

# God is Fighting for You

A study in the book of Joshua

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**AUTHOR**

The author of the book of Joshua is unknown. But from some clues, we see that the author (or editor) must have lived the same time as Joshua or immediately after him. For example, the author (or editor) says that Rahab was still living.

**AUDIENCE**

The audience is the Israelites. The book was written for them, not only to chronicle the history and success of Joshua but also to record the boundaries of each tribe's land. Even until the time when Israel and Judah was conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians, respectively, the Israelites would have used the book of Joshua as their law in regard to which tribe owned which land and which city. In the same way, they would have used Joshua to know which cities belonged to the Levites and which cities were cities of refuge.

We begin Joshua with the people ready to enter the Promised Land. What God originally promised to Abraham, the people have not received yet.

This is where the Sadducees' Bible ended.

**STYLE**

The style is historical. In the sections that list the towns and boundaries of the tribes, those sections are more in the style of law.

**THEME: God fights your battles; Joshua as a leader.**

The theme of this class will be how God fights and Joshua leads. There are two relationships at hand: (1) everyone's relationship to God and how God is the one who fights our battles and (2) Joshua as a good leader of the people. With God, notice how little fighting the Israelites actually did. The book is a great picture of Joshua as a leader. As there was with Moses, there are a lot of "case studies" in this book that address the difficulties in leading people.

Josh 23:3, "You have seen for yourselves everything the Lord your God did to all these nations on your account, because it was the Lord your God who was fighting for you."

Other Scriptures that show the Lord fighting for His people: 5:13-15.

**ABOUT JOSHUA**

Joshua was the direct successor to Moses. Moses and Joshua were the only singular leaders of the Israelites until the time of the kings—under Saul. One of the themes of this book is leadership. Both Moses and Joshua in the Bible make for great character studies on leadership. While one theme will be leadership, the main theme of the book has to do with God. [Read the main theme above.]

Joshua, the servant of God defeats KINGS! Joshua did it all without a title!!!

**Joshua's history**

Joshua is mentioned a few times in Exodus. He is called the minister to Moses. He is also seen as a commander of the army.

In Numbers 11, Joshua speaks. He complains about how some of the tribal leaders (who stayed in the camp) were prophesying in the Spirit. Moses rebukes Joshua's complaint.

In Numbers 13, Joshua is one of the Twelve Spies sent into Canaan. He is one of the two spies who give a positive report. Here, we learn that Joshua is from the tribe of Ephraim, which was the youngest born tribe. So Joshua is a son of Joseph. On top of that, Joseph's wife was Egyptian, which means that the tribe of Ephraim (and Joshua specifically?) was half-Egyptian. (Over and over, I am amazed by how much of Egypt is in God's people. Moses was raised by Egyptians. His name is an Egyptian name for crying out loud! I think God did this on purpose to prove that it is not genetics nor genealogy that determine a person's worth. It is their faith. As we will see, Joshua becomes a strong person of faith and a successful leader.) What tribe was Moses from? Levi. We usually hear about Judah and Benjamin a lot. In fact, Reuben was the firstborn of Jacob. Yet, I find it

amazing that God chose Moses, a Levite, to be the first leader of Israel and Joshua, an Ephraimite, as the second leader. Why those tribes, I wonder?? Was it to show that faith is not a result of genetics?

After Numbers 14, 40 years past in the wilderness. God “killed” everyone 20 years old or more... but not Joshua and Caleb. Therefore, when we begin our story, we have a new generation of Israelites who did not witness the things that were done in Egypt. Joshua would become the leader of this new generation.

When it was Moses’ time to die, God appointed a successor to him. My first guess that the leader of Israel should be the High Priest, right? That would keep the leadership in the same tribe, Levi, and family, Moses-Aaron’s family. But God chooses Joshua. He’s not “the right choice” when it comes family/tribe. But he is the right choice when it comes to practicality! Joshua had already been Moses’ servant. Joshua was already trained by the leader of the Israelites.

#### Joshua’s name

Joshua’s original name was Hoshea. In Numbers 13:16, Moses renames Joshua. The meaning of his named changed from “savior” to “God saves.” His full name is Joshua son of Nun.

In Greek, his name is Iesous. Can you think of someone else who also was named Iesous in the New Testament? Jesus! In the languages of the Bible, Joshua and Jesus have the same name (Acts 7:45, Heb 4:8).

Why do English translations have a different name for Jesus? Here is how the name evolved over time.

1. Joshua’s name was originally Hoshea (H1954).
2. Moses changed it to Yehoshua (H3091).
3. After the exile, when the Jews spoke Aramaic, Joshua’s Aramaic name was Yeshua (H3442).
4. Then, when Jews added Greek to their languages, Joshua’s name in Greek was Iesous (G2424).  
When Jesus was named, he was named the same as Joshua: Iesous. That is Jesus’ name through the New Testament. So when you read Joshua’s name in the New Testament, it reads exactly like Jesus’ name: Iesous (see Acts 7:45, Heb 4:8).
5. When people started speaking Latin because of the Roman Empire, the Bible was translated into Latin, and their name in Latin was Iesvs.
6. When their name was translated (transliterated) from Latin to English, their name was Jesus.

In summary, If we had taken Jesus’ name from the Aramaic (like we still do for Joshua), then Jesus’ name would be Joshua too. However, we English speakers have inherited Jesus’ name from Latin. That is Jesus’ name is Jesus and not Joshua. But again, they have the same name! It would be totally fine to call Jesus: Joshua of Nazareth. It would be totally fine to call Joshua: Jesus son of Nun. I believe God did this on purpose. Are there any spiritual similarities between Joshua and Jesus? We will see! Obviously, one similarity is the meaning of their name: God saves.

## Book of Joshua - Outline

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- 1:1-18**      Becoming the leader of Israel.
  - 1:1-9      God speaks to Joshua.
  - 1:10-15    Joshua prepares the people.
  - 1:16-18    The people fully support Joshua.
- 2:1-24**      The spies in Jericho and Rahab.
  - 2:1-7      Rahab hides the Jericho spies.
  - 2:8-21     Rahab's faith and her covenant with the spies.
  - 2:22-24    The spies report to Joshua.
- 3:1-4:24**    Crossing the Jordan and the monuments of stones.
  - 3:1-13     The Israelites break camp.
  - 3:14-17    Crossing the Jordan.
  - 4:1-8      The tribes gather stones.
  - 4:9-18     Finishing the crossing and Joshua's monument of stones.
  - 4:19-24    The Israelites camp and the tribes' monument of stones.
- 5:1-15**      First time in Canaan.
  - 5:1-9      First circumcision since Egypt.
  - 5:10-12    Passover and the manna cease.
  - 5:13-15    Commander of the Lord's Army.
- 6:1-27**      Battle of Jericho.
  - 6:1-7      Preparation for a week of marching.
  - 6:8-14     A week of marching.
  - 6:15-21    Seventh marching and victory over Jericho.
  - 6:22-25    Rahab and her family made safe.
  - 6:26-27    Joshua's curse on Jericho and his fame.
- 7:1-26**      Battle of Ai (defeat).
  - 7:1         Achan takes some treasure.
  - 7:2-5      First battle of Ai.
  - 7:6-15     Joshua's conversation with God.
  - 7:16-26    Achan's family is found and executed.
- 8:1-9:2**     Battle of Ai (victory).
  - 8:1-9      Preparation for the second battle.
  - 8:10-29    Second battle of Ai.
  - 8:30-35    Joshua establishes an altar, the written Law, and the reading of the Law.
  - 9:1-2      Amorites and Canaanites form an alliance.
- 9:3-27**      Gibeon.
  - 9:3-15     Gibeon's deception and treaty.
  - 9:16-21    Israel upholds the treaty with Gibeon.
  - 9:22-27    Israel's "punishment" on Gibeon.
- 10:1-43**     Battle of Five Amorite Kings and victory over their cities.
  - 10:1-4     Alliance of five Amorite kings.
  - 10:5-11    Battle of five kings at Gibeon.
  - 10:12-15   Joshua asks for the sun to be still.
  - 10:16-27   Aftermath of the battle.
  - 10:28-39   Joshua attacks the cities of the five kings.
  - 10:40-43   Summary of Joshua's victories in the south.
- 11:1-23**     The Amorite-Canaanite alliance.
  - 11:1-5     The alliance mobilizes.
  - 11:6-15    Battle of the alliance and the attacks on their cities.
  - 11:16-23   Summary of Joshua's conquest of the land.
- 12:1-21:45**  Dividing the land.
  - 12:1-6     East of the Jordan.
  - 12:7-16a   West of the Jordan and south of Jerusalem.
  - 12:16b-24   West of the Jordan and north of Jerusalem.
  - 13:1-7     God tells Joshua that he is old but there is more land to conquer.
  - 13:8-33    Land for Manasseh, Reuben, and Gad.
  - 14:1-5     Land for the Israelite leaders.
  - 14:6-15    Land for Caleb.

- 15:1-12 Land for Judah.
- 15:13-19 Caleb's family's conquest of the Hebron region.
- 15:20-63 Land for Judah.
- 16:1-4 Land for Ephraim-Manasseh (Joseph), west of the Jordan.
- 16:5-10 Land for Ephraim.
- 17:1-13 Land for Manasseh, west of the Jordan.
- 17:14-18 Ephraim and Manasseh complain to Joshua.
- 18:1-10 Preparing to divide the land for the remaining seven tribes.
- 18:11-28 Land for Benjamin.
- 19:1-9 Land for Simeon.
- 19:10-16 Land for Zebulun.
- 19:17-23 Land for Issachar.
- 19:24-31 Land for Asher.
- 19:32-39 Land for Naphtali.
- 19:40-48 Land for Dan.
- 19:49-51 City for Joshua.
- 20:1-9 Six cities of refuge.
- 21:1-12 Land for the Levites...
- 21:13-19 Land for the priests.
- 21:20-26 Land for the Kohathites.
- 21:27-33 Land for the Gershonites.
- 21:34-42 Land for the Merarites.
- 21:43-45 Dividing the land - Conclusion.
- 22:1-34** Dispute over the eastern tribes' altar.
  - 22:1-8 Joshua releases the three tribes to return to their land east of the Jordan.
  - 22:9-12 Eastern tribes build an altar which infuriates the western tribes.
  - 22:13-20 The western tribes' accusation.
  - 22:21-29 The eastern tribes' defense.
  - 22:30-34 Result of the conflict.
- 23:1-16** Joshua's farewell address.
- 24:1-31** Israel's history.
  - 24:1-13 God's testimony to Israel (through Joshua).
  - 24:14-28 Israel's covenant with God (through Joshua).
  - 24:29-31 Death and burial of Joshua, Joseph, and Eleazar.

## **Book of Joshua – Suggested 18-Week Schedule**

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<b><u>Week</u></b>	<b><u>Scriptures</u></b>
1	Introduction, Joshua 1:1-9
2	Joshua 1:10-2:7
3	Joshua 2:8-3:13
4	Joshua 3:14-4:24
5	Joshua 5:1-15
6	Joshua 6:1-21
7	Joshua 6:22-7:5
8	Joshua 7:6-26
9	Joshua 8:1-9:2
10	Joshua 9:3-27
11	Joshua 10:1-15
12	Joshua 10:16-43
13	Joshua 11:1-23
14	Joshua 13:1-7, 14:6-15, 15:13-19
15	Joshua 17:14-18, 19:49-51, 21:43-45, 22:1-8
16	Joshua 22:9-34
17	Joshua 23:1-24:13
18	Joshua 23:14-33

The theme of Joshua's book is how God is fighting our battles ([Josh 23:3](#)). "You have seen for yourselves everything the Lord your God did to all these nations on your account, because it was the Lord your God who was fighting for you." Joshua is a great leader, but look at how little fighting the Israelites actually did. God goes before them to fight their battles!

The style of Joshua's book focuses on how God fights their battles, Joshua's good leadership and relationship with the people, and God's relationship with everyone

The translation I mostly use is the Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB).

### **1:1-9 God speaks to Joshua.**

The Lord's servant. Moses is called the Lord's servant, and he was! We see through earlier accounts about Joshua that he was the servant of Moses. There was a hierarchy of servanthood. But now, with Moses' death, Joshua becomes servant of the Lord. Hence, this is why we start this book with God speaking directly to Joshua. Joshua is now in the place of Moses, so God is speaking directly to him now.

The land I am giving the Israelites. What is happening right now is the beginning of the end of God's promise that he made to Abraham about 500 years later. This is it! The beginning of the Hebrew people comes down to this. Not only were the people saved from slavery, but now they will be given a land they did not cultivate. THIS is the book where God's promise to Abraham about the Promised Land is fulfilled! (There were 430 years from the promise to Abraham until Mount Sinai ([Gal 3:17](#)). There was 40 or more years from Sinai until the crossing the Jordan.)

I have given you. Notice how God says this in verse 3. He speaks in past tense. God has already given them the land. It's already theirs; they just have to take it!

Lebanon, Euphrates, Mediterranean. To get an idea of the scope of land they are about to possess, God gives these geographical markers. (1) The wilderness of Lebanon is the northern border. It looks like the border is the same as the border of today's nation of Israel. However, the Promised Land includes both Tyre and Sidon (which today is in Lebanon). (2) The great Euphrates River is the eastern border. This is interesting. If the Euphrates is the eastern border, then the Promised Land goes all the way through Lebanon and halfway through Syria, including Damascus. Based on every map, the Promised Land does not go as far as the Euphrates. The only thought I have is that the Israelites will find themselves traveling as far as the Euphrates (for trade or to chase the Canaanites). But this phrase about the Euphrates matches the mention of the Hittites. The Hittites lived in modern day Syria and Turkey, which would include the Euphrates. (3) The Mediterranean Sea is the western border. This is the most obvious border. The nation that lived along the Mediterranean were the Philistines. As we know, the Israelites did not conquer the Philistines, so the Philistines caused trouble all the way through the time of the Israelite kings. (4) Why does God not mention the southern border? To the south is the desert of the Negev, Arabia, and Egypt. I think it would be more than obvious to the Israelites that they would not be conquering Egypt. Plus, the Israelites already travelled through Arabia, so that would not be part of the Promised Land.

No one will be able to stand against you. Wow, what a promise to Joshua! God is spoiling how things will end: Joshua will always be victorious for his whole life.

Be strong and courageous. THIS is the primary message God has for Joshua. God tells this to Joshua three times in this chapter (1:6, 1:7, 1:9). Look at the progression of how God says it... Be strong and courageous. Above all, be strong and VERY courageous. Haven't I told you to be strong and courageous? Joshua has what is important. Joshua already has everything he needs. What's left is for him to do it (take the land). Joshua can be strong and courageous because it is God who has made him strong and courageous! Look at the end of verse 9, the main reason Joshua can be strong and courageous is because God is with him wherever he goes.

Carefully observe this book of instruction. Being strong and courageous is the primary and most important thing God is trying to tell Joshua. That is what he should focus on. But with that, five times God tells Joshua to observe the book of the Law. Take a close look at verse 7 and 8. Twice, God says that Joshua's success depends on how carefully he is in observing the Law (Torah).

### **1:10-15 Joshua prepares the people.**

Go in and take the inheritance. Now is the time! In less than three days, the people will be entering the Promised Land. In less than three days, the Promised Land will become “the Fulfilled Land.” What a reason to get excited!

Reuben, Gad, Manasseh. You might remember that these three tribes really liked the land on the east side of the Jordan, where they are now. They didn’t want the Promised Land that God originally wanted to give them. So they requested that they have the land where they are, and God fully allowed that. These verses here are when Joshua reminds them that, just because they are keeping the land where they are now, this does not mean they are exempt from going into the Promised Land and fighting as a unified Twelve Tribes. As you can see, Joshua says that the fighting men from these three tribes are to cross the Jordan and fight. But the rest of the people of those three tribes are able to permanently settle to where they are.

### **1:16-18 The people fully support Joshua.**

Strong and courageous. In 1:18, it is the people who tell Joshua to be strong and courageous. Not only are the people supporting Joshua. But they are supporting God in God’s message to Joshua. There is a beautiful three-way relationship where everyone is supporting everyone. God, Joshua, and the people are all on the same, courageous page.

### **2:1-7 Rahab hides the Jericho spies.**

Two spies. Joshua says they are crossing the Jordan in less than three days. So, these two spies have less than that to scout out Jericho and the surrounding land.

Acacia Grove. Hebrew: Shittim. As a proper noun, the place is called Shittim. Shittim means Acacia trees. One commentary says that this place is 6 miles east of the Jordan River. If that is the case, this is modern Juwafat al-Kafrayn or Ar-Rawda, Jordan. Jericho is also about 5 miles away from the Jordan River, so the Israelites are about 11 miles away from Jericho. (11 miles would be from Lewisville to Farmers Branch or Lewisville to the north side of Corinth. The Israelites are over a half million people, which is like 4 Lewisvilles!)

Came to the house of Rahab. From verse 2-3, it seems apparent that these spies are not the sneakiest spies. The people of Jericho know that these men are Israelites. Is that why the spies ended up staying with Rahab? Was it because no one in town would take in two Israelite men? Is this prostitute the only person who is welcoming these men? In any case, you have a situation where a prostitute is welcoming men of God. Can you think of another time when prostitutes welcomed a Man of God? Just as Jesus accepted them and their faith, we will see that Joshua accepts Rahab and her faith.

King of Jericho. Less than 15 miles away from Jericho, there is a travelling nation of over a half million people. Next, you hear about how two men from this travelling nation are staying in Jericho. Why else would those men be there except to spy out the area? After all, this is the nation, who a generation before defeated the might of the Egyptian Empire. The king of Jericho does have reason to fear. I’m sure he expects that this travelling nation will either pass by or attack Jericho.

Rahab hid them. What Rahab does for the spies is considered a great example of faith. As we will see in verses 9-13, Rahab’s faith is in God. She knew the stories of what God did at the Red Sea and what God did to the Amorites. Rahab knew who these men (spies) were, and she knew who their God is. Because of this, Rahab showed great faith in God by hiding the Israelite spies and by sending the spies from Jericho a different way. The Hebrew writer wrote, “By faith, Rahab the prostitute received the spies in peace and didn’t perish with those who disobeyed” (Heb 11:31). James wrote, “Wasn’t Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by a different route?” (Jam 2:25).

I didn’t know where they were from. Rahab tells [king? soldiers?] Jericho that she did not know where the men were from and that the men just escaped the city through the gate. I don’t think there is any way to sugarcoat what Rahab is doing here. She straight up lied. Note that when the Hebrews writer and James speaks about the righteousness of Rahab, they do not mention her lie. They say that Rahab had great faith by receiving the spies, sent them out another way, and did not die with those who disobeyed. So yeah, Rahab is a liar. But I would like to point out that she is also a prostitute. In fact, both the Hebrews writer and James refer to her in that way: Rahab the prostitute. Now, do you think the Israelites would have been OK with Rahab continuing her prostitution as she was assimilated into the people? No, while prostitution was not condemned in the Law of Moses, it was considered to be



highly shameful. When Rahab assimilated into the Israelite people, I believe she gave up her prostitution. I also think she gave up her lying also. Remember: at this time, all Rahab understands is that the God of the Israelites is the true God (as we will see in the next verses). It is because of her great, GREAT faith in God that she is considered righteous in these events. Her faith is truly great and absolutely remarkable. For someone who hasn't read the Law of Moses yet, I for one would give her a pass on her lying and prostitution. Again, I fully doubt that she would have continued in those things after reading the Law of Moses.

Flax. What is flax? Flax is linen, the material to make clothes. In the Hebrew, it says "stalks of linen." So really, the spies are hiding in what we call the flax plant. In the Greek, it says "linoleum," which was the material to make the floor. If this is the accurate reading, then the spies are hiding in the flooring of house above Rahab's house, which was made from the flax plant also.

Fords of Jordan. The Jericho soldiers "chased" the spies to the obvious places they expected them to go: any one of the Jordan crossings in order to return to the Israelite camp.

### **2:8-21 Rahab's faith and her covenant with the spies.**

Said to them. This incredibly beautiful confession of faith should cause us to pause. Not only does Rahab show an enormous amount of faith, an amount of faith that up to this time, the Israelites should be jealous of, but Rahab completely understands the point of the book of Joshua. Remember the theme: God is fighting your battles! Rahab understands this better than the majority of the Israelites! If the Israelites had Rahab's level of faith, they would have entered the Promised Land 40 years earlier. Jesus' observation in the gospels is the same as it is here, "I assure you: tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you!" (Matt 21:31). There, Jesus was talking to the scribes and Pharisees, the ones who were "supposed" to believe. Instead, the righteous ones were the ones who had FAITH. In that case, the prostitutes and tax collectors had greater faith than the Jewish leaders. In our story, we see that the prostitute Rahab is like them because she is putting her faith in God of heaven and earth.

The Lord has given you this land. Not only has Rahab heard of the stories of God did at the Red Sea and with the Amorites, but Rahab has also heard of God's promise to Abraham! Why else would she say that the Lord has given them this land (also note the past tense)?

We lost heart. Rahab is speaking for the city of Jericho. When they had heard the stories of the Red Sea and the Amorites, they lost heart. Yet, we see that Rahab and her family appear to be the only ones in Jericho who have developed any kind of faith in God. Look at the anguish Rahab says Jericho is going through: terror, panic (Hebrew: fainting), loosing heart (Hebrew: melting hearts; Greek: astounded in heart), and failed courage (Greek: no longer a spirit standing). And what did the city of Jericho do with these stories of God? Did they submit to the stories? No, they stood their ground in pride and continued to oppose God. No wonder the Hebrews writer said, "By faith, Rahab the prostitute received the spies in peace and didn't perish with those who disobeyed" (Heb 11:31). The rest of Jericho is disobeying the message they have heard about the God of heaven and earth. Instead, Rahab has denied her Canaanite gods and is submitting herself to the God of Israel.

