

JOSHUA

A Look into the Life of Joshua, Son of Nun,
A Mighty Man of God

Cyndee Leppke

Joshua, A Look into the Life of Joshua, Son of Nun, A Mighty Man of God

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To My Son Joshua

It is almost impossible for me to express in words how much I love you and how very special you are, not only to me, but to your family. It has been a privilege and a joy to have you as my son and to watch you grow and become the man that you are today. It has also been exciting to watch you grab hold of your dream of becoming a helicopter pilot that you had at the age of three and encouraging you along the way as you have fulfilled that dream.

You were named Joshua because of the meaning of the name and after my favorite Old Testament Bible character, Joshua, the son of Nun. I know your Dad used to joke about how you were named after a dog your Dad and I got shortly after we were first married, years before you were born, that was named Joshua, but that is not why you were named Joshua and he knows that too! That puppy came from a Catholic family who had named all of the ten to twelve puppies in that litter Bible names. They had named the puppy we picked out “Joshua” and we kept the name.

This book came as a result of my desire to give you a lasting and enduring birthday present that would give you more of an insight into the name you were given. The purpose of this writing is to take a deeper look into Joshua, son of Nun, his life, his faith, his accomplishments, and his dedication and love for God.

I thank my God and Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the privilege and high honor of leading you to receive Jesus into your heart at the early age of four. Your Grandma Eleanor kept this note she had written from the telephone conversation that she had with you shortly after you prayed to receive Jesus. She found this note on (on the following page) Sunday, June 2, 2013, among the papers she had saved.

Sept 10, 1985, the day you accepted Jesus as your personal savior.

Sept 10, 1985, 10:30 P.M. CDT, Joshua called to tell me, **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”** He asked Jesus to come into his heart tonight! Praise the Lord! He is 4 years, 2 months and 8 days old.

Joshua told his Mommy, “I love the Lord Jesus very, very much.” Cyndee asked him if he had ever told Jesus that he loved him and he said, “No, how do I do it?” So Cyndee told him and they prayed together. It was 7:30 – 8:30 P.M. their time.
(Arizona)

King David gave his son Solomon a lot of wise advice when he was given the task to build the temple and just before he was crowned king of Israel. I am passing this advice along to you as well:

⁹“And Solomon, my son, learn to know the God of your ancestors intimately. Worship and serve him with your whole heart and a willing mind. For the LORD sees every heart and knows every plan and thought. If you seek him, you will find him. But if you forsake him, he will reject you forever. ¹⁰ So take this seriously” (1 Chronicles 28:9–10).

²⁰“Be strong and courageous and get to work. Don’t be frightened by the size of the task, for the Lord my God is with you; he will not forsake you” (1 Chronicles 28:20).

Notice David’s words to his son Solomon: “Worship and serve him with your whole heart and a willing mind.” This is the same charge that Moses gave to the children of Israel.

⁴“Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. ⁵ And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. ⁶ And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today” (Deuteronomy 6:4–6).

Then in 1 Chronicles 28:20 we see David’s charge to his son, “Be strong and courageous”. This is also a recurring theme in the Book of Joshua. (Joshua 1:6–7, 9, 18, & Joshua 10:25). David continues on to say, “Don’t be frightened...for the Lord my God is with you; he will not forsake you.”

In the Book of Deuteronomy, written by Moses, we find the charge to Joshua from Moses, just before his death:

“⁷Be strong and courageous... ⁸Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you” (Deuteronomy 31:7, 8).

It is amazing how the scriptures in the Bible intertwine across the timeline continuum and from one author to another author, who never knew each other and who lived decades, if not centuries apart.

Ezra the author of Chronicles, Moses the author of Deuteronomy, and Joshua the author of Joshua¹, all recorded the same thing: “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid. The Lord is with you and He will not forsake or abandon you.” This is the same charge David gave to Solomon, and Moses gave to Joshua before his death, and the Lord gave to Joshua after the death of Moses.

Joshua, my son, this charge and these promises still hold true for you today: 1) Worship and serve the Lord with your whole heart and mind; 2) Be strong and courageous; 3) Do not be afraid or discouraged; 4) For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go; 5) He will not forsake you.

