and hastened and set the city on fire."
    - a. Joshua had arranged a signal which would tell his men hiding west of Ai that they were to
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- commence their attack now. The signal was a raised spear, which he lifted and pointed toward the undefended city. The distance was short enough that it could be seen by the ambushers.
- b. Acting immediately at his signal, the men in hiding rushed toward Ai, captured it, and set it on fire. The fire would tell the pagan army that they were in severe trouble.
3. Verses 20-23: “And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and, behold, the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven, and they had no power to flee this way or that way: and the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon the pursuers. And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city, and that the smoke of the city ascended, then they turned again, and slew the men of Ai. And the other issued out of the city against them; so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, and some on that side: and they smote them, so that they let none of them remain or escape. And the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua.”
    - a. Soldiers are taught to stay alert. It was not long until the men of Ai looked back and saw smoke arising from the burning town. The fleeing Israelites turned back on their pursuers, and the hunted now became the hunters. The pagan soldiers found themselves cut off from returning to Ai, and were quickly surrounded by a greatly superior force.
    - b. The men of Ai were in a panic; the men of Israel wreaked vengeance on them. The five thousand men who took the city entered the fray, completely cutting off the enemy from any possible escape. The only one to survive the fighting was the king of Ai, who was captured and brought to Joshua.
  4. Verses 24-26: “And it came to pass, when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness wherein they chased them, and when they were all fallen on the edge of the sword, until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned unto Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword. And *so* it was, *that* all that fell that day, both of men and women, *were* twelve thousand, *even* all the men of Ai. For Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.”
    - a. When the Israelites had finished the slaughter on the battlefield, they entered Ai and slew everyone therein. The entire population was killed. We must keep in mind that these people were enemies of God; they were steeped in idolatry, with all the corrupt practices that pertained to it in that evil day. All the adults were corrupted; all the minors who were of an accountable age were corrupted; all the little ones would have followed the steps of their elders. Additionally, the wicked influence of this sizeable number of corrupt pagans could have had a powerful evil effect on the surrounding nations in particular, and the general population of the region in general.
    - b. Twelve thousand from the city of Ai were slain that day; this was the entire population. This may or may not include the people of Bethel. Joshua, holding the spear in his hand, did not draw back his arm until all the inhabitants had been destroyed.
    - c. We read in Joshua 12:9,16 that the king of Ai and the king of Bethel were slain. Coffman suggested that there may have been only one king who ruled both Bethel and Ai. It is more likely that there was a king over each, and that they had joined their forces against Israel, and they and all their people were slain in the operation.
  5. Verses 27-29: “Only the cattle and the spoil of that city Israel took for a prey unto themselves, according unto the word of the LORD which he commanded Joshua. And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever, *even* a desolation unto this day. And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide: and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcase down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, *that remaineth* unto this day.”
    - a. The livestock and other plunder became the possessions of the Israelites. God forbade their
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taking any personal booty from Jericho, but they were given permission to despoil Ai.

- b. Ai was burned down, leaving only a heap of rubble. Its desolate condition remained to the time of the writing of the book, and was a constant reminder of the awesome power of God.
- c. The king of Ai was hanged on a tree until the evening. At sundown, Joshua had his body removed from the tree and cast down at the entrance of the ruined city. A great heap of stones was raised upon his body; this pile of stones likewise was still present at the time the book was recorded.

E. Joshua 8:30-35: The Aftermath of the Battle.

1. Verses 30-31: "Then Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God of Israel in mount Ebal, As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up *any* iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings."
  - a. Proceeding from Ai, Israel came to Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, a distance of about twenty miles from Ai. Joshua raised an altar on Ebal, constructed of natural stones which had not been cut by any manmade instrument. Offerings were made on this altar.
  - b. Israel offered to God these sacrifices in keeping with his law in expressing their heartfelt gratitude for the help and bounties he had given them. Forty years earlier, their forebears had left Egypt under his mighty hand; he had preserved them through a generation of trouble in the trackless wilderness through which they had come. He had recently led them across the Jordan River; he had enabled them to conquer Jericho; they were now the masters of Ai. They had every reason to be confident that their conquest of Canaan would soon be successfully accomplished.
  - c. It is doubtless of great significance that the altar was erected on the mount of cursing—Mount Ebal. A curse is pronounced on those who are guilty of sin—not on the righteous ones. An altar was needed in Old Testament days because of sin. Sacrifices were offered for sin. Mount Gerizim was known as the mount of blessing. Christ was sacrificed on the cross at Calvary because of the sins of mankind; without his offering, we would have no hope. See Coffman, p.87.
  - d. Deuteronomy 27:12-13: "These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin: And these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse; Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali."
2. Verse 32: "And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel."
  - a. On the stones of the altar, Joshua inscribed a copy of the law of Moses. The Decalogue, which lies at the heart of the law, may be the part that was recorded thereon; some think the blessings and curses given in Deuteronomy are meant.
  - b. This was a way of telling the Israelites and all the Canaanites yet in that country that God was staking his claim to this land. It served notice to all that Israel was there to stay.
  - c. "Here we have a passage that the critics hate. The narrative here is denounced as misplaced, unfit-ting, and 'impossible to be true, since Joshua had not yet conquered central Canaan.' What really troubles them is the proof this passage gives of the prior existence of the Mosaic law. It is vain criticism that the passage does not belong here....Furthermore, it *belongs* here. As Schaeffer noted, 'The victorious Israelites now controlled the northern end of the ridge highway that went south to Jerusalem and Hebron. Having defeated Ai (and probably Bethel), they could march straight to Shechem over an excellent road that had been there for generations'

(Coffman, p.85).

3. Verse 33: "And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel."
    - a. What occurred here was done in keeping to the instructions given through Moses:
      - 1) Deuteronomy 11:29: "And it shall come to pass, when the LORD thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal."
      - 2) Deuteronomy 27:12: "These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin."
    - b. The focal point of the activities given here was the ark of the covenant. Half of the people were ranged on Gerizim and half on Ebal. There is a valley lying between these two mountains. McGarvey said there is "a recess in the side of Mount Gerizim, which forms a vast natural amphitheatre, and by a similar recess of almost the same dimensions exactly opposite in the side of Mount Ebal. The valley is here more than half a mile wide, and the chord of each of the amphitheatres is more than a quarter of a mile long, while the slopes of each mountain from base to summit is nearly half a mile....If it were possible, under any circumstances, for one man to read so as to be heard by such a multitude, this is the very place in which to do it. A number of travelers have tried the experiment of speaking to one another from mountain to mountain, and have succeeded with ease. The author tried the experiment of standing in the middle of the valley, with one of his companions half way up Mount Gerizim and the other halfway up Mount Ebal, and reading to them the curses in the 27th chapter of Deuteronomy. He was heard distinctly by the one on Mount Gerizim and indistinctly by the one on Mount Ebal, the thick grove of olive-trees to the eastward obstructing the passage of the sound in that direction. If, therefore, the people could have stood in this vast double amphitheatre, which seems altogether probable, Joshua could have read to them without aid so that all could hear" (p.287).
  4. Verses 34-35: "And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them."
    - a. Joshua read in the hearing of Israel the words of the law, inclusive of the blessings and curses. As noted in McGarvey's comments describing his firsthand knowledge, Joshua could have read and the people could all have heard him.
    - b. Present in this vast assemblage were all the men of Israel, the women and children, and the strangers who were part of the great company. The entire law was read.
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## JOSHUA 9

### A. Joshua 9:1-2: The Canaanites Unite Against Israel.

1. Verse 1: "And it came to pass, when all the kings which *were* on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof."
  - a. These nations presently inhabited Canaan. God gave them time in which to change their ways from idolatry or to corrupt themselves completely. "But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Gen. 15:16). This was their condition about four hundred years earlier.
  - b. Ten Canaanites nations are named in Genesis 15:19-21: "The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."
  - c. *This side* of Jordan refers to that land lying west of the Jordan River. Those nations on the east side of Jordan had already been subdued by Israel. The Canaanites learned of Israel's success there, and were now greatly concerned on learning of the victories at Jericho and Ai.
2. Verse 2: "That they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord."
  - a. There remained a formidable force of Canaanites, but until now they had been divided. There would have been limited opposition to Israel's invasion without unity among these pagan nations. To their credit, they recognized the obvious: they must join their forces and oppose Israel in a united effort if there was to be any hope of their survival. In unity there is strength. The various strands which comprise a rope are weak individually, but each lends its strength to the whole, making the rope strong.
  - b. Christ's enemies united in seeking his death. The Psalmist predicted it: "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed..." (Ps. 2:2). "Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:25-28).

### B. Joshua 9:3-15: The Gibeonites Deceive Israel.

1. Verses 3-5: "And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up; And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry *and* mouldy."
    - a. While the nations of Palestine set up an agreement to fight jointly against Israel, the people of the city of Gibeon decided on a different course of action. Realizing their certain annihilation at the hands of the Israelites, even though all the Canaanites could effect a united opposition, the Gibeonites developed an ingenious scheme by which to deceive Israel into thinking they were allies with them, and so to be spared from destruction.
    - b. They correctly perceived that they would certainly be crushed by the Israelite invasion. Dressing in old clothes, having old, moldy bread, and carrying their supplies in old, worn-out sacks and bottles, they endeavored to get the Israelites to believe they had made a long journey, and that they were not inhabitants of Canaan.
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2. Verses 6-8: “And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us. And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you? And they said unto Joshua, We *are* thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who *are* ye? and from whence come ye?”
  - a. Their statement was an outright lie. They had not come from a far country, but from a city in the near vicinity. They enhanced their lie with the assertion of their desire to enter into an alliance with Israel.
  - b. Israel inquired about the nature of the agreement they sought, to which the Gibeonites replied that they wanted to be servants to Israel. Joshua asked them plainly to identify themselves and the land from which they had come.
3. Verses 9-13: “And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that *were* beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which *was* at Ashtaroth. Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We *are* your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us. This our bread we took hot *for* our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy: And these bottles of wine, which we filled, *were* new; and, behold, they be rent: and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey.”
  - a. They replied to Joshua’s questions by claiming to have been motivated to approach Israel with the request on account of the great things God had done in behalf of Israel. They referred to the miracles of Egypt forty years earlier, and to the more recent assistance given Israel in conquering the two Amorite kings on the east side of Jordan.
  - b. To give credence to their words, they asserted that the moldy bread they carried had been taken hot from the oven on the day of their departure from their far country, and that the old bottles of wine had been new when they left home; furthermore, they claimed that their clothes and shoes had aged because of the long journey they had taken.
  - c. Of course, there was scarcely a word of truth in their story! That they were terribly fearful of Israel and wanted to save their lives is obviously true. The bread, wine bottles, and clothing and shoes offered no proof of their claims; these were mere “window-dressings.”

C. Joshua 9:14-21: Israel Learns of the Deceit.

1. Verse 14: “And the men took of their victuals, and asked not *counsel* at the mouth of the LORD.”
  - a. The men of Israel took of the Gibeonites’ victuals. It appears to be illogical that the Israelites would eat the moldy bread, since they had the fresh products of Canaan at their disposal. The meaning seems more likely to be that they accepted the story of the Gibeonites on the basis of the moldy bread. The statement is placed in opposition to the second part of the verse: they took of their victuals and did not ask God’s counsel.
  - b. *And asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord.* This lies at the heart of man’s spiritual difficulties. Joshua and Israel did not ask guidance from God before entering into the treaty with these Hivites from Gibeon. God had forbidden Israel to form any alliance with the pagans. "And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, *and* utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee

- suddenly" (Deut. 7:2-4). Just before this episode, the entire law had been read in the hearing of all Israel (8:34-35). How could they plead ignorance of violating this warning?
- c. Israel could not excuse their action by claiming ignorance; God held them responsible for the violation. If they had taken the time to request guidance from the Lord, by at least consulting his revealed word, they could have avoided trouble. Consider some of the modern parallels to this omission:
    - 1) Many will take the word of some other human being (priest; preacher; friend; relative) instead of searching God's word for the truth on the matter at hand.
    - 2) God's word is not consulted to see what God requires for the salvation of souls.
    - 3) God's word is ignored by many when a plan for worship is developed.
    - 4) Many go to other sources for information concerning morality.
    - 5) Multitudes shun the Bible when deciding the work of Christians.
2. Verse 15: "And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation swore unto them."
    - a. Joshua entered into a treaty with these Hivites, notwithstanding the plain statement in the Law forbidding it. The error was simple, but serious. It seems highly unlikely that no one would remember the prohibition of Deuteronomy 7:2-4, for the preceding chapter closed with a public reading of the entire law.
    - b. The princes of Israel bound themselves with an oath to the covenant they had formed with these pagans. It is a case where they rashly committed themselves to a vow which should never have been made.
    - c. The agreement was based on a falsehood; Israel believed the false claims of the Gibeonites. If one party of such an agreement is guilty of bad faith, the other party should be able to end it honorably. In this case, however, God's name had been invoked, which Israel perceived to make the covenant inviolate.
  3. Verse 16: "And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they *were* their neighbours, and *that* they dwelt among them."
    - a. Three days later, as is often the case, the truth came to light: these people were neighbors, and lived nearby. They had lied to Israel; Israel had believed the lie, and had violated God's will because they believed the lie.
    - b. We can, and many often do, believe a lie sincerely. A lie that is believed is still a lie; it is not the truth. Sincerity cannot change a lie into the truth. The number of people, even prominent men, who believe a lie cannot change a lie into truth.
  4. Verses 17-18: "And the children of Israel journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities *were* Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjathjearim. And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes."
    - a. On the third day following the treaty, Israel came to the cities pertaining to the Hivites in question. The cities were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjathjearim. These cities were later assigned to the tribe of Benjamin. The truth became evident to all on arrival at this location, as contact was made with the inhabitants of the cities.
    - b. When the people of Israel learned of the deception, they did not smite the pagans of these cities because the leaders had sworn to spare them. The Israelites murmured against their leaders on account of this development. This is a case of the people having a better understanding of the situation than did the leaders.
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5. Verses 19-21: "But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them. This we will do to them; we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto them. And the princes said unto them, Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation; as the princes had promised them."
  - a. The oath rashly given forbade any action being taken against the Gibeonites. The leaders of Israel hastened to assure the people that they could not smite these cities because of the oath, an oath in which God's name had been invoked.
  - b. The Gibeonites would not be slain, but they would be punished. They had themselves requested to become servants to Israel; their servanthood would require the most menial of work—cutting wood and hauling water, no small task for so numerous a nation as Israel. Their work was to be done for the tabernacle.

D. Joshua 9:22-27: The Gibeonites Are Made Servants of Israel.

1. Verses 22-23: "And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, *We are* very far from you; when ye dwell among us? Now therefore ye *are* cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God."
    - a. Joshua called the leaders of the Gibeonites before him and demanded to know why they had beguiled Israel. The question was not so much asked to receive an answer as it was to introduce the penalty.
    - b. He pronounced a curse upon these people, assigning them the unending task of supplying wood and water for the house of God. This assignment required constant work, for there would be many sacrifices to be offered, which required much fuel; besides the wood, there was the continuing need for water.
  2. Verses 24-25: "And they answered Joshua, and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the LORD thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing. And now, behold, we *are* in thine hand: as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do."
    - a. The Gibeonites at last spoke honestly and truthfully. They had learned that God had given the land of Canaan to Israel and had commanded Moses to destroy all the inhabitants. They were so terrified of Israel that they conceived this subterfuge as the best plan to save the lives of their people.
    - b. While we admire their intentions, we loathe their deception. Would it not have been better had they simply humbled themselves before God, and pleaded for his mercy? Could they not have been accepted into Israel as others had been? The Rechabites, who are spoken of highly in Jeremiah 35, came from the Kenites. The Kenites had been listed as early residents of Canaan (Gen. 15:19-21) who were to be evicted; however, in the meantime, they had acquired the favor of God.
    - c. These Gibeonites (Hivites) who were also marked for destruction, now placed themselves in Joshua's hands, to do with as he deemed right.
  3. Verses 26-27: "And so did he unto them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not. And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose."
    - a. Joshua gave to them the punishment previously indicated. God accepted the commitment
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Israel's princes had sworn to the Gibeonites, and thus spared their lives.

- b. The penalty of perpetual servanthood to Israel was assigned to them because of their falsehoods. The alternative was to be utterly destroyed, young and old.

## JOSHUA 10

### A. Joshua 10: 1-5: Adonizedec Forms an Alliance With Other City-States to Oppose Israel.

1. Verse 1: "Now it came to pass, when Adonizedek king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them."
  - a. Jerusalem was known earlier as *Salem* when Melchizedec was its king. That noble man was also "the priest of the most high God" (Gen. 14:18). Notice the similarity between the names of these two kings of Jerusalem: Melchi-zedec and Adoni-zedec. The latter king was an enemy of God's people, an evil man who sought the destruction of Israel.
    - 1) *Adoni* is one of the Hebrew words for "Lord."
    - 2) *Zedec* (or *zedek*) means "righteous" or "just."
    - 3) *Melchi* means "king."
    - 4) Thus, *Melchizedec* means "righteous king," and *Adonizedec* means "righteous lord."
  - b. Adonizedec feared Israel; he had no fear of Israel's God: this was his fundamental error in the events that follow. When he learned of the fate of Jericho and Ai, and their kings, he realized that the Palestinian Pagans must unite or face extinction at the hands of Israel.
  - c. This conclusion was made more obvious in view of the fact that the Gibeonites had made peace with Israel, and were now listed with the invaders. The next verse shows that Gibeon was no small city as Ai had been.
2. Verse 2: "That they feared greatly, because Gibeon *was* a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it *was* greater than Ai, and all the men thereof *were* mighty."
  - a. Adonizedec and his people were filled with terror over the prospect of facing Israel's powerful army alone. The city of Gibeon was a great city, and had a military force comprised of mighty men; since this powerful city-state had decided to capitulate rather than to fight Israel, Jerusalem's fate would be no less perilous than Gibeon's had been if she tried to make a solitary stand against the Israelites.
  - b. Gibeon is described as "one of the royal cities." No specific mention is made of a king of Gibeon, but that may only indicate that he was non-effectual.
    - 1) "Royal" city, on the surface, seems to describe a city over which royalty reigned. As used in the verse, Gibeon is described as "one of the royal cities," indicating there were others like it. The margin gives this rendering: one of the "cities of the kingdom." The reference may be to the alliance of Kings whose union is introduced in Joshua 9:1 f, with Gibeon being one of those included.
    - 2) Chapter nine also tells of the wily scheme by which the Gibeonites obtained a treaty with Israel. The present chapter shows that the alliance put forth their army to punish Gibeon for betraying the Canaanite cause, which further suggests that Gibeon had been part of the original pact with those five kingdoms named in the chapter.
3. Verses 3-4: "Wherefore Adonizedek king of Jerusalem sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying, Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon: for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel."
  - a. Adonizedec, in view of the recent development of Gibeon's treaty with Israel, invited the four kings named to come to Jerusalem to make plans to attack Gibeon. Gibeon was located about six miles to the northwest of Jerusalem, and posed a serious problem for Adonizedec.