Show kindness because I showed kindness to you. What is Rahab saying here? Is she saying, "I've done something for you, so now you owe me something in return?" I don't think that is the case at all. This is still part of Rahab's faith. First, she hears the stories of what God has done for the Israelites, then she develops faith in God as the true God, and that is why she hid God's spies. By hiding God's spies, she is telling the spies, "See, the kindness I have shown you proves that I'm on God's side." In other words, Rahab's works in hiding the spies proved her faith in God. Remember what James said, "Wasn't Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by a different route?" (Jam 2:25). James explains to us how the works of faith justify us. "I will show you faith from my works.... Wasn't Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the alter? You see that faith was active together with his works, and by works, faith was perfected" (Jam 2:18, 2:21-22). Works of faith PROVE our faith. Therefore, Rahab not only had faith in God, but she was given a great opportunity to demonstrate her faith in God by hiding the spies. At the same time, Rahab knows that faith in God is rewarded by God, so she asks the Israelites to spare her whole family. She is not owed it; she is requesting it.

The men answered. The men promise to Rahab (with their lives) that they will return kindness and faithfulness to her.

Hide yourselves for three days. (1) Rahab gives more good advice to the spies. This final act that Rahab does for them is mentioned by James. (2) When Joshua sent out the spies, he said that they would be crossing the Jordan within three days. If the spies stay in the hill country for three more days, then would their mission last an extra day?

The spies' covenant with Rahab. Verses 17-20 are interesting. The spies and Rahab are making an oath to each other. The spies have put their own lives on the line in order to make sure Rahab is spared. Rahab's life is already on the line, being a resident of Jericho, so her part of the oath is to tie a scarlet rope in her window. The purpose of this is so that all of the Israelite army will know that Rahab and her whole family is to be spared. Now, what is the real reason why Rahab and her family are spared? Is it because of some great work Rahab did? No. Was it because of an oath that she made with the spies? No. The real reason Rahab and her family are spared is because of her FAITH! It was Rahab's faith that led to all of those other things.

### **2:22-24 The spies report to Joshua.**

Hill country. Jericho is surrounded by some hills/mountains on the west and north side. The Jericho soldiers are looking for the spies along the Jordan, which is on the east side. So the spies were able to hide in a safe and relatively nearby place until the Jericho soldiers gave up the search.

Reported to Joshua. The spies report to Joshua what they learned about Jericho. The spies give a good report, repeating what Rahab said about the Canaanites: they are fainting because of the Israelites. I'm sure the spies report about everything they did, including Rahab and the covenant they made with her. In chapter 6 right before the Israelites conquer Jericho, Joshua will remind the army that Rahab and her whole family will live.

### **3:1-13 The Israelites break camp.**

After three days. In Joshua 1:11, Joshua tells the people they will be crossing the Jordan within three days. There are two possibilities here. First, Joshua meant that the people had three days to prepare to leave Acacia Grove (Shittim) and they will walk a few miles to Jordan. I think this is unlikely because Joshua had said that they would be crossing the Jordan within three days. Second, I think what we are reading here is happening while the spies are in and around Jericho. That is, when the officers are going around the camp is the same time that the two spies are returning from Jericho.

You haven't travelled this way before. In all of the Israelite history, God's promise to Abraham has come to this point. With the exception of how God defeated the Egyptians, this is one of the most significant events in the Israelite nation! Of course, I'm sure they are VERY excited! So the officers tell them to have patience and ask them to cross the Jordan in an orderly fashion. Even though God has already prepared and given the Promised Land to the Israelites, the Israelites must remember that God will give them the land in the proper time. The Israelites are not to rush God as God leads them. (Repeat that!) I think there is an important lesson here for us. As for me, this is a lesson I learned the hard way. As I went through the most difficult years of my life, I remember demanding that God DO SOMETHING. Have you ever thought, "If God is all powerful and all good, then why doesn't God just make it right??" or, "Hurry up!!" But, I have learned I cannot rush God. I've seen how God is all powerful and all good. And God also works in His perfect timing. While I wait for God to do His thing, I have seen how God uses that time to TRAIN ME. God trains my patience, building it. God trains my love for Him, growing it. God trains me in relying on Him, showing me how much I must depend on Him. I believe God is reminding the Israelites of this. Just because God has great blessings planned for His people, God still expects His people to continue viewing God as the One who is ALWAYS guiding the people in every way. It doesn't matter how great life is or how hard life is, we must let God set the pace for us because He knows best.

Consecrate yourselves. Joshua is telling the people to be ceremonially clean or holy. There are so many laws about this. For example: touching a dead body, having sex, or giving birth made a person unclean. Sometimes, what the Israelites had to do to be clean lasted a few days. But most of the laws on cleanliness simply instructed the Israelites to wash and wait until sunset. Therefore, Joshua is telling the people that if anyone is unclean, they are to make sure they are clean for tomorrow, and they are to keep themselves from things that make them unclean (like touching a dead body or having sex) until after the crossing. You might remember that God asked the same thing of the

Israelites before they approached God's presence at Mount Sinai. What the Israelites are about to do is so important and awesome, Joshua asks the same thing from them.

Choose 12 men from each tribe. Verses 1-13 is instruction after instruction as God and Joshua prepare the people to cross: the people have arrived, the people are to be consecrated, the Ark is ready to move, and the tribes select men for a special task.

### **3:14-17 Crossing the Jordan.**

Harvest season. In the Jewish calendar, the harvest season is between Passover and Pentecost, a span of 50 days. Typically, this is early April to late May. Joshua 4:19 tells us exactly which day the Israelites crossed the Jordan.

Flowing downstream. From the way the river is described, God backs up the river. From the crossing downstream to the Dead Sea, the water "empties." But from the crossing upstream, the water backs up. The Jordan has high banks, but I'm sure some areas of the Jordan valley experienced flooding.

Adam, Zarethan. Today, this place is called Jisr ed Damiye (Bridge of Damieh) or Gesher Adam. The closest modern city is Damia, Jordan. As the crow flies, this is 18 miles north of where the Israelites crossed. Zarethan is hard to locate where it was. Some believe it is Succoth (modern day Shlomsiyon?), this is extremely close to Gesher Adam.

Dry ground. (1) I'm sure everyone remembers that the Israelites crossed the Red Sea under the same conditions. The Israelites who saw the crossing of the Red Sea have nearly all died. This new generation didn't get to see it. But here, they experience the same thing, although it is on a MUCH smaller scale. (2a) When the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, it was a moment of salvation for them. God used the Red Sea as the pathway to save the Israelites and destroy their enemies. I see similarities in the salvation that Jesus brought by bringing the gospel to humanity. The same gospel that brings salvation to the faithful is the same gospel that will condemn those who reject it. Jesus uses a number of illustrations to show this. First is a winnowing fork. The fork separates the wheat from the chaff—while the wheat remains, the chaff is blown to the wind. Second is when Jesus says that everyone will be baptized with fire. God's fire is able to baptize people with the Holy Spirit. And God is able to use fire in a place where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. I see this in the Red Sea, the same Red Sea that brought salvation to God's people also destroyed their enemies. (2b) When the Israelites crossed the Jordan River, it was another moment of salvation for them. God used the Jordan as the pathway from being sojourners and wilderness people into becoming a people with a home that God had promised to them. The New Testament also speaks of two salvations, so to speak. There is the salvation we receive from sin and Satan when we are baptized into Christ. But there is also the salvation to come on Judgment day, when God completes His salvation for us. (Matt 10:22, "The one who endures to the end will be saved," Rom 5:9-10, Rom 13:11, "Knowing the time, it is already the hour for you to wake up from sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed," 1Thes 5:9, Php 2:12, 1Tim 4:16, Heb 9:28, Jam 1:21, 1Pet 1:5,9, "You are being protested by God's power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time... because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.") As I said, I see God using the Jordan as a pathway from their sojourning and being a wilderness people by giving them a home that God has promised to them. And when it comes to our final salvation, the home that God has promised for us is a new heaven and a new earth, which is our future salvation. (3) I can think of another parallel. In Luke 19 Jesus gives a parable of slaves who are given responsibilities with minas. As their reward, the Master puts them in charge of ten cities and five cities. (And you have the slave who hid his mina in a cloth.) We have the same thing here. After Joshua defeats the enemies of the land, Joshua gives cities and cities and cities to various tribes. I think there is a connection between that and Jesus' parable about this second/future moment of salvation.

### **4:1-8 The tribes gather stones.**

Memorial. For me, the stones act as evidence that a miracle happened. And that is the case! But God also wants these stones to act as a memorial that point to Him. It's not just about the fact that God performed a miracle. It's about bringing glory to a God who has performed miracles!

### **4:9-18 Finishing the crossing and Joshua's monument of stones.**

Middle of the Jordan. It seems a little confusing, but there seems to be two monuments of stones. First, the man from each tribe is taking a stone from the Jordan and setting up a monument on the west side of Jordan. Second, Joshua is making a monument of stones in the Jordan River, at the place where the Ark waited for the people to cross.

Continued standing. The priest who were holding the Ark stood for a long time! They waited as more than a half million people crossed the Jordan.

In front of the Israelites. (1) Verse 12 and 13 remind us that the fighting men of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh crossed first, with the rest of their tribes remaining on the east side of the Jordan, and everyone from the other 9 tribes crossing the river. (2) Why did the soldiers of these three tribes cross first? I think this is because these three tribes already have their inheritance while the other tribes do not. Three tribes have already been blessed by God, so the three tribes are being a blessing to the other tribes who don't have their inheritance yet. In short, they are helping bear the burdens of the Israelites who are still lacking.

40,000. This is a wild guess, but if the fighting men from 3 tribes equals 40,000, then the fighting men from all tribes might equal around 160,000 men. I'm sure some tribes were much larger than others, so this is a guess.

Lord exalted Joshua. There is a mutual exalting in verses 14-18. First, the Lord exalted Joshua as leader of the people. With this tremendous miracle, God puts His stamp of approval on Joshua in the sight of all the people. The people see it and fear (literally: fear) Joshua "throughout his life" just as they feared Moses. Second, God exalts Himself by using the Ark. It wasn't Joshua who split the water as Moses did with his staff. This time, Joshua split the water using the Ark, which is God's presence. The people see how the Ark (God's presence) was what split the waters.

#### **4:19-24 The Israelites camp and the tribes' monument of stones.**

Tenth day of first month. Nisan 10. Passover is at sunset on Nisan 14, which is four days away.

Gilgal. (1) At this time, there is no town or area called Gilgal. Between Jericho and the Jordan are open plains. As we will see in Joshua 5:9, Joshua will name the area where they are camping as Gilgal. Gilgal would be identified by this monument of stones. (2) In chapters 9 and 10, we see that Gilgal becomes Joshua's base of operations.

Eastern limits of Jericho. Knowing the geography, this statement blows me away. For over a half million people to fit on the eastern side of Jericho, they are taking up all the space between Jericho and the Jordan River. The Israelites are probably taking up more land than the city of Jericho itself.

12 stones. These are the 12 stones that the men from each tribe pulled from the Jordan River. This was to become a memorial to what God did this day!

#### **5:1-9 First circumcision since Egypt.**

Amorite kings. The Amorites were mentioned in Deut 1, 3, and 4. From the locations given, it looks like the Amorites were a culture of people who had many kings. These people seemed to have ruled around the Dead Sea (both east and west sides) and even had area that went west as far as Hebron. At this point, the Israelites had already defeated two powerful kings: Sihon and Og, who were on the east side of Jordan. This verse is referring to the Amorite kings west of the Jordan—who knew that the Israelites might conquer them also.

Canaanite kings near the sea. I believe this is referring to the Dead Sea. The book of Joshua is telling us that the kingdoms of the Amorites and basically everyone else too have lost courage.

None born in the wilderness were circumcised since Egypt. (1) I am very surprised to hear this. Wasn't the covenant of circumcision given to Abraham? Wasn't the covenant of circumcision put into the Law of Moses, which the people received right after Egypt? Why wasn't the Israelite men circumcised on the eighth day? I would think they would have been! I see two possibilities.

(1a) The Israelites were sinning by not circumcising people between Egypt and now. Does this mean the people were breaking the covenants God made with Abraham and Moses? There is no way around it: they were not doing what they were supposed to do. A reason why this possibility is not the case is the fact that God never punished them for it—whether in the wilderness nor at this event.

After all, God wanted to severely punish Moses for not circumcising his son. And God showed up to punish them while they were travelling to Egypt for the first time (Ex 4:24-26). God never treated the Israelites that way after the Exodus.

(1b) The other possibility is that God showed all the Israelites grace as they were wilderness

wanderers. Did the people not have time for circumcision as they travelled around? (I don't think that was the reason.) Did God want to purposefully have the Israelites take a hiatus from circumcision as they were wilderness wanderers? That is, was it God's plan to wait until His people arrived in the Promised Land before He expected them to uphold His covenant with Abraham and Moses? Perhaps so. Because we see a lot of important things happen between the crossing of the Jordan and their first battle in the Promised Land: the people's first harvest in the Promised Land, the first Passover in the Promised Land, the ending of the manna. So why not have the first circumcision too?

(2) So the Israelites who experienced the Exodus and the Red Sea were circumcised? They were the ones who complained and complained and complained in the wilderness? They were the ones who sided with the 10 spies, believing that they could not enter the Promised Land? Did the circumcised act so unfaithfully? But this new generation is ready and excited to enter the Promised Land? This new generation is fully supporting Joshua? And this new generation isn't even circumcised?? So this uncircumcised generation is acting faithfully? Wait, are you telling me that circumcision of the flesh doesn't make a person have faith in God?? Paul talks about this in many of his letters ([Rom 2:26-29](#))! Let this story of circumcision act as an example of how godliness comes through the obedience of faith, not the works of the Law.

40 years. People 20 years old and older died during that time. Therefore, all men in their 50s and younger were circumcised on this day.

Rollled away the disgrace of Egypt. Even after the Exodus, it appears that the Egyptians continued to taunt the Israelites. They would say, "God was not able to bring them out of Egypt. He hated them and just wanted to kill them in the mountains" (Ex 32:12, Num 14:16, Deut 9:28). With the Israelites in the Promised Land and doing what Israel has ALWAYS done (circumcision), never again can any nation claim that God's people would not be successful. Now that the Israelites were performing circumcision in the Promised Land, it was the proof to them (and to all nations) that God does deliver on His promises.

Gilgal. This Hebrew word means "wheel."

### **5:10-12 Passover and the manna cease.**

Kept the Passover. While it says that the Israelites did not perform circumcision since leaving Egypt, it looks like they did keep the Passover. While at Mount Sinai (Num 9), they keep the Passover there. Because of that, I would assume that the Israelites continued to keep the Passover for the many years they were in the wilderness. Remember, the whole point of Passover was to remember their exodus from Egypt!

Fourteenth day of the month. Let's look at the timing here. Josh 4:19 says the Israelites crossed on Nisan 10. Next, they circumcised their males. Then four days after crossing, Nisan 14 at sunset, the Jews observe their first Passover in the Promised Land.

Produce of the land. How were the Israelites able to eat from the produce of the land if they had only been there a few days? Did they buy grain from Jericho? (Probably not!) Did they take grain from Jericho's surrounding farmland? (Probably yes.) Because the land was flowing with so much milk and honey, did they harvest from wild (non-farmed) grain around the area?

Manna ceased. The ceasing of manna had a spiritual significance to the Israelites. Here is what Moses said about the purpose of the manna. [Deut 8:1-19](#). From what Moses said, this Passover is when Moses' words are fulfilled! The idea that the many years of testing being over and to finally arrive in a place where you can eat normal food for the first time... it brings tears to my eyes. Normal food... think about it: a new generation will experience normal, real food for the first time! Was this the first time this new generation has ever TASTED real food?? With the manna ceasing, the Israelites know that they will finally experience RELIEF and incredible prosperity.

Crops of the land. To top things off, the Israelites have arrived in the Promised Land at the beginning of harvest time! Exactly as God promised through Moses, the Israelites are going to live in houses they did not build and eat from crops they did not plant.

### **5:13-15 Commander of the Lord's Army.**

Drawn sword. Joshua knows that the people are about to conquer Jericho. To find a man near the city with his sword drawn would be an immediate threat! But, Joshua realizes that finding such a man, the man might be on Jericho's side or on the Israelite side.

No. This person's first response of "no" appears in the Hebrew, but it is not there in the Greek. Commander of the Lord's army. In the Hebrew, this is a generic title: ruler. Literally, the Hebrew says, "Ruler of the Hosts of Yahweh." In the Greek, this is a compound word: chief general. (In modern Greek, the rank would be Major General, but I do not think that is the point of this title, because "chief" means first or greatest.) Literally, the Greek says, "Chief general of the force of the Lord."

Worship. For some reason, this person that Joshua has met is so spectacular, Joshua feels like he should worship him. To make matters even more interesting, this man does not stop Joshua! As we see in other places in Scripture, if this was an angel, angels do not allow people to worship them. Who is this man?? He is a man who accept worship. This person is a God-Man. Whenever the Bible gives us clues like this, we know this person is special and greater than any angel. Of course, I believe this is the pre-incarnate Son of God. A similar thing happened to Moses at the burning bush. The voice from the bush said that He is the Angel of the Lord (Ex 3:2) then says He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Ex 3:6). As we see in the Old Testament, any time the Angel of the Lord shows up, who else can that be but the Son of God? Therefore, in this event, Joshua is meeting Jesus. Remember that they have the same name: Joshua meets Joshua, or Jesus meets Jesus.

Place is holy. In verse 13, it says Joshua was near Jericho. Was the outside of Jericho holy? I don't think so. Could Joshua be at the stone monument that is called Gilgal? I don't think so. I think this place is holy because Joshua is in God's presence!

Joshua did. This phrase is not in the Greek.

### **6:1-7 Preparation for a week of marching.**

Fortified because of the Israelites. I'm sure Jericho first fortified their city as the Israelites were crossing the Jordan. I'm sure the people of Jericho have been hunkered down for a handful of days now. Jericho is very much ready for war.

With all the men of war. This is the first time the Israelites will fight a battle in the Promised Land. We know that the fighting men of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh are there. But now, all the fighting men from the whole nation are ready for battle.

Circling the city one time. I'm very, very curious what the people (especially the soldiers) of Jericho think about this. Israel had been camped next to them for almost a week. I'm sure on the first day, the soldiers thought that this was the day the Israelites would attack. They might have thought that the second day too. But when the Israelites went back to camp for the day, what did the people of Jericho think? Obviously, what the Israelites are doing is a threat. But after six days of nothing happening, did the people of Jericho think that the Israelites must be out of their minds? With nothing happening for six days, did Jericho get used to the Israelites doing this silly thing? The people of Jericho are still trapped (fortified) inside the city, but do they think they will weather this Israelite storm because the Israelites are so "stupid?"

Do this for six days. God tells Joshua to march around the city one time each day for six days. Some Israelites might look at what God is doing and think it is pointless to waste so much time "doing nothing" as they march around Jericho for six days. I'm sure I would. But those who have faith, they see the significance of six days. What other story in the Bible lasted six days? Just as God spent 6 days creating the universe for mankind, God uses this week of marching around Jericho to show the people that God is creating for them the victory. God is using this whole week to show the Israelites that they don't have to fight against the walls of Jericho. Instead, God is the one who is fighting their battle against these walls.

In front of the ark. As we will see, the Ark of the Covenant was taken into battle. The Ark was the symbol of God's presence in battle. Someone might say, "Why would they take this precious and extremely valuable Ark into battle? What if it is captured and stolen?" But the Ark is not about the all the gold covering it, is it? The Ark is all about the presence of God. There is so much gold on the Ark, but that is not the Ark's true value. The true value of the Ark is God's presence. While the Israelites looked to the Ark as the symbol of God's presence, that's not where Christians look for God's presence. Where do Christians look? We find God's presence in our own bodies, which we call temples of God!

Seventh day. When it came to creation, God stopped working on the seventh day. God gave creation to mankind and gave mankind the responsibility to take care of it. On the seventh day of marching around Jericho, God is going to do the same thing: God is going to hand Jericho (already destroyed)

over to the Israelites. Just as mankind didn't lift a finger in the creation of the universe, the Israelites don't have to lift a finger against Jericho's walls.

#### **6:8-14 A week of marching.**

Do not shout. (1) Joshua commands them that they cannot shout, they cannot even make a sound or say one word. This NOT typical for a battle. The priests are blowing their trumpets because it is war time, but the army is not acting like warriors. If the people should not utter any sounds, then they are certainly not going to raise their weapons in battle. While the priests are calling people to war, the army doesn't war. Instead, the soldiers are submissive. They just march and that is all. (2) Do you think the same command to not say a word was given to the people of Jericho? I don't think so at all. I can see the people of Jericho hurling insults and trying hard to break the morale of the Israelite soldiers. Remember when Goliath did this to all of Israel? I see Jericho doing the same thing. But what are the Israel soldiers called to do? They are commanded to keep silent. I don't think it is a coincidence that Jesus calls Christians to act the same way around our enemies. See [Matt 5:38-45a](#), [1Cor 4:12-13a](#), and Jesus' being the fulfillment of this Christian command: [1Pet 2:20b-23](#). Think about it! This command not to resist an evildoer, endure insults, and be silent is exactly what Jesus did for us and calls us to also. When the Ethiopian eunuch was reading from Isaiah, he read, "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb is silent before its shearer, so He does not open His mouth. In His humiliation justice was denied Him" (Acts 8:32-33). [Rom 8:35-39](#). You see, when Jesus came to this earth, He kept His mouth shut and allowed mankind to do every kind of wicked thing to Him. Why did Jesus do this? Because Jesus perfectly understood that it was Father God who was fighting His battle. Jesus knew that He would lay down His life, and He also knew that He would receive it back again (John 10:17). Jesus closed His mouth and submitted to His Father. We are called to the same thing. If we would only close our mouths, do the things God has called us to, then God will fight our battles for us... just like God did with Jesus and just like God is doing for the Israelites. Let me say it this way, for God and Joshua to command the soldiers to keep their mouths closed, Joshua is telling them, "Shut up and let God." "Shut up and let God... fight your battles!" We should follow the Israelites' example in that. Or even better, we should follow Jesus' example in that.