My prayer is that you will pass the torch of faith to your children and help them to see your love and dedication to the Lord.

Mom

¹ Bible scholars disagree on the authorship of Joshua and time of writing as it is never stated in the book and because it is written in the 3rd person. However, in Joshua 24:26, NLT, it states: “Joshua recorded these things in the Book of God’s Instructions.” In an article entitled, “*An Introduction to the Book of Joshua*” David Malick writes: “The Talmud affirms that “Joshua wrote his own book” and that his death was recorded by Eleazar son of Aaron and that Eleazar’s death was recorded by his son, Phinehas.” He also states internal evidence that it was written by Joshua or someone who was a contemporary of Joshua because the book has an eyewitness quality. Malick, David, *An introduction to the Book of Joshua*, <https://bible.org/article/introduction-book-joshua> (accessed 31 Mar 2016)

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Preface

In April of 2013, while reading in my *One Year Bible* in the book of Joshua about my favorite Old Testament Bible character, it occurred to me that I should take a few notes and write a short paper for my son Joshua about the person he was named after.

Every time I read the Bible I discover or read things that I hadn't seen or noticed before. Oh, I saw the words alright and read them, but sometimes the more you read something the clearer it becomes and your understanding of it becomes sharper. At times, an "aha" moment occurs and the lightbulb is turned on in the mind shining light into the dark spaces of understanding.

Perhaps, I thought, there were things about Joshua, son of Nun, that my son had never heard about before or thought about. My goal at the time was a three or four-page document that I could present to him for his birthday in July.

During this period of time I was unemployed so had the time, in between applying for hundreds of jobs, to sit at the computer and write. The three to four pages quickly came and went and I still had pages of notes to type up. I suddenly realized that I could divide it up into chapters and that I had the start of a book!

Little did I realize where this goal of writing a short paper for my son's birthday would take me. While researching and writing I truly felt the Lord's hand in this. Words, sentences, paragraphs and chapters flew onto pages. There was never a "writer's block"; in fact, it was as if I couldn't type fast enough. I learned so much as I did the research into the archeological findings of the historical places set in the *Book of Joshua* in the Bible, but I know that I have just barely skimmed the surface of what I learned in what I have actually presented here in my book. I look back at what I have written and know that God's hand was in this giving me the words, thoughts, and discernment. I thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and give Him all the honor and glory and praise.

Ninety-five percent of this book was written in three months from mid-April 2013 – mid-July 2013. I took my rough draft down to a local Office Max and had it printed and spiral bound and presented it to my son as a gift in July 2013. In essence, I had accomplished my

goal; however, it was still unfinished. The polishing touches and editing still needed to be done and permission rights needed to be obtained.

Then in September of 2013, I obtained a job in Washington State as an equestrian manager at a Christian camp where I spent the next 7 months before returning home to family in North Dakota. After returning to North Dakota much time was spent seeking employment and, eventually, in desperation taking a job as a cook at a truck stop to meet financial needs.

It wasn't until the summer of 2015 that I got back to doing some editing and writing for permission to use photos, maps and quotes.

Time once again elapsed until May 2017, when I decided to "buckle down and get it done". This has been my obsession for the past three months after work until late at night and every weekend. The time spent editing, writing for permissions and reformatting for book publication has by far been the most time consuming and tedious.

The Lord provided a wonderful sister in Christ Jesus and faculty member at the College of Nursing, Rennae Millette, who graciously proof read and helped edit my book, whom I am eternally grateful for. Her constant encouraging words inspired me to keep going even when it seemed like an insurmountable task that would never get finished. Thank you, Rennae!

My Mom has been there through this entire journey as she and I live together. She has always encouraged me, believed in me and even taken on extra chores around the house so I could sit at the computer for hours and days and weeks and months. I am so thankful for my Mom, who is eighty-eight, still sharp in her thinking and memory, in good health and has always been a positive influence in my life. Thank you, Mom! I love you so much!

A huge thank you to Tracy Backstrom who designed the front and back covers of my book. Thank you, Tracy,!