- b. Hebron was an old city, lying nineteen miles southwest of Jerusalem. The city had an elevation of 3,040 feet MSL, the highest of any city in Palestine.
    - 1) Abraham spent time at Hebron (Genesis 13:18; 18:1)
    - 2) The cave of Machpelah, where Abraham and other members of his family were buried, was here (Genesis 23).
    - 3) The spies found the giant Anakim there (Numbers 13:22).
    - 4) Caleb later received the city as part of his allotment (Joshua 14-15).
    - 5) It became one of the six cities of refuge (Joshua 20:7; 21:11).
  - c. Jerusalem is called *Salem* in Genesis 14:18 and Psalm 66:2. It was called *Jebus* (Judges 1:8,21), taking that name after its Jebusite inhabitants. Nothing is reported in our present chapter about the conquest of Jerusalem, but later we are told that David captured the city (2 Sam. 5:6-8).
  - d. Jarmuth was about fifteen miles west of Jerusalem, overlooking the coastal plain. It was given to the tribe of Judah when the land was divided among the tribes.
  - e. Lachish was about fifteen miles west of Hebron, and was part of Judah's portion.
  - f. Eglon's location has not been fixed, but was likely near Lachish (Josh. 15:39).
4. Verse 5: "Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together, and went up, they and all their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it."
- a. The five kings are called "Amorites." "The narrow application of that word referred to mountain dwellers, but some of the cities are not in the mountains" (Moffitt, *SS*, p.184). The Jebusites inhabited Jerusalem, and gave their name to that city. It appears, therefore, that the term "Amorite" may be a loose reference to these kings, and not the specific national name.
  - b. Having a common view of the problem, the five kings agreed to make war against Gibeon, hence they went forth and made camp before the city, making preparation for the ensuing battle. The Gibeonites, although described as mighty men, knew they were not able to fight against the combined forces of these five kingdoms.

**B. Joshua 10:6-14: Israel Defeats the Alliance at Gibeon.**

1. Verses 6-7: "And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us. So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour."
    - a. The Gibeonites were shrewd in gaining a treaty with Israel. That pact not only kept Israel from destroying them, but it also placed them on the side of Israel. The alliance meant that they had the right to expect help if attacked by Israel's enemies.
    - b. When Gibeon perceived the intentions of the army at their door, they sent an appeal to Joshua, who was encamped at Gilgal, to come quickly to their aid. Joshua and his host ascended from Gilgal to Gibeon. The occasion was one which afforded him the opportunity to strike a quick, decisive blow in the prosecution of the war of conquest.
  2. Verses 8-9: "And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee. Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, and went up from Gilgal all night."
    - a. Once again, the Lord encouraged Joshua in the fearful task before him. The Lord promised that he would be successful in the battle, that no man would be able to withstand the attack.
    - b. Immediately Joshua and his host began the ascent from Gilgal to Gibeon; leaving the valley of the Jordan, they climbed to the higher country where Gibeon was situated. "The difficulty of
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Joshua's all-night march should be noted. It was some 25 miles distance, uphill all the way, a climb of 2000' vertical from the camp at Gilgal" (Coffman, p.109). Some have described the ascent to be so steep that steps had to be chiseled in the rocks to enable the soldiers to make the climb.

3. Verse 10: "And the LORD discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Bethhoron, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah."
    - a. The pagan army must have been stunned to find themselves confronted by the Israelite military forces the next morning. If that was a shock to them, what transpired during the day was far greater.
    - b. They fled before the Israelite attack, with God providing the primary force to produce their terror. The Israelites pursued them as they fled from Gibeon, chasing them to upper Bethoron, on to Azekah, and on to Makkedah.
    - c. Although God did marvelous things in routing the pagan army, what Joshua and his army did was spectacular. They made a night march of twenty-five miles or more over hard terrain, and fought a very long battle the next day, a running fight that covered many miles.
  4. Verse 11: "And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, *and* were in the going down to Bethhoron, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: *they were* more which died with hailstones than *they* whom the children of Israel slew with the sword."
    - a. As the fleeing enemy descended from upper Bethhoron to lower Bethhoron, God sent great hailstones upon their host, which killed more than which died by the hand of the Israelite army.
    - b. In delivering Israel from Egypt a generation earlier, God sent hailstones upon the land, killing man and beast alike (Exodus 9). In modern times, great hailstones the size of grapefruit have been documented. Even in a hailstorm which produces only small stones, tremendous damage is done. We are not told how large these hailstones were, but they were of sufficient size to kill thousands of soldiers who likely wore protective armor.
    - c. Coffman (p.110) told of a great hailstorm which hit our nation's capital in the early 1950s which rained down stones the size of grapefruit. Some of these stones were stored in freezers. Some of the larger ones were photographed, resting on the tops of four-inch wide tumblers.
  5. Verses 12-14: "Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. *Is* not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel."
    - a. Joshua made his statement openly, before his army—when he requested that the sun and moon should stand still. He was superbly confident that his entreaty would be heard and granted, or else he would have suffered humiliation in the sight of his men. An army that has lost its respect for its commander is doomed to defeat.
    - b. During the day's fighting, Joshua called on the Lord, in a voice which was heard by his army, to cause the sun to stand still and for the moon to remain in sight, until the slaughter of the pagan forces was complete. The statement gives us a good picture of the time of day and the positions of the sun and moon at the time of the battle. The sun appeared to be above the city of Gibeon, indicating that the time would be about eight or nine in the morning; the moon was
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over the valley of Ajalon, to the west. These facts preclude the conclusion that the miracle that occurred was merely an eclipse: the sun and moon were not lined up at all. Some have thought that an eclipse somehow caused light to be refracted in such a way as to give the illusion of continued daylight. An eclipse would have brought darkness; it would not have prolonged daylight!

- c. Verse thirteen plainly states the fact that the sun stood still and the moon stayed where it was. The prolonged daylight kept the enemy from escaping in the dark, and Israel was able to continue the slaughter.
- d. The following quotation is from Jamison on Joshua 10:10-14:
  - 1) Then spake Joshua to the Lord ... Sun, stand thou still.... and thou, Moon-literally, 'Sun upon Gibeon, be still (remain), and the moon in the vale of Ajalon.' The language which Joshua addressed to the Lord was evidently a prayer that the day might not close until he should have completely overthrown his enemies; and it was most natural in the circumstances that such should have been the fervent wish of his heart; because it would appear that at the time when the ejaculation was uttered, the day was far advanced.
  - 2) *And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.* The sun stood still, [bach<sup>a</sup>tsiy (OT:2677) hashamayim (OT:8064), in the midst, in the bisection of the heavens-i.e., noonday] (cf. Judg 16:3). Now, this passage has given use to much discussion; and while it is generally admitted that it points to a physical miracle, a difference of opinion is entertained as to the form, and consequently the extent, of its operation. Some regard the section from Josh 10:12-15 inclusive as a continuous portion of the history; and, considering that the inspired historian has related what occurred according to the natural appearance of things, and conformably to the state of human knowledge at the time, believe that the expressions, "the sun stood still, and the moon stayed," mean, on the principles of science, that the earth was arrested in its diurnal rotation on its axis, and thereby produced the phenomena described. Another way of explaining the words of Joshua has been suggested. 'Day and night are produced by the rotation of the earth upon her own axis, and that revolution is principally caused by the action of the sun upon our globe. Now, if that action be suspended at any given hour of a day, the rotation of the earth on its axis will cease, and that day will be prolonged beyond its usual length, during the time that suspension continues. Joshua's words are, on this hypothesis, interpreted thus: "Let the sun restrain his influence, or be inactive, upon the earth, that the earth may not revolve further and bring night, that his light may continue upon Gibeon as it now appears, and that the moon may continue to shine over the vale of Ajalon as at present she does." Joshua does not request the earth to cease her motion, which was merely the effect of the sun's acting upon her; but he addresses the sun, from which, as its cause, that motion proceeded, and thus he employs language which, everything considered, Sir Isaac Newton himself would have demonstrated to be correct, elegant, and sublime. Philosophically, to stop an effect, there must be removed its producing cause. Hence, in the storm, Jesus first rebuked the wind that raised the billows, and then said to the waves, "Peace, be still;" and here the sun withholds his influence upon the earth, and the earth becomes motionless' ('Azuba,' p. 397).
  - 3) Doubtless it was within the compass of omnipotence to stop the movements of the great machinery of nature, or any part of it; and as the Creator cannot be bound by the laws He Himself thought fit to impose upon matter, He must be considered free to suspend them, whenever the interference may seem to His infinite wisdom necessary for the promotion of His glory or the good of His people. Such an occasion undoubtedly was the contest at

- Gibeon, which, by securing to the Israelites a large instalment of possession in the promised land, was really an epoch in the history of redemption; and the control exercised over the sun and moon was a visible demonstration of God's superiority over those luminaries, which were objects of worship among the idolatrous Canaanites. A believer in revelation, then, would not hesitate to admit a temporary alteration of the laws that govern the solar system, if such a meaning were demanded by the Scripture record.... (PC Study Bible, Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by Biblesoft).
- e. Joshua records the fact that this information was also inscribed in the book of Jasher. The name *Jasher* has "the upright" as its meaning (see the margin). Only here and in 2 Samuel 1:18 does the Bible make reference to the book of Jasher.
- 1) Uninspired writers of the ancient past have alleged the book of Jasher was a reference to the book of the Law, the book of Genesis, the book of Deuteronomy, or the book of Judges. Others have thought that the book was an uninspired writing which perished when the temple was destroyed by the Babylonians. It is clear that we do not know the actual identity of this book, and that we do not need to know!
  - 2) One encyclopedia gives the following information regarding Jasher: *This Book of Jasher was a kind of national sacred songbook, continued from age to age, according as great crises moved Israelites to mighty deeds, and poets to immortalize them; like the "chronicles" of the kings of Israel often alluded to in later times. So the Book of Psalms, beginning with David's, received fresh accessions from age to age down to the time of the return from Babylon, when it was completed. "The Book of the Wars of the Lord" (Num 21:14-15) similarly records in sacred odes Israel's triumphant progress; of these we have left the fragment as to passing the Arnon, the song of the well, and that on the conquest of Sihon's kingdom (ver. 17, 18, 27-30). The Targum and Jarchi explain, "the book of the law." Jerome (on Isa 44:2) mentions that Genesis was called "the book of the just." The only two specimens of the Book of Jasher extant are rhythmical. In this respect, and in its being uninspired or at least not preserved as part of our inspired canon, this book differs from the Pentateuch; both alike record successively the exploits of Jeshurun, the ideally upright nation*" (PC Study Bible, Fausset's Bible Dictionary, Electronic Database Copyright (c) 1998 by Biblesoft).
  - 3) Another reference states this about Jasher: *The book of the upright or righteous man, that is to say, of the true members of the theocracy, or godly men. From the two references given it has been justly inferred that the book was a collection of odes in praise of certain heroes of the theocracy, interwoven with historical notices of their achievements. That the passage in Joshua quoted from this work is extracted from a song is evident enough, both from the poetical form of the composition and also from the parallelism of the sentences. The reference in 2 Sam 1:18 is to an elegy upon Saul and Jonathan in the book of Jasher. Some suppose the book of Jasher to have perished in the captivity. [BIBLIOGRAPHY: L. Goldschmidt, *The Book of Jasher* (1923)].* {PC Study Bible, The New Unger's Bible Dictionary. Originally published by Moody Press of Chicago, Illinois. Copyright (c) 1988.}
  - 4) Matthew Henry adds these thoughts: "This is said to be written in the book of Jasher, a collection of state-poems, in which the poem made upon this occasion was preserved among the rest; probably the same with that book of the wars of the Lord (Num 21:14), which afterwards was continued and carried on by one Jasher. Those words, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou moon in the valley of Ajalon, sounding metrical, are supposed to be taken from the narrative of this event as it was found in the book of Jasher. Not that the divine testimony of the book of Joshua needed confirmation from the book of Jasher, a human composition; but to those who had that book in their hands it would be of use to
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compare this history with it, which warrants the appeals the learned make to profane history for corroborating the proofs of the truth of sacred history“ (PC Study Bible, Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.).

C. Joshua 10:15-27: The Five Kings are Captured and Executed.

1. Verses 15-19: “And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal. But these five kings fled, and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah. And it was told Joshua, saying, The five kings are found hid in a cave at Makkedah. And Joshua said, Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave, and set men by it for to keep them: And stay ye not, *but* pursue after your enemies, and smite the hindmost of them; suffer them not to enter into their cities: for the LORD your God hath delivered them into your hand.”
    - a. Verse fifteen is seen by Bible critics as an example of a scribal addition. The verse simply states that Israel returned to their semi-permanent camp at Gilgal, after the battle was over. To this point, however, the battle had not concluded; the writer is merely anticipating the conclusion of the fighting; he is not suggesting that they went back to Gilgal, and later returned to finish the present battle.
    - b. As the prolonged day continued, the five kings concealed themselves in a cave at Makkedah. When Joshua learned this, he gave instruction that the mouth of the cave be sealed with large stones. The ringleaders of the alliance would be kept there until their armies were annihilated. He told his soldiers to keep after the enemy, smiting them as they fled, and to prevent their finding safety in their cities.
    - c. There was a great slaughter of the enemy! Those few who were able to enter into the “fenced cities” (cities which were protected by walls) were left for future campaigns (verse 20). During those ancient times, even farmers and shepherds lived in villages and cities, many of which were protected by walls.
  2. Verses 20-22: “And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed, that the rest *which* remained of them entered into fenced cities. And all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace: none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel. Then said Joshua, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings unto me out of the cave. And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon.”
    - a. The noncombatants among the Israelites remained in the camp at Gilgal. When the day's battle was over, Joshua and his fighting men entered into a temporary camp at Makkedah.
    - b. Verse twenty indicates that there was a small number of the enemy who escaped death on this memorable day, and took shelter in the walled cities in the area. Evidently, the noncombatants of the pagan alliance were not slain. The few soldiers to escape took refuge with these. Verse twenty-one states that no one spoke against Israel, lest they call attention to themselves and be slain; Israel was completely unopposed by the survivors of the five city-states.
    - c. Encamping before the day's end at Makkedah, Joshua ordered that the stones be removed from the cave in which the five kings had sought safety. These men were to be brought forth to Joshua.
  3. Verses 23-27: “And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them. And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight. And afterward
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Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening. And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun, *that* Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave's mouth, *which remain* until this very day.”

- a. The five kings were brought forth to Joshua. The soldiers were assembled, and the captains of the host were told to put their feet on the necks of these kings. The kings were prostrate on the ground. By placing a foot on the neck of a king, the army was shown that even these kings were at the mercy of Israel.
- b. Putting on this demonstration of superiority over these kings, Joshua charged the soldiers to have no fear of any of their enemies. They had every reason to be confident in gaining the ultimate victory over all their enemies in the land, for as God had subjugated these kings by defeating their armies, so he would lead Israel to conquer all the other nations in the land.
- c. Following the ceremony, Joshua had the kings slain and their bodies affixed to trees. Prior to sundown, he had their bodies removed from the trees, and thrown into the cave. The cave was then sealed up once again by stopping its mouth with great stones.
- d. The writer of this inspired record states that those stones were still there at the time of the writing. As elsewhere noted, the inspired author was most likely Joshua.

D. Joshua 10:28-43: Israel Smites the Cities of the Canaanite Alliance.

1. Verses 28-30: “And that day Joshua took Makkedah, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof he utterly destroyed, them, and all the souls that *were* therein; he let none remain: and he did to the king of Makkedah as he did unto the king of Jericho. Then Joshua passed from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, unto Libnah, and fought against Libnah: And the LORD delivered it also, and the king thereof, into the hand of Israel; and he smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that *were* therein; he let none remain in it; but did unto the king thereof as he did unto the king of Jericho.”
    - a. The city of Makkedah had not been a participant in the five-king alliance, but it was to be destroyed also. Its king and all its inhabitants were put to the sword.
    - b. Joshua took his army on to the city of Libnah, which was also delivered into their control. The king and all the people were slain, just as had been the case with Jericho.
  2. Verses 31-32: “And Joshua passed from Libnah, and all Israel with him, unto Lachish, and encamped against it, and fought against it: And the LORD delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, which took it on the second day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that *were* therein, according to all that he had done to Libnah.”
    - a. Following the operation at Libnah, Israel proceeded to Lachish, and besieged and took this city also. In the second day of fighting, the city was captured. Again, what befell Libnah, now became the fate of Lachish.
    - b. Lachish was situated on top of a sizeable hill, making the attack difficult and dangerous. But God was able to deliver the city into the hands of Israel. The king of Lachish had already been slain.
  3. Verse 33: “Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish; and Joshua smote him and his people, until he had left him none remaining.”
    - a. The king of Gezer made the mistake of trying to assist Lachish. He and his people suffered the same fate as the inhabitants of Lachish.
    - b. This city [Gezer] was located along the road from Joppa to Jerusalem. Nothing is reported here about it being destroyed, although the text reports that all the people that belonged to the king were destroyed.
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4. Verses 34-37: “And from Lachish Joshua passed unto Eglon, and all Israel with him; and they encamped against it, and fought against it: And they took it on that day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that *were* therein he utterly destroyed that day, according to all that he had done to Lachish. And Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, unto Hebron; and they fought against it: And they took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof, and all the souls that *were* therein; he left none remaining, according to all that he had done to Eglon; but destroyed it utterly, and all the souls that *were* therein.”
- a. Israel proceeded on to Eglon, which was obviously located near Lachish. This city was captured and all its citizens were put to the sword. The king of Eglon who had entered into the alliance had already been slain; the king of this passage may refer to him, or perhaps to a successor. The entire population was slain.
  - b. From Eglon, Joshua led his army against Hebron, took it, and destroyed the population. Evidently, there were outlying cities that pertained to Hebron; these were captured and destroyed, along with the people.
  - c. Many years later, when David re-entered Israel after living at Ziklag among the Philistines, he took up residence in Hebron, and his men dwelled in the cities of Hebron. "And his men that *were* with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron" (2 Sam. 2:3). The first seven and one-half years of his forty-year reign were spent at Hebron (2 Sam. 2:11; 5:4-5).
5. Verses 38-39: “And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to Debir; and fought against it: And he took it, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof; and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed all the souls that *were* therein; he left none remaining; as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir, and to the king thereof; as he had done also to Libnah, and to her king.”
- a. The city of Debir was next on the list of cities to be destroyed. With God’s help, the good general-ship of Joshua, and the fighting men at his command, Joshua took Debir. Its king had been slain earlier at Makedah.
  - b. What had befallen Hebron, now came upon Debir. Obviously, Hebron was rebuilt later.
6. Verses 40-43: “So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel commanded. And Joshua smote them from Kadeshbarnea even unto Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even unto Gibeon. And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel. And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.”
- a. This passage gives a condensed report of the conquest of the southern part of Palestine. From Kadesh-barnea to Gaza, Joshua led his army to victory. He overlooked none of those who inhabited the area described. The country included was the hill country around Jerusalem, the Hegeb (Josh. 15:21), and the lowlands (Josh. 15:33). Obviously, Goshen is a different area from the land Israel occupied in Egypt.
  - b. All of the cities and kings did he conquer. The victories are ascribed to the power of God. Following this extensive campaign, which is reported in the briefest of words, Joshua returned to the encampment at Gilgal. Verse fifteen anticipated this report of verse forty-three.
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## JOSHUA 11

### A. Joshua 11: 1-5: Jabin, the King of Hazor, Initiates Action Against Israel.

1. Verses 1-4: “And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor had heard *those things*, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph. And to the kings that *were* on the north of the mountains, and of the plains south of Chinneroth, and in the valley, and in the borders of Dor on the west, *And to* the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and *to* the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and *to* the Hivite under Hermon in the land of Mizpeh.”
  - a. “Joshua is far from giving a detail of all the fighting that took place in the Conquest of Canaan; but, taking the over-all view, the author of this book bases the conquest upon three, and only three, great campaigns: (1) the fall of Jericho and the destruction of Ai, (2) the defeat of the coalition under Adoni-zedek, and (3) the defeat of the coalition led by Jabin. Afterwards, all of the opposition encountered by Israel was of a merely local nature. After the events of this chapter, the whole land of Palestine lay open to Israel; and there was no power in the entire area that could effectively challenge them. The great pity, of course, is that Israel desired peace so earnestly that they neglected to continue the conquest in any thorough manner. Consequently, some of the tribes did not actually ‘possess their possessions’” (Coffman, p.123).
  - b. “On receiving intelligence of what had occurred in the south, the king of Hazor formed an alliance with the kings of Madon, Shimron, and Achshaph, and other kings of the north, to make a common attack upon the Israelites. This league originated with Jabin the king of Hazor, because Hazor was formerly the head of all the kingdoms of northern Canaan (ver. 10). *Hazor*, which Joshua conquered and burned to the ground (vers. 10,11), was afterwards restored, and became a capital again (Judg. 4:2; 1 Sam. 12:9); it was fortified by Solomon (1 Kings 9:15); and taken by Tiglath-Pileser (2 Kings 15:29). It belonged to the tribe of Naphtali (chapt. 19:36)...” (Keil, pp.118f).
  - c. Jabin, the ringleader in this new alliance, summoned certain other kings in the area to meet with him regarding the common problem Israel posed to them all. The defeat of the powerful alliance, detailed in the preceding chapter, brought a desperate situation upon the remainder of the Canaanites. “Jabin (‘the intelligent’), which seems to have been a hereditary title (Judg. 4:2), took the lead, from Hazor being the capital of the northern region (v.10)” (JFB, p.31).
  - d. Madon has been suggested as the site where Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount (Coffman, p.125). The location of Achshaph remains somewhat of a mystery, except that it was situated within the territory occupied by Asher (Josh. 19:25).
2. Verses 4-5: “And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that *is* upon the sea shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many. And when all these kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel.”
  - a. “The combined forces of the broad area of Northern Canaan were so numerous that Joshua did not even attempt to number them. To count the multitude would have been as futile as counting the sand on the seashore....Joshua’s army had neither horses nor chariots. The vast numbers of the oppressing army plus their apparently superior equipment was such as to strike terror into the heart of the boldest Hebrew” (McClish, FF, p.206).
  - b. “Now the number of the whole army was three hundred thousand armed footmen, and ten thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand chariots; so that the multitude of the enemies affrighted both Joshua himself and the Israelites; and they, instead of being full of hopes of good success, were superstitiously timorous, with the great terror with which they were stricken.