#### **6:15-21 Seventh marching and victory over Jericho.**

Shout. The trumpets were blowing on the first six days and on these seven trips around Jericho. The trumpets were blown loudly, so it wasn't noise that brought down Jericho's walls. It wasn't until the soldiers shouted that the walls came down. This is to show that it was actually God who brought down the walls. The soldiers were commanded to not use or to use their voices at the right times. Because the people trusted and obeyed God, He honored their faith and obedience by bringing down the walls when they shouted. Even though God's power could easily bring down the walls, we also see how the people's FAITH also played a part. Heb 11:30, "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after being encircled by the Israelites for seven days."

The Lord has given you the city. From the way Joshua's speech is placed, it appears that he is making the speech after their seventh trip around Jericho and before they shout. And that could be the case. But these instructions are pretty specific, so I think Joshua would have given these instructions to the soldiers before they marched around Jericho. And perhaps Joshua gives them again.

Set apart. In verses 17-18, Joshua says that things are set apart for destruction. Translations differ on this word. Some say set apart or dedicated. Some say devoted or designated. Some say accursed. Set apart or dedicated is a bad translation here. The Hebrew word certainly carries a negative connotation. Literally, Joshua is saying that the city and the things within are "doomed." Usually when we hear about something being set apart, we think of something being consecrated to God. However, that's not the word used here. The city and the objects within are "doomed" to destruction. To best show you what is meant here, check out the Greek word: anathema. It means "cursed." You might remember that Paul used this word for anyone (even an angel) who preaches a gospel that the apostles did not preach (Gal 1:8-9). In conclusion, Jericho and the objects within are not set apart, they are cursed! (2) In verse 19, we see the opposite of this word for cursed. It says the gold and iron are to be "consecrated" to the Lord. There, the word has the positive connotation.

Rahab. (1) When you look at everything dealing with the city, everything is either anathema or consecration. Rahab and her family survived because of her faith; she is consecrated. The city itself and all the other people inside are anathema; they are cursed and destroyed. The gold and iron is

consecrated; they are placed in the Lord's treasury. As we look at Jericho, there doesn't seem to be any middle ground. Things were either consecrated or cursed. (2) This reminds me about what will happen on Judgment Day. On that day, everything in the universe will be consecrated (by faith) or destroyed (by fire). (2a) The fire will come and destroy this universe, but some of the universe will not be fully destroyed but will be re-made. Creation is eagerly waiting for its redemption through fire. Rom 8:19-23, Rev 21:1. (2b) The same is true for us. While we will die, most people will die eternally in Hell. But some people will not be dead forever but will be resurrected to eternal life. 1Pet 3:5-7, 3:10-13. (2c) The same is true for our works. Some of our works will be eternally destroyed and forgotten. But the works of righteousness we do will survive and become a reward. 1Cor 3:9-15. Therefore, just like everything in Jericho was either cursed or consecrated, the same will happen to the universe, to us, and to our works when Jesus returns. Will we be faithful and consecrated? Or will we be disobedient and cursed?

Or you will be set apart (cursed) for destruction. Joshua says that those who disobey his instructions will be cursed for destruction. Jesus said that if a person loves Him then the person will obey His commandments. Paul says the same thing the other way around. 1Cor 16:22, "If anyone does not love the Lord, a curse be on him." Here is what Jesus says about those who are "set apart for destruction." Matt 25:41-46. Joshua and Jesus give us warnings like this. Obey God (as Rahab and the soldiers did) and He will bring down the walls in your life and lead you to His Promised Land. Disobey God (as the rest of the people of Jericho did) and He will leave you to destruction.

Each man straight ahead. When the soldiers were marching around Jericho and shouted, they were already surrounding the city. When the walls fell, the army didn't attack from a strategic location. All the soldiers just walked forward, entering the city from all directions. I'm blown away by this. When the walls fell, they probably killed most of the Jericho soldiers. The Israelite soldiers entered and finished the job. Therefore, from the very first battle in the Promised Land, we see how GOD IS THE ONE WHO FOUGHT THEIR BATTLE!!!

#### **6:22-25 Rahab and her family made safe.**

Two men. The same two men who were spies are sent to Rahab's house to make sure she is kept safe and not killed with the rest of the city. I picture this a lot like a reunion. The two spies and Rahab are reunited! Rahab proved her faith in God by saving the spies' lives. Here, the spies prove their faith toward Rahab by saving her life too (and the lives of her family). (2) According to Matthew's genealogy, Rahab married Salmon. Wouldn't it have been neat if Salmon was one of the two spies? House. When the spies escaped from Rahab's house, it says that Rahab's house was part of Jericho's wall. Wait, wasn't the wall just destroyed? There is a Hanna-Barbara cartoon about the story of Joshua and Jericho. In the cartoon, it shows the wall completely destroyed EXCEPT for one section of the wall with Rahab's house at the top. I love that image. God is the one who destroyed Jericho's walls, but God did not destroy Rahab's house. With this image in my mind, I can see how Rahab's faith in God saved her, her family, and her house. To me, this is JUST LIKE Noah. Noah's ark saved him, his family, and all the animals. Rahab's house saved her and her family. Imagine it: as Noah went into the ark and heard the screams of the drowning people outside, Rahab and her family want into her house and heard the screams of the people all around her being crushed by the walls.

Joshua spared Rahab. Wait, didn't God say that the Israelites were supposed to wipe out all the people of Canaan? By sparing Rahab, are the Israelites disobeying God? Absolutely not! In fact, it is the exact opposite. As we know as Christians, God is looking for obedient faith. That's what Rahab had. It is in God's merciful nature that He would absolutely save everyone who has faith. For Jews, this story may sound like an exception to God's nature, an act of mercy on a Canaanite woman. For Christians, we see God saving someone because of their faith. If anyone else in Jericho had faith, then God would have saved them also. Remember the story with Abraham asking God about Sodom and Gomorrah? God isn't looking for the destruction of people. God is looking for the FAITH in people.

Outside the camp of Israel. Although Rahab has great, great faith, she is still not an Israelite. God had laws on how many generations had to pass before a foreigner could enter the temple complex as a Jew. It appears that God valued the assimilation of foreigners into the Israelites ...but over a period of time. I believe this is because it takes time for a person to learn about and become someone of a different culture.



She lives in Israel to this day. Whenever the book of Joshua was last edited, it happened while Rahab was still alive. I'm glad they put this in the book. It shows that Rahab wasn't killed at a later time. And it implies that she would assimilate into the people of Israel. When the book of Matthew was written, we see that is exactly what happened to Rahab and her family. She assimilated into the Israelite people so much that she herself became an ancestor of the Messiah!

#### **6:26-27 Joshua's curse on Jericho and his fame.**

Rebuilding. (1) Just because he pronounces a curse on the city's rebuilding, he knows that someone will one day rebuild the city. That's how the world works, and Joshua knows it would happen one day. So instead of keeping people from rebuilding the city, he gives this curse, showing people that rebuilding the city is going to come at a very great cost. I must ask, "Given the incredible and awesome story of what just happened to Jericho, why would anyone be so stupid as to ignore Joshua's curse??" (2) Someone did rebuilt Jericho. 1Kings 16:34 says that Hiel the Bethelite rebuilt Jericho. Hiel did lose his oldest son, Abiram, and his youngest son, Segub, in the rebuilding. This happened during the reign of Ahab over the northern country of Israel. This happened 400 or more years after Joshua. Of course, the author of 1Kings brought this up to demstrate how wicked the people were because of the reign of Ahab, one of the most wicked kings in the Divided Kingdom. (3) Fast forward to Jesus' time and Jericho is once again a big, thriving city. You might remember that Jesus healed a blind man there. Think about it. Many times, Jesus travelled through a city that was cursed by Joshua. And Jesus, being Jesus, did GOOD while He was there.

Fame spread. First the Israelites were famous because of Egypt and the Red Sea. Then, the Israelites were famous for the Amorite kings, Sihon and Og. Then, the Israelites were famous for crossing the Jordan on dry ground. Now, Joshua is famous because of the victory over Jericho. Not only do all the Canaanite nations fear the Israelites, but they are now hearing about their new, powerful leader: Joshua.

#### **7:1 Achan takes some treasure.**

The Israelites sinned. This is how the author starts the next section. What did the verse before this say? This is a really QUICK turn-around! I think the author did this on purpose. God and the author is trying to warn us very strongly: when things are going so well, be careful that you do not fall (1Cor 10:12)!!

Cursed for destruction. As discussed earlier, everything in Jericho was assigned to be cursed (for destruction) or consecrated (for the Lord). Rahab, her family, the gold, and the iron were to be consecrated. But everything was to be cursed. This was God's command. As we will see, Achan will disobey it.

Achan took. Achan took what was cursed (anathema). In verse 21, we see what Achan took. Not only did he take some of what was cursed (a cloak from Babylon) but he also took the things that were supposed to be consecrated to God! Not only did he bring cursed things into the camp but he also took consecrated things for himself. He cursed the Israelites and he stole from God.

The Lord's anger burned. (1) Pay attention what this verse is saying. Achan disobeyed, taking what was not his. At the beginning of the verse, who sinned? At the end of the verse, who was God mad at? How can one man's sin affect the whole nation?? We will see as the story unfolds, it was not the nation of Israel who are guilty of this sin. After all, it was the nation of Israel to will stone Achan. This makes the Israelites different from Achan. But what is it about the Israelites that make them the same as Achan? They are both in the same nation. Even though the Israelites are not guilty, they are sharing in Achan's consequences. Even though the Israelites do not have the guilt, God will punish all the Israelites because of Achan's sin. After all, this is exactly how God said consequences would work; see Josh 6:18. (2) I can think of another story in the New Testament that is like this. 1Cor 5:1-8. The Corinthians were tolerating (even boasting bout) sin within their camp (congregation)! Paul's response is that they must remove him (like the Israelites will remove Achan). Paul explains, "A little yeast permeates the whole batch of dough." Sin is dangerous! One person's sin can certainly ruin an entire congregation. This story teaches that it is the community's responsibility that sin should be addressed and dealt with. Wether we are talking about the Israelites or the church, God is howing us that they need to address sin and deal with it. For us in the church, God has shown us that sin must be addressed and dealt with also. Not only is it the community's responsibility to build each other up to love and good deeds, but it is also the community's responsibility to address and deal with sin.

### **7:2-5 First battle of Ai.**

Ai. Ai was a city fairly close to Jerusalem. By my guess, it was about 20 miles west of Jericho and about 20 miles north of Jerusalem. It is believed to be located next to the modern city of Deir Dibwan. 2000 or 3000 men. Obviously, Ai was a smaller city. According to Josh 8:25, Ai's total population was 12,000. It was a strategic location because it was along the road toward the north; it separated the northern half of the land from Jerusalem.

They fled. This is Israel's first defeat in the Promised Land. Human logic says that 2000 or 3000 soldiers could have easily won this battle. But they lost!? Obviously, something isn't logical with this.

Struck down about 36. (1) If they attacked with 3000 soldiers and lost about 36, that is a loss of 1.5% of their attacking force. Loosing that few soldiers would be a miracle in a victory! But this was a defeat. I don't want to be insensitive to the families of those 36 soldiers, but loosing only 36 men in a defeat is actually not so bad. How else could that have happened except that God protected the Israelites in this battle? After all, if God was truly going to let His anger have its day, God would have allowed all 3000 men to die. Instead, they lost only 1.5% of their men—in a defeat. I see God's mercy in this!!

(2) How was it that so few Israelites died? It is because they fled. As it says, the men who died, died as they were running away. Therefore, the Israelites' defeat was NOT because they lost soldiers in a hard-fought battle. It was because ALL of the men became incredibly afraid. How could that have happened? They just won a miraculous victory over Jericho, a much, much larger and stronger city! How could these men (who had more than enough men) turn tail and run away? In the Old Testament, it seems like this happens more times than we can count. Who usually becomes so afraid that they lose battles? Israel's enemies. Who is the one who causes them to have so much fear? God. Who do you think made the 3000 Israelite men afraid this day? I think it was God! What God normally does to Israel's enemies, this time, He did to them.

People's hearts melted. When was the last time we hear about people's hearts melting? It was when Rahab was telling the spies about how the people of Jericho felt. Now, it's happening to the Israelites. (1) Of course, it makes sense because human logic says that 3000 men should be able to conquer Ai, and the Israelites lost that easy battle. Yes, that would be demoralizing. (2) In a world where polytheism was so common, I wonder if many of the Israelites thought, "Could the god of Ai be stronger than the God of Israel?" The Israelites have lost their courage. I hope they haven't lost their faith too.

### **7:6-15 Joshua's conversation with God.**

Tore clothes. Joshua and the elders are showing great signs of humility! They tore their clothes, worshipped in front of the Ark, put dust on their heads, and did these things until evening.

If only. Although Joshua and the elders are displaying humility to God, their words are filled with pain and accusation. Joshua is using "only if" statements. These are statements of regret over things he cannot control. In what Joshua is saying, he is wishing to go back to life before the Jordan.

Really??? In effect, Joshua is wishing that the Jordan crossing didn't happen, that the victory at Jericho didn't happen, that the first Passover in the Promised Land didn't happen, that the people should not eat from the food of this land, and that God should not have called him to lead the people into the Promised Land.

Your great name. (1) Joshua's heart and actions are in the right place. He is showing great humility toward God. But Joshua's heart and words are in the wrong place. He is in pain and blaming God for what's happening. (The truth is, both of those things are true. Joshua is in pain and God did cause this defeat.) But the way Joshua is speaking to God is not good. Here is what I see: Joshua continues to see God as God truly is. Joshua recognizes God as God. However, in the same moment, Joshua is absolutely not being strong and courageous about his situation. (2) This reminds me of Job. In many ways, Job "took God to task" for the things that were happening to him. Yet, Job said all of those things AND did not sin against God. And as we see in Job, God shows up at the end and puts Job in his place (while also calling Job righteous). I see Joshua doing the same thing here.

Stand up. In verse 6, it says Joshua did this until evening. So God allowed Joshua to do this, pouring out his heart to God, for many hours. Then at evening time, God speaks to Joshua. The book of Joshua started with God speaking to Joshua. We left that and focused on all the Israelites (with the Jordan River and Jericho). Here, we return to the close relationship that Joshua has with God. Even the reader of Joshua get distracted by focusing only on the Israelites. All leaders should remember and

not neglect their relationship with God. Like what was discussed in the introduction, I find three major characters in this book: God, Joshua, and all the people.

Set apart for destruction. God says Israel has been cursed for destruction. God is holding true to what He said in 6:18, "Keep yourselves from the things cursed, or YOU will be cursed for destruction. If you take any of those things, you will curse THE CAMP OF ISRAEL for destruction and bring disaster on it." God told all of Israel that this sin would affect all of Israel. The defeat at Ai is proof of that.

Consecrate. Remember, with Jericho, everything was either consecrated or cursed. Having the people consecrate themselves before the trial is to remind the people that they are still God's precious people. They are still His precious people. But even though everyone will be consecrated, someone will be at the trial who isn't wearing wedding clothes. Matt 22:1-2, 10b-13.

You will not be able to stand against your enemies. (1) God wants to fight our battles. Is He going to fight our battles no matter what? Didn't God tell Joshua, "You will prosper and succeed in whatever you do" (Josh 1:8b)? Yes, but the whole verse reads, "This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth... carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do." We are to follow every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. But when we are guilty of rebellious sin, like Achan, then God will STOP fighting out battles for us. In fact, as we saw in the battle, God will actually cause us to be scared and run away. Is God fighting your battles for you? He most certainly is! But if we continually and willfully disobey God, rejecting Him, then God will reject us, leaving us to fight our battles according to our own devices. This is NOT where God wants us to be. I cannot stress that enough. God is going to do whatever He can to help us choose and do His will. (2) This reminds me of one of the first sins in the Bible. Gen 4:4-7. 1Cor 10:11-13. Cain didn't follow God's escape—even with God speaking directly to him. God is speaking to us through Cain's story and Achan's story. Are we listening?

#### **7:16-26 Achan's family is found and executed.**

He had. In verse 16-18, Joshua is the one bringing forth the right tribe, clan, family, and person.

However, note that in verse 14, God says that He will select them man by man. Both God and Joshua are drilling down the people to find the guilty person. Of course, God already knows. This process is for the people to see.

Give glory, make a confession. In verses 20-21, Achan is actually agreeable with Joshua. He confesses everything. Achan tried to hide those things, but having gone through Joshua drilling down the people all the way to him, Achan knows full well that he cannot hide anymore. As we see, Achan does give glory to God and confesses his great sin.

Cloak, silver, gold. (1) Achan lists the many things he took. Not only did he take the cloak, which was a cursed thing, but he also took gold and silver, which were consecrated things that were supposed to be put into the Lord's treasury. Therefore, Achan not only put a curse on ALL the Israelites but he also stole from God. (2) 200 shekels of silver is about 5 pounds (in 2022, this is about \$2,000). 50 shekels of gold is about a pound (in 2022, this is about \$28,000).

Valley of Achor. The trial has finished and Achan has pleaded guilty. This place is where Achan will receive his sentence. Achor sounds an awful lot like Achan. There is a difference in two letters, but both Achan and Achor mean the same thing. Guys, they named this valley after Achan (Josh 7:26c).

Trouble. Achan's name means trouble! In Hebrew, there is one letter difference between Achan's name and the word for trouble. Joshua is using a play on words, saying that Achan has lived up to his name. He is named trouble, he caused trouble on Israel, and the Lord will give him trouble. I find it a coincidence in what Achan's name sounds like in English. Achan caused the Israelites to ache, and the Lord will cause Achan to ache. In the end, Achan was really achin'.

Stoned him. (1) In the Hebrew and Greek, it says that all Israel stoned him (singular). (2) Achan committed the first sin in the Promised Land. This reminds me SO MUCH of the first priestly sin after the Law of Moses (Nadab and Abihu) and the first sin after the establishment of the church (Ananias and Saphira). There is also the first man who violated the Sabbath by picking up sticks. In all those cases, these people immediately died. We should add Achan's story to that list too. It appears that God has a pattern of being super strict with people at the beginning. God's message is clear: He is absolutely serious about sin. Again, we must be reminded: 1Cor 10:11-13.

They burned their bodies. At the end of verse 25, it switches to the plural, saying that THEY were stoned and THEIR bodies burned. This part does not exist in the Greek. The Greek does not say whether all of Achan's family died with him on this day. Regardless, I do believe this is implied. In verse 15,

God says that everything he has will be burned. In verse 24, it lists a bunch of things that are brought to the Valley of Achor. Why mention those things again? I believe that all the things Achan stole, all his children, all his animals, his tent, and all he owned were stoned, burned, and buried that day. The items, Achan, and his family had all become cursed for destruction.

Large pile of rocks. This is another “monument of stones.” Achan’s grave (and the name of the place) is a memorial to the Israelites of his great sin.

Burning anger. The Israelites became cursed because of Achan. When the curse was removed from the Israelites, God no longer sees them as cursed. Here, the author focuses on the curse and God’s anger. In the New Testament, Jesus says the same thing but focusing on the positive side. In the parable of the lost sheep and lost coin, Jesus says, “There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:7,10). For the Israelites, taking care of Achan’s sin is what moved them from being cursed to being consecrated. For Christians, repentance from sin is what moves us from being lost to being found.

### **8:1-9 Preparation for the second battle.**

Lord said. I think, once again, this is the Commander of the Lord’s Army who is talking with Joshua. I believe the Commander is talking with Joshua just like he did before the battle at Jericho.

Do not be afraid. I believe there are two things that God is trying to tell Joshua. First, by God using this phrase, he is reminding Joshua about their conversation at the beginning of the book. God is picking Joshua back onto his feet, reminding Joshua who he is: a fearless and courageous warrior of God. Second, now that Joshua has taken care of a great sin within the camp, God is letting Joshua know that things are better now. God is saying that the next battle will be different.

Whole military force. (1) When the spies first spied on Ai, it was clear that 3,000 men would be enough to take the city. Now that God is going to help the Israelites fight the next battle, perhaps the Israelites could take less men (like Gideon would do). If Joshua took less men and allowed God to give them the victory, then their victory over Ai would become as famous as Jericho. However, God directly instructs Joshua to take ALL fighters into this battle. Through the whole book, Joshua has been completely obedient to God. Even when God tells him to do the illogical, Joshua believes that God knows what he is doing. Just like with Jericho, God will be the highest ranking military commander for this battle too. With Jericho, God said to march around. This time, the strategy God will give is different. It will be based on a surprise ambush. (2) This reminds me of the story of Moses striking the rock. First, God told Moses to strike the rock to make water come out. He does. A second time, God told Moses to speak to the rock. Instead, Moses strikes it. Because of that, God punishes Moses and does not allow him to enter the Promised Land. Notice how God changes His strategy at times. God gives a different strategy for Jericho and for Ai. What does this mean for us? We should remember that God is not always going to do things the same way every time. And God doesn’t want us to do the same things every time. Just because we know God’s ways have worked in the past, we should still rely on His guidance for every situation. After all, God might give us a different strategy for a different situation.