My initial goal of writing about the Joshua of the Bible and presenting it as a gift to my son has not changed, as I can hardly wait to present this book in its finished form to my son; but my goal has also expanded to a desire to see others challenged and encouraged by reading this book, come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and what He has done on their behalf and have them learn to trust and serve the Lord Jesus Christ with their whole heart, soul and mind.

CHAPTER 1

Joshua is a Powerful Name

The name Joshua is a powerful name. It means:

From the Hebrew name **יְהוֹשֻׁעַ** (Yehoshu'a) meaning "YAHWEH is salvation".

The name Jesus comes from a Greek translation of the Aramaic short form **יֵשׁוּעַ** (Yeshu'a), which was the real name of Jesus.

The English name Joshua is a rendering of the Hebrew language "Yehoshua", meaning "Yahweh is salvation". The vocalization of the second name component may be read as Hoshea - the name used in the Torah before Moses added the divine name (Numbers 13:16).

"Jesus" is the English of the Greek transliteration of "Yehoshua" via Latin. In the Septuagint, all instances of the word "Yehoshua" are rendered as **Ἰησοῦς** (Iēsoūs), the closest Greek pronunciation of the Aramaic "Yeshua" (Hebrew word #3443 in Strong's, Nehemiah 8:17). Thus, in Greek Joshua is called "Jesus son of Naue" (**τοῦ Ναυή**) to differentiate him from Jesus Christ

Yeshua (**יֵשׁוּעַ**, with vowel pointing **יֵשׁוּעַ** - **yēšūā'** in Hebrew) was a common alternative form of the name **יְהוֹשֻׁעַ** ("Yehoshuah" - Joshua) in later books of the Hebrew Bible and among Jews of the Second Temple period. The name corresponds to the Greek spelling **Iesous**, from which comes the English spelling Jesus.

The name יֵשׁוּעַ "Yeshua" (transliterated in the English Old Testament as Jeshua) is a late form of the Biblical Hebrew name יְהוֹשֻׁעַ Yehoshua (Joshua), and spelled with a waw in the second syllable.

Yeshua is the Hebrew name for the Lord. It means "Yahweh [the Lord] is Salvation." The English spelling of Yeshua is "Joshua." However, when translated from Hebrew into the Greek language, the name Yeshua becomes ἰησους. The English spelling for ἰησους is "Jesus."¹

Basically, what this means is Joshua and Jesus are the same name. One is translated from Hebrew into English, the other from Greek into English. It is also interesting to note that the names "Joshua" and "Isaiah" are essentially the same names as Yeshua in Hebrew. They mean "Savior" and "the salvation of the Lord."

We can refer to Jesus as "Jesus," "Yeshua," or "YehSou" (Cantonese), without changing His nature. In any language, His name means "the Lord is Salvation".

CHAPTER 2

Joshua Was a Mighty Man of God

Joshua is a Bible character and hero that I have always admired for his courage, faith, and dedication to the Lord. He wasn't afraid to go against the crowd and popular thinking; instead, he intentionally and knowingly stood up for what he believed was right even though all of his peers, except one, namely Caleb, out-numbered him and voted against his views and observations.

Joshua was born a slave in Goshen in the land of Egypt and grew up under cruel Egyptian taskmasters, but rose to be the leader of Israel through faithful obedience to God.

Joshua was Moses' personal assistant for over forty years and experienced first-hand the awesome miracles of God.

Joshua was a mighty man of God, handpicked by God to be Moses' successor to lead the children of Israel not only militarily, but also spiritually. Joshua was a great military commander and leader. Joshua listened to God's instructions and knew how to lead a strategic battle and win.

In my in-depth study of Joshua, I have learned to appreciate him even more. I believe he was a quiet man and content to take a back seat, not seeking fame or power; however, very willing to serve the Lord in whatever God called him to do.

Joshua was a man of tremendous faith and prayer. He did not waver in his faith or trust in God. When he made a decision to follow and choose the Lord, he never turned back from following after Him.

As you will see in the book of Joshua, God made Joshua a great leader in the eyes of all the Israelites and they revered him as much as they had revered Moses.

The Israelites obeyed and served the Lord all the days of Joshua. I believe this was partly because Joshua had seen all of the amazing miracles that God had performed for the children of Israel, but also because of the life that he exemplified before them. Joshua followed and obeyed the Law of God, meditated on it day and night and continually reminded the people of the law and repeatedly challenged them to serve the Lord.