Whereupon God upbraided them with the fear they were in, and asked them, whether they desired a greater help than he could afford them; and promised them that they should overcome their enemies; and withal charged them to make their enemies' horses useless, and to burn their chariots" (Josephus, Book V, 1, 18, pg. 107).

- c. The vast army of the coalition forces met at Merom, a lake that is situated a few miles north of the sea of Galilee. "The size of the lake varies with the season, and the northern side of it ends in a large swamp. The shape of the lake is triangular, the point being at the south, where the Jordan, which enters it on the north, again quits it. There is a considerable space of table-land along the south-western shore, and here probably the troops of Jabin and his confederates were encamped, preparing to move southwards when Joshua and his army fell suddenly upon them" (Baker Commentary, p.379).

#### B. Joshua 11:6-9: Israel Defeats Jabin.

1. Verse 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 hock their horses, and burn their chariots with fire."
  - a. God gave Joshua some encouraging words, promising that by the same time on the next day, the enemy forces would be delivered into his hands. There was no reason for Joshua and Israel to be fearful. They had God's word that all would be well in the impending battle. Israel was to do the fighting, but God would superintend their efforts, insuring their success.
  - b. Israel was given similar words of encouragement on other occasions. "Fear thou not; for I *am* with thee: be not dismayed; for I *am* thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isa. 41:10). With God's vow of assistance, neither Israel nor Christians should succumb to terror.
  - c. Following the battle, Joshua is to have the horses hocked and the chariots burned. Hocking the horses was a procedure of cutting the tendons of the hind legs, just above the hoof. This would render the horse incapable of use in warfare, and some scholars think it was also fatal. Evidently, the tendons were severed by using a sword, which likely would not only cut the tendon, but also an artery; in such case, the animal would bleed to death. However, other scholars think that the procedure only cut the tendon, and that the animal could still be used for domestic purposes.
  - d. "The critics invariably deplore what they call the 'brutal mutilation of the captured horses!' These horses were the military equivalent of tanks in modern warfare, and the purpose of the many thousands of horses at this place was to use them in the *destruction* of God's people. Now, what could possibly have been wrong, inappropriate, or distasteful about killing all those horses?" (Coffman, p.127).
2. Verses 7-8: "So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly; and they fell upon them. 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. And Joshua did unto them as the LORD bade him: he hocked their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire."
  - a. Joshua's order of battle was to suddenly attack Jabin's great army. His assault was so sudden and strong that the enemy was quickly routed. They fled from the battlefield, with the Israelite soldiers giving chase. Deprived of their fast means of movement, the Canaanites fled on foot, and were unable to escape the well-conditioned Israelite men of war.
  - b. They pursued the Canaanites all the way to "great Zidon" [Sidon]. The distance from the battlefield to Sidon was about thirty miles, a great distance, but Israel was urged on by the divine directive to destroy the pagans. Misrephothmaim was on the Mediterranean coast, not

far from Tyre. Mizpeh was located toward the east from the site of the battle.

- c. The defeat was total. All of the enemy soldiers who fell into Israelite hands were slain. They also followed God's instruction regarding the horses and chariots.

C. Joshua 11:10-14: Hazor is Burned.

1. Verses 10-11: "And Joshua at that time turned back, and took Hazor, and smote the king thereof with the sword: for Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms. And they smote all the souls that *were* therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying *them*: there was not any left to breathe: and he burnt Hazor with fire."
  - a. After pursuing and slaying the fleeing Canaanite soldiers, Joshua returned with his army to Hazor, where they captured and slew the king. They slaughtered the entire population. Obviously, Jabin had returned to the city, no doubt with some of his soldiers, when Joshua's attack scattered his forces. The civilian population still occupied Hazor. The city was burned.
  - b. To many today who live in a safe and secure environment, with little to fear, God's orders regarding the eradication of the pagan population of Palestine might seem cruel and unnecessary. His decision was not only for the benefit of Israel, but for other nations and individuals who would have been contaminated by the idolatrous, wicked practices of these ungodly people. God's operations take into consideration the effect to be felt by people in the present, and also on those who may not live for many years. When a man commits an act of sin, which is a violation of God's law (1 John 3:4), he forfeits his right to live. When Adam and Eve transgressed God's command in Eden (Gen. 2:15-16), they began to die physically from that moment, and were separated from God instantly. The innocent ones who were included in the slaughter would have become guilty of the same spiritual crimes characteristic of their parents; it is better to die violently while in the state of innocence than to leave the earth peacefully while in the state of guilt.
2. Verses 12-14: "And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did Joshua take, and smote them with the edge of the sword, *and* he utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the LORD commanded. But *as for* the cities that stood still in their strength, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only; *that* did Joshua burn. And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe."
  - a. The rest of the kings of the coalition were also destroyed by the Israelites, along with their people in the cities, but these other cities Joshua did not destroy. These Canaanites paid a high price for their opposition to Israel. The reason why some Canaanite cities were not destroyed is indicated in Deuteronomy 6:10: "And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not."
  - b. Hazor, which had been burned, had formerly been the leader of these other cities (vs. 10); being the main source of this coalition brought utter destruction upon Hazor. Israel was presently doing exactly as they had been told to do: "Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places" (Num. 33:52).
  - c. Verse thirteen might seem to say that Joshua did not destroy these other cities because they were too strong, but Hazor, the greatest of the cities in this area, was much stronger; such is shown by archaeological investigation. Perhaps a better rendering of the verse is given other translations:
    - 1) Joshua 11:13: "But *as for* the cities that stood on their mounds, Israel burned none of them, except Hazor only, *which* Joshua burned" (NKJ).

- 2) Joshua 11:13: "But as for the cities that stood on their mounds, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only; that did Joshua burn" (ASV).
  - 3) "The meaning is simply that, with the exception of Hazor, Joshua did not burn the cities, but left them standing, each on its former site. This site is spoken of as a hill, because such was the ordinary site chosen for cities in Canaan (cp. Matt. 5:14)" (Baker Commentary, p.380).
  - 4) The Hebrew term "neither contains an allusion to any special fortification of the town, nor implies a contrast to the towns build in the valleys and plains, but simply expresses the thought that these towns were still standing upon their hill, *i.e.* upon the old site (cf. Jer. 30:18: the participle does not express the preterite, but the present). At the same time, the expression certainly implies that the towns were generally built upon hills" (Keil, p.122).
- d. As with Ai and Bethel, God allowed the Israelites to take spoils from these cities, which included cattle and other property. Israel was greatly enriched by the spoils they were permitted to take. The land was to be divided up among the people once the fighting had ceased, but in the meantime, they were able to obtain food and supplies, as well as property, as they conquered the cities.

D. Joshua 11:15-20: Joshua is Faithful to his Commission.

1. Verse 15: "As the LORD commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses."
  - a. The faithfulness of Joshua is shown by the statement of this verse. He did all the Lord commanded through Moses. To this point, he had entirely discharged his obligations. One whose heart wants to be obedient to God will not shun or reject any part of God's requirements.
    - 1) "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10).
    - 2) "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:19).
    - 3) "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all" (Jas. 2:10).
  - b. The report of the conquest of Canaan is not intended as a comprehensive presentation of the whole operation; rather, it was written to give a general and brief account of those activities, the purpose of which was to instruct and encourage future generations. The Old Testament has special meaning to Christians, although it is not the law under which we serve God.
    - 1) Romans 15:4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."
    - 2) Colossians 2:14-16: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*."
2. Verses 16-17: "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. *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."
  - a. "After detailing the major battles by which the Canaanites were routed and subdued, both in the Southern area (prior to chapter 11), and the Northern area (11:1-15), Joshua gives, in the verses before us, a summary of all the territory conquered. The broad expanse of land described

stretched from the area south of the Dead Sea (Mount Halak) at its southern extremity to the area of Mount Hermon northward. It is specifically stated that Joshua put to death all of the kings of the cities of this vast territory” (McClish, FF, p.212).

- b. The book of Judges shows that there were still some powerful tribes inhabiting Canaan during that era. We know, thereby, that not all of the Canaanites were exterminated and not all of their cities and territories were taken over by Israel. Some of these people made life miserable for future generations of Israelites; this was especially true of the Philistines.
3. Verses 18-20: “Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. 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. For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, 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.”
  - a. The duration of this war of conquest is here stated to be long. Moses had cautioned Israel against thinking the Canaanites could be quickly removed from the land: "I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land" (Exod. 23:29-30).
  - b. The accounts of the conquest has been highly condensed, giving notice only of certain leading events. The information in this section of Joshua shows that the war was over after only the three campaigns thus far concluded. Ai, Bethel, and Jericho had been conquered; the alliance Adonizedec had put together had been crushed; now the coalition of city-states organized by Jabin had been destroyed. At this point, organized resistance on the part of the Canaanites had ceased.
  - c. The Canaanites had fiercely opposed Israel’s invasion. This defiance is attributed in verse twenty to the Lord hardening their hearts. To understand God’s word, one needs to take into consideration all that God has said on a given subject, for “the sum of thy word is truth” (Ps. 119:160, ASV). Since the Bible elsewhere declares that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34,35), and that he does not coerce any man’s obedience (Jer. 6:16) or disobedience (Jas. 1:13-15), it follows that God did not directly harden the hearts of the Canaanites.
    - 1) We are also told that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart against allowing Israel to leave Egypt peacefully (Ex. 4:21; 7:3; 14:4,17). He hardened Pharaoh by making demands on the king which he was unwilling to accept; and when he saw the plagues God sent upon the land, Pharaoh’s anger against God and Israel was raised.
    - 2) The Hivites of Gibeon and Rahab of Jericho were moved by the supernatural powers God had wrought in Israel’s behalf to see the futility of opposing his will. God had given the people of Canaan sufficient time to turn away from their idolatry (Gen. 15:16; Rom. 2:4); had they done so, it would not have been necessary for God to destroy them. But since they were determined to continue in their open rebellion against God, in retaining their wicked practice, which they could know was a way of folly, they hardened their own heart.

#### E. Joshua 11:21-23: Joshua Cuts off the Anakims.

1. Verses 21-22: “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. 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.”
  - a. One of the main reasons the ten weak spies had told Israel they could not conquer Canaan was the presence of the giant Anakims in the land. “And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have

gone to search it, *is* a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it *are* men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, *which come* of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight" (Num. 13:32-33).

- b. Because of the weakness of their faith, they could not foresee how these giants could be overcome; they ignored the fact that God was on their side. There were several miraculous demonstrations that accompanied their escape from Egypt, including the crossing of the Red Sea. God had provided them with water and food by supernatural fiat in the wilderness; they had beheld the spectacular signs that were manifested while they were at Sinai. But they did not have the faith to trust God to continue his assistance. Now the giants were defeated. Only a few of them remained in the land of the Philistines. There were a goodly number of these Anakims at Hebron and other places in the mountains of Judah.
2. Verse 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."
    - a. This summarizes the entire conquest. God had fulfilled his promises to Abraham, which were renewed to Isaac and Jacob. The promises had begun to be fulfilled when he dispatched Moses to Egypt, and led the people through the wilderness to the borders of Canaan. Joshua had led them across the Jordan, in taking Jericho, and now they had concluded several years of fighting to gain control of the land of promise. God had not forsaken them, even though many of the nation had rebelled against him.
    - b. We are also here told that the land was given to Israel, to be divided among the various tribes and families of the nation. It was a highly productive land, capable of producing bountiful harvests: "The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence....And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this *is* the fruit of it" (Num. 12:24,27).
    - c. Joshua points out here that the land had rest from war. "The great battles had now been won and God's people could now concentrate on peacefully settling the land. Not until their battles were over could they peacefully rest. Only those who are deranged welcome war, strife, and violence. The servant of God will 'seek peace, and pursue it' (1 Pet. 3:11). However, we will never find complete peace upon this earth, even when we do our best to maintain it (Rom. 12:18)" (McClish, FF, p.215).
    - d. Now that the major battles were over, individual tribes were expected to begin eradicating all the remaining Canaanites in their territory. After years of fighting, many of the people grew tired of war, and were willing to have peace at any price; later, some of them conceived the idea that they could be done with fighting and make a profit at the same time, if they offered peace to the pagans if the pagans would pay tribute. "Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute; but did not utterly drive them out" (Josh. 17:13). This proved to be a long-lasting problem, for future generations of Israelites would have to suffer many bitter consequences.
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## The City Of Hazor And Old Testament Accuracy

by Wayne Jackson

The city of Hazor lay almost nine miles north of the Sea of Galilee. During the time of Joshua, it was a Canaanite stronghold in northern Palestine. During the conquest of Canaan, as Joshua marched his army northward, he was confronted by a coalition of forces under the leadership of Jabin, king of Hazor. The biblical record declares that the Israelite army resoundingly defeated this confederation and burned Hazor to the ground (Josh. 11:1-14).

In excavations at Hazor in 1955-1958, and in 1968, Yigael Yadin discovered evidence that this city had been destroyed in the 13th century B.C. He identified the ruins with Joshua's conquest. The problem with this assertion, however, is that it does not harmonize with Bible chronology regarding the time of Israel's exodus from Egypt. The data contained in 1 Kings 6:1 indicate that the exodus occurred some 480 years prior to the fourth year of Solomon's reign (c. 966 B.C.), thus in the mid-15th B.C.

Liberal critics, subscribing to the documentary hypothesis, simply dismiss 1 Kings 6:1 as an addition of some later time, and therefore assume it is chronologically worthless. It is interesting to note, though, that "the name of the month which appears in that text is the archaic form of the name and not the late one" (Davis, 1971, p. 29).

But the fact of the matter is, Professor Yadin's discoveries actually revealed that there were two destructions of Hazor" one in the 13th century B.C., and another in the 15th century B.C. (Avi-Yonah, pp. 481-82). This is precisely the picture presented in the Old Testament.

In addition to the conquest of Hazor during the time of Joshua in the mid-15th century B.C., two hundred years later, in the period of Israel's judges, the Hebrews again engaged the king of Hazor in battle. In the days of Deborah and Barak (c. 1258 B.C.), the armies of Hazor, under Sisera, were decisively defeated by the Israelites (Judg. 4:2ff), and, as Professor Siegfried H. Horn has observed, "undoubtedly Hazor was destroyed" (1963, p. 31).

Once more, the sublime accuracy of the biblical record has been vindicated, and the charges of liberal critics have been shown to be baseless.

Thank God for the fidelity of His Word.

### Notes

Avi-Yonah, Michael, ed. (1976), *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall), Vol. II.

Davis, John J. (1975), *Moses and the Gods of Egypt* (Grand Rapids: Baker).

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## JOSHUA 12

### A. Joshua 12:1-8: The Territory Conquered by Israel.

1. Verse 1: "Now these *are* the kings of the land, which the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land on the other side Jordan toward the rising of the sun, from the river Arnon unto mount Hermon, and all the plain on the east."
    - a. The kings described are those who were located on the east side of Jordan. The Old Testament frequently identifies the territory east of Jordan as *the other side Jordan*, as it does here. *This side Jordan* refers to the territory on Jordan's west side, where the bulk of Israel resided.
    - b. The eastern territory extended from the Arnon River to Mount Hermon, and included the plain east of Jordan.
  2. Verses 2-3: "Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, *and* ruled from Aroer, which *is* upon the bank of the river Arnon, and from the middle of the river, and from half Gilead, even unto the river Jabbok, *which is* the border of the children of Ammon; And from the plain to the sea of Chinneroth on the east, and unto the sea of the plain, *even* the salt sea on the east, the way to Bethjeshimoth; and from the south, under Ashdothpispah."
    - a. Sihon had been defeated by Israel prior to their crossing of Jordan. "And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon: for the border of the children of Ammon *was* strong" (Num. 21:24).
    - b. The Sea of Chinneroth is also known as the Sea of Tiberias, Sea of Gennesareth, and Sea of Galilee. The Salt Sea is the Dead Sea, into which the Jordan River empties.
  3. Verses 4-6: "And the coast of Og king of Bashan, *which was* of the remnant of the giants, that dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei, And reigned in mount Hermon, and in Salcah, and in all Bashan, unto the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and half Gilead, the border of Sihon king of Heshbon. Them did Moses the servant of the LORD and the children of Israel smite: and Moses the servant of the LORD gave it *for* a possession unto the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh."
    - a. Numbers 21:33-35: "And they turned and went up by the way of Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan went out against them, he, and all his people, to the battle at Edrei. And the LORD said unto Moses, Fear him not: for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land; and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon. So they smote him, and his sons, and all his people, until there was none left him alive: and they possessed his land."
    - b. Deuteronomy 3:11: "For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead *was* a bedstead of iron; *is* it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits *was* the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man." King Og had two palaces, one at Ashtaroth and another at Endrei. Matthew Henry observed that the man who was not content with one palace, Israel buried in a single grave.
    - c. The territory occupied by the two kings (Sihon and Og) was given to the tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh. The condition on which Moses promised them this land was that they not settle it until after the western part of Canaan was conquered, and that they would help in the conquest.
  4. Verses 7-8: "And these *are* the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan on the west, from Baalgad in the valley of Lebanon even unto the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir; which Joshua gave unto the tribes of Israel *for* a possession according to their
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divisions; In the mountains, and in the valleys, and in the plains, and in the springs, and in the wilderness, and in the south country; the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites."