Spoil and livestock. (1) Even the spoils of the Battle of Ai will be different than the Battle of Jericho! With Jericho, they were to kill everything and all valuable metals were to be given to the Lord. With Jericho, there were no spoils for the people. And God was SUPER STRICT with that command. As for Ai, God is telling the Israelites that they are welcome to the spoils of this city. It was as if Jericho’s spoils were for God. (They were the first fruits of the spoils in the Promised Land). With Ai, those spoils were for the people. (2) Why mention cattle/livestock? Normally, God had instructed the Israelites to kill every living thing in the Promised Land. But this time, God will allow the Israelites to take extra cattle as plunder. Livestock was a highly valuable resource. It included all domesticated animals. The Israelites would put them to great use for: animal labor, food, milk, wool, etc.

30,000. Israel had quite the army! Because it says Joshua selected this many soldiers to be in the ambush squad, I imagine that there were many more soldiers in Joshua’s squad. Or, I could be wrong and the ambush squad made up the larger squad. Remember, it would only take 3,000 soldiers to conquer Ai. If Joshua attacked the city with 50,000, perhaps the soldiers of Ai would be too scared to leave the city and attack them. OK, enough with trying to figure out the details. The point is: this battle is going to be overkill. This squad of 30,000 soldiers outnumbers the entire city of Ai 2.5 to 1 (see Josh 8:25). Plus, this squad of 30,000 soldiers is going to attack and empty town! Yeah, this battle is overkill. But even though the Israelites could attack Ai’s front door and easily win,

God, being a master strategist, gives them a plan that is incredibly more effective than a frontal assault.

Behind the city. God and Joshua tell the ambush squad to get behind the city, on the west side. This makes sense. Jericho is southeast of Ai, so the Israelites are arriving from the southeast. The west side is behind the city.

The Lord has handed it over to you. Unlike Jericho when God Himself brought down the walls, God doesn't show up in a miraculous way at the battle of Ai. God gives them the strategy, and the soldiers take care of the rest. It would be easy for a person to believe that the Israelites gained the victory by their own power (because a miracle wasn't performed). But that is not the case. God gave Joshua this strategy. And even though we don't see God perform a miracle in this battle, that does NOT mean that God is not fighting their battle. Joshua knows this very well. That is why Joshua says, "For the Lord your God has handed it over to you."

Between Bethel and Ai. There are some large hills a mile west of Ai. I think the Israelites would be hiding on the other side of those hills. So they are about 2 miles west of Ai.

### **8:10-29 Second battle of Ai.**

LXX. In Joshua chapter 8, there are a number of differences between the Hebrew Masoretic and the Greek Septuagint. Most of the differences are in this section. (The next section, verses 30-35, are not in the Greek at all.) As we go through this section, I will point out some of the differences.

North of it. Which side of the city was Joshua? (1) Verse 11 and 13 says that Joshua and his troops were north of Ai. The city of Ai is the location of modern day Deir Dibwan. There is a valley to the north of Ai. Across the valley is a large range of hills. From where the Israelites are, they have a huge strategic advantage. For the people of Ai to leave their city and attack the Israelites would have been really stupid. (2) In the Greek, it says that Joshua and his troops were east of Ai, in the plains. Just like there is a valley to the north of Ai, there are plains to the east of Ai. Today, that area is farmland. The plain has a gradual slope to the east, so it would actually be strategically wise for Ai to attack the Israelites in that direction. Because verse 14 says that the ambush squad was behind the city, to me, the Greek Septuagint's reading makes more sense. Plus, it was extremely common for armies to attack from the east, with the rising sun behind them.

5,000. There is a discrepancy here. In verse 3, it says Joshua took 30,000 men to be in the ambush squad. In verse 12, it says 5,000 men. Commentaries see the discrepancy here and they give a handful of explanations. Perhaps there was an error made when a scribe copied Joshua and that error was passed forward. Perhaps in verse 12, Joshua is taking 5,000 additional soldiers and sending them to be added to the 30,000 soldiers who are already in position. In my opinion, I believe this is an error in the manuscript. Because in the Greek, the phrase talking about the 5,000 is not there. So, the Septuagint doesn't have the discrepancy from the Hebrew in the number of men. (Also in the Greek, the names of the two cities are not in verse 12. Both the Hebrew and Greek have the names of the cities in verse 9, so those cities are accurate. It's just that the Hebrew mentions them twice.)

Facing the Arabah. Arabah is a Hebrew word that means desert or plain. Now, if the Israelites were positioned on the north side, as the Hebrew Masoretic says, then this phrase doesn't make sense. But if the Israelites were positioned to the east, as the Greek Septuagint says, then this phrase makes sense. The only Arabah (or desert/plain) in the area is on the east side of Ai. Interestingly, this mention of Arabah or plain does not appear in the Greek. This is the same in verse 15; the Hebrew says wilderness, and the Greek does not mention the area.

All the troops of Ai. Since the king of Ai sees that this will be another easy victory, he calls all the reserve soldiers in the city to help with the pursuit. This means that not a single soldier would be left in the city for the next few hours or half day. In the Greek, this phrase doesn't appear. It doesn't imply that the king pulled more soldiers from the city. In verse 17, the Hebrew and Greek both say that there were no soldiers left in the city because they all were pursuing Joshua's squad.

Sword. My translation (HCSB) says sword here. While that might be the case, the Hebrew and Greek word mean spear. Spear would be a more accurate translation.

I will hand the city over to you. In the Greek, God speaks another phrase to Joshua. "And the ambush will rise up quickly out of their place." The Greek shows us that, when Joshua does this, the Commander of the Lord's Army will cause the ambush squad to attack. I think this is implied in the Hebrew.

Set it on fire. The ambush squad had the easiest task. They entered and conquered a city that did not have a single soldier in it. It was so easy because God made it happen. God, the Master Strategist, gave Israel this plan. When God said that He would hand the city of Ai over to the Israelites, He wasn't kidding. He handed them an empty city!! And if you know anything about battles, if the soldiers of Ai are outnumbered to the east AND they are outnumbered to the west, how easy it would have been for the Israelites to win. When we let God fight our battles, when we see the result, it is plain to see how much God has done the heavy lifting for us!

Not escape in any direction. Looking at the landscape to the east of Ai, there is the plain (where today there is farmland). But all around that plain are ranges of large hills. Yes, the only escape routes the soldiers of Ai had were filled with many Israelites.

12,000. This is the number of all the people of Ai. Men and women. Remember, originally, the Israelites knew 3,000 soldiers would have been enough to take the city. But in this second battle, God told them to bring everyone. We know there were 30,000 (or more?) soldiers in the ambush squad. We don't know how many soldiers were in Joshua's squad. Either way, the point is that Israel had more than enough soldiers to do the job. Maybe God is training and preparing them for more battles ahead.

Joshua did not draw back his hand. This verse reminds me of the first battle we know Joshua was in, where Aaron and Hur held up Moses' hands so that the Israelites would win. Joshua is doing the same thing here. In the Greek, verse 26 does not appear. With so many, many soldiers in this battle—way more than they need—, it seems weird that Joshua would have to hold up his spear the whole time. In my opinion, the Greek is correct and verse 26 doesn't belong.

Permanent ruin. They left Ai to be uninhabited. This was God's command through Moses. Deut 13:15-17 instructs the Israelites to kill all people, kill all the livestock, destroy all spoils in the city square, completely burn the cities, and do not rebuild them. We see with Ai, God tells Joshua that it is an exception. The people are allowed to take the livestock and the spoils. The people do this. They followed God's instruction through Moses in the other areas, such as turning Ai into a permanent ruin.

Threw his body. (1) The way the Israelites are treating the king of Ai is exactly as Moses instructed, Deut 21:22-23. The king of Ai was cursed for destruction because everything that hangs on a tree is cursed. After executing the king of Ai and hanging him on a tree, they threw his body down. The Hebrew says they threw him at the city gate. The Greek says they threw him into a pit. Either way, they buried him with stones. (2) Can you think of another person who was hung on a tree and become cursed? Jesus became a curse for us so that we would be free from the curse that comes from Moses' Law (Gal 3:6-14).

### **8:30-35 Joshua establishes an altar, the written Law, and the reading of the Law.**

LXX. Verses 30-35 do not appear in the Greek Septuagint.

Israel, foreigner and citizen. Notice how it mentions all the people of Israel: citizens and foreigners.

While foreigners were not citizens, they were still considered to be part of Israel. They didn't have the genealogy. They didn't have the family heritage of Abraham. However, they were part of Israel. What made them part of Israel? Their faith. Remember, Rahab is one of them now. Plus, there were Egyptians who "defected" to the Israelites at the Exodus. It is wonderful that people were able to join Israel even though they were not born into Israel. With Christianity, it is different. No person becomes a Christian because of genealogy. As Tertullian famously said, "Christians are made, not born."

Mount Ebal, Mount Gerizim. These mountains are located about 30 miles north of the city of Ai.

Blessings as well as the curses. With the mention of these mountains and the blessings and curses, this is a reference to Deut 11:26-29.

### **9:1-2 Canaanite-Amorite alliance**

All the kings. Here is a rundown of the general area where these peoples lived. (1) West of the Jordan in the hill country... This matches modern-day West Bank (north of Jerusalem). (2) Judean foothills... Directly between Jerusalem and the Mediterranean. (3) Along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea toward Lebanon... The coast from Tel Aviv to Haifa to Tyre. (4) Hittites... Modern day Turkey, Syria, and Lebanon; Israel does not end up living in Turkey or Syria, so this would be the Hittites who lived in Lebanon. (5) Amorites... This is more of a cultural people instead of a nation. The culture's language would later evolve into the Aramaic language. The densest areas with Amorites were Syria

and Iraq. (6) Canaanites... Like Amorites, Canaanite is more of a cultural people. Basically, this was all of the Promised Land. (7) Perizzites... These people lived in the hills country south of Jerusalem. (8) Hivites... The area between Lebanon, Damascus, and the Golan Heights. Additionally, Josh 9:7 and 11:19 says that the people who lived in Gibeon (just north of Jerusalem) were also Hivites. (9) Jebusites... They lived in Jerusalem and the mountains that surround it.

Unified alliance. Joshua and the Israelites had defeated the kings and nations east of the Jordan. But now that Joshua and the Israelites are defeating the kings and nations in the Promised Land (Canaan), all the kings and nations of Canaan are scared. So they form this alliance. If you look at all the areas listed before, these nations are as north as Sidon, Lebanon and Damascus, Syria. They are as south as Tel Aviv and Hebron, Israel. Really, this alliance includes ALL of the Promised Land except for the Philistines, who lived on the southwest coast of the Mediterranean. Since Amorites and Canaanites are more general names, referring to the cultures of the people, I will call this alliance the Amorite-Canaanite Alliance. Now, this alliance is not going to attack until chapter 11. This alliance has time to gather their forces while Joshua deals with the Gibeonites (chapter 9) and a handful of Amorite kings (chapter 10).

### **9:3-15 Gibeon's deception and treaty.**

Gibeon. This was a city (and included a few more cities) located about five miles north-northwest of Jerusalem, modern-day Al Jib, West Bank.

Acted deceptively. While nearly all of the people of the Promised Land are making a final alliance against the Israelites, the people of Gibeon acted deceitfully. On one hand, it is a sin to lie and deceive others, so what they are doing is wrong. On the other hand, for Gibeon to do what they are doing is far, far better than what everyone around them has decided to do. Everyone around them have joined a huge alliance against Israel. If the Gibeonites joined with the alliance, they would have been included in the "west of the Jordan in the hill country," Perizzites, or as it says in 9:7 Hivites. But instead, they wish to be Israel's servants, which could possibly be seen as an act of faith! But the Gibeonites are becoming Israel's servants in a less-than-faithful way, of course. In their minds, I bet the end would justify the means. When the Gibeonites explain why they did what they did in 9:24-25, it looks like they did have faith in God. The Gibeonites had a goal of faith but they had an execution of fear.

Gathered provisions. In some Hebrew manuscripts, it says that these men from Gibeon pretended to be ambassadors. Other manuscripts say that the men of Gibeon got ready and prepared. These other manuscripts include different Hebrew manuscripts, the Greek Septuagint, the Aramaic Peshitta, and the Latin Vulgate. So, if the Greek, the Aramaic, the Latin, and some of the Hebrew agree, then I think that is the correct reading. I don't think they pretended to be ambassadors. Of course, this does not mean that their intentional deception is any less of a lie.

Worn-out, old, cracked, old, patched, threadbare, dry, and crumbly. Look at the great lengths the Gibeonites are going through in order to deceive Joshua. Their supplies, their clothes, and their food are all barely fit for human use. I believe their reason for doing this was two-fold. First, they wanted to pretend that they come from a poor country that doesn't have the resources to make quality supplies and clothes. Second, they claim that the journey they took is what caused all these things to become old. I guess they really wanted Joshua to think that they were from very, VERY far away. They couldn't possibly be from the Promised Land. Perhaps the Gibeonites' fear of Israel caused them to go to such extremes. They had to make sure that Joshua wouldn't kill them. And they wanted to play it safe by their own power, which was to lie to Joshua.

Gilgal. (1) Why did the Gibeonites travel back to the place where the Israelites camped when they conquered Jericho? Gilgal is where the Israelites had the first Passover, first circumcision, etc. It looks like Gilgal was the base of operations for Joshua. Or, it was where the Israelite people waited as the soldiers travelled through the Promised Land and destroyed the cities. (2) The Gibeonites are travelling from north of Jerusalem to the east side of Jericho. It is 24 miles from Gibeon to Jericho. By the look of the Gibeonites' supplies and clothing, they had been travelling for YEARS. But in reality, they had travelled only about a day and a half.

Hivites. According to Josh 9:7 and 11:19, the Gibeonites were Hivites. The Hivites predominately lived in Syria and Iraq. Gibeon must have been a city made up of Hivites that had travelled and settled near Jerusalem.

We are your servants. In other words, "We come in peace."

But look. The Gibeonites are really eager to point out how dry their bread is. They are eager to point out how cracked their wineskins are. They are eager to point out how worn their clothes are. They are really milking their intention to deceive Joshua. Either they are trying to “prove” how far they have travelled, or they are wanting Joshua to see how poor they are so that he would have pity on them—because now they don’t have the supplies to travel back to their “homeland.” Or both! (2) With someone bringing this much attention to their poor state, I would think should have been a red flag for Joshua. And maybe that is why this was included in the book: Joshua should have seen the red flags.

Took some provisions. No one can make a treaty unless there is a trading of provisions. While the Gibeonites had all these old supplies and clothes and food, they did have at least a little something of value to trade with the Israelites.

Did not seek the Lord’s counsel. (1) God had warned the Israelites through Moses and the Law that they were not to make treaties with the Canaanites. Why? Because the people of Canaan had become too wicked. To make a treaty with wickedness is to allow wickedness to gain a foothold in your life. That is what God instructed through Moses. So Joshua’s default response to anyone making a treaty would be not to do it. Now, the Gibeonites claimed to be from outside the Promised Land. So Joshua would think that God was silent about whether the Israelites could make treaties with nations outside of the Promised Land. Perhaps this is why Joshua didn’t give it much thought. However, because God had been silent about making treaties with non-Canaanites, that in itself is a reason to seek the Lord’s counsel. So far through this book, this is Joshua’s first mistake. As far as he knew, he was not sinning by making this treaty. But even in situations when you don’t think you are sinning, maybe you should seek what the Lord thinks before you make a decision. I hope you see that this is true with Joshua and it is true for us too. It is true in big decisions and small decisions. Just because it may not seem like a sin, we should remember to seek the Lord’s counsel before we make any commitments—large or small. (2) The good news about this whole situation is that the Gibeonites also keep their side of the vow too. Even until the time of King David, the Gibeonites are very, very loyal to Israel.

Made a treaty. Joshua and the leaders of the community swear an oath to Gibeon. They made this vow to them, thinking that they were people from a far, far away country. However, the Gibeonites were from less than 25 miles away. As we will see, just because Joshua and the leaders were deeply deceived by the Gibeonites, that didn’t mean that Joshua could go back on his word. Joshua could have said, “Because you deceived us, that was unfair, so the treaty is null and void.” Instead, Joshua knew that a treaty was a vow and that a person of God will always keep their vows. This is the case in both Old and New Testaments (Num 30:1-2, Deut 23:21-23, Matt 5:33-37).

### **9:16-21 Israel upholds the treaty with Gibeon.**

Three days. Three days is not a long time for the news to reach the Israelite people. I imagine that the Gibeonites were happy and proud to have a treaty with Israel, knowing that they were safe from attack, flaunting their new treaty. With peace being guaranteed in their future, I’m sure they were no longer worried or fearful of the Israelites. Perhaps the Gibeonites were kind with the Israelites, wanting to be their friends.

The Israelites set out. From the wording, it looks like the day the Israelites learned about the treaty, the Israelites took action to see if it was true. They found that it was, so they complained against the elders for doing this. I mean, the elders had made a treaty with a Canaanite people! That was a sin! Of course, the Israelite leaders are not fully to blame. They were tricked by the Gibeonites.

Oath to them by the Lord. (1) As stated before, when someone makes a vow, God requires that every person keeps their vow (Num 30:1-2, Deut 23:21-23, Matt 5:33-37). The Israelite leaders know this. They know that if they break their vow with Gibeon, God will punish them. I find this amazing! Even when a vow is made in deception, God still expects people to keep their vows. This is just one example through Scripture when people took vows and then later begrudgingly had to keep the vows they made. A vow is a vow. A promise is a promise. God has always expected everyone to keep their word, no matter how foolish and regardless of deception. (2) Not only did the Israelite leaders continue to honor their treaty, but God continued to honor it too. When Saul becomes king, he begins a genocide on the Gibeonites because of “his zeal for the Israelites and Judah.” In Saul’s misplaced nationalism, he tried to kill all the Gibeonites. Because of this, when David was king, God caused a three-year famine. David inquired of the Lord about why the famine was happening. God answered



David, “It is because of the blood shed by Saul and his family when he killed the Gibeonites.” The account of Saul’s genocide is not recorded in Scripture, but everything shared about this story is found in 2Sam 21:1-9. It is clear that even until the time of David, God continued to honor this treaty with the Gibeonites. So much so that God caused a three-year famine to bring it to King David’s attention.

### **9:22-27 Israel’s “punishment” on Gibeon.**

You are cursed. Joshua cannot take back his vow. He is bound by the treaty to be friends with the Gibeonites. But Joshua does punish them for their deception. He restricts their economy and workforce to two things: cutting wood and carrying water. In this way, Joshua calls them slaves because they are restricted to those two things.

House of my God. (1) Joshua punishes the Gibeonites to be slaves in only two kinds of jobs. But Joshua takes their restricted place of slavery and gives them an honor in that. Joshua says that they will do this for the house of God. At this time, this is the tabernacle. In the future under Solomon, this would include the temple. At the end of this chapter (verse 27) it again says that the Gibeonites will cut wood and carry water for the Lord’s altar. Even in the midst of punishment and slavery, there is an opportunity for the Gibeonites to have honor. (2) I see the same things happen in the church. In the church, Jesus has given certain roles to certain people. Sometimes it is based on age. Sometimes it is based on gender. Sometimes it is based on money. Sometimes it is based on talent. Sometimes it is based on circumstances we cannot control. But wherever we fall in those areas, it may seem like God has restricted us from certain things. While it may feel that way, each role that God has assigned to us has something very, very special about it. Do you think the Gibeonites felt restricted in only two kinds of jobs? I think they did. But they still had a special honor in doing those two jobs for God, including at the Tabernacle and at the Temple. Like the Gibeonites, we may not think our lot in life is fair. We may feel restricted in doing certain things. But God still has a job for each of us that we can use in God’s honor. Whether we are Israelite or Gibeonite, we are all slaves of God and He has placed us where we need to be.

Gibeonites answered. Verse 24-25 is Gibeon’s statement of faith. Like Rahab’s statement of faith in chapter 2, the Gibeonites declare their faith in God here. Although they had acted out of fear and deception, they call themselves Israel’s servants and they submit to whatever punishment that Israel gives them. Now that is faith: submitting to God as their Supreme Master AND to Israel as their earthly master.

### **10:1-4 Alliance of five Amorite kings.**

Day the Sun Stood Still. (1) The heading in the HCSB is “The Day the Sun Stood Still.” This just makes me think of the old sci-fi movie The Day the Earth Stood Still. Granted, my heading for this section is “Battle of five kings at Gibeon.” This is a slight reference to the end of the Hobbit which was the Battle of Five Armies. (2) Unlike the heading in the HCSB, the focus of this chapter is not the sun. The focus is Gibeon and Joshua’s victory over a handful of Amorite kings. For example, I believe what this chapter says about the hail is more significant than what the chapter says about the sun and moon. (But it is not a competition.)

Adoni-zedek. His name means lord of justice. One of the last times we heard about the king of Jerusalem was a man named Melchizedek. He was priest of the Most High God and a man without genealogy. About 430 years later, the king of Jerusalem went from exceedingly righteous and blessing Abraham down to this “lord of justice.” Jerusalem’s morality had a very significant decrease! Hebron and Jarmuth. Hebron was a major city. Both of these cities were about 20 miles south of Jerusalem.

Lachish and Eglon. It appears that these cities are to the southwest of Jerusalem, near the border of Philistine.

Because they have made peace. In 9:1-2, we read how nearly ALL of Canaan is forming an alliance against the Israelites. This alliance included the Hivites, which the Gibeonites were. Therefore, for Gibeon to make a treaty with “the enemy” was a betrayal to their Canaanite heritage, their Canaanite gods, and to the this newly formed alliance. This new alliance is thinking, “If Gibeon will not join us, then they must be destroyed.” This is why these Amorite kings are attacking Gibeon. Plus, as it says, Gibeon was a warrior city—even larger than Ai. The Amorite kings are going to teach Gibeon a lesson and destroy them because they are now a potential threat.