CHAPTER 3

The Secret of Joshua's Success

If someone gave you the secret of success, long life and prosperity, would you follow the directions? “Well, of course!” may be your reply.

However, what if there is sacrifice, dedication and commitment involved? Athletes may reply, “No pain, no gain!” Athletes know that in order to achieve their goals and win the prize there is dedication and commitment involved along with sacrifice: sacrifice of one's personal time, sacrifice in diet and many times sacrifice of time with family and friends.

Instead of sleeping in, an athlete will get up early to run or to work out at the gym or health club before showering and getting ready to go to work. Then, after work they go for another run, or go and work out, or practice some more. Instead of eating whatever they want to eat, they are on a strict diet to maintain or lose weight, or to get enough nutrition and calories to be able to work out like they do. Instead of having free time to go to the movies, watch television, play video games, read or sit and visit with friends, an athlete will be running and working out or going to athletic practice.

An athlete's focus must be entirely on their goal and on the prize. They must get their bodies in the best physical shape they can possibly be in and their mind must be totally focused. Not only does their body has to be in the best top physical shape it can be in, but they also have to practice their particular sport and train their bodies to perform that sport and be at the top of their game. Their whole life revolves around running, swimming, playing football, playing basketball, playing baseball, playing hockey, wrestling, lifting weights, gymnastics, track and field, skiing, rodeo, or whatever sport they are participating in, whether it be in

high school or college level, but definitely in the professional league, or trying out for, or competing in the Olympics.

Some people are really dedicated and make great athletes. Others start out, but after counting the cost and trying it for a while, they drop out. It takes too much time, too much effort, and too much sacrifice on their part and their heart really isn't in it.

Perhaps Christianity and being a Christ follower could be compared to being an athlete.

The author of Hebrews tells us to run with endurance the race that is set before us. The race that the author is referring to is the life of faith.

¹Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us (Hebrews 12:1 NKJV).

The word "therefore" refers back to the previous verses in Hebrews 11 where we find the roll call of those who lived by faith in the Old Testament. I believe the great cloud of witnesses are all those believers who have died and gone to heaven, including the Old Testament Saints listed in chapter 11, and they are watching us from the grandstand of heaven, cheering us on to live a life of faith and to conduct ourselves as citizens of heaven.

Live as Citizens of Heaven

²⁷ Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. Then, whether I come and see you again or only hear about you, I will know that you are standing together with one spirit and one purpose, fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News (Philippians 1:27).

Fight of Faith

¹² Fight the good fight for the true faith. Hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you, which you have declared so well before many witnesses (1 Timothy 6:12).

We read in the previous verses that the walk of a believer will not be an easy one. We read words such as fighting together, striving together, and fight of faith; words that would be used in a pep talk in a locker room before and during an athletic game, or words that would be used when talking to soldiers preparing for battle.

The prophet Isaiah wrote:

²⁹ He gives power to the weak,
And to those who have no might He increases strength.
³⁰ Even the youths shall faint and be weary,
And the young men shall utterly fall,
³¹ But those who wait on the LORD
Shall renew their strength;
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,
They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint (Isaiah 40:29–31 NKJV).

In this passage, we find the prophet Isaiah talking about how the Lord gives power and strength to the weak and how they shall run and not be weary and walk and not faint, which also reminds me of an athlete or soldier.

Just as some people start out to be athletes and drop out, so do many professing Christians.

Some people just don't want to pay the price or go the distance. They want to live in this world and enjoy everything this world has to offer: a materialistic society, entertainment, media, food and beverages, anything and everything to indulge one's senses.

Some people believe in God and have made a profession of faith in Christ Jesus, and attend church and try to live a "good life", but that's as far as they want to go. They aren't truly sold out 100% to following what Jesus would have them to do. Their heart hasn't been truly sold out and they're not willing, or ready, to lay everything down on the altar.

Some people are too bogged down in the everyday struggles of life to even think about such things and others may not even know that we are expected to grow and mature in our faith and walk with Jesus. Others may have been confronted with going the next step and drawing closer, but there are things in their lives they don't want to give up, don't want to sacrifice on the altar.