- a. The territory described is that on the west side of Jordan, and extended for about 180 miles, north to south. Mount Halak is located about 40 miles to the southwest of the Dead Sea; the valley of Lebanon was in the north (Gus Eoff, FF, p.235).
- b. The pagan people included were the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and the Jebusites. These were idolatrous, cruel, and war-like people.

B. Joshua 12:9-23: The Kings Who Were Conquered.

1. Verses 9-12: "The king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which *is* beside Bethel, one; The king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; The king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; The king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one."
  2. Verses 13-16: "The king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; The king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; The king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; The king of Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one."
  3. Verses 17-20: "The king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hepher, one; The king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one; The king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one; The king of Shimron-meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one."
  4. Verses 21-24: "The king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; The king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam of Carmel, one; The king of Dor in the coast of Dor, one; the king of the nations of Gilgal, one; The king of Tirzah, one: all the kings thirty and one."
  5. Thirty-one kingdoms were subdued.
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## JOSHUA 13

### A. Joshua 13:1-7: The Cities Not Yet Taken.

1. Verse 1: "Now Joshua was old *and* stricken in years; and the LORD said unto him, Thou art old *and* stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed."
    - a. Joshua was now nearing the end of his earthly sojourn; before long, his spirit must take its flight into eternity. He had filled his life with useful service to God. Few people who approach their last earthly days can have this said about them. But Joshua had been a slave in Egypt during his young days; he departed from Egypt in Israel's great exodus; he passed through the Red Sea; he was one of the twelve scouts who searched out the land of promise; he had fought in many battles; he served as Israel's leader and general.
    - b. God had a purpose in reminding him that he was old and stricken in years. There was a great deal of territory which had not yet been conquered by Israel. Since Joshua was now old, he did not have much time in which to finish the conquest. The Lord sought to prompt him to complete the job.
  2. Verses 2-3: "This *is* the land that yet remaineth: all the borders of the Philistines, and all Geshuri, From Sihor, which *is* before Egypt, even unto the borders of Ekron northward, *which* is counted to the Canaanite: five lords of the Philistines; the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites."
    - a. The territory yet to be brought into Israel's possession included the area controlled by the Philistines. If they had destroyed this evil nation, a tremendous amount of trouble and pain would have been prevented. Strong cities of these war-loving Philistines are identified.
    - b. Geshuri possibly refers to some area in the southern part of Canaan (Clarke). Sihor was a stream south of Palestine, near Egypt; this is probably the body of water called *the river of Egypt* in several references (Num. 34:5; Jer. 2:18).
      - 1) 1 Kings 4:21: "And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life."
      - 2) 2 Samuel 8:3: "David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates."
    - c. The Philistine cities referred to become more familiar as one progresses through the Old Testament. The five referred to here are Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath (the Gittites), and Ekron.
  3. Verses 4-5: "From the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that *is* beside the Sidonians unto Aphek, to the borders of the Amorites: And the land of the Giblites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrising, from Baalgad under mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath."
    - a. The unconquered territory was still large, even though a considerable amount of Palestine was under Israelite control. God had aided Israel in subduing the land, but apparently they grew weary of the fighting, and were slack in completing the conquest.
    - b. The unconquered land included territory to the south and in northern Palestine. There remained a considerable job ahead of Israel if they wanted to fully subdue the pagans. Organized resistance had been overcome, but there were many cities which held sizeable populations, which in time to come, would grow to create major problems for Israel.
  4. Verse 6: "All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon unto Misrephothmaim, *and* all the Sidonians, them will I drive out from before the children of Israel: only divide thou it by lot unto
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the Israelites for an inheritance, as I have commanded thee."

- a. God promises that he would drive out all these people, giving Israel full access to all the parts of the promised land. But this is not an unconditional promise. Israel must do her part.
  - b. "God never absolutely, or unconditionally, promised to put Israel in possession of the whole land of Canaan. The promise of their possessing it was suspended upon their fidelity to God. They were *not* faithful, but rebelled against God repeatedly; and that is why Israel actually failed to possess great portions of the promised land. Furthermore, they did not drive out the Canaanites, even where they did possess it; and eventually Israel was seduced and corrupted by the pagan worship..." (Coffman, p.151).
  - c. The control over the promised land reached its zenith under David and Solomon.
    - 1) 2 Samuel 8:3: "David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates."
    - 2) 1 Kings 4:21: "And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life."
  - d. No partiality was to be involved in meting out the land. The land was to be divided by "lot." This would remove the possibility of favoritism and fraud.
5. Verse 7: "Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half tribe of Manasseh."
- a. The land was to be parceled out among the tribes. Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh had already received their portions, which were on the east side of Jordan.
  - b. The rest of the tribes were to receive their inheritance on the west side of Jordan. Even though the pagans still occupied part of the land, tribal boundaries were to be established.

**B. Joshua 13:8-14: The Land Conquered on the East Side of Jordan.**

1. Verses 8-9: "With whom the Reubenites and the Gadites have received their inheritance, which Moses gave them, beyond Jordan eastward, *even* as Moses the servant of the LORD gave them; From Aroer, that is upon the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that *is* in the midst of the river, and all the plain of Medeba unto Dibon"
    - a. Reuben and Gad were given the land on the east side of Jordan, from Aroer (on the banks of Arnon) to Dibon, including the plain of Medeba.
    - b. Deuteronomy 3:12: "And this land, which we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, and half mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites and to the Gadites. And the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, being the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half tribe of Manasseh; all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants."
  2. Verses 10-12: "And all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon, unto the border of the children of Ammon; And Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites and Maachathites, and all mount Hermon, and all Bashan unto Salcah. All the kingdom of Og in Bashan, which reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei, who remained of the remnant of the giants: for these did Moses smite, and cast them out."
    - a. The territory of these eastern tribes also included the cities that had belonged to Sihon; it extended to the boundary of the Ammonites, and to Gilead, and northward to Mount Hermon.
    - b. The Ammonites's territory lay to the east of the land which Reuben and Gad occupied. Bashan describes the area which King Og of the Amorites ruled. The tribe of Manasseh inherited the
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land of Bashan.

- c. There were giants inhabiting the land when Israel first arrived. King Og was one of them. He had an iron bedstead which measured nine cubits in length and four cubits in width (13.5 by 6 feet). "For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man" (Deut. 3:11).
  - d. The giants had been killed or driven away from the eastern lands; the last of the giants lived only in Gath and Ashdod. Goliath was from Gath. "And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span" (1 Sam. 17:4).
3. Verses 13-14: "Nevertheless the children of Israel expelled not the Geshurites, nor the Maachathites: but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day. Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave none inheritance; the sacrifices of the LORD God of Israel made by fire *are* their inheritance, as he said unto them."
- a. The Israelites failed to cast out the Geshurites and the Maachathites, who remained in the land at the time Joshua was written. "But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. Moreover it shall come to pass, that I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them" (Num. 33:55-56).
  - b. The tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe, was given no inheritance. They were to be supported by the other tribes, receiving a prescribed portion of each burnt sacrifice. "And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I *am* thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, *even* the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die. But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance. But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer *as* an heave offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance" (Num. 18:20-24).

C. Joshua 13:15-23: The Land Given to Reuben.

1. Verses 15-16: "And Moses gave unto the tribe of the children of Reuben *inheritance* according to their families. And their coast was from Aroer, that *is* on the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that *is* in the midst of the river, and all the plain by Medeba."
    - a. Specifying the division, the author reports that Reuben's assigned land was from Aroer (which was on the banks of the River Arnon) northward to include the plain by Medeba.
    - b. Medeba was located about twelve miles directly east of the north end of the Dead Sea; it was about five miles southeast of Mount Nebo.
  2. Verses 17-21: "Heshbon, and all her cities that *are* in the plain; Dibon, and Bamothbaal, and Bethbaal- meon, And Jahaza, and Kedemoth, and Mephaath, And Kirjathaim, and Sibmah, and Zarethshahar in the mount of the valley, And Bethpeor, and Ashdothpisgah, and Bethjeshimoth, And all the cities of the plain, and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses smote with the princes of Midian, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, *which were* dukes of Sihon, dwelling in the country."
    - a. The cities which Reuben received were: Dibon, Bamothbaal, Bethbaalmeon, Jahazah,
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Kedemoth, Mephaath, Kirjathaim, Sibmah, Zarethshahar, Bethpeor, Ashdothpishgah, Bethjeshimoth, and all the cities of the plain.

b. The land included the kingdom of Sihon. See Numbers 21:21-35.

3. Verse 22: "Balaam also the son of Beor, the soothsayer, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them."

a. In the process of defeating the kingdom of Sihon and the Midianites, the Israelites also slew Balaam. The story of this man's work in the employ of Balak, king of Moab, is related in Numbers 22-25.

b. Numbers 31:8 reports the death of this enemy: "And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword."

4. Verse 23: "And the border of the children of Reuben was Jordan, and the border *thereof*. This was the inheritance of the children of Reuben after their families, the cities and the villages thereof."

a. The western border of Reuben's inheritance was Jordan.

b. Lying to their east was the land of Ammon, and beyond that, the desert.

#### D. Joshua 13:24-28: The Land Given to Gad.

1. Verses 24-26: "And Moses gave *inheritance* unto the tribe of Gad, *even* unto the children of Gad according to their families. And their coast was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the children of Ammon, unto Aroer that *is* before Rabbah; And from Heshbon unto Ramathmizpeh, and Betonim; and from Mahanaim unto the border of Debir."

a. The territory included Jazer to the south, and to the Yarmuk River to the north. It lay east of Jordan, between the northern end of the Dead Sea to the southern end of the Sea of Galilee.

b. It included the land known as Gilead.

2. Verses 27-28: "And in the valley, Betharam, and Bethnimrah, and Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, Jordan and *his* border, *even* unto the edge of the sea of Chinnereth on the other side Jordan eastward. This *is* the inheritance of the children of Gad after their families, the cities, and their villages."

a. The land Gad inherited included the cities of Betharam, Bethnimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon.

b. It also took in part of the kingdom of Sihon.

#### E. Joshua 13:29-33: The Land Given to the Half-Tribe of Manasseh.

1. Verses 29-31: "And Moses gave *inheritance* unto the half tribe of Manasseh: and *this* was the possession of the half tribe of the children of Manasseh by their families. And their coast was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair, which *are* in Bashan, threescore cities: And half Gilead, and Ashtaroth, and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, were pertaining unto the children of Machir the son of Manasseh, *even* to the one half of the children of Machir by their families."

a. Half of the tribe of Manasseh was given land on the east side of Jordan; the other half of the people of Mannaseh were given land on the west of Jordan.

b. The half-tribe of Manasseh on the east of Jordan occupied a land that had 60 cities, including Gilead, Ashtaroth, and Edrei.

c. Manasseh and Ephraim were descendants of Joseph, through his two sons who wore these names. Genesis 41:46-52; 48:5-22.

2. Verses 32-33: "These *are the countries* which Moses did distribute for inheritance in the plains of Moab, on the other side Jordan, by Jericho, eastward. But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not *any* inheritance: the LORD God of Israel *was* their inheritance, as he said unto them."

- a. The chapter included a description of the territories assigned to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh. It was an area suitable for flocks and herds, which quickly caught the eye of the men of these tribes.
  - b. Again, it is stated that Levi received no portion of this land, in keeping with God's plan for them to be the priestly tribe. Only the Levites were to serve as priests. Since they were to be occupied full-time with the Lord's work at the tabernacle, the other tribes were to give a portion of their goods for the support of the Levites.
  - c. The truth that the priests had the right to partake of the sacrifices they offered, is used by Paul to show that gospel preachers have a right to be provided with a living wage as they serve the church. "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:13-14).
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## JOSHUA 14

### A. Joshua 14:1-5: The Division of the Land Explained.

1. Verses 1-2: "And these *are the countries* which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for inheritance to them. By lot *was* their inheritance, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes, and *for* the half tribe."
  - a. Turning now to a report of how the land was distributed among the remaining tribes, the author shows that the lot was used in keeping with the instructions given earlier through Moses.
    - 1) Numbers 26:55: "Notwithstanding the land shall be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit."
    - 2) Numbers 33:54: "And ye shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance among your families: *and* to the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer ye shall give the less inheritance: every man's *inheritance* shall be in the place where his lot falleth; according to the tribes of your fathers ye shall inherit."
  - b. Eleazar the priest, Joshua, and the heads of the tribes were in charge of the division, using the lot to determine the owner of the various parcels.
2. Verses 3-5: "For Moses had given the inheritance of two tribes and an half tribe on the other side Jordan: but unto the Levites he gave none inheritance among them. For the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim: therefore they gave no part unto the Levites in the land, save cities to dwell in, with their suburbs for their cattle and for their substance. As the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did, and they divided the land."
  - a. Reference is again made of the land Moses gave to the two and one-half tribes who settled on the east side of Jordan. The author shows that Joseph received two portions of the land, through the descendants of his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.
  - b. The Levites received no major territory of their own, however they were given certain cities in which to live, and also certain parcels of land were given them for their cattle.

### B. Joshua 14:6-15: Caleb's Request.

1. Verse 6-7: "Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadeshbarnea. Forty years old *was* I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadeshbarnea to spy out the land; and I brought him word again *as it was* in mine heart."
  - a. Prior to the division of the land, the leading men of Judah, including Caleb, came before Joshua with a request. The land could not rightfully be meted out until Caleb received the inheritance promised to him for his faithfulness in spying out the land from Kadesh-Barnea (Numbers 13-14).
  - b. He had been promised a portion in the land.
    - 1) Numbers 14:21-24: "But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD. Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it."

- 2) Deuteronomy 1:35-36: "Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I swear to give unto your fathers, Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD."
  - c. Caleb was not a full-blooded Israelite. Although he was a member of the tribe of Judah, his genealogical lines go back to Kenaz (1 Chron. 4:13,15); both Caleb and his father were *Kenezites* (Num. 32:12). Kenaz may have been an Edomite.
  - d. Caleb affirms here that the report he brought back from the reconnaissance, was "in mine heart." "And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Num. 13:30). He sincerely believed this recommendation.
  - e. He was forty years of age when he was sent into Canaan on the reconnaissance mission; he states in verse ten that he was now eighty-five years of age, showing that Israel had been in the land for about five years, following the forty years in the wilderness. More precisely, Israel had been gone from Egypt about two years when the spies were sent out; thus, Israel had been in Canaan about seven years at this point. "And the space in which we came from Kadeshbarnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, *was* thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the LORD swear unto them" (Deut. 2:14).
2. Verses 8-9: "Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God. And Moses swear on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God."
    - a. Caleb reminds Joshua in the present setting that the ten fearful spies were able to melt the hearts of Israel with their discouraging report, causing them to rebel against God's will for them to enter the land at once.
    - b. After accepting the faithless report of the ten fearful spies, Israel wanted to elect a new captain and have him lead them back into Egypt (Num. 14:1-5). They wanted to stone Caleb and Joshua for making their confident report. When God saw their rebellion, he vowed that they would all die in the wilderness, except Joshua and Caleb. Israel repented, and told Moses they were now ready to go into the land to take it, but the time had passed; to go in now would be to rebel against God's will. They tried anyway, and were dealt a heavy defeat by the Amalekites and Canaanites (Numbers 14:40-45).
    - c. No greater compliment can be paid to a man than to say that he "wholly followed the will of God." Caleb modestly states here that he had wholly followed the Lord; Moses made the same statement about him.
  3. Verses 10-12: "And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while *the children of* Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I *am* this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I *am as* strong this day as *I was* in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength *was* then, even so *is* my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims *were* there, and *that* the cities *were* great *and* fenced: if so be the LORD *will be* with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said."
    - a. Simply stating the facts, and at the same time giving an added reason why his request should be granted, Caleb affirms that he is now eighty-five years old, but his natural strength had not abated with the passing of many years. He was just as strong at present as he had been forty-five years earlier when he had spied out the land.
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- b. The promise had been given to him that he would receive an inheritance in the land; that was sufficient reason for his request to be granted. Here he assures Joshua that he is still man enough to capture and control the part he wanted. "And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, *even* the city of Arba the father of Anak, which *city is* Hebron. And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak. And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before *was* Kirjathsepher. And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjathsepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife" (Josh. 15:13-17).
  - c. The report in Numbers did specify the location of the inheritance God promised to Caleb. It is referred to here as "this mountain," and in verse fourteen it is specifically identified as Hebron. This city was situated about 19 miles south-southwest of Jerusalem, and at 3040 feet above mean sea level, had the highest elevation of any city in Palestine. (See Coffman, p.106). The cave of Machpelah, where Abraham and others were buried, was at Hebron.
  - d. Critics point out that Hebron had already been conquered (Josh. 10), and that the text is wrong when it indicates here and in Joshua 15:13-17 that it had not yet been taken. However, when Israel captured Hebron in chapter ten, they did not stay there to occupy and control the city. Many of the giants living there had been slain, and the rest went to live in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod (11:22). When Israel went on to other operations, it would have been quite natural for the Anakims to return and reoccupy Hebron.
4. Verses 13-15: "And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance. Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel. And the name of Hebron before *was* Kirjatharba; *which Arba was* a great man among the Anakims. And the land had rest from war."
- a. Joshua quickly agreed to fulfill the request Caleb made. Clearly he had access to information not included in the sacred accounts Moses had recorded. By granting the request, Joshua praised Caleb and verified the pledge Moses had given to Caleb. At the time of the writing, Hebron remained in the possession of Caleb.
  - b. Giving a brief history of the city, the author reports that Hebron had been called Kirjatharba earlier, being named after Arba, a great man among the Anakims. *Kirjatharbaa* means "city of Arba."
  - c. The word *Arba* carries the meaning of "four," leading some scholars to think that the reference is to four great men who lived at Hebron in the past. This view is unlikely.
  - d. After Caleb recaptured Hebron, the fighting ceased.
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## JOSHUA 15

### A. Joshua 15:1-12: The Territory Given to Judah.

1. Verses 1-4: "*This* then was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah by their families; *even* to the border of Edom the wilderness of Zin southward *was* the uttermost part of the south coast. And their south border was from the shore of the salt sea, from the bay that looketh southward: And it went out to the south side to Maalehacrabbin, and passed along to Zin, and ascended up on the south side unto Kadeshbarnea, and passed along to Hezron, and went up to Adar, and fetched a compass to Karkaa: *From thence* it passed toward Azmon, and went out unto the river of Egypt; and the goings out of that coast were at the sea: this shall be your south coast."
  - a. Edom was located south of the Dead Sea. Judah's land extended from the western edge of the Dead Sea and was bordered on the west by the Mediterranean Sea. Simeon's territory was carved off the southern end of Judah (Josh. 19:1-9).
  - b. Maalehacrabbin means *Mount of Scorpions*; it was probably well-named. Before Simeon's area was set apart, Judah included the Wilderness of Zin, and extended on to the river of Egypt.
2. Verses 5-7: "And the east border *was* the salt sea, *even* unto the end of Jordan. And *their* border in the north quarter *was* from the bay of the sea at the uttermost part of Jordan: And the border went up to Bethhogla, and passed along by the north of Betharabah; and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben: And the border went up toward Debir from the valley of Achor, and so northward, looking toward Gilgal, that *is* before the going up to Adummim, which *is* on the south side of the river: and the border passed toward the waters of Enshemesh, and the goings out thereof were at Enrogel."
3. Verses 8-12: "And the border went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom unto the south side of the Jebusite; the same *is* Jerusalem: and the border went up to the top of the mountain that *lieth* before the valley of Hinnom westward, which *is* at the end of the valley of the giants northward: And the border was drawn from the top of the hill unto the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, and went out to the cities of mount Ephron; and the border was drawn to Baalah, which *is* Kirjathjearim: And the border compassed from Baalah westward unto mount Seir, and passed along unto the side of mount Jearim, which *is* Chesalon, on the north side, and went down to Bethshemesh, and passed on to Timnah: And the border went out unto the side of Ekron northward: and the border was drawn to Shicron, and passed along to mount Baalah, and went out unto Jabneel; and the goings out of the border were at the sea. And the west border *was* to the great sea, and the coast *thereof*. This *is* the coast of the children of Judah round about according to their families."