### **10:5-11 Battle of five kings at Gibeon.**

Besieged Gibeon. Gibeon was about 5 miles north of Jerusalem. So, these five kings are attacking from the south. They have a siege around the city. As stated earlier, Gibeon is a capital city whose men are warriors. It looks like the five kings are focusing on strategy against Gibeon instead of a frontal assault that would result in many casualties.

Come quickly and save us. Gibeon tricked Joshua and the Israelite elders. Gibeon has a treaty with Israel that they did not originally want. Now, they are being attacked and Israel is obligated to fight for them. If I were Joshua, I would see the city of Gibeon as a great burden for the Israelites. Joshua could complain, "What have the Gibeonites ever done for us? Why do I have to defend non-Israelites? How did I ever get duped into making that treaty with them?" At least, this would be my attitude. However, God tells Joshua to have a VERY different attitude.

From Gilgal. From Gilgal to Gibeon would take a normal person a day and a half to get there. But being military and in a rush, I would think that the army could get there in a day. As it says in verse 9, Joshua and the army march all night long. For a messenger to travel one day from Gibeon to Gilgal and for the army to travel from Gilgal to Gibeon, this means that Gibeon has been sieged for at least two days.

Do not be afraid of them. God speaks to Joshua, telling Joshua His will about the coming battle. Joshua could be bitter about having to defend and protect these lying Gibeonites. However, that's not the attitude God wants Joshua to have. God wants Joshua to have the attitude of victory. God is saying, "Joshua, don't be afraid of these enemies of the Gibeonites. I have already given you a future victory. They will not be able to stand against you! You will win, and you will live in victory this day."

Caught them by surprise. (1) Joshua marched all night. He is arriving from the east, So I imagine that he would have attacked with the sunrise behind him. So Joshua is attacking with surprise and sunrise! :) (2) How do you think the Gibeonites felt for the past couple days? Do you think they were wondering if Israel would abandon them? Do you think their hope failed because they were surrounded by the armies of five Amorite kings? From the Gibeonites' perspective, things were bleak and seemed hopeless. However, behind the scenes (behind the Amorites which were the only things they could see), God was working for the salvation of the Gibeonites. They didn't see it, but we can see how hard God was working. As soon as Joshua heard the news, the entire army mobilized, marched all night long, and arrived to save the Gibeonites in a HUGE victory. This is a picture of what God wants to do for us in our lives as He fights our battles. I can see God tell us, "Just hang on longer. Keep asking Me for help. Lean on Me. Just hang on longer. I WILL absolutely deliver you!!! I have already handed your enemies over to you. Until it happens, just hang on and do not give up." (3) I cannot help but see a lot of similarities between this story and JRR Tolkien's Battle of the Pelennor Fields. The nation of Gondor is attacked by an uncountable number of orcs from Mordor. They approach the capital city of Minas Tirith. The number of orcs is so many, they take up the entire countryside, called the Pelennor Fields. They siege the city. (The steward of Gondor, Denethor, loses all hope and becomes a coward, telling everyone to flee. He also laments that Rohan has abandoned them.) Gandalf lights the beacons, sending a message to Rohan, asking for aid. It takes Rohan 5 days to reach the battle. But when they do, they attack the orcs with the rising sun behind them.

Struck them down. Based on the locations below, the Israelites would have chased and killed the Amorites back toward their home towns (southwest of Jerusalem), up to 40 miles away. It's 25 miles from Gilgal to Gibeon, so the Israelites chased the Amorite army for almost double what it took for them to arrive at Gibeon.

Beth-horon. This is northwest of Gibeon, about 6 miles. It is modern-day Beit Ur (or Beit Horon), Israel. Azekah. This is about 40 miles southwest of Gibeon. It is modern-day Tel Azekah, inside Britannia Park. Makedah. This is about 7 or 8 miles south of Azekah. It would be near modern-day Nehusha, Israel.

The Lord threw large hailstones. (1) To me, this is the most amazing part of this chapter. The Hebrew says that the Lord threw large stones from heaven. The Greek says that the Lord threw stones of hail from heaven. (Then later in the verse, both the Hebrew and the Greek says it was hailstones.) (2) But the thing I want to call attention to is that God threw them. When you think of the Bible talking about throwing stones, what do you think of? You think of capital punishment. That was the primary method the Jews used to execute sinners. That is the picture of what is happening here. (3) Do you remember what the Lord said to Abraham about 430 years before? [Gen 15:16](#). God promised

Abraham the land of the Amorites, but Abraham and the following generations would be sojourners in the land of Egypt and Canaan for 430 years (Ex 12:40, Gal 3:17; note: Ex 12:40 is supposed to say Egypt AND Canaan). For those generations, the Hebrews had to sojourn in Canaan (Isaac, Jacob) and Egypt (Joseph) until the sins of the Amorites were complete. Well, God's promise to Abraham about the sins of Amorites is being fulfilled today. Their sins have become complete. As you see in Josh 10, the Lord Himself is stoning the Amorites because of their sins!! God is stoning them with hail from heaven.

More died from the hail. (1) I will ask again: what is the theme of the book of Joshua? Have you yet seen how God is the one who fights their battles!?!? Over and over, we see that God actually does more work than the Israelites do! The Israelites are doing their part and following God as they kill the Canaanites. But God gives them the victories and God even does most of the work! What does that tell you as you fight the battles in your life?? (2) Jericho was an amazing, miraculous victory. Ai was an amazing non-miraculous victory. What do you think the Canaanite-Amorite mega-alliance will think of this battle? God Himself threw hailstones down from heaven on Israel's enemies! Even nature itself bends to the God of the Israelites! Not only does "weather" bend to God's will, but so does the sun and the moon! I'm sure the Canaanites had a god for the hail, a god for the sun, and a god for the moon. But here are the Israelites, a monotheistic people, whose ONE God can control ALL those things! Not only does He control those things, but He has more control over those things than the Canaanite gods do. I'd like to see a Canaanite god make the sun stop. This kind of power had never, ever been seen by the Canaanites. (Unless they had heard of the stories of how God controlled the plagues of Egypt.)

#### **10:12-15 Joshua asks for the sun to be still.**

Joshua spoke. The narration of the battle ends at verse 11. Verses 12-14 is a supplement to the battle. The way this is placed, it is placed to show us that it happened, but the exact time in the battle that Joshua said this was not known. But we do know the duration of how long the sun and moon stood still: a full day (verse 13).

Until the nation took vengeance. As noted above, the Israelites chased the Amorites up to 40 miles. It is extremely, extremely rare for anyone to be able to go that kind of distance in one day. Since verse 13 says that the sun stood still an extra day, that means that the Israelites chased the Amorites for two days. (One day with the sun moving and one day with the sun staying still; 36 hours of straight sunlight.)

Valley of Aijalon. (1) Aijalon means deerfield. This valley exists today, called Ayalon Valley. The best town to locate it is Modi'in-Maccadim-Re'ut, Israel. (2) If this poem (verse 12) says the sun was over Gibeon, the moon would be to the west.

Sun and moon stopped. (1) Not only was there a TON of hail—hail strong enough to kill many, many people--, but the sun and moon obeyed Joshua. Again, Joshua's God is strong enough to control the sun and moon!! Not only would this get the attention of the Israelites, but it would also get the attention of every astrologist and person across the entire world! (2) This is true with the darkness in the afternoon when Jesus died. I might be wrong, but there was a historian who lived in modern-day Turkey who witnessed and recorded that darkness. Wow!]

Book of Jasher. This book is mentioned a few times in the Old Testament between the time of Joshua and the time of David. It has been lost to history so long, there has never been found a single manuscript of it. For a Jewish book to be THAT lost, Jasher must have been non-Scripture.

A full day. (1) As stated before, if this is accurate, then there was constant sunlight for about 36 hours. Remember, this was at a time when no one lived by clocks. Everyone depended on the Sun and Moon to know "what time it was." (While all of history had access to sundials, those still depended on the sun. The mechanical clock wasn't invented until the 1300s AD in Europe.) This means that there were people who kept working in the field for an extra 24 hours that day. It meant that people on the other side of the world could keep sleeping for an extra 24 hours that night. For a miracle like this, the entire world would have known that something was up! For God to do this for Joshua is to show the ENTIRE WORLD the power of the God of the Israelites! I'm sure many people in the world (like China, Europe, and Africa) would be inquiring about what this was about. Out of all the people in the world, only the Israelites had the answer. (2) Since this was the day the earth stood still, I looked into how this would affect the earth. The most obvious affect would be that it would drastically change wind currents. In fact, if the world didn't spin, a tornado or hurricane would be impossible. It would

also keep the tides from changing. It would also cause the side of the earth with the sun to become much hotter and the side of the earth without the sun to become much cooler. There are theories that this would affect the magnetic properties of the earth. Lastly, of course, if the earth stopped spinning for too long, eventually, the earth would die.

When the Lord listened to the voice of a man. Because of the way this is worded, it sounds like the stopping of the sun was Joshua's idea. And the purpose behind it was to allow his army more time in chasing and killing the Amorites.

#### **10:16-27 Aftermath of the battle.**

Roll large stones. Take a close look at verses 18-21. The kings have chosen to hide instead of run. But they are found, so Joshua basically says, "Put them in jail until we're done killing their soldiers." And when the Israelites arrive to where the kings are trapped, they are like fish in a barrel. I find it rather funny that Joshua acts so nonchalant about the kings, "Just keep them trapped until we've finished our jobs." Then, Joshua comes back and executes the five kings with ease.

Terrible slaughter. Both the Hebrew and the Greek say, "A vehemently great slaughter." If Joshua and the Israelites did a vehemently great slaughter and God killed even more enemies with the hail, then how many enemies died a really horrible death this day!

Few survivors ran to fortified cities. In the next section (verses 28-39), we see that they are not survivors for long.

Put their feet on their necks. Joshua might have done this to humiliate the five Amorite kings. But I think Joshua is doing this to tell his commanders to be strong and courageous! Joshua has actually experienced first-hand how God fights his battles. Joshua does this to help train up the next generation of leaders that "the Lord will do this to all the enemies you fight" too!

Commanded that they be taken down from the trees. Just like with the previous kings, Joshua is following God's instruction through Moses (Deut 21:22-23).

#### **10:28-39 Joshua attacks the cities of the five kings.**

Makkedah. See note at Josh 10:10.

Libnah. (1) The location of this city is unknown, but it is believed to be a little farther west of Makkedah.

In modern-day, it would be in the area in or around Britannia Park. (2) In this section with Libnah and Lachish, it says that the Lord handed these cities over to Israel. The Lord has already handed all these cities to the Israelites. But for these two cities, I think this means that God did something special or miraculous. If that is correct, we aren't told what happened.

Lachish. (1) See note at Josh 10:3. (2) In this siege, for some reason, the Lord caused Lachish to fall on day 2. Perhaps this was because the king of Gezer was coming to Lachish's aid. Perhaps Lachish and Gezer had a treaty. But of course, the fate of Gezer became the same as the fate of Lachish.

Eglon. See note at Josh 10:3.

Hebron. See note at Josh 10:3.

Debir. This is the first time this city is mentioned. Apparently, this was an Amorite city, but the king of this city did not participate in the alliance of the five Amorite kings. Debir is modern-day Rabud, West Bank. It is 8 miles southwest of Hebron. Or, it is the town Othiel right next to it, named after Othiel. See note at Josh 15:15-19.

#### **10:40-43 Summary of Joshua's victories in the south.**

Hill country. This is the area surrounding Jerusalem, the middle of the Promised Land.

Negev. This is the whole area south of Jerusalem. Today, Beer Sheva and Hebron are the only major cities in this area.

Judean foothills. This is the beautiful area to the west of Jerusalem and east of the Mediterranean coast.

One campaign. Beginning with (and because of?) the Gibeonites, it took Joshua only one campaign to conquer all the land around Jerusalem and to the south, east of Philistia, and west of the Dead Sea. Except for the Philistines (who lived along the Mediterranean coast), Joshua conquered HALF of the Promised Land in only one campaign.

Kadesh-barnea. Scholars believe this marked the border between Israel and Egypt. It is probably modern-day El Qadees Spring, which is currently (and barely) within Egypt. In fact, all the locations mentioned in verse 41 are places that Joshua did NOT conquer. Kadesh-barnea and Goshen would be in Egypt. Gaza would be in Philistia. And Gibeon is mentioned because Joshua didn't conquer it.

Goshen. This is not the Goshen in Egypt where Jacob and Joseph settled. There must have been an area or city in the southern country of Israel/Egypt called Goshen, which has not been identified by scholars. Goshen is an Egyptian name, so this must have been an area that was controlled (or originally settled) by Egypt.

#### **11:1-5 The alliance mobilizes.**

Hazor. Josephus (Antiquities, V, v, 1) says that Hazor was at Lake Semechonitis, modern day Lake Hula.

This is about 15 miles north of the Sea of Galilee, east of Mercaz Kah, Israel, and west of Gonen, Israel. Hazor is a place that returns to the story of the Israelites in Judges 4. There, it was Deborah and Barak who completely wiped out the Hazor people.

Madon. This is located northwest of the Sea of Galilee, modern day Meron, Israel.

Shimron. This was a city to the west of Nazareth, modern day Timrat, Israel.

Achshaph, Chinnereth. It is unknown where these cities were.

Slopes of Dor. The actual name is Naphoth-Dor. It was a city south of Haifa, Israel, made up of Phoenician (Tyre-Sidon) people. It is near modern-day Zihron Ya'akov, Israel.

Kings. The list in verse 1-2 is a list of locations from the area. From the locations he lists, this includes the Canaanites from all around Galilee. It is the northern half of Israel. The author wants to make sure his readers understand how many peoples are joining this mega-alliance, so he lists the cultural peoples in verse 3.

Canaanites...Hivites. This is the same list of cultural peoples from Josh 9:1-2. Remember, this Canaanite-Amorite mega-alliance started in those verses. The accounts of the Gibeonites and the battle of the five Amorite kings is like a parentheses inside what is happening in chapter 11. This mega-alliance began before the Gibeonites. But now that Israel has dealt with the five Amorite kings and are allied with the Gibeonites, it is time for the mega-alliance to mobilize. This will be the final, gigantic battle for Joshua and the Israelites in their conquest of the Promised Land.

Numerous as the sand on the seashore. This is a figure of speech, meaning that there were so many soldiers, they could not have been counted. The picture I see here is an image of the Final Battle (between Jesus and Satan). It is like the final battle in Revelation is called Armageddon, when Babylon the Great amasses everyone and fights in one, gigantic battle against God and Jesus. After this battle, Joshua (Jesus) and Israel will own the Promised Land. After Armageddon, Jesus (Joshua) and spiritual Israel will own the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, and the New Heavens and New Earth.

Waters of Merom. Many scholars believe this is the same place as Hazor, which was a fertile area with lakes. (Again, it is about 15 miles north of Galilee.) But more likely, this is Dalton Lake, which is between Jish and Dalton, Israel, and is near Meron, Israel. It is about 11 miles northwest of Galilee. Hazor's armies would travel south, but most of the kings would travel north to Merom. The armies are mobilizing at a well-watered place, since there were so many soldiers they could not be counted.

#### **11:6-15 Battle of the alliance and the attacks on their cities.**

This time tomorrow. It would take 3 or 4 days for the Israelites to travel from Gilgal to Merom. For them to be one day away, Joshua and the Israelite armies would have been somewhere north of Nazareth, or next to the Sea of Galilee (like near Tiberias or Ginosar or less likely Capernaum). Therefore, Joshua already knew about these new armies and had already mobilized the Israelite armies to attack this mega-alliance. So, it was the day before the attack that God spoke to Joshua, giving him more confidence in the battle to come.

Hamstring their horses. To hamstring a horse is to cut the horse's large tendon at the back of the knee. This kept the animal from being used for any useful work, such as military use. Until this time, there isn't a mention that Israel used horses or chariots in their battles. Perhaps God ordered this (and the burning of the enemy's chariots) to tell the Israelites and all the world that their victory is not because of military strength. As Psalm 20:7 says, "Some take pride in chariots, and others in horses, but we take pride in the name of the Lord our God." This is probably why God ordered these things—to show His power. God fights your battles! You don't need all the tools or weapons the world gives you. You need God and His weapons. By King David's time, Israel had employed horses and chariots into their army.

Joshua surprised them. Just like the five Amorites kings, Joshua again makes a surprise attack. I am seeing a pattern here. Could it be that God is “blinding” the military intelligence of the enemies of Israel? Are these surprise attacks God’s doing?

Struck them down. Even though this is the biggest battle of the Promised Land, we aren’t given any details about the battle except for the location where it happened. All we are given is that the Israelites surprised, attacked, struck down, and pursued them. I would expect the biggest battle of the Promised Land to have more description. But of course, even though the Israelites did those things, all the glory should go to the Lord, who “handed them over to Israel!” (verse 8).

Great Sidon and Misrephoth-maim. It is unknown where Misrephoth-maim is. It was probably somewhere in Pheoncia (the land of Tyre and Sidon). Sidon is obvious. In fact, the author calls it Great Sidon. From Meron, Israel to Sidon, Lebanon, it is about 60 miles. Before the battle, it was about 60 miles for some of those armies to travel to Merom. After the battle, they would have been chased another 60 miles. Also note: Joshua and the Israelites chased these enemies outside of the Promised Land. While Tyre was in the Promised Land (given to Asher), Sidon was north of the Promised Land. I imagine that some of the enemies made it to Sidon and found refuge there. While Israel did not attack Sidon, according to God in Josh 13:4, they should have. (That Sidon became a city of refuge for Israel’s enemies, like Hazor, makes sense because the Hazor royal family shows up again in Judges 4.)

Valley of Mizpah. This was the valley between modern-day Margaliot, Lebanon and the Golan Heights. This was about 5 miles north of Hazor. The largest, modern-day city in the valley is Qiryat Sehmona, Israel.

No survivors. We see that the Hazor royal family returns in Judges 4. Obviously, some of them escaped to cities, such as Sidon. Then later, they tried to re-establish themselves. So when this says “no survivors,” although some enemy soldiers escaped, this means Israel took no prisoners.

Captured Hazor. We see that the king of Hazor, who established this mega-alliance didn’t even take part in the battle. He stayed “safe” in Hazor, letting his army do his dirty work without him. Of course, even when you try to get others to do your dirty work, if you are working against God, God will always avenge His people.

Except Hazor. (1) Why did Joshua only burn the city of Hazor? I don’t know, but in verses 12-15, it says three times the Lord commanded Moses and once Moses commanded Joshua. I think the point is clear: everything Joshua did to the cities of this mega-alliance—whether to burn them, loot them, or not--, Joshua was following the Lord’s instructions. (2) Isn’t it amazing that the Lord gave different instructions about different cities that were part of one big alliance? It is as if the Lord knows each of these cities very well. In my view, the Lord knew which ones were the most evil, instructing Joshua to burn those (like Jericho), and which ones had spoils that were safe for the Israelites to loot (like Ai). I see the same thing happening on Judgment Day to the wicked. Some enemies will be beaten, and some enemies will be cut into pieces (Luke 12:45-48 says: beaten lightly, beaten heavily, cut into pieces). To me, this is a picture of God dealing out punishment to these rebellious and disobedient Canaanites, according to what they deserved. And Joshua is God’s instrument of punishment. On Judgment Day, Hell will be God’s instrument of punishment.

### **11:16-23 Summary of Joshua’s conquest of the land.**

Seir to Lebanon. Mount Seir is the mountain range in Jordan that goes from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba. The borders of Israel given here nearly identically match Israel’s borders today. One exception is that in Joshua’s day, it included a little more of Lebanon, including Tyre.

Waged war for a long time. The only clue we have to how long Joshua’s military conquests were in the Promised Land, we look to Caleb. Caleb speaks in Josh 14:6-10. Caleb was 40 years old when he was sent by Moses as one of the spies. The Israelites wondered for 40 years. Here, Caleb says he is 85. Therefore, Joshua’s military conquests lasted 5 years at the most.

The Lord’s intention to harden. When it comes to the story of the Canaanites, it is helpful to look at everything the Scriptures say about them. In this instance, remember what was said about the Amorites. God said to Abraham that he could not yet have the Promised Land because “the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure” (Gen 15:16). With the Lord commanding the Israelites to kill all the Canaanites and with the Lord Himself killing more Canaanites than the Israelites did, I see all of this as God’s judgment on the Canaanite people. Their opportunities for repentance have run out. Except for the faithful people like Rahab and the Gibeonites who God

granted salvation because of their faith, it was time for the rest of the Canaanites to be judged by the Lord. Just like when the Lord did the same thing to Pharaoh, God knew that these people were wicked and God decided that their opportunities for repentance were past. At least twice Jesus taught about this... the parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt 25:10-13) and the teaching about the narrow way (Luke 13:24-28).

Anakim. (1) In Num 13:22, the spies find the descendants of Anak. In verse 33, the spies say that the descendants of Anak came from the Nephilim, calling them giants. Joshua and the Israelites kill all the Anakim from the Promised Land. (2) But here, the author reminds us that there is an exception. Some descendants of Anak had moved and lived and possibly intermarried with the Philistines. (Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod were all Philistine cities.) Of course years later, Goliath of Gath will show up to taunt Israel. (3) Thus far, there is nothing in the Scriptures that imply that the land of the Philistines is part of the Promised Land. Growing up, I had always heard that the Israelites failed in wiping out the Philistines. However, from how the book of Joshua reads, it was not Joshua's intention to conquer the Philistines. (4) See also note at Josh 14:12.

### **12:1-6 East of the Jordan.**

[Dividing the land]. Chapters 12 through 21 are lists and lists of cities as the Israelites divide up the land between the tribes. For chapter 12 only, instead of researching the most probable location of each place (which is my normal practice), I will search the Scriptures for these towns and mention the town if the town has another significance outside of the book of Joshua.

Sihon and Og. When the people of Canaan, including Rahab, heard about what the Israelites did before crossing the Jordan, it was the battles against Sihon and Og that made the Israelites very popular. Here, their lands are given to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh.