The Secret to Joshua's Success

When God gave Joshua the instructions and conditions for a successful and prosperous life, Joshua not only listened very carefully, but he also made a choice. The secret to Joshua's success is that he was totally sold out to God 100% and obeyed the following instructions that were personally given to him by God in Joshua 1:6–9. The instructions also included a promise: that he would prosper and succeed, only if he followed and obeyed all the instructions written in the law.

I have included both the New Living Translation and the New King James Version as I like the wording of certain phrases in each of them.

⁶“Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them. ⁷Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. ⁸Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. ⁹This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:6–9).

⁶“Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.

⁷Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. ⁸This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. ⁹Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God *is* with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:6–9 NKJV).

Notice the stipulations listed in the first part of verses 7 & 8. After the stipulations come the promise with the conditional words of “only” and “then”.

This secret to success was not just limited to Joshua. This same instruction and promise was given by Moses to the people of Israel back in Deuteronomy.

³² So Moses told the people, “You must be careful to obey all the commands of the Lord your God, following his instructions in every detail. ³³ Stay on the path that the Lord your God has commanded you to follow. Then you will live long and prosperous lives in the land you are about to enter and occupy (Deuteronomy 5:32–33).

Once again, we find the promises conditional upon the people adhering to the stipulations and conditions set forth by God and following the word “then”.

A Call for Wholehearted Commitment

A call for wholehearted commitment was given to the children of Israel in **Deuteronomy 6**, with the promise of enjoying a long life and that all would go well with them and they would have many children in the Promised Land.

¹“These are the commands, decrees, and regulations that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you. You must obey them in the land you are about to enter and occupy, ² and you and your children and grandchildren must fear the LORD your God as long as you live. If you obey all his decrees and commands, you will enjoy a long life. ³ Listen closely, Israel, and be careful to obey. Then all will go well with you, and you will have many children in the land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

⁴“Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. ⁵ And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. ⁶ And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today.

⁷ Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.

⁸ Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. ⁹ Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:1–9).

If we as Christians would really live like this and do what these verses say, how different would our lives and the lives of our children be! If we would love the Lord with all our heart

and all our soul and all our strength and commit ourselves wholeheartedly to God and to His word and His commands what an impact we would have on our families and the world around us!

Notice that the command to meditate on God's word day and night and to repeat His word again and again to our children. We are to talk about God's word when we are at home, when we are on the road and when we get up and when we are going to bed! We are to tie them to our hands, wear them on our foreheads as reminders and write them on the doorposts of our homes and gates.

When my son Joshua and I first moved to the ranch in Miles City, Montana, I wrote scripture verses on paper and hung them around the ranch house. I had them in the bathroom, in the bedroom, in the kitchen and in the living room. I wanted us to be reminded of those verses and to help us remember and memorize them.

One set of verses that I posted in our home was the following:

¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

¹¹ Put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

¹² For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

¹³ Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

¹⁴ Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

¹⁵ And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

¹⁶ Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:11–17 KJV).

I think one of the reasons why I posted these verses was because we really are in a battle. We are in a spiritual battle that Satan is waging against us. He does not want anyone to be saved. He wants to take as many people as he can to hell. He knows that Jesus died for all of mankind and all they have to do to be saved is acknowledge their lost condition in sin and their need of a Savior and believe in Him and call on His name to be saved. If you are a born-again Christian, Satan does not want you to be a dedicated or an effective witness in winning others to the saving knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He wants to keep you entangled and ensnared in the things of this world. He came to kill, steal and destroy (John 10:10). He came to kill you spiritually, physically, emotionally, and mentally and to steal your joy, your abundant life, your peace, and to destroy you anyway he can.

¹⁰The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (John 10:10 KJV).

Satan knows that if you are committed 100% to God and have your armor on, you will not be defeated. That's why he will try and let the things of this world distract you and keep you from being all that God wants you to be for Him.