### B. Joshua 15:13-19: Caleb Takes Possession of His Territory.

1. Verses 13-15: "And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, *even* the city of Arba the father of Anak, which *city is* Hebron. And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak. And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before *was* Kirjathsepher."
    - a. Caleb had requested to receive the mountain where Hebron was situated. In keeping with the promise made to him when he returned from the reconnaissance mission with the other eleven spies, Joshua gave him the portion he desired. It only remained for him to recapture the city.
    - b. Anak, one of the giants, had three sons who presently held Hebron. Caleb, with whatever forces he needed for the job, was able to drive the giants from the place. He went up to take Debir, which was earlier known as Kirjathsepher.
  2. Verses 16-19: "And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjathsepher, and taketh it, to him will I give
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Achsah my daughter to wife. And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. And it came to pass, as she came *unto him*, that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted off *her ass*; and Caleb said unto her, What wouldest thou? Who answered, Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs."

- a. He encouraged his men at Debir, promising the hand of his daughter to the one who conquered the city. Othniel, his brother, took Debir, and won the hand of Caleb's daughter.
- b. In a side note, Caleb's daughter came to her father with a request. The land she was to inherit was in the dry southland; she requested that she also be given springs of water. The upper and lower springs were added to her portion.

C. Joshua 15:20-63: Families of Judah.

1. Verses 20-62: "This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families. And the uttermost cities of the tribe of the children of Judah toward the coast of Edom southward were Kabzeel, and Eder, and Jagur, And Kinah, and Dimonah, and Adadah, And Kedesh, and Hazor, and Ithnan, Ziph, and Telem, and Bealoth, And Hazor, Hadattah, and Kerioth, *and* Hezron, which *is* Hazor, Amam, and Shema, and Moladah, And Hazargaddah, and Heshmon, and Bethpalet, And Hazarshual, and Beersheba, and Bizjothjah, Baalah, and Iim, and Azem, And Eltolad, and Chesil, and Hormah, And Ziklag, and Madmannah, and Sansannah, And Lebaoth, and Shilhim, and Ain, and Rimmon: all the cities *are* twenty and nine, with their villages: *And* in the valley, Eshtaol, and Zoreah, and Ashnah, And Zanoah, and Engannim, Tappuah, and Enam, Jarmuth, and Adullam, Socoh, and Azekah, And Sharaim, and Adithaim, and Gederah, and Gederothaim; fourteen cities with their villages: Zenan, and Hadashah, and Migdalgad, And Dilean, and Mizpeh, and Joktheel, Lachish, and Bozkath, and Eglon, And Cabbon, and Lahmam, and Kithlish, And Gederoth, Bethdagon, and Naamah, and Makkedah; sixteen cities with their villages: Libnah, and Ether, and Ashan, And Jiphtah, and Ashnah, and Nezib, And Keilah, and Achzib, and Mareshah; nine cities with their villages: Ekron, with her towns and her villages: From Ekron even unto the sea, all that *lay* near Ashdod, with their villages: Ashdod with her towns and her villages, Gaza with her towns and her villages, unto the river of Egypt, and the great sea, and the border *thereof*: And in the mountains, Shamir, and Jattir, and Socoh, And Dannah, and Kirjathsannah, which *is* Debir, And Anab, and Eshtemoh, and Anim, And Goshen, and Holon, and Giloh; eleven cities with their villages: Arab, and Dumah, and Eshean, And Janum, and Bethtappuah, and Aphekah, And Humtah, and Kirjatharba, which *is* Hebron, and Zior; nine cities with their villages: Maon, Carmel, and Ziph, and Juttah, And Jezreel, and Jokdeam, and Zanoah, Cain, Gibeah, and Timnah; ten cities with their villages: Halhul, Bethzur, and Gedor, And Maarath, and Bethanath, and Eltekon; six cities with their villages: Kirjathbaal, which *is* Kirjathjearim, and Rabbah; two cities with their villages: In the wilderness, Betharabah, Middin, and Secacah, And Nibshan, and the city of Salt, and Engedi; six cities with their villages."
2. Verse 63: "As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day."
  - a. The Jebusites were too firmly entrenched within the walls of Jerusalem to be captured. The soldiers of Judah had no choice but to let them alone, biding their time for an occasion when a successful assault could be mounted.
  - b. At the time of this inspired record, Jerusalem was still occupied by the Jebusites. The city remained in their hands until the time of David.
    - 1) 2 Samuel 5:6-9: "And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither.

Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same *is* the city of David. And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, *that are* hated of David's soul, *he shall be chief and captain*. Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house. So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward."

- 2) 1 Chronicles 11:4-9: "And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, which *is* Jebus; where the Jebusites *were*, the inhabitants of the land. And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, Thou shalt not come hither. Nevertheless David took the castle of Zion, which *is* the city of David. And David said, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain. So Joab the son of Zeruiah went first up, and was chief. And David dwelt in the castle; therefore they called it the city of David. And he built the city round about, even from Millo round about: and Joab repaired the rest of the city. So David waxed greater and greater: for the LORD of hosts *was* with him."
- c. Why could not the men of Judah remove the Jebusites from Jerusalem? Did they wait too long before trying, and allowed the Jebusites to so-fortify the city that it became impossible to capture it? Or were they lacking in faith and courage?
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## JOSHUA 16

### A. Joshua 16:1-4: The Territory Pertaining to the Children of Joseph.

1. Verses 1-3: "And the lot of the children of Joseph fell from Jordan by Jericho, unto the water of Jericho on the east, to the wilderness that goeth up from Jericho throughout mount Bethel. And goeth out from Bethel to Luz, and passeth along unto the borders of Archi to Ataroth, And goeth down westward to the coast of Japhleti, unto the coast of Bethhoron the nether, and to Gezer: and the goings out thereof are at the sea."
2. Verse 4: "So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance."

### B. Joshua 16:5-10: The Territory Given to Ephraim.

1. Verses 5-7: "And the border of the children of Ephraim according to their families was *thus*: even the border of their inheritance on the east side was Atarothaddar, unto Bethhoron the upper; And the border went out toward the sea to Michmethah on the north side; and the border went about eastward unto Taanathshiloh, and passed by it on the east to Janohah."
  2. Verses 7-9: "And it went down from Janohah to Ataroth, and to Naarath, and came to Jericho, and went out at Jordan. The border went out from Tappuah westward unto the river Kanah; and the goings out thereof were at the sea. This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim by their families. And the separate cities for the children of Ephraim *were* among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages."
  3. Verse 10: "And they drave not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer: but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, and serve under tribute."
    - a. In the case of Judah and Jerusalem, that citadel of the Jebusites was too formidable to be conquered at the time. Judah made genuine efforts to take the city, but was unable to do so.
    - b. However, in the case of Gezer, the men of Ephraim made no serious effort to take it. They were indifferent toward the task. By the time Joshua was written, the pagans still dwelled in Gezer, and paid tribute to Ephraim. It appears that they were more interested in taking money from Gezer than they were in obeying the will of God. It is no wonder, then, that their descendants come under this scathing denunciation: "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone" (Hosea 5:17).
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## JOSHUA 17

### A. Joshua 17:1-6: The Territory Given to Manasseh.

1. Verses 1-2: "There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh; for he *was* the firstborn of Joseph; *to wit*, for Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead: because he was a man of war, therefore he had Gilead and Bashan. There was also *a lot* for the rest of the children of Manasseh by their families; for the children of Abiezer, and for the children of Helek, and for the children of Asriel, and for the children of Shechem, and for the children of Hopher, and for the children of Shemida: these *were* the male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph by their families."
2. Verses 3-4: "But Zelophehad, the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters: and these *are* the names of his daughters, Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. And they came near before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes, saying, The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren. Therefore according to the commandment of the LORD he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their father."
  - a. Zelophehad had no sons, only daughters.
  - b. These women requested and obtained an inheritance.
3. Verses 5-6: "And there fell ten portions to Manasseh, beside the land of Gilead and Bashan, which *were* on the other side Jordan; Because the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons: and the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead."

### B. Joshua 17:7-12: The Territory of Manasseh on the West Side of Jordan.

1. Verses 7-11: "And the coast of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethah, that *lieth* before Shechem; and the border went along on the right hand unto the inhabitants of Entappuah. *Now* Manasseh had the land of Tappuah: but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh *belonged* to the children of Ephraim; And the coast descended unto the river Kanah, southward of the river: these cities of Ephraim *are* among the cities of Manasseh: the coast of Manasseh also *was* on the north side of the river, and the outgoings of it were at the sea: Southward *it was* Ephraim's, and northward *it was* Manasseh's, and the sea is his border; and they met together in Asher on the north, and in Issachar on the east. And Manasseh had in Issachar and in Asher Bethshean and her towns, and Ibleam and her towns, and the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Endor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Taanach and her towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns, *even* three countries."
2. Verse 12: "Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out *the inhabitants of* those cities; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land."
  - a. God never gave any man a job to do that was impossible to be done. He never sent a man on an impossible mission. He never required more of a man than that individual was able to produce. In other words, every time God gave a man a job to do, that man had the ability and means to do the work required.
  - b. Numbers 33:55: "But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell."
  - c. When the men of Manasseh decided that they could not drive out the pagans, they contented themselves to condone their presence, despite the commandment of the Lord and the warning he gave (Num. 33:55).

### C. Joshua 17:13-18: Manasseh and Ephraim Have Trouble With the Canaanites.

1. Verses 13-14: "Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute; but did not utterly drive them out. And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me *but* one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I *am* a great people, forasmuch as the LORD hath blessed me hitherto?"
    - a. As Israel increased in strength in the land, instead of evicting the pagans, they began to place them under tribute. Rather than obey God, which would have required a concerted, sacrificial effort, and conquer the pagans, they sought to make money from them.
    - b. The people of Ephraim and Manasseh approached Joshua with a complaint. Asserting their greatness, they demanded to know why they had only received the territory allotted to them. We are not told which tribe (perhaps both) took the lead in this. Joshua was of the tribe of Ephraim (19:49f). His own people tried to use their kinship as a leverage to pry more land from their famous relative.
  2. Verses 15-16: "And Joshua answered them, If thou *be* a great people, *then* get thee up to the wood *country*, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee. And the children of Joseph said, The hill is not enough for us: and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both they who *are* of Bethshean and her towns, and *they* who *are* of the valley of Jezreel."
    - a. Joshua's reply is excellent. If it is true that you are such a great people, then you should have no trouble in taking control of the land which is occupied by the Perizzites. The Perizzites and the giants (Rephaims—margin) should not be able to stand before you.
    - b. Their reply shows the emptiness of their claims. They assert that the enemy [in Bethshean, in the towns nearby, and those who dwell in the valley of Jezreel] has chariots of iron which are too great a weapon for us to overcome. They seem to have forgotten that God enabled Israel to destroy the great host of chariots and horsemen Jabin arrayed against them (Joshua 11).
  3. Verses 17-18: "And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, *even* to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou *art* a great people, and hast great power: thou shalt not have one lot *only*: But the mountain shall be thine; for it *is* a wood, and thou shalt cut it down: and the outgoings of it shall be thine: for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, *and* though they *be* strong."
    - a. Joshua sought to encourage his kinsmen in the fighting they must do. He agreed that they were a mighty people, and that they would be able to cut and use the trees which abounded in their territory.
    - b. He also told them that despite the iron chariots of the enemy, they would be able to subdue them, if they wished to do so. The strength and weapons of the enemy would not stand against them. Implied in this, of course, was the provision that God would fight with them.
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## JOSHUA 18

### A. Joshua 18: 1-9: Israel at Shiloh.

1. Verses 1-2: "And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them. And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance."
  - a. On this occasion, the whole nation assembled at Shiloh and set up the tabernacle there. Shiloh was located about twenty miles north of Jerusalem. The pagans had been sufficiently subdued or cowed that they offered no real threat to the young nation.
  - b. However, at the time, only five of the twelve tribes had had their territory assigned to them. This need would be addressed at this time.
2. Verses 3-6: "And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long *are* ye slack to go to possess the land, which the LORD God of your fathers hath given you? Give out from among you three men for *each* tribe: and I will send them, and they shall rise, and go through the land, and describe it according to the inheritance of them; and they shall come *again* to me. And they shall divide it into seven parts: Judah shall abide in their coast on the south, and the house of Joseph shall abide in their coasts on the north. Ye shall therefore describe the land *into* seven parts, and bring *the description* hither to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD our God."
  - a. Calling attention to the delay in taking possession of the land, Joshua called for each of the seven tribes to select three men who would survey the land so that it could properly be divided among them.
  - b. According to the information these twenty-one men would gather, a seven-way division could be made among these seven tribes: Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan.
3. Verse 7: "But the Levites have no part among you; for the priesthood of the LORD *is* their inheritance: and Gad, and Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh, have received their inheritance beyond Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them."
  - a. Once more, reference is made to the Levites, that they were to receive no portion of the land as the other tribes were given. Serving as the priestly tribe was their inheritance.
  - b. Joshua mentions that the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh had already obtained their inheritance on the east side of Jordan.
4. Verses 8-9: "And the men arose, and went away: and Joshua charged them that went to describe the land, saying, Go and walk through the land, and describe it, and come again to me, that I may here cast lots for you before the LORD in Shiloh. And the men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities into seven parts in a book, and came *again* to Joshua to the host at Shiloh."
  - a. The party of twenty-one men was sent out to do the survey of the land; they entered their findings in a book, and later returned to Shiloh.
  - b. Joshua took the lead in casting lots to see how the seven parts were divided among the seven remaining tribes. The division was made before the Lord at the tabernacle in Shiloh. It is evident that the Lord guided the lots to assign the land as he saw fit. Proverbs 16:33: "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD."
5. Verse 10: "And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD: and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions."

### B. Joshua 18:11-28: The Territory Given to Benjamin.

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1. Verses 11-20: "And the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families: and the coast of their lot came forth between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph. And their border on the north side was from Jordan; and the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north side, and went up through the mountains westward; and the goings out thereof were at the wilderness of Bethaven. And the border went over from thence toward Luz, to the side of Luz, which *is* Bethel, southward; and the border descended to Atarothadar, near the hill that *lieth* on the south side of the nether Bethhoron. And the border was drawn *thence*, and compassed the corner of the sea southward, from the hill that *lieth* before Bethhoron southward; and the goings out thereof were at Kirjathbaal, which *is* Kirjathjearim, a city of the children of Judah: this *was* the west quarter. And the south quarter *was* from the end of Kirjathjearim, and the border went out on the west, and went out to the well of waters of Nephtoah: And the border came down to the end of the mountain that *lieth* before the valley of the son of Hinnom, *and* which *is* in the valley of the giants on the north, and descended to the valley of Hinnom, to the side of Jebusi on the south, and descended to Enrogel, And was drawn from the north, and went forth to Enshemesh, and went forth toward Geliloth, which *is* over against the going up of Adummim, and descended to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben, And passed along toward the side over against Arabah northward, and went down unto Arabah: And the border passed along to the side of Bethhoglah northward: and the outgoings of the border were at the north bay of the salt sea at the south end of Jordan: this *was* the south coast. And Jordan was the border of it on the east side. This *was* the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, by the coasts thereof round about, according to their families."
  2. Verses 21-28: "Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin according to their families were Jericho, and Bethhoglah, and the valley of Keziz. And Betharabah, and Zemaraim, and Bethel, And Avim, and Parah, and Ophrah, And Chepharhaammonai, and Ophni, and Gaba; twelve cities with their villages: Gibeon, and Ramah, and Beeroth, And Mizpeh, and Chephirah, and Mozah, And Rekem, and Irpeel, and Taralah, And Zelah, Eleph, and Jebusi, which *is* Jerusalem, Gibeath, *and* Kirjath; fourteen cities with their villages. This *is* the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families."
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## JOSHUA 19

### A. Joshua 19:1-9: The Territory Given to Simeon.

1. Verses 1-8: "And the second lot came forth to Simeon, *even* for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families: and their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah. And they had in their inheritance Beersheba, and Sheba, and Moladah, And Hazarshual, and Balah, and Azem, And Eltolad, and Bethul, and Hormah, And Ziklag, and Bethmarcaboth, and Hazarsusah, And Bethlebaoth, and Sharuhem; thirteen cities and their villages: Ain, Remmon, and Ether, and Ashan; four cities and their villages: And all the villages that *were* round about these cities to Baalathbeer, Ramath of the south. This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families."
2. Verse 9: "Out of the portion of the children of Judah *was* the inheritance of the children of Simeon: for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them: therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them."

### B. Joshua 19:10-16: The Territory Given to Zebulun.

1. Verses 10-1: "And the third lot came up for the children of Zebulun according to their families: and the border of their inheritance was unto Sarid: And their border went up toward the sea, and Maralah, and reached to Dabbasheth, and reached to the river that *is* before Jokneam; And turned from Sarid eastward toward the sunrising unto the border of Chislothtabor, and then goeth out to Daberath, and goeth up to Japhia. And from thence passeth on along on the east to Gittahhepher, to Ittahkazin, and goeth out to Remmonmethoar to Neah; And the border compasseth it on the north side to Hannathon: and the outgoings thereof are in the valley of Jiphthahel: And Kattath, and Nahallal, and Shimron, and Idalah, and Bethlehem: twelve cities with their villages."
2. Verse 16: "This *is* the inheritance of the children of Zebulun according to their families, these cities with their villages."

### C. Joshua 19:17-23: The Territory Given to Issachar.

1. Verses 17-22: "*And* the fourth lot came out to Issachar, for the children of Issachar according to their families. And their border was toward Jezreel, and Chesulloth, and Shunem, And Haphraim, and Shihon, and Anaharath, And Rabbith, and Kishion, and Abez, And Remeth, and Engannim, and Enhaddah, and Bethpazzez; And the coast reacheth to Tabor, and Shahazimah, and Bethshemesh; and the outgoings of their border were at Jordan: sixteen cities with their villages."
2. Verse 23: "This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Issachar according to their families, the cities and their villages."