### **12:7-16a West of the Jordan and south of Jerusalem.**

Ai and Bethel. (1) Perhaps one of the reasons why Ai was significant was because it was next to Bethel. Perhaps Bethel was a part of Ai's city-state. Scholars believe Bethel is modern-day Baytin, Israel. (2) Bethel is significant in Genesis. In fact, when Bethel is mentioned in Genesis, it is usually mentioned with Ai too. (2a) Both before Abraham went to Egypt and after he came back, Bethel was the place where he worshipped God (Gen 12:8, 13:3). (2b) When Jacob ran from Esau, he came to Bethel, slept, had a vision of a ladder to heaven, met with God, and gave the place the name of Bethel, which means House of God (Gen 28:10-22). (2c) After Jacob had eleven sons and was reconciled with Esau, God told Jacob to return to Bethel to worship. When there, God changes Jacob's name to Israel. After they leave Bethel and came to Bethlehem, Rachel gives birth to Benjamin, and she dies (Gen 35:1-20). (3) In Judges 1:22-26, the "house of Joseph" attacks Bethel, driving out the Canaanites. Interestingly, Bethel and Ai are in the land of Ephraim. (4) At a time when the Canaanites of Hazor were oppressing the Israelites for 20 years, Deborah was a prophetess and judge over Israel. She would judge Israel between Ramah and Bethel in the hills of Ephraim (Jdg 4:4-6). (This near modern-day Psagot, Israel. The hill she would judge on might have been at lat/long: 31.922, 35.229 or 31.913, 35.230.) (4) Bethel was where the Israelites spoke to God about how they would attack Benjamin (Jdg 20). (5) Bethel was also a town in the stories of Samuel and Saul. It was a place where bad kings worshipped their gods and where good kings restored the worship of the God. When Zerubbabel returned from Persia, either 123 or 223 men returned to Bethel and Ai (Ezra 2:28, Neh 7:32).

Jerusalem. Being the most famous city in the entire Bible, there is so, so much history here! It was in the tribe of Benjamin.

Hebron. After Egypt, Abraham lived here, and it is where the Oaks of Mamre are. Isaac lived here too. Hebron was in the tribe of Judah, specifically Caleb. After Saul died, God told David to move to Hebron, where David was anointed king. David reigned as king from Hebron for 7.5 years (2Sam chapters 2-5) and in Jerusalem for 33 years (2Sam 5:4).

Lachish. (1) This was the city of one of the kings of the alliance of the five Amorite kings in Josh 10. It was southwest of Jerusalem near the Philistia. Lachish was given to the tribe of Judah (Josh 15:39). (2) In the following two points, they show that Lachish was one of Judah's most fortified cities. (2a) When Sennacherib king of Assyria was invading Judah while Hezekiah was king of Judah, Sennacherib ended up at Lachish (conquering it). While there, Hezekiah asked for peace with Sennacherib and stole gold and silver from God in order to pay Sennacherib (2King 18:13-18, Is

36:1ff). (2b) At the time of Nebuchadnezzar, Jer 34:6-7 mentions Lachish as one of the fortified cities of Judah.

Eglon. This was also a city of one of the five Amorite kings in Josh 10. Like Lachish, Eglon was given to the tribe of Judah (Josh 15:39). Eglon can be confusing, because Eglon was the name of the king of Moab (Jdg 3).

Gezer. (1) This was given to the tribe of Ephraim, but Gezer was given to the Levite clan of Kohath. (2) Josh 16:10 says that, although Joshua killed the king there, Ephraim did not wipe out the rest of the Canaanites from Gezer. It says that they were forced laborers, which might mean two things: either the Canaanites of Gezer had faith like the Gibeonites and served the Israelites OR they did not have faith but Ephraim made the Canaanites of Gezer unwilling slaves of the Israelites. (3) During the time of Solomon, Egypt attacked and captured Gezer, killing the Canaanites who lived there. The king of Egypt returned it to Solomon as a dowry because Solomon married the king of Egypt's wife (1King 9:16-17).

Debir. This was also a city of one of the five Amorite kings in Josh 10. It was given to the tribe of Judah (Josh 15:49). Caleb offered his daughter Achsah as payment for the person who captured Debir (Josh 15:14-17, Jdg 1:8-13). Also, Debir was given made a city for the priests (Josh 21:14, 1Chr 6:57-58).

Geder. This was also called Dederah. It was given to the tribe of Judah (Josh 15:36).

Hormah, Arad. (1) These are found in the Negev, southern country. Hormah was given to the tribe of Judah (Josh 15:30). However, a section within Judah was given to Simeon, which included Hormah (Josh 19:4). Arad is not mentioned in the allotment of lands. It just says that Arad was in the Negev, and most of the Negev was given to Judah. (2) Around the time Moses sent spies into the land, the Israelites had some battles with these cities. This was when the Israelites were south of the Dead Sea (this did not involve crossing the Jordan River). (2a) When the Israelites did not believe the spies and God punished them, making them wander for 40 years, the Israelites repented. However, now that they wanted to enter the Promised Land, God would not let them because they were now punished. They wanted to enter the Promised Land anyway, but Moses said that the Lord would not be with them. Without Moses or the Ark, they invaded up to the hill country of the Promised Land, but the Amalekites and Canaanites attacked them and drove them back to Hormah (Num 14:39-45, Deut 1:34-44). (2b) Later, the king of Arad attacked the Israelites, so the Israelites asked God for help, and the Israelites won. That's when they named that place Hormah (Num 21:1-3).

Libnah. (1) This city was also given to the tribe of Judah (Josh 15:42). But the city was given to the priests (Josh 21:13). (2) The Israelites had camped here during their wilderness wanderings (Num 33:20-21). (3) During the evil reign of Judah's king Jehoram, Edom and Libnah rebelled against him (2King 8:20-22). Libnah had rebelled against Jehoram because Jehoram was evil (2Chr 21:10). (4) Hamutal, a woman from Libnah, was the wife of good king Josiah. After Josiah's death, she was the mother of two wicked kings of Judah: Jehoahaz and Zedekiah (2King 23:31, 24:18).

Adullam. This city was given to the tribe of Judah (Josh 15:35). In Genesis 28, one of Judah's friends was Hirah the Adullamite. Twice, David took refuge at the cave of Adullam (1Sam 22:1, 2Sam 23:13).

Makkedah. This city was given to the tribe of Judah (Josh 15:41). This is where the five Amorite kids hid (Josh 10).

### **12:16b-24 West of the Jordan and north of Jerusalem.**

Bethel. See notes at Josh 12:9.

Tappuah. This city is mentioned twice when dividing up the land. It is likely that there were two cities with this name. One Tappuah (probably NOT the one mentioned here) was given to the tribe of Judah (Josh 15:34). The other Tappuah (probably the one mentioned here) was given to the tribe of Ephraim (Josh 16:8). It acted as a border between Ephraim and Manasseh, with Manasseh getting land that belonged to Tappuah (Josh 17:7-8).

Hepher. This city was given to the tribe of Manasseh on the west side of Jordan (Josh 17:2).

Aphek. This city was given to the tribe of Asher (Josh 19:30). There were a few battles that happened near Aphek. These included against the Philistines (1Sam 4:1, 29:1) and the Arameans (1King 20). At the time of Elisha's death, the Arameans had control of Aphek (2King 13:14-17).

Lasharon. This is mentioned no where else in the Scriptures.



Madon. The king from this city joined in Hazor's mega-alliance. There is no other mention of this city in Scripture.

Hazor. (1) See notes at Josh 11:1 and 11:13. (2) This city is mentioned twice when dividing up the land. It is likely that there were two cities with this name. One Hazor (probably NOT the one mentioned here) was given to the tribe of Judah (Josh 15:23). Judah's Hazor is prophesied against by Jeremiah because Nebuchadnezzar would conquer it (Jer 49:28-33). Judah's Hazor is also mentioned in Neh 11:33. (3) The other Hazor (probably the one mentioned here) was given to the tribe of Naphtali (19:36). Solomon rebuilt and fortified Hazor (1King 9:15). (4) When Pekah was king of Isreal, Tiglath-pileser of Assyria conquered the tribe of Naphtli and deported all the people to Assyria (2King 15:29).

Shimron-meron. Do not get confused. Shimron was the name of one of Issachar's sons. The city Shimron-meron is likely the same city found in Josh 19:15, which was given to the tribe of Zebulun.

Achshaph. This city was given to the tribe of Asher (Josh 19:25).

Taanach. This city was near Issachar and Asher but was given to the tribe of Manasseh west of the Jordan (Josh 17:11). But the city became a city of the Levite clan of Kohath (Josh 21:25). However, Manasseh failed to conquer this city (Jdg 1:27).

Megiddo. This city was given to the tribe of Manasseh west of the Jordan (Josh 17:11). However, Manasseh failed to conquer this city (Jdg 1:27). Solomon rebuilt and fortified Megiddo (1King 9:15). Josiah, good king of Judah, fought Neco king of Egypt at Megiddo. Josiah died in the battle (2King 23:29-30).

Kedesh. This city is mentioned twice when dividing up the land. It is likely that there were two cities with this name. One Kedesh (probably NOT the one mentioned here) was given to the tribe of Judah (Josh 15:23). The other Kedesh (probably the one mentioned here) was given to the tribe of Naphtali (Josh 19:37). But the city became a city of the Levite clan of Gershon (Josh 21:32). Kedesh became one of six of the cities of refuge (Josh 20:1-9). Barak, Deborah's military commander, was from Kedesh. He and Deborah assembled Israel's army at Kedesh to fight against Hazor (Jdg 4:6-11). When Pekah was king of Isreal, Tiglath-pileser of Assyria conquered the tribe of Naphtli and deported all the people to Assyria (2King 15:29).

Jokneam. This city was given to the tribe of Zebulun (Josh 19:11). It wasn't too far from Mount Carmel. But the city became a city of the Levite clan of Merari (Josh 21:34).

Naphath-Dor. See note at 11:2 (also spelled Naphoth-Dor). This may have not been a city but a region. Josh 17:11 says that Naphath had three cities: Endor, Taanach, and Megiddo. If that region is the same Naphath-Dor, then this region was given to the tribe of Manasseh west of the Jordan.

Goiim. (1) This city is only mentioned in Genesis 14. Goiim was part of the four-king alliance that lost against the five-king alliance. The five-king alliance took Lot prisoner, so Abraham went to rescue him. (2) The HCSB says that this is Goiim of Gilgal. This does not make sense because Gilgal was the settlement and headquarters Joshua set up between Jericho and the Jordan River. Today's Hebrew is incorrect. The Septuagint says "Goiim of Galilee," which places this city in the correct region.

Tirzah. This city is not mentioned in Joshua. It is mentioned during the divided kingdom. It is the place where Baasha king of Israel ruled (1King 15:33). Tirzah became the capital of northern Israel, previously the capital was Shechem. Tirzah is mentioned often in 1Kings 16. Tirzah is mentioned in Song of Solomon 6:4.

### **13:1-7 God tells Joshua that he is old but there is more land to conquer.**

Old. I don't know how old Joshua is at this time. It's likely that Joshua is the same age as Caleb. According to Josh 14:10, Caleb is 85 years old. I imagine that Joshua is about the same age. If Joshua is this old, I am guessing that God is implying something by telling Joshua that he is old and getting on in years. I am guessing that God is trying to tell Joshua that he will die soon, and now is a good time for him to retire. Just because there is more land to conquer, it will not be Joshua's responsibility to do it. It is Joshua's old age and upcoming death that will keep Joshua from conquering all the Canaanites.

Land remains to be possessed. God tells Joshua which areas the Israelites will need to conquer next. The way the HCSB lays out verse 2-6 is confusing. Basically, there is a southern region, which can be summarized as the Philistines, and a northern region, which can be summarized as the Sidonians. Verses 2-3 is about the southern region and verses 4-6 is about the northern region.

Philistines. The Shihor was a river southwest of Gaza. It either made the border between Egypt and Philistia or it was between that border and Gaza. I believe it was located near modern-day Rafah or Khan Yunis, Gaza Strip. God says that this region went from Shihor to Ekron, even naming the five capital cities of the Philistines. This was either all of or most of Philistia. The Avvites were a culture of people who also lived in this area.

Geshurites. This was a desert people who lived in southern Israel (Negev). It is possible they lived farther east in modern-day southwestern Jordan. However, the Geshurites are mentioned in Josh 13:11, which would have been Manasseh's tribe, which was east of Jordan and Galilee, putting these people in the northern region. However however, it is possible that they lived in the south part of Reuben's territory, which would have put these people east of the Dead Sea, which is in the central-southern region.

Canaanites. Arah of the Sidonians was a city or an area very close to Sidon. Aphek, also mentioned in Josh 12:18, was near Sidon also. This makes sense. From the locations of earlier battles, Tyre was mentioned as a place that the Israelites conquered. According to this verse, Israel was supposed to conquer Sidon too. God mentions the Amorites, which would control the same as modern-day Syria. Therefore, God is saying that the Israelites should conquer Lebanon also.

Gebalites. These were a people who lived in Lebanon, east of Sidon and west of Damascus. Mount Hermon marks the border between Lebanon and Syria. Scholars say that Hamath is the same as Hama, Syria. However, Hama, Syria is far too north to be correct.

I will drive them out. (1) Here, God makes the same promise all along, "I have given you the Promised Land." Whoever becomes leader after Joshua, or if the tribes of Judah and Dan in the south and the tribes of Asher and Naphtali in the north, those Israelites will have God's blessing and God's power in driving out those people—just like Joshua did when Joshua was leader! (2) HOWEVER, there is no mention in Scripture that God drove these people out like He promised. Was this a fault on God's part? Why didn't God drive them out? I believe it is because the Israelites didn't take up arms and do their part in accepting God's promise. Just like if Israel had never crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land and not received it as God promised, it appears that Joshua's successor or the tribes of Judah and Dan or the tribes of Asher and Naphtali never decided to take God up on His promise. Therefore, God didn't drive those people out because the Israelites failed to believe God's promise in Josh 13:2-6.

Nine tribes and half tribe of Manasseh. This exactly matches the map of tribes that were west of the Jordan. The tribes that were east of the Jordan were Reuben, Gad, and some of Manasseh. That area was not the Promised Land, but those tribes wanted it. The nine tribes were the tribes that lived in the Promised Land, which was between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. Note: the half tribe of Manasseh had land on both sides of Jordan. That's why God mentions them here as being one of the tribes in the actual Promised Land. That is why the beginning of verse 8 states, "with the other half of the tribe..."

### **13:8-33 Land for Manasseh, Reuben, and Gad.**

[Dividing the land]. For chapters 13 through 21, I will be very brief if there is anything worth mentioning. If nothing else, I will list the towns or regions that are mentioned.

Geshurites and Maacathites. Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh did not drive these people out of the modern-day Jordan area.

No inheritance to Levi. This is mentioned many times in the book. It is a reference to what God said in Num 18:20, Deut 10:9, 18:2. The Levites were not to get land as an inheritance. God said that HE is their inheritance. They weren't given land. They were given cities with the other tribes' land.

Reuben. In this section, three times it mentions the plateau. Yes, directly east of the Dead Sea is a large plateau area. Balaam was from this area. He is mentioned here again, as being executed by the Israelites.

Gad. The Ammonites are listed. After all, Gad's inheritance would have included modern-day Amman, Jordan.

### **14:1-5 Land for the Israelite leaders.**

This is a summary of how and why the leaders were to divide the land.

### **14:6-15 Land for Caleb.**

I remained loyal. Caleb speaks the truth. Some people might see a fine line between what Caleb is saying here and bragging. But I don't think that is the case. Caleb, being one of the only persons in all of Israel to stay loyal to God was promised to receive a reward from God. Caleb, who has suffered in the wilderness and fought in the Promised Land, including waiting 45 years, is ready to receive the reward that God promised.

Kept me alive 45 years. While all of Caleb's contemporaries (except Joshua of course) died off in the wilderness, God kept Caleb alive to see this day of reward.

Still as strong. Twice Caleb says that he is as strong at 85 as he was at 40. Caleb is giving God the glory. Not only has God allowed Caleb to keep his life over the last 45 years, but God has allowed Caleb to keep his strength over the last 45 years too. If what Caleb said is true, he is an 85-year-old man who feels like a 40-year-old man. This is nearly miraculous!

Give me the hill country. Whether or not Joshua is chronological or not matters here. (A) If Joshua is not chronological, then the hill country was given to Judah by lot and then Caleb chose to take Hebron as his hometown. (B) If Joshua is not chronological and if this conversation from Caleb happened before Joshua conquered the hill country, then Joshua and Caleb were the ones who fulfilled Josh 11:21-22. (C) If Joshua is chronological, then Caleb chose to take Hebron as his hometown, as by coincidence, the hill country was given to his own tribe of Judah by lot. Either way, I get the impression from this section that Caleb is the only Israelite who chooses what his hometown will be NOT by lot. To allow Caleb to do this is a huge honor! He bypassed the drawing of lots and given his choice for a hometown. All this was because Caleb "remained loyal to the Lord his God" (verse 8).

Anakim. At the end of Josh chapter 11 talk about the Anakim. They were considered giants. These were the giants that the 10 spies said that the Israelites could not conquer. These were the giants who Joshua and Caleb said that they could conquer. Here, Caleb is using the exact same courage he had as a spy today. While God kept Caleb alive and very strong for 45 years, Caleb kept his courage alive and strong also! According to Josh 15:14, Caleb succeeded.

#### **15:1-12 Land for Judah.**

Judah's land included Hebron, but not Jerusalem. Philistia was the border to the west (but should have been the Mediterranean), Dan and Benjamin were to the north, the Dead Sea was to the east, and the Wilderness of Zin was to the south. Both Judah and Simeon took the land of the Negev. The Negev included these two tribes and the Wilderness of Zin.

#### **15:13-19 Caleb's family's conquest of the Hebron region.**

Hebron and Debir. See note at Josh 10:36-39.

Anak. (1) See note at Josh 11:21-22 and note at Josh 14:15. (2) There is a difference in the Hebrew and Greek here. The Hebrew says that Arba was the name of the town and the father of Anak. The Greek says Arba was the metropolis of Anak. The difference is that the Hebrew mentions the father of Anak, and the Greek says that Arba was just the city of the children of Anak.

Othniel. (1) By reading who this by only using the Scripture, Othniel is Caleb's nephew (Josh 15:17, Jdg 1:13). (2) In Judges 3, Othniel was Israel's first judge who freed Israel from Aram-Naharaim (Arameans of Mesopotamia). (3) If you look at the relationship between Othniel and Achsah, they are cousins. Othniel's father is Kenaz. Achsah's father is Caleb. Kenaz and Caleb are brothers. Othniel is marrying his cousin. According to the Law (Lev 18), for cousins to marry was not sinful. It sounds sinful to us because it is illegal for cousins to marry in most states in America. Interestingly, in twenty states, it is legal to marry your first cousin.

Achsah persuaded Othniel. Here, Achsah is taking the initiative in getting more land from her father. She first persuaded Othniel to ask Caleb for it and she is the one who makes the official request to her father. Basically, Achsah is telling Othniel, "Should I go to my father and ask for more land?" Othniel agrees that it is a good idea. We see how respectful Achsah is toward her husband, asking if he approves of doing this for their family.

Donkey. The Hebrew says that Achsah descended from her donkey to ask her father. The Greek says that Achsah shouted to Caleb from her donkey. I'm thankful for modern translations. Older translations say that Achsah "lighted off her ass" (KJV) and that Achsah "sighed as she sat on her ass" (Douay-Rheims).

Upper and lower springs. (1) This place is also uncertain. Some scholars believe they found springs near Dura, West Bank. If this is the correct place, these springs would have been closer to Hebron

than Debir. (2) We saw how respectful Achsah was to her husband, Othniel. Here, we see how respectful Caleb is to Achsah. Achsah asks for a blessing, springs of water. Caleb gives her two, which might have been closer to his town of Hebron than to Debir. That would show how much Caleb respected Achsah and Othniel.

#### **15:20-63 Land for Judah.**

Ekron, Ashdod, Gaza. Because these cities are listed, it is more than obvious that Judah was supposed to conquer the Philistines! But the only Philistine town that was outside their land was Ekron, which was in the tribe of Dan.

Jerusalem. I find it odd that Jerusalem is listed here like this. The city of Jerusalem itself was located in the tribe of Benjamin's land. Although the border of Judah went to the hills on the south side of Jerusalem (less than 1 mile away from the city).

#### **16:1-4 Land for Ephraim-Manasseh (Joseph), west of the Jordan.**

(1) This land was on the west side of Jordan. This land was given to both Ephraim and Manasseh, the two tribes from Joseph. This section about the land that was given to both of them. The next two sections divide this land further between the two half-tribes. (2) On the southern edge of its border was Jericho, Bethel (which was 12 miles north of Jerusalem). The southern border of Manasseh went between Bethel (modern-day Baytin, West Bank) and Ramah (modern-day Ramallah, West Bank). Although the rest of the towns are hard to locate, it appears that the southern border went from Bethel to Joppa (Tel Aviv). Joppa (Tel Aviv) was certainly in this tribe's land. The tribe that was to the south and included Jerusalem was Benjamin (Jerusalem) and Dan (hill country west of Jerusalem).

Luz. Scholars believe Luz is the same as Bethel (Gen 28:19). But this appears to be another Luz that would be located somewhere northwest of Jerusalem.

Archites. This place is also unknown. Some believe it is the same as "Atara."

Gezer. This is modern-day Kibbutz Gezer, which is south-southeast of Joppa and west-northwest of Jerusalem.