### D. Joshua 19:24-31: The Territory Given to Asher.

1. Verses 24-30: "And the fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families. And their border was Helkath, and Hali, and Beten, and Achshaph, And Alammelech, and Amad, and Misheal; and reacheth to Carmel westward, and to Shihorlibnath; And turneth toward the sunrising to Bethdagon, and reacheth to Zebulun, and to the valley of Jiphthahel toward the north side of Bethemek, and Neiel, and goeth out to Cabul on the left hand, And Hebron, and Rehob, and Hammon, and Kanah, *even* unto great Zidon; And *then* the coast turneth to Ramah, and to the strong city Tyre; and the coast turneth to Hosah; and the outgoings thereof are at the sea from the coast to Achzib: Ummah also, and Aphek, and Rehob: twenty and two cities with their villages."
2. Verse 31: "This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families, these cities with their villages."

E. Joshua 19:32-39: The Territory Given to Naphtali.

1. Verses 32-38: "The sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali, *even* for the children of Naphtali according to their families. And their coast was from Heleph, from Allon to Zaananim, and Adami, Nekeb, and Jabneel, unto Lakum; and the outgoings thereof were at Jordan: And *then* the coast turneth westward to Aznothabor, and goeth out from thence to Hukkok, and reacheth to Zebulun on the south side, and reacheth to Asher on the west side, and to Judah upon Jordan toward the sunrising. And the fenced cities *are* Ziddim, Zer, and Hammath, Rakkath, and Chinnereth, And Adamah, and Ramah, and Hazor, And Kedesh, and Edrei, and Enhazor, And Iron, and Migdalel, Horem, and Bethanath, and Bethshemesh; nineteen cities with their villages."
2. Verse 39: "This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali according to their families, the cities and their villages."

F. Joshua 19:40-48: The Territory Given to Dan.

1. Verses 40-47: "*And* the seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families. And the coast of their inheritance was Zorah, and Eshtaol, and Irshemesh, And Shaalabbin, and Ajalon, and Jethlah, And Elon, and Thimnathah, and Ekron, And Eltekeh, and Gibbethon, and Baalath, And Jehud, and Beneberak, and Gathrimmon, And Mejarkon, and Rakkon, with the border before Japho. And the coast of the children of Dan went out *too little* for them: therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein, and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father."
2. Verse 48: "This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages."

G. Joshua 19:49-51: The Division of the Land is Completed.

1. Verses 49-50: "When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts, the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them: According to the word of the LORD they gave him the city which he asked, *even* Timnathserah in mount Ephraim: and he built the city, and dwelt therein."
    - a. Joshua was given a choice in the territory he was to receive; he chose a place in Mount Ephraim that was about eleven miles from Shiloh. It is described as "a barren place, and one of the worst spots Joshua could have chosen" (Ken Willis, FF, p.376).
    - b. Did the Israelites respect Joshua? "They were perfectly willing to let this man of God have a small barren place as his portion. Thus, he accepted a city which had to be rebuilt, and made suitable for his habitation and for his people" (ibid., pp.376f). Do brethren respect their elders and preachers today?
  2. Verse 51: "These *are* the inheritances, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, divided for an inheritance by lot in Shiloh before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. So they made an end of dividing the country."
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## JOSHUA 20

### A. Joshua 20:1-6: Purpose for the Cities of Refuge.

1. Verses 1-2: "The LORD also spake unto Joshua, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses."
  - a. God had given instructions to Moses regarding the appointment of cities of refuge (Num. 35; Deut. 19). The first reference called for six cities. Three were to be on the west side of Jordan and three on the east side of that river (Num. 35:14).
  - b. Deuteronomy 19 allotted three cities of refuge initially, and then promised three others would be added after they had taken over the land from the Canaanites. "And if the LORD thy God enlarge thy coast, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy fathers; If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to love the LORD thy God, and to walk ever in his ways; then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, beside these three" (Deut. 19:8-9).
  - c. Premillennialists deny that Israel ever controlled the full territory God gave them, and teach that this promise will only be fulfilled in their so-called millennial kingdom. Their position is shown to be wrong by the passage before us. Three cities of refuge were allotted at the beginning of the conquest of Canaan; three other cities of refuge were promised after Canaan had been conquered; six cities of refuge were set up by Joshua in our present chapter; therefore, Israel received the land promise. 2 Samuel 8:3 and 1 Kings 4:21 show that they controlled the territory from the Euphrates River to the border of Egypt.
    - 1) 2 Samuel 8:3: "David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates."
    - 2) 1 Kings 4:21: "And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life."
2. Verses 3-4: "That the slayer that killeth *any* person unawares *and* unwittingly may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood. And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them."
  - a. God showed his concern for the innocent when he drew the plans for the cities of refuge. The Law he gave through Moses called for murderers to be punished with death, but knowing mankind was prone to accident, God made provision for those who killed someone accidentally to escape the vengeance which relatives of the slain person might seek to wreak.
  - b. One who killed another accidentally could flee to the nearest city of refuge, announce to the elders of that city his reason for coming, and he was to be permitted to take up residence there.
  - c. Abner entered Hebron, after slaying Asahel; evidently he thought he could live there in peace. Joab met him there, and took him aside ostensibly to speak with him quietly, but slew him at the gate of Hebron. "And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth *rib*, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother" (2 Samuel 3:27).
3. Verses 5-6: "And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime. And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment, *and* until the death of

the high priest that shall be in those days: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled."

- a. If the avenger followed the man who sought refuge, the elders of the city were not to turn him over to the one seeking vengeance. The conditions were two-fold: that he had accidentally taken the life and had no previous animosity toward the dead man.
- b. The man seeking refuge was obligated to remain in the city where he sought refuge; to leave the city was to forfeit his life, if the avenger persisted. The fleeing man could be charged by the avenger before the city's judges. If he was found guilty of murder, the proper penalty would be administered. If he was found innocent of willful killing, his life was spared, but he must remain in the city until the death of the current high priest. At that point, he was free to return to his own city and house.

B. Joshua 20:7-9: The Cities of Refuge.

1. Verse 7: "And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjatharba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah." Each of these cities has a lesson in its name with a present-day application.
  - a. The city of Kedesh was one of the three refuge cities on the west side of Jordan.
    - 1) This city was in Galilee, in the territory assigned to Naphtali (Josh. 19:37). It was the home of Barak (Judges 4:9f), and was located about five miles northwest of Lake Hula.
    - 2) The name means *holy, sanctified*. The church is to be holy (sanctified). The word for the church (*ekklesia*) means "the called out ones."
      - a) 2 Corinthians 6:17: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you."
      - b) 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."
      - c) 1 Corinthians 1:1-2: "Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother, Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours."
    - 3) Because the church in general, and its members in particular, are separate from the world and holy in life, hatred arises on the part of the world.
      - a) John 15:18-19: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."
      - b) John 17:14-16: "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."
      - c) John 3:19-21: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."
  - 4) As the innocent slayer was acceptable to God, so faithful Christians are accepted by him today

- a) Isaiah 35:8: "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it *shall be* for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err *therein*."
  - b) Ephesians 5:27: "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
  - c) Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
- b. The city of Shechem was located between Ebal and Gerizim, and became one of the cities of refuge on the west side of the Jordan River.
- 1) It was visited by Abraham and Jacob (Gen. 12:6; 33:18). It was in the tribal territory assigned to Manasseh (Josh. 17:2). Joshua gave his farewell address at this place (Josh. 24:1).
  - 2) The name means *shoulders*, a place to carry burdens. This meaning suggests the church's obligations to support the truth (1 Tim. 3:15; Rev. 1:20).
  - 3) This is a difficult job because of opposition. Unbelievers oppose us because they want to eat, drink, and be merry; false teachers oppose us for the obvious reason that we expose their errors (Acts 28:22; Eph. 5:11); ungodly members oppose us because they want the liberty to live as they please without being embarrassed (John 3:20).
  - 4) We must uphold the truth without fear, favor, or deviation.
    - a) John 8:31-32: "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
    - b) 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
- c. The city of Hebron belonged to Caleb (Josh. 15:54), served as David's first capital (2 Sam. 2), and was the third city of refuge on Jordan's west side.
- 1) The name means *alliance, union, association, fellowship*.
  - 2) Fellowship in Christ is not found in the same kind and degree elsewhere.
    - a) Acts 2:42-47: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
    - b) Acts 4:32-35: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."
    - c) Ephesians 4:1-3: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy
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of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

- d) Philippians 1:3-5: "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;"
  - e) Romans 12:15: "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."
  - f) 1 Corinthians 12:25-26: "That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."
  - g) As Aaron and Hur cooperated together in holding up Moses hands, so Christians are to co-operate for the good of the Lord's work: "And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands *were* heavy; and they took a stone, and put *it* under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword" (Ex. 17:11-13).
2. Verse 8: "And on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh." These three cities of refuge were on the east side of Jordan, and also carry lessons for us.
- a. Bezer is the first of these cities named in this part of Palestine, east of Jordan..
    - 1) The name means *strong, or inaccessible fortress*.
    - 2) Christ and his church form a strong fortress against the enemy. The Lord is pictured as our shield (Rom. 8:35; cf. Psalm 46:1-7). Even death is no terror to us (Rev. 14:13).
    - 3) The Lord's church is the most powerful institution on earth.
      - a) Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."
      - b) Hebrews 12:28: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."
  - b. Ramoth in Gilead is another of the cities of refuge.
    - 1) Its name means *height, elevation, exalted*. Many institutions are greater than the Lord's church in numbers, wealth, and worldly power, but Christ died for none of these.
      - a) Isaiah 2:2: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it."
      - b) Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
      - c) Ephesians 5:25: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."
    - 2) There is no honor as great, no blessing as meaningful, and no hope as grand, as those which pertain to those in the Lord's church!
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- a) Matthew 11:11: "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."
  - b) Ephesians 2:12-13: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."
  - c) Ephesians 5:26-27: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
- c. Golan is the third city of refuge on the east side of Jordan.
- 1) Its name means *circle, completeness*. In the Lord's church, we are made complete (Col. 2:10). The church is the fullness of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). It fills up Christ; one cannot be in Christ and out of the church; we cannot be in one without also being in the other. To be complete, we must be in the church (in Christ's body).
  - 2) We have everything we need in the church: truth, righteousness, holiness, hope, strength: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. 2:6-13).
3. Verse 9: "These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth *any* person at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation."
- a. The cities of refuge were intended for all the Israelites, and the strangers who lived among them. If any man in Israel slew another accidentally, he could spare his life from any avenger by entering one of these cities.
  - b. This verse shows that the avenger could bring charges of murder against the individual, and if the charges were proved, the person was to be dealt with according to the law; but if he was found innocent of murder, he was free to live in the city until the death of the high priest currently in power (verse 6).
4. Sundry lessons from the cities of refuge.
- a. The cities of refuge were within the reach of all Israel.
    - 1) The roads were marked, passable, and each Israelite could know the way to the nearest one.
    - 2) The cities of refuge could be reached by any Israelite who needed refuge; they were open to all.
    - 3) The cities held water, shelter, and food, which were accessible by all.
    - 4) The gates of the cities could be entered day or night.
  - b. All of these facts are true of our refuge: the Lord's church and heaven.
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- 1) The way is clearly marked.
    - a) Psalms 119:105: "Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."
    - b) Isaiah 35:8: "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it *shall be* for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err *therein*."
    - c) 2 Timothy 3:15-17: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
  - 2) It is accessible to all.
    - a) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
    - b) Titus 2:11-14: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."
    - c) Revelation 22:17: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."
  - 3) All of our necessities are provided within: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ" (Eph. 1:3; cf. Rev. 21-22).
  - 4) The door is always open.
    - a) John 6:37: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."
    - b) 2 Corinthians 6:2: "(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)"
    - c) 2 Peter 1:5-11: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
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## JOSHUA 21

### A. Joshua 21:1-42: The Inheritance of the Levites.

1. Verses 1-8: "Then came near the heads of the fathers of the Levites unto Eleazar the priest, and unto Joshua the son of Nun, and unto the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel; And they spake unto them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, The LORD commanded by the hand of Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with the suburbs thereof for our cattle. And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites out of their inheritance, at the commandment of the LORD, these cities and their suburbs. And the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites: and the children of Aaron the priest, which were of the Levites, had by lot out of the tribe of Judah, and out of the tribe of Simeon, and out of the tribe of Benjamin, thirteen cities. And the rest of the children of Kohath *had* by lot out of the families of the tribe of Ephraim, and out of the tribe of Dan, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh, ten cities. And the children of Gershon *had* by lot out of the families of the tribe of Issachar, and out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities. The children of Merari by their families *had* out of the tribe of Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad, and out of the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities. And the children of Israel gave by lot unto the Levites these cities with their suburbs, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses."
  - a. Moses directed in Numbers 35:1ff that the Levites were to be given dwelling places among the rest of the Israelites. Forty-eight cities were to be given them, including the six cities of refuge (Num. 35:6). Hebron had been given initially to Caleb (Josh. 14); no doubt he turned it over gladly to the Levites, to serve them as a dwelling place and to serve the nation as a city of refuge.
  - b. "The Aaronic priests are all located within the area of Judah and Benjamin. The working of providence is seen in this; because all of the priests drew cities in that area which, in time, would become the center of Israel's worship in Jerusalem....God no doubt intended that the Tabernacle should continue to be the location of God's altar after the entry into Canaan. The Temple was David's idea; and, although God accommodated to it, we believe the purpose of the providential placement of these priests in the Jerusalem area was to have them near the Tabernacle, not the Temple" (Coffman, p.226).
  - c. These cities were to include an area extending outward for a thousand cubits (1800 feet); beyond that area, another strip of land extending two thousand cubits (3500 feet) was to be added on each side. This land on the outside of the city would serve as pasturage for their animals. Compare Numbers 35:2-5: "Command the children of Israel, that they give unto the Levites of the inheritance of their possession cities to dwell in; and ye shall give *also* unto the Levites suburbs for the cities round about them. And the cities shall they have to dwell in; and the suburbs of them shall be for their cattle, and for their goods, and for all their beasts. And the suburbs of the cities, which ye shall give unto the Levites, *shall reach* from the wall of the city and outward a thousand cubits round about. And ye shall measure from without the city on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits; and the city *shall be* in the midst: this shall be to them the suburbs of the cities."
2. Verses 9-42: "And they gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon, these cities which are *here* mentioned by name, Which the children of Aaron, *being* of the families of the Kohathites, *who were* of the children of Levi, had: for theirs was the first lot. And they gave them the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron, in the hill *country* of Judah, with the suburbs thereof round about it. But the fields of the city, and the villages

thereof, gave they to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for his possession. Thus they gave to the children of Aaron the priest Hebron with her suburbs, *to be* a city of refuge for the slayer; and Libnah with her suburbs, And Jattir with her suburbs, and Eshtemoa with her suburbs, And Holon with her suburbs, and Debir with her suburbs, And Ain with her suburbs, and Juttah with her suburbs, *and* Bethshemesh with her suburbs; nine cities out of those two tribes. And out of the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with her suburbs, Geba with her suburbs, Anathoth with her suburbs, and Almon with her suburbs; four cities. All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, *were* thirteen cities with their suburbs. And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites which remained of the children of Kohath, even they had the cities of their lot out of the tribe of Ephraim. For they gave them Shechem with her suburbs in mount Ephraim, *to be* a city of refuge for the slayer; and Gezer with her suburbs, And Kibzaim with her suburbs, and Bethhoron with her suburbs; four cities. And out of the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with her suburbs, Gibbethon with her suburbs, Aijalon with her suburbs, Gathrimmon with her suburbs; four cities. And out of the half tribe of Manasseh, Tanach with her suburbs, and Gathrimmon with her suburbs; two cities. All the cities *were* ten with their suburbs for the families of the children of Kohath that remained. And unto the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, out of the *other* half tribe of Manasseh *they gave* Golan in Bashan with her suburbs, *to be* a city of refuge for the slayer; and Beeshterah with her suburbs; two cities. And out of the tribe of Issachar, Kishon with her suburbs, Dabareh with her suburbs, Jarmuth with her suburbs, Engannim with her suburbs; four cities. And out of the tribe of Asher, Mishal with her suburbs, Abdon with her suburbs, Helkath with her suburbs, and Rehob with her suburbs; four cities. And out of the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with her suburbs, *to be* a city of refuge for the slayer; and Hammothdor with her suburbs, and Kartan with her suburbs; three cities. All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families *were* thirteen cities with their suburbs. And unto the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites, out of the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with her suburbs, and Kartah with her suburbs, Dimnah with her suburbs, Nahalal with her suburbs; four cities. And out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with her suburbs, and Jahazah with her suburbs, Kedemoth with her suburbs, and Mephaath with her suburbs; four cities. And out of the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with her suburbs, *to be* a city of refuge for the slayer; and Mahanaim with her suburbs, Heshbon with her suburbs, Jazer with her suburbs; four cities in all. So all the cities for the children of Merari by their families, which were remaining of the families of the Levites, were *by* their lot twelve cities. All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel *were* forty and eight cities with their suburbs. These cities were every one with their suburbs round about them: thus *were* all these cities."

B. Joshua 21:43-45: The Lord Fulfilled His Promise to Give the Land to Israel.

1. Verse 43: "And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein."
  - a. God had made the promise to Abraham that he would give to that great man's descendants a land of their own, at the time and in the place of his choosing. Although Abraham dwelled in the promised land, he owned only a burying place.
  - b. After Abraham's descendants were enslaved in Egypt, they would naturally despair of ever obtaining that land of promise. God's timetable usually runs counter to man's schedule. Before the Father takes action, all the potential effects his move will have on humanity must be weighed carefully, with the short- and the long-range consequences considered.
  - c. It was his intention that the people of Israel should through the rest of human history on earth remain a separate, identifiable people, so that anyone could look to them for evidence that God is in heaven and the Bible is his word. But before they could be so-wrought as to retain their autonomous identity as a people, the weld of hardship was necessary. Individuals who have suffered through a common tragic experience are often bound together with a union that ever

- holds. The harsh ordeal they shared in Egyptian slavery bonded them with a weld that has held for thirty-five hundred years! "For I *am* with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished" (Jer. 30:11).
- d. Human eyes and wisdom could not envision the possibility of these slaves of Egypt ever having a land of their own, and being masters of their own destiny. But God fulfilled the promises he gave Abraham!
2. Verse 44: "And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand."
    - a. After several hundred years, God brought them into Canaan, and gave them possession of the land. Their control of the land and prosperity therein was of course dependent on their faithfulness to God. "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee....The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth....And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee....Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all *things*" (Deut. 28:15,25,37,47).
    - b. At this point in their history, Joshua had led them successfully into the land, with the Lord's help. There was no longer any organized opposition, although there were pockets of pagans still occupying parts of Canaan.
  3. Verse 45: "There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass."
    - a. Plainly stating what modern millennial theories deny, God declares that he had fully given them the land he promised; it was now under their control (cf. 2 Sam. 8:3; 1 Kings 4:21).
    - b. God was true to his word to Abraham; he is true to his word today. When alien sinners obey the gospel (Acts 18:8), he translates them into his kingdom (Col. 1:13-14; Acts 2:36-47), releasing them from the guilt of their past sins (Acts 2:38; Heb. 8:12). He will usher the faithful into the glories of heaven at the last day (Mark 10:29-30; 2 Tim. 4:6-8; 2 Pet. 1:5-12). Our travail is no more hopeless than was that of the Israelite slave in Egypt. God will fulfill the promises he has made to us!
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## A Sketch of the Levitical Priesthood \*

### A. The Qualification of the Levitical Priests.

1. They were to be at least thirty years old. "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD *concerning things* which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them: If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin offering" (Lev. 4:1-3).
    - a. Numbers 8:23-26 shows that those selected to become priests were to *wait* on the service of the Tabernacle when they were twenty-five years of age. Evidently, there was a period of training for five years before they became full-fledged priests.
    - b. David later fixed the time of their service from the age of twenty.
      - 1) 2 Chronicles 31:17: "Both to the genealogy of the priests by the house of their fathers, and the Levites from twenty years old and upward, in their charges by their courses."
      - 2) Ezra 3:8: "Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD."
    - c. The priests served only until they were fifty years of age, due to the heaviness of the work (Num. 4:3). Their work included slaughtering and sacrificing animals, some of them quite large, such as bullocks.
  2. They were to be free from any physical imperfections, impurities, and infirmities (Lev. 21:16-24; 22:1-9).
    - a. They were not to defile themselves by touching a dead body. They could touch the body of a close relative (Lev. 21:1-6). The high priest could not even touch the body of his father or mother. (Lev. 21:10-12).
    - b. Since the priests were symbolic of Christians, these requirements were mandated.
      - 1) Leviticus 11:44: "For I *am* the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I *am* holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."
      - 2) 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
      - 3) Hebrews 10:1: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."
      - 4) 1 Peter 1:15-16: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."
      - 5) 1 John 3:1-3: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And
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every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

3. They were not permitted to marry a woman of ill repute or a divorcee (Lev. 21:7-8). The high priest could only marry a virgin (Lev. 21:13-15).
  - a. The church is married to Christ.
    - 1) Romans 7:4: "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."
    - 2) 2 Corinthians 11:2: "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ."
  - b. As Christ is pure, so the church must be pure. The church is purified as each of its members obeys the gospel.
    - 1) Ephesians 5:25-27: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
    - 2) 1 Peter 1:22-23: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
4. The priests were all Kohathites (Num. 4:1-4). Kohath was a son of Levi (Ex. 6:16ff). and was the forebear of Amram, to whom Moses and Aaron were born. Levi had three sons: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. The cities given to the Levitical tribe were divided among the descendants of these three men (Josh. 21).

#### B. The Duties of the Levitical Priests.

1. To offer sacrifices, burn incense, and perform all the other services ordained for the Tabernacle (Exod. 27:20-21; 30:1-10; cf. Luke 1:9; Lev. 1:5-17; Heb. 8:4; 10:11; Num. 3:5-10; 4:4-15; 18:1-7).
2. They were to minister to the people of Israel (Num. 8:26; 1 Chron. 23:27).
3. They were to instruct the people (Lev. 10:8-11; Deut. 24:8-9; 33:8-11; Neh. 8:1-8; Jer. 2:8; Mal. 2:1-9; Luke 10:31-32).

#### C. The Clothing of the Levitical Priests.

1. The garments of the priests are named in Exodus 28:40-43.
2. The garments of the High Priest included the following:
  - a. The robe of the Ephod [worn under the Ephod] (Exod. 28:31-35; 39:22-26).
  - b. The Ephod (Exod. 28:6-14; 39:2-7).
  - c. The Breastplate of Judgment (Exod. 28:15-30). Four rows of precious stones were set into this article, and the Urim and Thummim were carried in it.
  - d. A Plate of Gold was attached to the headdress (Exod. 28:36-38; 39:30).

#### D. The Consecration of the Levitical Priests.

1. Aaron and his sons were brought before the door of the Tabernacle where they were washed with water (Lev. 8:5-6).
  2. They were clothed in their priestly garments (Lev. 8:7-13).
  3. Moses anointed the Tabernacle and its furnishings, the laver and the altar, and Aaron himself (Lev. 8:10-12).
  4. Moses presented a bullock for a sin offering, and had Aaron and his sons to place their hands on
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its head; the bullock was then slain and offered.

5. Other details are given in remainder of Leviticus 8.

E. The Payment given to the Levitical Priests.

1. They were to be given ten percent of the tithes collected (Num. 18:25-32).

2. They received portions of the sacrifices and offerings (Lev. 7:1-8; 6:25-26; Lev. 23:19-20; Lev. 7:31-34; 24:9; Num. 18:8-19). [\* See Robert Milligan's *The Scheme of Redemption*, pp.149-162].

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## JOSHUA 22

### A. Joshua 22:1-9: The Tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh Settle in their Assigned Territories.

1. Verses 1-3: "Then Joshua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, And said unto them, Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you: Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God."
    - a. These men had faithfully stayed at the side of Joshua and the rest of Israel, fighting and suffering along with the rest of their brethren.
    - b. Their lands had long since been subdued and were ready for occupation, but they heeded the instructions Moses had given them in regards to helping to conquer the rest of Canaan. They had longed for the day when they could settle into their new homes and take up their lives in the land of promise.
  2. Verses 4-6: "And now the LORD your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them: therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, *and* unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side Jordan. But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul. So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away: and they went unto their tents."
    - a. Joshua instructed them to return to their tents, and make preparation for entering into their tribal territory. The time was now at hand for them to reap the benefits of their long struggle.
    - b. Think of all those men who, because of the weakness of their faith, fell in the wilderness. If they had only maintained their trust in God, they could have enjoyed the honor and blessedness of living in the land of promise. Think about the multiplied millions who will fall short of heaven because they refused to obey the gospel, or turned back from following the Lord; seeing the bounties of heaven which they missed, and beholding the horrors of hell which they earned, they will see too late the folly of their earthly decisions.
    - c. Joshua cautions them to remember their obligations to God. Living apart from the main part of Canaan where the great majority of Israel were to dwell, there would be the tendency for them to grow slack in their devotion to God, and perhaps even turn to the practices of the pagans.
    - d. Pronouncing a blessing upon them, Joshua dismissed them to their destiny in the land.
  3. Verses 7-9: "Now to the *one* half of the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given *possession* in Bashan: but unto the *other* half thereof gave Joshua among their brethren on this side Jordan westward. And when Joshua sent them away also unto their tents, then he blessed them, And he spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment: divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren. And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which *is* in the land of Canaan, to go unto the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed, according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses."
    - a. The two-and-one-half tribes were addressed in the preceding passage; the remaining one-half tribe of Manasseh which had been assigned territory on the west side of Jordan is now sent to its inheritance.
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- b. They carried with them a treasure of cattle, silver and gold, brass and iron, and garments. These spoils they were to share with their brethren. The plunder captured by Israel was, of course, divided among all the tribes.
- c. Verse nine states that the people of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh departed from Shiloh to settle in their land.

B. Joshua 22:10-20: The Eastern Tribes Build an Altar at the Jordan River Crossing.

1. Verse 10: "And when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that *are* in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by Jordan, a great altar to see to."
    - a. When the people of these three tribes crossed Jordan, they erected a great altar there. It was raised on the west side of Jordan, in the land of Canaan.
    - b. It was great in size, and easy to see. They did not try to hide the altar, hence they were not ashamed of it. A definite purpose was intended to be served by this altar, but as is often the case, men are prone to misinterpret what they see
  2. Verses 11-14: "And the children of Israel heard say, Behold, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh have built an altar over against the land of Canaan, in the borders of Jordan, at the passage of the children of Israel. And when the children of Israel heard *of it*, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh, to go up to war against them. And the children of Israel sent unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, And with him ten princes, of each chief house a prince throughout all the tribes of Israel; and each one *was* an head of the house of their fathers among the thousands of Israel."
    - a. The rest of the nation, learning about the altar, supposed the worst, assembled to go to war against the builders of the altar. Israel placed the worst possible interpretation on the erection of the altar. They committed the folly of judging according to appearance. "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24).
    - b. The real purpose of the altar will be soon shown by the eastern tribes. The fact that the rest of Israel rose up in arms against the altar indicates primarily their desire that God's will be observed. They assumed that the eastern tribes intended to offer sacrifices on that altar, which would have been a violation of God's law; he had directed that sacrifices were to be offered at the altar of the Tabernacle. "Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest" (Deut. 12:13).
    - c. The nation sent some of her most important leaders to deal with the problem.
  3. Verses 15-20: "And they came unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, unto the land of Gilead, and they spake with them, saying, Thus saith the whole congregation of the LORD, What trespass is this that ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in that ye have builded you an altar, that ye might rebel this day against the LORD? *Is* the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD, But that ye must turn away this day from following the LORD? and it will be, *seeing* ye rebel to day against the LORD, that to morrow he will be wroth with the whole congregation of Israel. Notwithstanding, if the land of your possession *be* unclean, *then* pass ye over unto the land of the possession of the LORD, wherein the LORD'S tabernacle dwelleth, and take possession among us: but rebel not against the LORD, nor rebel against us, in building you an altar beside the altar of the LORD our God. Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? and that man perished not alone in his iniquity."
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- a. Israel had learned an important lesson at Peor (Num. 25). During the days of Joshua, Israel was determined to follow the Law. Being quick to investigate the matter is a mark in their favor.
- b. Those who had erected the altar should have taken precautions lest their efforts prove to become a problem. If they had sent a message to Joshua giving a report of their intentions, there would have been no problem.
- c. The delegation from Joshua accused the eastern tribes of promoting a rebellion against God, by building the altar. They suggested that if the land they had been given was unclean, that they could take up an inheritance among the rest of the nation, on the western side of Jordan.
- d. The representatives of the central government reminded the *offenders* of what had happened to Achan at Jericho, how that his sin brought shame and punishment upon the whole nation. Achan did not perish alone when he committed his offense.
  - 1) Those who died with him may have been those men slain in battle at Ai; some think that the family of Achan was also slain with him. If they were slain with him, it was because they were also guilty.
  - 2) The Law forbade punishing the innocent family members with a guilty member. "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin" (Deut. 24:16).

C. Joshua 22:21-29: The Purpose of the Altar Explained.

1. Verses 21-24: "Then the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh answered, and said unto the heads of the thousands of Israel, The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if *it be* in rebellion, or if in transgression against the LORD, (save us not this day,) That we have built us an altar to turn from following the LORD, or if to offer thereon burnt offering or meat offering, or if to offer peace offerings thereon, let the LORD himself require *it*; And if we have not *rather* done it for fear of *this* thing, saying, In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the LORD God of Israel?"
    - a. The eastern tribes declared their intention to follow the will of God; they glorified him as the "Lord God of gods," meaning that he was real and powerful. They placed themselves in his hands, stating that he knew whether they were righteous or rebellious. They were willing to face whatever penalty that God prescribed.
    - b. They stated their purpose in building the altar; it was built to serve as a visible reminder of their brotherhood with Israel and allegiance to the God of Israel. They meant for it to stand as a sign to future generations that they were citizens of the nation of Israel and servants to the Living God.
    - c. They never intended to offer sacrifices on the altar, for they knew that doing that would have been a violation of God's Law. God had specified the one altar upon which burnt offerings were to be made; that excluded every other altar.
  2. Verses 25-29: "For the LORD hath made Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of Reuben and children of Gad; ye have no part in the LORD: so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the LORD. Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice: But *that* it *may be* a witness between us, and you, and our generations after us, that we might do the service of the LORD before him with our burnt offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your children may not say to our children in time to come, Ye have no part in the LORD. Therefore said we, that it shall be, when they should *so* say to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say *again*, Behold the pattern of the altar of the LORD, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices; but it *is* a
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witness between us and you. God forbid that we should rebel against the LORD, and turn this day from following the LORD, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for meat offerings, or for sacrifices, beside the altar of the LORD our God that *is* before his tabernacle."

- a. The Great Rift Valley of the Jordan formed a natural boundary between the eastern and the western tribes; it was a natural barrier between the two parts of Israel. The intention of the eastern tribes was pure; they feared that in time their people might get the idea that they were not part of the nation, and drift away from their common heritage.
- b. Therefore, they constructed the altar as a reminder to future generations that they were Israelites, and that they served and worshipped the God of Israel. They fully intended to worship God at the Tabernacle, in accordance with the divine directives of the Law; they did not plan to use the altar at Jordan for sacrifices.

D. Joshua 22:30-34: Israel's Reaction to the Explanation.

1. Verses 30-31: "And when Phinehas the priest, and the princes of the congregation and heads of the thousands of Israel which were with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the children of Manasseh spake, it pleased them. And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manasseh, This day we perceive that the LORD *is* among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the LORD: now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD."
  - a. The investigating company listened to the explanation, and accepted it at face value. They believed their brethren, as well they should. They were pleased to hear the explanation.
  - b. Phinehas, the son of the High Priest (Eleazar) declared with happiness that the problem had been properly shown to be no problem; there had been no rebellion, and there would be no punishment from the Lord.
2. Verses 32-34: "And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the princes, returned from the children of Reuben, and from the children of Gad, out of the land of Gilead, unto the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought them word again. And the thing pleased the children of Israel; and the children of Israel blessed God, and did not intend to go up against them in battle, to destroy the land wherein the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt. And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar *Ed*: for it *shall be* a witness between us that the LORD *is* God."
  - a. Phinehas and his company returned from Gilead, where they had met with the eastern tribes; they came back to Shiloh where the affairs of the nation, spiritual and otherwise, were being conducted. The report of their findings fell on happy ears. No one wanted trouble within the nation, especially at this early stage.
  - b. They had feared that a war between the eastern and western tribes was in the offing; it was good news indeed to learn that the altar was satisfactorily explained.
  - c. The builders of the altar gave the name *Ed* to the altar, a word that means *witness*. It bore a visible witness of the close brotherhood that existed between the tribes on the east side of Jordan and the tribes on the west side of Jordan. It stood as a strong reminder to future generations that the Lord is God.
  - d. What ever became of this altar?

E. Some lessons can be gleaned from this story that will be of benefit to us.

1. It shows the need for the righteous to be always alert to detect and correct departures from the faith on the part of others. This does not mean that we are self-appointed *watchdogs*, but that we are concerned about the integrity of the truth and the welfare of precious souls.
  - a. Galatians 2:11-14: "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because

he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

- b. Galatians 6:1-10: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden. Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
  - c. James 5:16: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
  - d. Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
2. The episode teaches the need to be careful about making judgments, especially those which are principally based on outward appearances. Appearances can truly be deceiving! Before a righteous judgment can be made, we must know more than what may be seen on the outside.
  3. The story illustrates the fact that even best intentions can be misunderstood. Good deeds can be opposed and rejected.
  4. The need to communicate with each other is illustrated by the story. If the eastern tribes had announced their plans and stated the purpose they sought to fill, their altar would not have created the stir that was aroused.
  5. To avoid potential trouble with others, sometimes it would be better to forgo an activity that might be misunderstood. Although an activity may be entirely proper of itself, if engaging in it causes another to violate his conscience, do as Paul: "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (1 Cor. 8:13).
  6. The incident illustrates the need to get all the facts in a case before taking action.
  7. We are taught by the case at hand to happily accept a reasonable explanation.
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## JOSHUA 23

### A. Joshua 23:1-5: Joshua Addresses Israel.

1. Verse 1: "And it came to pass a long time after that the LORD had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old *and* stricken in age"
    - a. We are not told by the text how much time had passed since the conquest was completed. Some scholars (Clarke & JFB) confidently affirm that it had been fourteen years since the conquest, and seven years since the division of the land. These are reasonable estimates, but they cannot be considered as absolute. If it was important that modern readers know the time factor, that detail would have been included in the text.
    - b. Joshua is described as "old and stricken in age." He is described in a similar way in chapter 13:1: "old and stricken in years." At the point of our text, his earthly days are numbered, but he still maintains his determination to serve God and Israel. He had been told: "Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them. 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 whithersoever thou goest. 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 shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Josh. 1:6-8).
  2. Verses 2-3: "And Joshua called for all Israel, *and* for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them, I am old *and* stricken in age: And ye have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the LORD your God *is* he that hath fought for you."
    - a. Joshua summoned Israel to meet with him at some unnamed location, possibly at Shiloh or Shechem. Other meetings had been held at Shiloh, where the Tabernacle was situated; in the next chapter, Joshua meets with Israel at Shechem.
    - b. Did the entire nation gather in the assembly of our present chapter, or were only the leaders gathered? The opinion of several scholars is the latter. It seems logical that certain instructions would be given to the nation's leaders prior to his death. He states in verse fourteen that "this day I am going the way of all the earth," indicating that he expected to die that very day, or at least in the very near future.
    - c. If he addressed the entire nation, the most likely place for such a speech would be between Ebal and Gerizim, which offers a natural amphitheater where he could have been heard easily by everyone.
    - d. He stated to the assembly that he was old and stricken in age, and reminded them what God had done to the Canannite kingdoms in the land. The Lord had fought for his people, enabling them to subdue these powerful foes.
  3. Verses 4-5: "Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward. And the LORD your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the LORD your God hath promised unto you."
    - a. Joshua spoke of the division of the land, over which he had presided. Their territory included that land lying west of Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea. The land on the east side of Jordan had been assigned by Moses to the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh.
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- b. Those nations inhabiting the west side of Jordan had been cut off; their military forces had been destroyed, and all organized resistance had ceased. The people who remained were under Israel's domination, and God would expel them from the land so that Israel could have it all. This was the Lord's promise, which of course included the conditions that they follow his will and continue the struggle against the pagans.
- c. Israel failed to conquer the Philistines when they had the power at hand to subdue them; instead they allowed them to stay in the land, where they later developed a strong military force, which caused them to be a lingering thorn in Israel's flesh for many generations.

B. Joshua 23:6-13: Joshua Admonishes Israel to Keep Separate from the Pagans.

1. Verses 6-8: "Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom *to* the right hand or *to* the left; That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear *by them*, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them: But cleave unto the LORD your God, as ye have done unto this day."
    - a. Recognizing the danger that Israel might soon lose sight of the need to obey God, Joshua charges them to be very courageous to keep and do all that God's law required. When an individual (or group of individuals) sees his need for God's help, he will be zealous in prayer and obedience; but when he is at ease in Zion, he tends to rely on his own strength and accomplishments.
    - b. Deuteronomy 6:10-12: "And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage."
    - c. Joshua warns them against having fellowship with the pagans who remained in the land. There was good reason for this warning, for contact with idolaters was sure to contaminate Israel, as future events show.
    - d. In our day, we need strong warning against the evils of our modern world. Every kind of false religious doctrine that can be imagined by the fertile minds of those who are not content to believe the Bible is running rampant in our land. Besides these, there are powerful men who effectively promote unbelief. Even now, the Lord's church is once again in the throes of a great apostasy. Brethren failed to take heed to the warnings of gospel preachers to remain faithful to the truth, and because they lent their ears to false teachers, have had their souls corrupted by error and sin. We have not learned from the mistakes of ancient Israel, and must face the consequences of departing from the word of God.
  2. Verses 9-11: "For the LORD hath driven out from before you great nations and strong: but *as for* you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day. One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, he *it is* that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you. Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God."
    - a. The nations which had fled before the army of Israel and the power of Israel's God, were great and strong; they were not small, weak kingdoms. They had joined together to present a united opposition to Israel, but they had been completely defeated. No individual or army had been able to stand before Israel.
    - b. Provided Israel maintained their faithfulness to the will of God, they would continue to be invincible before their enemies. One Israelite would be able to rout a thousand foes! This was demonstrated in the case of Gideon, whose three hundred men were able to defeat a force of
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about one hundred and thirty-five thousand men (Judges 8:10).