#### **16:5-10 Land for Ephraim.**

This was the land from the Ephraim-Manasseh region that was specifically given to Ephraim. The southern border of this tribe was the same as above. But the northern border (which separates only-Ephraim from Ephraim-Manasseh) is as follows, from east to west. The southern border of Ephraim went from the Mediterranean, down to Gezer, did not include Ramah, down to Jericho, down to the Jordan. Ephraim controlled Bethel (Baytin, West Bank) and Shiloh. The northern border of Ephraim went from the Mediterranean (I'm not sure if it included Joppa or not) to Tappuah (Rasuf, West Bank), to Shechem (Askar, West Bank) to Jericho.

Michmethath. This is uncertain, but might be near Shechem, which is modern-day Askar, West Bank.

Jericho. While Jericho is listed above, Jericho was specifically given to Ephraim.

Canaanites in Gezer. There is note here that it was Ephraim's responsibility to remove the Canaanites from their land. Gezer was the southwest corner of their land. Gezer was already completely conquered by Joshua during the first campaign in the south (Josh 10:33). However, there seems to be Canaanites who resettled in Gezer. Yet, Ephraim didn't wipe them out. It appears that Ephraim made the Canaanites of Gezer forced laborers.

#### **17:1-13 Land for Manasseh, west of the Jordan.**

Manasseh. Do not be confused with Manasseh. Manasseh was given two areas. The first area was given to the parts of Manasseh who wanted to remain on the east side of the Jordan (see Josh 13:8-33). This part of Manasseh was given to them on the west side of the Jordan.

Tappuah. This is modern-day Yasuf, West Bank. The town itself belonged to Ephraim. But the town's countryside/farmland on the northside belonged to Manasseh.

This land bordered the half-tribe of Ephraim to the south, from west to east. (1) It went from the Mediterranean (I'm not sure if it included Joppa or not), to Tappuah (Yasuf, West Bank), to west of Shechem (Nablus, West Bank), to the Jordan (probably not too far north of Jericho, which belong to Ephraim). The north border, from west to east. It went from the Mediterranean, to Dor (near Zihron, Yaakov, Israel), to neat modern-day Rotem, West Bank., to the Jordan. (2) Perhaps because this

area was so desolate, there were some towns in Issachar's and Asher's land that were given to Manasseh. From Asher, Meggido (Megido, Israel). From Issachar, Ibleam (Jenin, West Bank), Endor (Ein Dor, Israel), Beth-shean (Beit Shean, Israel).

### **17:14-18 Ephraim and Manasseh complain to Joshua.**

Complain. I don't know when Manasseh complained. Was it while they were drawing lots for the land? Maybe. I think it was a bit later once they were able to scope out the land they were given. Either way, their complaint is twofold. First, they say that they don't have enough land. Second, they say that the Canaanites in those lands are too strong.

One tribal allotment. (1) Literally, they say, "One lot and one territory." The word for lot implies a small lot. The word for territory also implies something small. This is true in both the Hebrew and the Greek. Joseph's tribes are really milking their complaint to Joshua. (2) Yet, how I read these chapters, Ephraim and Manasseh were given three areas: Manasseh east of the Jordan and Galilee, Ephraim north of Jerusalem (including Bethel, Ramah, and Ai), and Ephraim-Manasseh from the Mediterranean to the Jordan (including Megiddo and Beit Shean).

The Lord has been blessing us greatly. They recognize the Lord's work in their lives. The Lord might have blessed them with large numbers, but they have not received this attitude of complaining from the Lord!

Clear an area. Joshua isn't giving in to their complaint but is offering them a solution. The land of the Perizzites was northwest of Jerusalem, the exact land that was given to Ephraim. The land of the Rephaim was on the north side of the land given to the Manasseh, on the east side of Jordan and Galilee (basically the Golan Heights). For Joshua to say it like this should be a little insulting to the two tribes. Joshua is basically saying, "Why don't you use the land that has been given to you. If you don't have enough room there, make some room. And while you're at it, you can drive out the Canaanites from those areas like you are supposed to anyway."

Descendants of Joseph said. (1) Obviously, they don't like this answer. They are still extremely ungrateful for the land they have received! They move on to complaining about the strength of the Canaanites in their land. They complain that the enemy has iron chariots. Are the half-tribes of Joseph still of little faith!? Haven't they helped their commander, Joshua, conquer all the fortified cities and kings in all of the Promised Land? Don't they know that God is with them? Didn't they hear about the courage of Caleb who is unafraid to fight the giants (Anakim) in the Hebron area? But here, the tribes of Joseph continue their complaints by showing their faithlessness. (2) Beth-shean (Beit Shean, Israel) was a city in Issachar's tribe that was given to Manasseh. The Jezreel Valley was also given to Issachar. Perhaps they are talking about Meggido and Ibleam (Jenin, West Bank), which were towns in Issachar also given to Manasseh.

Joshua replied. In Joshua's last reply to them, he repeats what he said before. I feel like Joshua is talking to the half-tribes of Joseph like a parent talks to a child. It's like Joshua is implying, "Did you hear what I already told you? I will tell you again." Joshua's words are direct, short, and sweet. Instead of getting upset with their complaining, Joshua takes the time to repeat what he said. I believe Joshua is annoyed by their complaining, and Joshua is still trying to treat them with respect. He even reminds the tribes of their spiritual reality. First, they are strong. They have been greatly blessed by the Lord. Second, they can win. They still have God on their side who is stronger than the Canaanites' iron chariots.

### **18:1-10 Preparing to divide the land for the remaining seven tribes.**

Shiloh. Part of the way through dividing up the land, Joshua moves the "capital" from Gilgal (next to Jericho) to Shiloh (which is in Ephraim, about 14 miles north of Jerusalem). Joshua, being the leader, wanted to move the capital to his tribe's land.

Seven tribes. (1) So far, Manasseh, Ephraim, Gad, Reuben, and Judah have land assigned to them. The seven tribes that do not are Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan.

How long. Joshua asks the seven tribes how long until they take possession of the land. Apparently, the tribes that had land are the proactive tribes, and these seven tribes are more lazy. Here, Joshua is not talking about taking possession of it by wiping out the Canaanites. They are lacking the geography in how the land will be divided up. As you see, the solution is for these tribes to send out scouts to divide the land into portions. Then, Joshua will draw lots to find which tribe gets which portion.

They returned to Joshua. After the tribes do their homework in dividing up the land, Joshua draws lots to see which of the seven tribes will get which of the seven portions. Their portions are explained in chapters 18 and 19.

### **18:11-28 Land for Benjamin.**

Benjamin had a small strip of land. The northern border of Benjamin, from west to east. It went from the Jordan, did not include Jericho, included the Jericho-Jerusalem road, to Ramah, and ended a little west of Jerusalem. The southern border was with Judah, from the where the Jordan empties in to the Dead sea, south of the Jericho-Jerusalem road, to less than a mile south of Jerusalem. Kiriath-Jearim. This was a town to the north west of Jerusalem. It is modern day Abu Ghosh, Israel.

### **19:1-9 Land for Simeon.**

Beer-sheba. This is modern-day Be'er Sheva, Israel. It is a relatively large city today. Simeon was given this city and its surrounding cities. Basically, Simeon had a "circle" of land around Beer-Sheva, and this circle was completely inside Judah. The tribe of Simeon had to go through the tribe of Judah if they wanted to go anywhere else in the Promised Land. So both Judah and Simeon received land in the Negev.

### **19:10-16 Land for Zebulun.**

Zebulun had a very small section of land. Going from the west corner counter-clockwise... In the southwest corner was Jokneam (Yokneam Illit, Israel). In the south corner was Sarid (Sarid, Israel). In the southeast corner was Daberath (Daburiyya, Israel). In the east corner was Gath-hepher (Mashhad, Israel). In the northeast corner was Rimmon (Beit Rimon, Israel). In the north corner was the Valley of Iphtah-el (Rumet Heib, Israel). In the northwest corner was Bethlehem (Bethlehem of Galilee, Israel). It seems that Mount Tabor was the marker between Zebulun and Issachar and Naphtali.

The only point of interest in Zebulun is Nazareth. Basically, Zebulun was given the entire Nazareth plateau. Even though Zebulun was given the smallest area of land, the Nazareth area was a central point for Israel in this Galilee region.

Asher was west and southwest of Zebulun. Issachar was to the southeast and east of Zebulun. Naphtali was to the northeast of Zebulun.

Matt 4:15. Zebulun and Naphtali are mentioned in a prophecy in Isaiah 9:1-2 and Matthew 4:15-16. Isaiah prophesied that they would be the first tribes to see a great light. That great light would be the Messiah. We see this in Jesus! Jesus grew up in Nazareth, which was Zebulun. Jesus lived in Capernaum, which was Naphtali.

### **19:17-23 Land for Issachar.**

The land given to the tribe of Issachar included the Jezreel Valley, which is south of Nazareth. It went east to the Jordan (and did not include the Sea of Galilee). It went north to Mount Tabor. It went south as far as Jenin and Beit Shean, Israel (though those cities were given to Manasseh).

Cities included Jezreel (Yizreel, Israel), Chesulloth (Iksal, Israel), Shunem (Sulam, Israel), Anaharath (Gazit, Israel), Rabbith (Raba, West Bank), Kishion (Kfar Tavor, Israel), Ebez (Ein Al-Beida, West Bank), Remeth (Gan Ner, Israel), En-haddah (Al-Yamun, West Bank), Mount Tabor, Beth-shemesh (Afikim, Israel). It seems that Mount Tabor was the marker between Zebulun and Issachar and Naphtali.

This included the Jezreel Valley, which is the valley between Nazareth, Yokneam Illit, Nurit, and Ein Dor. The valley included one mountain, where Dahi, Israel is.

### **19:24-31 Land for Asher.**

The tribe of Asher's land was along the Mediterranean coast, and included Carmel (Haifa, Israel) and Sidon. At the coast, Asher bordered Manasseh. On the eastern border, Asher bordered Zebulun (southeastern corner) and Naphtali (eastern side). According to Manasseh's section, Meggido was in Asher. Therefore, Asher's southern border included Nahsholim, Israel and Meggido, Israel (with Meggido actually belonging to Manasseh).

### **19:32-39 Land for Naphtali.**

The tribe of Naphtali 's southern border went from the edge of Zebulun (Nazareth) to the Jordan (probably just south of Galilee. This area included Heleph (Beit Keshet, Israel) and Jabneel (Yavneel, Israel). It seems that Mount Tabor was the marker between Zebulun and Issachar and Naphtali. The western border went from Tabor to Hukkok (Hukok, Israel). Asher was to the west. The northern border goes all the way to Hazor and [what is later] Caesarea Philippi. Dan (also called Leshem and Laish) is listed here, but this was a city of the survivors of the tribe of Dan when they were displaced from their land. The eastern border was the Jordan (except for Dan belonged to Naphtali) and Galilee.

Matt 4:15. Zebulun and Naphtali are mentioned in a prophecy in Isaiah 9:1-2 and Matthew 4:15-16. Isaiah prophesied that they would be the first tribes to see a great light. That great light would be the Messiah. We see this in Jesus! Jesus grew up in Nazareth, which was Zebulun. Jesus lived in Capernaum, which was Naphtali.

#### **19:40-48 Land for Dan.**

The tribe of Dan had Jerusalem (but certainly not including Jerusalem, which was Benjamin's) to the west and northwest. The southern border with Judah was between Eshtaol (Eshta'ol, Israel) and Bet Shemesh and between Ekron and Ashdod. The northern border with Ephraim and Manasseh, Dan included Elon (Beit' Anan, West Bank) and Aijalon (in the Valley of Aijalon (Modi'in Makabim-Re'ut, Israel)) and Joppa. Other cities include Zorah (a large hill to the northwest of Nes Harim, Israel), Shaalabbin (Sha'alvim, Israel), Timnah (Tel Batash, south of Tal Shahar and west of Kfar Uriya), and others.

Ekron. This was a Philistine city in the tribe of Dan. Dan had responsibility to conquer this city. Judah had responsibility to conquer the other Philistine cities.

Leshem. (1) This is the same as Laish and Dan. It is located north of the Galilee. (2) In Judges 18, it accounts how Dan had still not claimed the land of their inheritance. Instead, they fell into idolatry and took this city in the far, far north.

#### **19:49-51 City for Joshua.**

They had finished. Joshua made sure all the tribes were given their land before he claimed his own land. He put the people before himself, making sure they had homes before he had his.

Israelites gave. The people were willing to give Joshua land for himself. After all, although God did most of the work, it was Joshua who was the primary driving force that made all this possible.

By the Lord's command. There is no reference that this points to. It seems that, just as God promised a special inheritance of land to be given to Caleb, God promised the same thing to Joshua. Of course, this is because they were the two spies who went against the entire community and stayed completely loyal to God.

Timnath-serah. Modern-day Deir Nidham, West Bank.

He requested. Like Caleb did, Joshua requested this place. Also like Caleb chose a city in the land given to Judah, Joshua chose a city in the land given to Ephraim. Those were their tribes.

Eleazar and Joshua. These two men were the ones who drew lots for the twelve tribes. Both leader and high priest did this. I believe that Eleazar used the Umin and Thummim to do this (Ex 28:30).

#### **20:1-9 Six cities of refuge.**

Cities of refuge. Moses wrote about these at length in Num 35 and Deut 19:1-13. Not only were they cities of refuge but they were also cities for the Levites. Because of "an eye for an eye," the family of the victim had the right to kill the murderer. But these cities were set up for people who accidentally killed someone. They could live in one of these cities and be safe from the victim's family. The person had to live there, go to trial to see whether the killing was accidental or hateful, and live there until the death of the current high priest.

LXX. This chapter is very different between the Hebrew and Greek versions. In the Hebrew version, verse 3-6 is not found in the Greek. Instead, those verses are summarized in the Greek, "Even a refuge to the slayer who has smitten a man unintentionally; and the cities shall be to you a refuge, and the slayer shall not be put to death by the avenger of blood, until he have stood before the congregation for judgment" (Brenton's translation).

Kedesh, Shechem, Hebron. These three cities were on the west side of the Jordan. Kedesh was in the north, the Galilee region. Shechem was in Ephraim, not too many miles north of Jerusalem. Hebron was in Judah to the south, where Caleb's family governed the city.

Bezer, Ramoth, Golan. These three cities were on the east side of the Jordan. There was one city of refuge for each tribe on that side.

#### **21:1-12 Land for the Levites...**

Remember, the Levites were separated by the three sons of Levi: Kohath, Gershon, and Merari. All Levites fit into one of these families. The only exception were the priests, who were sons of Aaron. (Aaron, as well as Moses, was in the family of Kohath by their father and Gershon by their mother.)

Descendants of Aaron. They were given 13 cities in Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. Therefore, the priests were instructed to live in the three tribes of the south. The primary cities would have been Hebron (Judah), Beer Sheva (Simeon), and Jerusalem (Benjamin). It is interesting that the priests did not live in the "capitals" of Gilgal and Shiloh.

Kohath's descendants. They were given 10 cities in Ephraim, Dan, and Manassah. Therefore, the Kohathites lived in central Israel. In the Law, the Kohathites had responsibility for the holy objects inside the tabernacle.

Gershon's descendants. They were given 13 cities in Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Manasseh in Bashan. Therefore, the Gershonites lived in northern Israel (except Zebulun) and west of Galilee. In the Law, the Gershonites had responsibility for the tabernacle's curtain hangings and ropes.

Merari's descendants. They were given 12 cities in Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun. Therefore, the Merarites lived west of the Jordan (except Manasseh) and in Nazareth. I find this group the most interesting, because they are separated in this way. In the Law, the Merarites had responsibility for the tabernacle's framework (the structure).

#### **21:13-19 Land for the priests.**

#### **21:20-26 Land for the Kohathites.**

#### **21:27-33 Land for the Gershonites.**

#### **21:34-42 Land for the Merarites.**

#### **21:43-45 Dividing the land - Conclusion**

Took possession. (1) These three verses are the "happily ever after" for the Israelites in the Promised Land. NOT! We know that Israel would constantly struggle to keep the Promised Land, much like our lives after baptism. This passage is the grand conclusion and fulfillment for God's side of the promise. God fulfilled everything He had promised. It wasn't happily ever after as far as the Israelites were concerned, because they still lived in a sinful world. But as far as God's promises go, God finally, FINALLY fulfilled every single one of them. (2) Think about it: it began with Abraham in the land. But the promise wasn't fulfilled to him. Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph lived in the land, but the promise wasn't fulfilled to them either. Then the Israelites traveled to Egypt and became a mighty people there, but the promise wasn't fulfilled to them. The Israelites were forced to be slaves of Egypt, so God saved them and brought them out of Egypt, but the promise wasn't fulfilled to them because of their faithlessness. They walked around the Promised Land and spent 40 years wandering outside it. Then God used Joshua to conquer the Promised Land. In less than 5 years, the Israelites conquered it and possessed it. And THAT is when God fulfilled His promise. As Paul says, it was 430 years from the promise given to Abraham until the giving of the Law. So it was closer to 500 years from Abraham to Joshua. See Gal 3:17-18. God knew this would happen because He even told Abraham that it would be 400 years of wandering as sojourners until the promise was fulfilled.

Rest on every side. (1) Joshua's military campaigns were successful. They experienced peace from the Canaanites! But of course, that peace did not last long at all. Judges is a book all about how godly people rise up and help the Israelite people KEEP the Promised Land. (2) As we saw, the land of the Philistines were given to Judah. However, Joshua nor Judah ever conquered the Philistines. At least at this time, the Philistines are OK with Israel conquering the entire land adjacent to them. The Philistines are OK with Egypt and Israel on their borders... at least for the time being.

#### **22:1-8 Joshua releases the three tribes to return to their land east of the Jordan.**



Return to your homes. (1) This is a comforting message to the three tribes east of the Jordan. At the end of the previous chapter, we are told that God fulfilled all of his promises. Here, we see that Joshua acknowledges that these three tribes fulfilled their promises to their brethren. (2) When I think of this section, I once again think of Tolkien's Return of the King. After the battle at Gondor, King Aragorn speaks to the undead army who were under obligation to fight for the king. After taking Gondor but before attacking Mordor, Aragorn tells the undead army that their oaths are fulfilled and they can be at peace. Joshua is telling the people of these three tribes the same thing. Of course, to go home in peace is not only true for these three tribes but to all tribes.

Love the Lord. (1) Joshua gives the three tribes a few spiritual instructions that seem to be a good summary of what God wanted in the Old Testament. Really, this section is Joshua's beautiful blessing to the three tribes. (2) First, Joshua tells them to love the Lord. I do not think it is accident that this comes first. Joshua believes this is the most important thing—just as Jesus did. This is another similarity between Joshua and Jesus. Jesus' greatest commandment is to love. Both of them believed that loving the Lord their God was the most important thing a person can do. The idea here is to choose to LOVE God!

Walk in all His ways. This reminds me of how Paul often describes following God. Paul says we are to walk worthy of our invitation. The idea here is to LIVE the way God desires!

Keep His commands. (1) Hebrew says to guard or protect His commandments. Greek says to guard or preserve. (2) Even if we don't feel like it, even if we don't understand it, we are still called to love, live in, and keep God's commandments. This is stated both in the Old and New Testaments. Now, guarding or protecting God's commands is not something we do in other people's lives. Even if enemies wish to destroy God's commands, God's commands do not need our protecting. No, God's commands are eternal and do not need defending. This guarding and protecting is done within ourselves. We don't control others, but we can control ourselves. We are to guard, protect, and preserve God's commands in our own lives. Again, we are to love, to live in, and to keep God's commands because they are from God Himself. Specifically, the idea here is to OBEY God!

Remain faithful. (1) Hebrew says to cling to Him. Greek says to cleave or attend to Him. (2) I get two possible points that Joshua is trying to say. Either Joshua is saying to remain faithful with consistency and not falling away. Or, Joshua is saying to lean on and rely on God when times are good and when times are bad. Or, Joshua means both. The idea is that we should REMAIN with God no matter what. We should RELY on God no matter what.

Serve Him with your all. (1) This is a reference back to Deut 6:13, "Fear the Lord your God, and serve Him." This is a big part of what it means to follow God. Jesus repeats this verse in Matt 4:10, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only." Jesus uses this idea of doing this for God "with your all" when Jesus gives the greatest commandment, saying, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength" (Mark 12:30). The idea is to SERVE God with your all! (2) These are the ingredients that allow a person to fully follow God. Love Him. Live in Him. Obey Him. Remain in and rely on Him. Serve Him with your all. (3) Application... Within yourself, ask yourself the following. Which one of these is the easier for you? Which one is the most difficult?

Half of the tribe. Verse 7 is a reminder that Manasseh had two inheritances of land. One on the east side of Jordan and one on the west side.

Great wealth. For Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh to fulfill their duty to the other tribes of Israel was required. But even though they were obligated to that, they also gained many great spoils from the Canaanites they helped conquer. The principal is true for everyone: even when we do things we are required to do, we should still be rewarded for our work.

## **22:9-12 Eastern tribes build an altar which infuriates the western tribes.**

Shiloh. The way Joshua is laid out, the land for these three tribes was given to them while Joshua was still in Gilgal. Yet, we see here that these tribes (most likely the tribes' leaders) followed Joshua when he moved the capital to Shiloh. How nice of them to continue on and support their brothers!

Gilead. This is the mountainous country near Mount Gilead, which is near modern-day Irbid, Jordan. In the Bible, Gilead usually means "east of the Jordan." This would have been found in the land given to Gad.

Large, impressive altar. Both the Hebrew and Greek call the altar impressive (literally, to see). They differ in that the Hebrew calls it great and the Greek calls it big. Obviously, this altar isn't like the altars of stones that Moses and Joshua had made. This altar is more like a shrine or monument.

From the description of this altar, I might guess to say that this altar was larger and fancier than God's altar at the tabernacle. This might have been one of the reasons that made the western tribes so angry and ready for war.

Israelite side. The eastern tribes didn't put this altar on their side of the Jordan. Strangely, they put it on the western side, which would have been in the land of Issachar, probably not far from Beit Shean. Go to war. This altar upset the western tribes so much, they assembled soldiers for war! At first glance, this seems really, really extreme. But when it comes to idolatry, I can understand why they might want to make war in order to stop them. The Israelites know so well the dangers of idolatry. They remember how God killed Nadab and Abihu for their almost immediate sin against God. I'm sure the western tribes want to have the same level of seriousness when it comes to preventing the sin of idolatry from happening almost immediately into their possession of the Promised Land.

### **22:13-20 The western tribes' accusation.**

Phinehas. He is the grandson of Aaron and son of Eleazar, the current high priest. Phinehas was the one who killed an Israelite man, who was publicly intimate with a Midianite woman, with a spear. 10 leaders. A leader from each of the western tribes join Phinehas as a delegation to the eastern tribes. Rebellion. Phinehas and the 10 leaders accuse the eastern tribes of rebellion against God. Sin of Peor. This was the sin that Phinehas rescued the Israelites from when he killed the man. Here, Phinehas is reminding the eastern tribes of his heroic deed that freed the people from sin. He will be angry with the entire community. (1) Phinehas and the 10 leaders say that God would punish ALL of Israel for this sin of idolatry. Not only do they remember the Sin of Peor but they also remember the Sin of Achan, whose actions punished all of Israel, from just a few years before. They explicitly mention Achan in verse 20. (2) In verse 19, they say that idolatry would be a sin against God and against the entire community.

Cross over. (1) Phinehas and the leaders propose a very friendly solution. They say that if the land on the east side of Jordan is too defiled, the three eastern tribes are welcome to join the rest of the Israelites in the actual Promised Land. Even though the western tribes are very ready for war, they are selflessly offering to share their inheritance in the actual Promised Land if it means that the eastern tribes would give up their idolatry. (2) This is a huge for us to remember. When we have problems with someone, we should look to their repentance and salvation LONG BEFORE we look to their punishment. It is far, far better to find a solution that leads someone to repentance—even if it means we will give up some of our liberties or possessions. In fact, this reminds me of Jesus, who was willing to give up Himself in order to give mankind the opportunity for true repentance. Jesus was willing to do whatever it took, regardless of his liberties or possessions so that He could secure our salvation. The western tribes are offering the same thing to the eastern tribes. Even if it means that they give up large portions of their land, they are willing to do that if it means the eastern tribes wouldn't sin.

### **22:21-29 The eastern tribes' defense.**

If it was in rebellion. First, Manasseh, Reuben, and Gad make their defense, saying that they have not rebelled against the Lord. They loudly affirm that they still know God as the true God. They say that the western tribes have full authority to kill them if they have sacrificed offerings on this altar.

Your descendants might say. Second, Manasseh gives the reason for the altar (and probably the reason why they built the altar on the Israelite side (western) side of the Jordan. They were scared that the western tribes would say, "You three tribes on the eastern side of the Jordan, you three tribes are not in the Promised Land! Because you have chosen to deny the actual Promised Land, then you don't even know the Lord. But we western tribes are in the actual Promised Land, so we are the ones who know the Lord. Therefore, you are not in fellowship with us because you decided to not be in fellowship with God." Manasseh goes on to say that if the western tribes accused the eastern tribes of that, then the eastern tribes might believe them and decided to do exactly what the false accusation accuses them of: leaving the Lord. In other words, the three eastern tribes built this altar in order to prevent the western tribes from kicking them out of the holy people of God just because the three eastern tribes were on the "wrong" side of the Jordan River.

Reuben and Gad. While Manasseh is mentioned in this section, Manasseh is not mentioned in this verse. In this verse, it is the western tribes disowning the eastern tribes. They didn't mention Manasseh because Manasseh was on both sides of the river. So even if Manasseh on the east side

rebelled against the Lord, Manasseh on the west side would not. That is why only Reuben and Gad are here; they are the two tribes that are exclusively on the eastern side. Note: the same is true with verses 32-34.

Our generations would reply. The goal of the altar was to remind both sides to stay true to the Lord. This altar was never ever meant for sacrifices or offerings. It was to stand as a witness that the eastern tribes are committed to the real, actual, and true altar of God which is in front of his tabernacle.

### **22:30-34 Result of the conflict.**

They were pleased. (1) Phinehas and the 10 leaders went from ready-for-war to pleased. What a dramatic shift! This is my favorite part of this story. When someone is allowed to give a defense for why they do something, WAY more often than not, we find that the person actually has good intentions. In this case, the western tribes assumed and accused the other of idolatry, rebellion, and treachery. But the eastern tribes' apology acquitted them because they were fully dedicated to the Lord and His true altar. (2) Think about it. If both tribes hadn't of sat down to talk about this, they could have been in a civil war that would have destroyed both of them. Instead, they RECONCILED! In only one conversation, they were on the same page. I see this happen today so, so often. So many times, conflict between person and person (you and anyone else) can be completely resolved through communication. That's not always the case, but I absolutely LOVE this story because it shows us how simple of a solution communication can be. If we don't at least try to communicate with our enemy, then conflict is inevitable. But if we do the simple thing of having a conversation, I believe that reconciliation is always easier than we think. (3) Jesus shows us the power in having conversations in Matt 18:15-17.

You have delivered. How? By explaining their purpose. If the eastern tribes hadn't been able to give their defense, then the Israelites would have experienced a civil war. In Phinehas' mind, he was the instrument of the Lord's vengeance and power, ready to completely destroy idolatry—just he did with a spear and just like Joshua did to Achan. But now, the good and godly defense of the eastern tribes have ended all conflict and have prevented war.

Praised God. This reminds me so much of the letter the apostles in Jerusalem wrote to the Gentile Christians about how they should not eat food sacrificed to idols, not drink blood, not eat strangled animals, and not commit sexual immorality. When the Gentile Christians received the letter, they didn't focus on the things they couldn't do, they REJOICED because of the freedoms they were given (such as individual choice when it came to circumcision). See Acts 15, specifically Acts 15:31.

Named the altar. In Hebrew, the name is "It is a witness between us that Yahweh is God." In Greek, the name is "It is a witness at the middle of them, because the Lord is their God."

### **23:1-16 Joshua's farewell address.**

[Verse 3]. THIS is the theme of the book of Joshua! This statement cannot be overstated. Of all the things Joshua learned as leader of Israel, this lesson was probably the most practical when it came to this time of Joshua's life.

God will force them back. In verse 5, Joshua is speaking for God, but really, Joshua is just saying that God is willing and always ready to keep His promises to the Israelites. Joshua has already seen in a REAL way how God forced Joshua's enemies to run away or be defeated. Joshua has seen God work in both miraculous and non-miraculous ways. Joshua is 100% confident that God will continue doing this even after Joshua is gone. (See also verse 10.) Joshua believes that God will force the remainder of the Canaanites back. Will the Israelites believe it?

Law of Moses. (1) The book of Joshua begins and ends with the Law of Moses. While the Promised Land was a GREAT, GREAT event in the Israelites' lives and in the promises of God, the Law of Moses was greater than the Promised Land. While God promised the Israelites that they will inherit the Promised Land, the Israelites' relationship with God is not founded on the Promised Land. The relationship between the Israelites and God is founded on the Law of Moses. It was at Sinai that God called Israel His treasured possession and entered into a covenant with Israel. The Promised Land was a fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham, but God's relationship with Israel is not based on that. The Israelites had the Law of Moses before they entered the Promised Land, and the Israelites had the Law of Moses after they were removed from the Promised Land. The Law determined their relationship with God, not the Promised Land. (2) The same is true for us. Having salvation (the Promised Land) is not what our relationship with God is based on. Our relationship with God is based

on our faith in God's Son. Our belief and faith in Jesus are what determine our relationship with God. And that started before we became saved at our baptism. And that will continue after we are resurrected with perfect bodies. Just like the Promised Land was a fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, salvation is a gift of God. It took belief and faith for the Israelites to take the Promised Land. It takes belief and faith for us to receive God's salvation.

Great and powerful nations. Were the Canaanites great and powerful nations? Yes! Their first battle was against Jericho, which had impressive walls. The book of Joshua lists other fortified cities (for example, see the last half of Joshua 10, 14:12, 19:35.). Joshua and the Israelites defeated a large Amorite-Canaanite alliance of five Amorite kings in the south. And then there was the mega-alliance of the kings in the north. That mega-alliance had so many soldiers, they were not counted. Plus, they had horses and chariots. Israel had none of that! Yes, the underdogs won because the Lord drove out so many great and powerful nations in the land of the Canaanites!

One of you routed a thousand. (1) Now this is the power of God! God had their back! With the exception of the first battle of Ai, the Israelites won all their battles. They battled nations with stronger weapons and more numerous soldiers. With God at their back, it was like one Israelite was able to chase down 1000 Canaanites!!! That's what Joshua is saying. These Israelites saw that their victories defied all logic. Because of God, one Israelite could defeat 1000 Canaanites! (2) Did you know the same power of God is at your disposal when it comes to the powers of evil, sin, and darkness? As Christians, we have something that the everyday Israelite did not have: the Holy Spirit. If the power of God was able to cause one Israelite to route 1000 Canaanites, then what could the power of the Holy Spirit INSIDE US do to the forces of evil, sin, and darkness that are trying to defeat us? Does your sin or doubts seem too strong for you? Well, remember: with God's promises, just like with the Israelites under Joshua, a Christian under Jesus is able to chase away a thousand sins, a thousand temptations, and a thousand tactics of the devil. Just like with the Israelites under their Joshua (Jesus), God has the back of every Christian under our Jesus (Joshua).

Be very diligent. In verse 11, Joshua gives the Israelites some practical information on what NOT to do with the Canaanites who are still surviving. Multiple times in this passage, Joshua warns the Israelites that God will bring bad things on them if they fail to believe God (by accepting His promises) or if they disobey God (by violating the Law of Moses). Here are four things that Joshua lists as "do not's." (1) Do not turn away from the love of the Lord your God. As Joshua said in the previous chapter to the three tribes on the east side of Jordan, loving the Lord your God is the greatest and very first thing a person can do to follow God. Joshua says the same thing here. They are to be diligent in their love for God and not turn away from it. No wonder Joshua listed love for God first. If a person loses their love for God, what hope do they have left? (2) Do not cling to the nations around you. Moses and Joshua have stressed this. The biggest warning is that, if they cling to the nations around them, they will be enticed by foreign gods and cling to those gods instead of the Lord their God. (3) Do not intermarry with the nations. The same warning is here. Intermarrying with the Canaanites would most certainly be a specific way to cling to the nations around them. The problem with marriage is that it is a covenant and a vow. If the Israelites intermarry with the Canaanites, they are making a covenant with a spouse that worships a different god. This would put many Israelites between a rock and a hard place. They cannot forsake their God for the Canaanite gods, and they also cannot break their vow to their foreign spouse because to break a vow is a sin against God as well. Therefore, just don't intermarry with the Canaanites! (4) Do not associate with them or they with you. What does it mean to associate? The Hebrew means to go or come with the person. The Greek means to enter into something with the person or to be in accord with the person. Joshua is saying that the Israelites are not to join or partner or be in accord with the Canaanites and their evil deeds. This is a command that is echoed in the New Testament. While Christians should associate with non-Christians ([Acts 10:28](#)), Christians should NOT associate with those who claim to be Christians but are refusing to repent from their sins. See [1Cor 5:9-11](#), [2Thes 3:14-15](#).

God will not continue to drive these nations out. Just like with the Law of Moses says, if Israel disobeys God, God will remove His blessings and His promises. Instead of giving them good things, God will turn around and give them bad things. This is stated in verse 15-16, which simply says, "Just as every good thing has come from the Lord, in the same way, every bad thing will come from the Lord, including your annihilation from this land—if you break God's covenant by worshiping other gods." Joshua knows full well that God, the giver of His promise, has the right to take back His promise. So while God has made a promise and has fulfilled everything He promised, God's promise is

conditional. For the Israelites, it was conditional on their love for God and their obedience to the Law of Moses. As we see from later in their history, God sends the Assyrians and the Babylonians to annihilate the Israelites from the Promised Land. In the same way for Christians, our salvation is conditional on our love for God and our obedience of faith to Jesus.

#### **24:1-13 God's testimony to Israel (through Joshua).**

Joshua. In this chapter, Joshua acts as a prophet to the people. Just as Moses was for a long time, here, Joshua speaks the words of God to the people. Like Moses, Joshua was a great man of God who was given God's Spirit.

Shechem. I'm curious why Shechem. It was very hilly on one side of Shechem, so was this the best place to speak to such large numbers of people?

This is what the Lord the God of Israel says. In verses 2-13, this is a recounting of what God did for the Israelites. God most certainly did the impossible, proving to the Israelites and to all these nations that He is God of gods! In about 40 years, God took the slaves of Egypt and gave them their own nation and their own land! God is the One who established the Israelites and made them who they are!

[Everything God did]. (1) Look at all the things that God saved the Israelites from! God brought Abraham to the Promised Land. God multiplied Abraham's descendants through Isaac. God used Moses and Aaron to plague Egypt. God brought the Israelites out of Egypt. God saved them from the Egyptian armies. God defeated the Amorites east of the Jordan. God protected the Israelites from King Balak. God protected the Israelites from Balaam; God even forced Balaam to bless the Israelites instead of cursing them. God handed Jericho and ALL the people of the land over to the Israelites, including large Amorite armies. God gave the Israelites land and cities and farms that they did not work for. (2) In all these things, they were things that the Israelites could NOT have done on their own. Read through those things again. In every case, God was SAVING them from something. On top of that, God was causing things to happen that human beings could not cause to happen!

#### **24:14-28 Israel's covenant with God (through Joshua).**

[Everything the Israelites do]. (1) God has already proven Himself and done all the heavy lifting for the Israelites. Now, Joshua is going to explain Israel's side of their covenant with God. As with any covenant, they are never one-sided. Yes, God does all the heavy lifting, but He does require simple yet necessary things of His children.

Fear and worship. Fear the Lord and worship Him in sincerity and truth. This reminds me of what Jesus said, "Spirit and truth" (John 4:24). In Joshua's day, the Holy Spirit hadn't been gifted to all of mankind yet, so Joshua understands fear and worship to be shown in sincerity and truth. For Christians, our fear and worship of God is shown in Spirit and truth.

Get rid of the gods. Whether they were gods in Abraham's day (to the east), before the people became a promised people, or whether they were the gods of Egypt (to the west), while the people were slaves, the Israelites were supposed to get rid of all gods!

Choose for yourselves. This is the most famous verse in the book of Joshua. I think it should be the most famous verse! While 23:3 is the theme of the book, 24:15 is the practical application of the book. No matter if you were one of the Israelites listening to Joshua say this or if you are a person who is reading this verse today, the question is the same. It is a question about what you are going to do with your life. Are you going to follow God in all things, or are you going to serve the gods of this world? You cannot serve both.

As for me and my family. I love how Joshua doesn't demand or force obedience in his farewell address. Instead, he is direct in showing that there are only two options here. God has never wanted people to follow Him through coercion. God has always given mankind the choice on whether they will follow Him or not. Of course, we understand this as faith. A faithful person will worship God and their life will prove it. An unfaithful person will worship the world's gods and their life will prove it. Joshua nor God will force people into one option or the other. In fact, Joshua leaves it open to the people. They already have all the evidence they need to know that the Lord God is God indeed! What's left is for people to accept it or not. Today (actually, everyday) is always the day to choose whom each person will worship (Heb 3:12-13). In the end, it is your choice. I love how Joshua ends this statement, he cannot make the decision for you. No one can make the decision for you. But as for Joshua and his family, they have chosen to serve the Lord God.

For He is holy. In the Greek, there is an extra phrase at the end of verse 15, "...for He is holy."

The people replied. I like verses 16-18. When it comes to understanding all the things that God did for them (verses 2-13), the people get it! They get it!

You will not be able to worship the Lord. Even though the people get it, Joshua wants to drive home the point. The Lord God will not tolerate worship toward Him AND worship toward anything else. Joshua could remind the people of the first two commandments. In the same way, we have the words of Jesus saying, "You cannot serve both God and wealth." Joshua wants the people to know that God will not compete with other gods. If God has to compete with other gods in their worship, then it is not the Lord God whom they are worshipping. When it comes to worship and service, the Lord God will NOT compete!

Not remove your sins. I don't like that there is a break between verse 19 and 20 in the HCSB. The time when God will not remove transgressions and sins (verse 19) is when and only when a person abandons the Lord for other gods (verse 20). The last phrase in verse 19 should belong with all of verse 20. Joshua gives the conditions on when God will punish people, then he lists the consequences of that punishment. I believe reordering verse 19b and verse 20, makes it easier to understand: "If you abandon the Lord by worshipping other gods, God will not give you forgiveness, God will turn again you, God will harm you, and God will completely destroy you—even if God has already been good to you."

Witnesses. (1) Verses 21-24 are a quick interchange between Joshua and the people. While the people understand (verses 16-18) Joshua's point (verses 14-15), Joshua is making the people take an oath that they will commit to what they are vowing this day. In this chapter, the people promise four times that they will worship and serve the Lord God. (2) There is something that I find interesting in this chapter. Three times Joshua tells the people to get rid of their foreign gods (verses 14, 20, 23). But not once do the people speak out loud that they will do that. The people are abundantly clear that they will worship and serve the Lord God, but not once do they promise that they will get rid of the foreign gods among them. I wonder... is that why Joshua asks them to commit themselves to the Lord so many times in this section?? Is Joshua wanting them to explicitly say that they will get rid of the foreign gods of this land? Yet, in this chapter, they do not do that. (3) Fast forward less than a generation in the future. The Israelites were QUICK to worship foreign gods. As we see through the time of the judges and the kings, the Israelites were constantly, constantly guilty of worshipping foreign gods right along side the Lord God.

Sanctuary of the Lord. At this time, was the capital moved from Shiloh to Shechem? I cannot tell. And where is the Lord's tabernacle through this whole book?? This is the first mention of the sanctuary. Is this trying to say that the tabernacle (sanctuary) was set up at Shechem? Both Shiloh and Shechem were within the tribe of Ephraim and were near the geographical center of the Promised Land. Maybe the additional verses in the Greek version give us a clue; see the last note in this commentary.

#### **24:29-31 Death and burial of Joshua, Joseph, and Eleazar.**

Joshua died. Joshua lived to 110 years old. This was ten years younger compared to Moses' age. I imagine that Moses and Joshua were not that far apart in age. Based on the age of Caleb, it is my guess that Joshua was about 85 years old when he retired from being the leader and commander of the Israelites. So Joshua would have enjoyed about 20 years of retirement in his own town, in his own tribe's land, and in the Promised Land of God. Joshua's story is certainly one of success. It is also a story of fulfillment, since Joshua witnessed the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham. When Joshua died, he witnessed peace.

Israel worshipped the Lord. While Joshua was living and while the elders who were elders under Joshua were living, Israel worshipped the Lord. This shows that the elders that Joshua brought up to succeed him were successful in keeping the Israelites focused on God. But as we see, after those elders died, it was during the following set of leaders that the Israelites lost sight of the Lord God. We know that this happened during the time of Othniel, Caleb's nephew, was able to lead Israel to their first victory (Judges 3).

Joseph. Before the Israelites even became slaves, Joseph made the people promise to carry his bones from Egypt. Joseph was a strong believer in the promises of God, knowing that God would later fulfill His promise by giving the people the land of Canaan. Here, the people follow Joseph's wishes. Though Joseph's family became two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph was buried in Shechem,

which was in Ephraim's land. Remember, Manasseh was the oldest, but Jacob had blessed Ephraim over Manasseh. Perhaps this is one reason why Joseph was buried in Ephraim's land.

Eleazar. Eleazar's father was Aaron, the first high priest. After Aaron's death, Eleazar became high priest. Nadab or Abihu might have become high priests (instead of Eleazar) if they hadn't disobeyed the Lord and when the Lord killed them with fire. (Aaron had a fourth son, Ithamar, who never became high priest.) After Eleazar died, Eleazar's son, Phinehas became high priest.

LXX. There are additional verses at the end of the Greek version. They read, "In that day the children of Israel took the ark of God, and carried it around among them. And Phinehas exercised the priest's office in the room of Eleazar his father until he died, and he was buried in his own place Gabaar. But the children of Israel departed every one to their place, and to their own city. And the children of Israel worshipped Asherah and Ashtaroth and the gods of the nations around about them. And the Lord delivered them into the hands of Eglon king of Moab and he ruled them for 18 years." (1) The first thing about this section is the Ark of the Covenant. It appears that the ark (and by implication the tabernacle) would move around the Promised Land between the tribes. (2) The mention of the priests seems to imply that during the high priesthoods of Eleazar and Phinehas, the Israelites remained loyal to God. I understand that this to mean that the high priest after Phinehas was not a good high priest. Interestingly, there is no mention of Phinehas' son, Abishua, in Joshua and Judges. He is mentioned in 1Chr 6, 1Chr 8, and Ezra 7. It appears that few people cared about Abishua until after the Babylonian exile (both Chronicles and Ezra are post-exile books). I believe the Greek version is trying to say that Abishua was a terrible high priest for allowing Israel to fall to foreign gods. It is possible that Joshua and Judges never mentions him by name because he was a terrible high priest and ought to be forgotten. At least, that is my theory. (3) The mention of Eglon King of Moab is discussed in Judges chapter 3. This was the second time the Israelites were subjugated by a foreign power. Ehud was the rescuing judge. (The first subjugation was with Cushan-rishathaim of Mesopotamia. Othniel was the rescuing judge. Because the Septuagint mentions the high priests in this section, I assume that the events between Cushan-rishathaim and Othniel happened during the time of Phinehas, not Abishua.)