- c. With the Lord on Israel's side, there was nothing to fear; success beyond compare was possible. However, the condition of faithfulness to God was part of the bargain.
3. Verses 12-13: "Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, *even* these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you: Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out *any of* these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you."
    - a. If Israel lowered their spiritual fences, and began to fellowship with the pagans, God would not be obligated to uphold his promises. One of the things forbidden was intermarriage with these remaining idolaters. This shows the danger of entering into marital union with one who followed some other god.
    - b. The Canaanites would become snares and traps, and scourges in their sides, and thorns in their eyes. The activity that is forbidden often becomes the prime desire of one's heart, but when it is grasped, it has a sting. Solomon accumulated seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, but they turned his heart away from the Lord (1 Kings 11).
    - c. In our generation of the Lord's church, the majority has failed to learn the simple lessons taught by ancient Israel. When we become like the nations around us (the denominations), we cease to be the Lord's people.
      - 1) Romans 15:4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."
      - 2) 1 Corinthians 10:1-11: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

#### C. Joshua 23:14-16: God Had Fulfilled his Promises.

1. Verse 14: "And, behold, this day I *am* going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, *and* not one thing hath failed thereof."
  - a. Joshua announced to those gathered that the end of his earthly life was at its end. If he is using literal language, that day was to be his last; if he is using a figure of speech, he means that he was soon to die. Perhaps the most significant characteristic common to all earthly beings is the fact of death. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).
  - b. He called their attention to a fact known to them all: that God had not allowed a single promise he had made to them to go unfulfilled. This was a truth which they all knew in their hearts and souls. *Heart* and *soul* refers to the same part of a man—the eternal feature of his being, which

- contains the emotions, the mind, the will power, and the conscience.
- c. Since it is true that God had fulfilled the promises he had given them, and they had possession of the land, which was part of the great promise (Gen. 12:1-3), it follows that those men are wrong who assert that Israel never received the land promise. These false teachers maintain that the land promise will not be realized by Israel until the earthly kingdom of Christ is set up at the Second Coming of Christ. The kingdom has already come (Col. 1:13-14; Rev. 1:9); it is situated on earth, but was never intended to be a worldly institution (Luke 17:20-21; John 18:36; cf. Matt. 16:16-19; 19:28).
    - 1) Luke 17:20-21: "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."
    - 2) John 18:36: "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."
    - 3) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
    - 4) Revelation 1:9: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."
  2. Verses 15-16: "Therefore it shall come to pass, *that* as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you."
    - a. Joshua reminds them here that both God's promises and his warnings are certain. If the conditions are not met, the promises are not given; and if the conditions go unheeded, the warnings are sure to be applied. God is always true to his word, whether in offering promises of blessings or in giving threats of punishment.
    - b. Verse fifteen plainly states that God had given them the land! Hence, the premillennial theory is exploded, for one of its fundamental features is the denial that Israel has received the land of promise.
    - c. Obviously speaking by inspiration, Joshua declares that when the time comes when Israel will have transgressed the will of God, then his wrath will be poured upon them. The primary danger they faced at the time of Joshua's address was in turning from God to the gods of the Canaanites. The present generation remained faithful throughout the days of Joshua, and on through the rule of the elders who outlived Joshua. But the following generation fell victim to the very thing of which Joshua warned here! "And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel.... "And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel" (Judges 2:7,10).
    - d. The penalty of violating God's will would ultimately mean banishment from the land of promise. This was fulfilled when the Assyrians and the Babylonians carried the Israelites into captivity. It was also fulfilled when Rome conquered Jerusalem in 70 A.D., and expelled the
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Jews from the land. Even today, only a fraction of the Jewish people dwell in the land; the great portions of their people are still scattered through the world.

D. Some Other Passages Which Offer Timely Warnings.

1. Acts 20:27-32: "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."
  2. 2 Peter 1:12-15: "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance."
  3. 2 Timothy 4:1-8: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
  4. Matthew 10:34-39: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."
  5. 2 Peter 3:1-2: "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour."
  6. Deuteronomy 30:15-20: "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to
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Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

7. Romans 15:4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."
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## JOSHUA 24

### A. Joshua 24:1-13: Joshua Reminds Israel of their Blessings.

1. Verse 1: "And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God."
    - a. The ideal place for such a gathering was between Ebal and Gerizim where visitors have stated one's voice can be heard at unbelievable distances. (See McGarvey's comments in comments on Joshua 8:33).
    - b. The whole nation assembled at Shechem, which was near the natural amphitheater formed by the mountains of Ebal and Gerizim.
  2. Verses 2-3: "And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, *even* Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac."
    - a. The "other side of the flood" is a reference to the River Euphrates where Abraham and his forefathers lived. "And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt of old time beyond the River, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor: and they served other gods" (Josh. 24:2, ASV).
    - b. Abraham's father (Terah) and others of the family were idol-worshippers. Coffman cites a Jewish tradition which asserts that Abraham hated idolatry and was persecuted at Ur on account of his opposition (p.264). We have no Biblical reference to reveal the details of why God selected Abraham, but in some way this great man of faith had shown his worth to the Almighty. The very fact that he was willing to break with his father's idolatrous practices says much about his spiritual stature.
    - c. Genesis 12:1-3 gives the report (in past tense) of Abraham's call to leave Ur and his father's family. God led him into Canaan, and through the years, gave him Isaac and caused his seed to be multiplied.
  3. Verses 4-5: "And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. I sent Moses also and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did among them: and afterward I brought you out."
    - a. Continuing the survey of Hebrew history, Joshua calls their attention to God's giving Jacob and Esau to Isaac. Rebekah was barren for twenty years before she was enabled to conceive these twins.
    - b. Esau was given Seir as a possession, and dwelled there. Jacob and his children moved to Egypt. The Genesis record reveals the details of how Jacob's family came to take up residence there.
    - c. God sent Moses and Aaron, brought many plagues upon the Egyptians, and delivered Israel from their bondage there.
  4. Verses 6-8: "And I brought your fathers out of Egypt: and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red sea. And when they cried unto the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season. And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you: and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and I destroyed them from before you."
    - a. Joshua is the speaker here, but the words he uses are God's. Thus, God brought the preceding
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generation out of Egypt, and safely across the sea (the Red Sea). The Egyptians attempted to cross the sea in pursuit of Israel.

- b. Israel cried to the Lord, and he put darkness between them and the Egyptian army. The Egyptians were drowned in the sea, and Israel was safe.
  - c. Israel is further reminded of the many years their fathers spent in the wilderness, and how God brought them into the land of the Amorites, who lived on the east side of Jordan. These pagans put up a strong fight, but with God's help, Israel was able to subdue them, and to possess their land.
5. Verses 9-10: "Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you: But I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he blessed you still: so I delivered you out of his hand."
- a. As they neared the land of promise, King Balak of Moab hired a soothsayer by the name of Balaam to bring a curse upon Israel. A normal battle was not fought, but there was nevertheless a battle!
  - b. God turned Balaam's curse into a blessing, and delivered Israel out of the trouble Balak intended. The story is reported in Numbers 22-25.
6. Verses 11-13: "And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand. And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out from before you, *even* the two kings of the Amorites; *but* not with thy sword, nor with thy bow. And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat."
- a. Continuing the review of their recent history, God (through Joshua) reminds Israel that they had been able to cross over the Jordan River, and to conquer nearby Jericho. The report does not describe the details, but they were well familiar with the miraculous powers God manifested in those events.
  - b. No mention is made of hornets in the earlier detailed reports of the fighting to conquer Canaan, but the mention here is sufficient to show that somehow, at some point in the campaign, hornets were used to help drive out the Canaanites. Some scholars view the hornet of the text as a figure of speech, used to describe the inordinate fear with which God filled the hearts of the enemy.
    - 1) Exodus 23:28: "And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee."
    - 2) Numbers 22:3: "And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they were many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel."
  - c. It was not because of their own power or worth that they now dwelled in the land of Canaan, enjoying the cities and the fruits of the land. Without God's leadership and power, they could not have conquered the land. Moses warned them that there were dangers that accompanied such great blessings (Deut. 6:10-12). They would get to thinking that since they had this good land with its bounties, that they could relax, enjoy it, and ignore God.

B. Joshua 24:14-15: Joshua's Decision.

1. Verse 14: "Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD."
    - a. Joshua gives them a strong warning akin to that which Moses gave them earlier (Dt. 6:10-12).
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Although they had been successful in occupying the land, they must continue to fear God and to serve him in sincerity and truth. They now had the land, but they could lose it. Directly implied in this is the fact that they had a conditional grant to the land.

- 1) God must be feared (reverenced; held in awe). The greatness and holiness of God demand reverence of the most profound degree.
  - a) Exodus 3:4-6: "And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here *am* I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy ground. Moreover he said, I *am* the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God."
  - b) Psalms 89:7: "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him."
  - c) Ecclesiastes 5:1-2: "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."
  - d) Isaiah 6:1-5: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."
  - e) Hebrews 12:28-29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God *is* a consuming fire."
- 2) God is to be served; it is not enough that we profess faith in him. Service to God is to be sincerely done in accordance with truth. This is another way of saying that the only way we can serve God acceptably is to do so as he directs. No man has the ability to know the will of God except by the revelation God has given—his inspired word, the Bible.
  - a) 1 Corinthians 2:9-14: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned."
  - b) Ephesians 3:1-11: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of

Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

- c) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
  - d) Hebrews 1:1-4: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."
- b. The admonition of verse fourteen is two-fold: they were to fear and serve God; they were to shun the false gods which their forefathers served in Ur and their fathers served in Egypt. This reports that the Israelites had been guilty of idolatry while in Egypt. Certainly, such did not take place during the lifetime of Joseph; it must have developed later, after they were enslaved by the Egyptians.
2. Verse 15: "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."
- a. Joshua, speaking God's message, called on the Israelites to make a choice. If they thought it an evil thing to serve God, then make a choice among the so-called gods of whom they knew. Of course, Joshua is not telling them that it does not matter which God to serve! He is demanding that they make a commitment to serve the living God—they could not serve both God and an idol. "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD *be* God, follow him: but if Baal, *then* follow him. And the people answered him not a word" (1 Kings 18:21).
  - b. The gods which were on the other side of the flood were the gods Terah and others served in Ur of the Chaldees (24:2). The land of Canaan had a multitude of gods which the former inhabitants had served. It should have been clear to the Israelites that the gods of the Amorites were not worth serving, since they could not protect the Amorites! Only the God who called Abraham, delivered Israel from Egypt, brought many miraculous powers to bear against the enemies, led them through the Red Sea and the flooded Jordan River, drove out the Canaanites, and enabled Israel to subdue the land—only this God was worthy of reverence and service.
  - c. Joshua was a man of tremendous influence among the Israelites; they looked to him for guidance and counsel. He had never failed them. Therefore, when Joshua declared that he and his house would serve the Lord, it could be expected that the people would commit themselves
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to do the same. Influence is a powerful force for evil or for good.

- d. In making the statement of this passage, Joshua affirms in the strongest possible way that individuals have a choice in obeying or disobeying God. Calvinism repudiates this clear statement, affirming the absurd view that God made our choice for us (pro or con), before time began!

C. Joshua 24:16-25: The People Respond to Joshua's Charge.

1. Verses 16-18: "And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods; For the LORD our God, he *it is* that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he *is* our God."
  - a. The current generation was faithful to God; it was an abhorrent thing to them even to consider turning their back on the God who had done so much for them. They had beheld his mighty miracles, and were recipients of many bounties. There was scarcely an earthly power that could turn them away from their Benefactor!
  - b. They expressed their intention to serve God. Verse thirty-one shows that they lived up to their commitment, and served God all the days of Joshua and through all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua. They stated their purpose of heart to serve God, and lived up to their vow.
2. Verses 19-22: "And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he *is* an holy God; he *is* a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye *are* witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, *We are* witnesses."
  - a. To draw from the Israelites an even stronger commitment, Joshua reminds them that if they turn away from serving God, they will have committed a trespass which God would not overlook, but which he would surely punish.
  - b. He stated that God is holy and jealous; he cannot condone sin and will not fellowship one who is contaminated by sin. Joshua further affirmed that God would not forgive their transgressions. This was factual because the Mosaic Law contained no provision for removing the guilt of sin (Heb. 10:1ff; 9:22). Only the blood of Christ is able to cleanse sin.
    - 1) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
    - 2) Ephesians 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."
    - 3) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
    - 4) 1 Peter 1:18-25: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one

another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

- 5) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
  - c. If they forsook the Lord for idols, God would bring punishment upon them; this he would do despite the fact that they were now being blessed by the Lord. It seems strange, in view of this statement, that many today allege that once a man is saved, he has no reason to fear the wrath of God—that a child of God cannot fall into sin and be lost; this notion is repudiated on nearly every page of the Bible.
  - d. Once again, Israel affirms their loyalty to God, to serve him.
3. Verses 23-25: "Now therefore put away, *said he*, the strange gods which *are* among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel. And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem."
- a. It appears from this passage that there were some in Israel who had the inclination to serve idols. It might be that they had icons in their possession, perhaps taken from the cities they had captured in Palestine.
  - b. Joshua was seeking to destroy any propensity to idolatry from the nation, and to cause the people to commit themselves wholeheartedly to serve Almighty God. This was absolutely essential if they were to remain in God's favor.
  - c. A covenant was established on that day which bound Israel to obey the will of God. This was a very notable day, one which the people doubtless remembered the rest of their lives.

D. Joshua 24:26-33: The Book of Joshua Concludes.

1. Verses 26-28: "And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that *was* by the sanctuary of the LORD. And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God. So Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance."
  - a. Joshua wrote these words in the book of God's law. This means, of course, that the material he recorded became part of the inspired writings, which included the five books of the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
  - b. He set up a great stone under an oak at Shechem, which was near the sanctuary of the Lord. The Tabernacle evidently had been moved from Shiloh to Shechem; it was a movable tent, and could be erected at different places.
  - c. The great stone was to serve as a witness to the covenant which had been established at that place, the covenant being the promise Israel made to serve the Lord faithfully. When someone looked at this stone, it was to be a reminder to him of the commitment.
  - d. Following these events of that historic day, Joshua dismissed the people to return to their homes.
2. Verses 29-31: "And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathserah, which *is* in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash.
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And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel."

- a. Joshua died at the age of one hundred and ten years, the same age to which Joseph his ancestor had attained (Gen. 50:26). If we knew Joshua's age when he left Egypt, we would be able to know how long Israel had been in Palestine at this point.
  - b. His body was buried on his inheritance at Timnathserah, one the north side of the hill of Gaash.
  - c. The statement is given regarding the faithfulness of Israel. While Joshua lived, they were faithful; as long as the elders lived who survived Joshua, they were faithful. However, the time would come when they would become unfaithful. "And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel....And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel" (Judges 2:7,10).
3. Verse 32: "And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph."
- a. Joseph had given instructions before his death regarding the ultimate disposition of his remains.
    - 1) Genesis 50:25-26: "And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt."
    - 2) Exodus 13:19: "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you."
  - b. Joseph's body was buried in the parcel of ground which Jacob had bought at Shechem. This ground was assigned to the descendants of Joseph.
4. Verse 33: "And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him in a hill *that pertained to* Phinehas his son, which was given him in mount Ephraim."
- a. The final note of the book is a brief reference to the death of Eleazar, the son of Aaron. He was buried on a hill that was the possession of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, near Mount Ephraim.
  - b. The book of Judges begins at this point, and continues the annals of Israel into one of the most tumultuous periods of their long history.
5. Who wrote this last segment of Joshua? It appears clear that Joshua is the inspired author (24:26), at least through verse twenty-eight of this chapter. And it is possible, by inspiration, that he could have been guided to give the report of his own death, before the fact. However, God used more than one human instrument in revealing and recording his word, thus some other unnamed individual could have been employed in inscribing these lines, perhaps the author of the Book of Judges.
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## Preface and Acknowledgment

These various commentaries and other Biblical studies were developed through many years of hard and close study of the Bible. I have had an insatiable appetite to learn all of God's Word possible. I grew up in the Beans Creek Community of Coffee County Tennessee. My family started attending the Lord's church at Beans Creek in 1949, where I was privileged to have sister Ethel Croft as an outstanding Bible class teacher. All seven member of my father's family were baptized into Christ, plus my wife, Marie. Each of our five children also obeyed the gospel.

Sister Croft greatly encouraged me to study the Bible and to become a good worker for the Lord. I tried not to cause her any disappointment. In 1978, after preaching for many years, the brethren at Beans Creek invited me to conduct a gospel meeting. Sister Croft, though she was in advanced years and had to drive a good distance, did not miss any of the services.

Since first becoming acquainted with the gospel more than seventy years ago, I have had the honor to hear some of the greatest gospel preachers of the time. Some of these well-known to most members of the Lord's church, but some of them labored in the shadows, learning and dispensing the truth of God quietly and effectively. Not so many people in the brotherhood today knew such preachers as Luke Gibbs and Henry Simmons. I have learned much and have been profited greatly from many gospel preachers and teachers through these many years. I am fully appreciative also to those many sound brethren who have published books which I have had the privilege to study. I began preaching in July of 1961 in Italy.

A debt of gratitude is owed by many to the instructors of Memphis School of Preaching for the tremendous work they did through the years, patiently teaching their students the wonderful word of life. I am especially grateful to these great men who were serving in this capacity during 1970-72, when I attended the school: Roy Hearn, Frank Young, Richard Curry, Charles Pledge, Ray Hawk and E.L. Whitaker.

I claim no originality for all of the material presented in the material included in my books. There is no way to give proper credit to all who have contributed to the information I have learned, but in every case possible, acknowledgment is cited. I have attempted to be as accurate, clear and concise as my finite knowledge allows, but, as with all human productions, there will doubtless be imperfections. Our grasp of the infinite will of God is not absolute, despite the diligence of our efforts; there is always more to learn.

Some have incorrectly thought that my books are merely expansions of the notes I took while studying at MSOP. But those notes were skimpy at best, and were not in my possession when I wrote my material. The notes were put together in connection with Bible classes I have taught over much time. For several years, a hundred or more hours weekly were required as I prepared to teach two different Bible books each week, Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, while at the same time, during full-time work as a gospel preacher. These notes became the "Outlined Bible Commentaries" that have been made available to countless people. "Outlined" does not imply skimpy—these are full-length books.

It has not been my aim to make money through these efforts—indeed, we barely cover our expenses. Many of my books have been given away without charge to the recipients. An uncounted numbers of books and compact discs were ordered and shipped out, for which no payment was ever received. A good many of these non-paying costumers were gospel preachers. I have learned from brethren who operated Bible Bookstores that they have had the same problem. One of these brethren reported that he had to secure his supply of Bibles, in locked cases, to prevent their being stolen by preachers. How sad!

The Bible quotations in my books are from the King James Version, unless noted otherwise. These books were intentionally put on 8.5 by 11 inch pages, to make the outline format easier to view. A normal hardback book contains about 800 words per page; my pages contain twice that number of words. The spiral-bound books are much less expensive to produce. My wife and I have done all the manual labor required to produce the books. The supplies, software and equipment are very costly. Marie still helps as much as she can despite the dementia she has had for several years— and her many surgeries and broken bones and heartaches.