It's the biggest most deadly game of all and the stakes are high: human souls. Satan is trying to snatch away as many human souls as he can possibly deceive so they won't reach eternal life in heaven, but rather end up in eternal damnation (living death) and total separation from God in hell. Satan sees us as pawns on a chessboard of life and his goal is to snatch away as many as he can from the outstretched arms of the Savior. He knows that Jesus loved mankind, you and me, His creation, so much that He came down from heaven, born of a virgin as a baby and lived among men and then died a horrible death on the cross to pay for the penalty for all of our sins, your sins, my sins, so we may stand redeemed, paid for and clean before a Holy and righteous God. You see nothing unclean or unholy can stand in the presence of a Holy God. Jesus bought us with His own blood on that cross and when we confess our sins and put our faith and trust in Him, we become the sons of God!

²¹This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. ²²Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault (Colossians 1:21–22).

⁵ God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. ⁶ So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. ⁷ He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins (Ephesians 1:5–7).

²⁶ For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26 NKJV).

Wow, while I was sitting here at my computer writing this, I was listening to a song, “A Place Called Grace” by Phillips, Craig, and Dean and the words hit me and tears started falling.

I know there is a place
Where arms of compassion welcome me home
Sweet mercy falls like rain
I know there's a place called grace

Can you see the compassionate outstretched arms of Jesus calling you to Him?

Because of what Jesus did on the cross for us, we become the sons and daughters of the living God and brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ! We have been bought with His shed blood and adopted into the family of God.

¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

¹⁵ For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

¹⁶ The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

¹⁷ And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together (Romans 8:14–17 KJV).

Another wow! I went to biblegateway.com to look up a verse and as soon as I opened up biblegateway.com this is the verse I saw. It is the verse of the day:

¹⁶ “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, ¹⁷ Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow (Isaiah 1:16–17 NKJV).

I read this verse and it was another confirmation from my heavenly Father and Savior Jesus, that what I am writing is exactly what He is calling us to: a call for wholehearted commitment.

What is wholehearted commitment and what does it mean to love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength?

The Bible says, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21, Luke 12:34 KJV).

What is most important to you? What do you do in your leisure time? What do you spend your extra money on? Do you take time to pray? Do you take time to read the Bible and meditate on His word? Are you in fellowship with other believers?

When I was younger I didn't think there was anything wrong with listening to secular music or watching television or movies, after all, I reasoned, I wasn't listening to anything bad or watching dirty or R rated movies; but then one day my then teenage son asked me why I listened to Country Western music. He went on to state that almost all of the songs are about cheating, adultery, divorce, drinking, broken homes, and broken lives. Wow, that hit me hard and I had to admit that he was right. I quit listening to Country Western and all other secular music and from that time on, only listened to Christian radio and Christian or classical music.

Maybe you aren't at this point in your spiritual walk and commitment with the Lord, but I challenge you to examine what you watch and what you listen to in light of God's word.

⁸Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue if there be any praise, think on these things (Philippians 4:8 KJV).

Is what you are watching honest, true, pure, just, lovely, virtuous and uplifting? If Jesus were with you, what would Jesus do? Would you want Him to listen to what you are listening to? Would you want Him to watch what you are watching? Would you read to Him what you are reading? Would you want Him to see what you are looking at?

The fact of the matter is that He is watching and reading and looking at the things you see with your eyes. He is listening to the things you listen to with your ears. If you are a born-again believer you have the Holy Spirit living inside of you and the Holy Spirit and Jesus are ever present with you.

Satan gets into our thoughts through our eyes and ears in what we listen to with our ears and what we see and read with our eyes. How do the things you watch and listen to measure up with God's word? What are you allowing into your home and what are you exposing your children to?

Don't worry; I felt that felt blow too. I must constantly be on my guard with what I watch on television or movies. In my quest to be sold out 100% to following my Lord, I have become acutely aware of the media and how acceptable sin and bad language in television shows and movies have become even in the Christian home.

I recently visited the home of some friends of mine and while there we watched a movie. I was very uncomfortable the whole time and had it been my home, I would have switched the channel and found something else. I did not feel like I could get up and leave and did not want to offend them, but on the other hand I felt like I was offending my Lord and grieving the Holy Spirit because of what my eyes were watching and my ears were hearing in that movie.

One of the twelve spies that went with Joshua to spy out the land was Caleb:

²⁴ But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it (Numbers 14:24 NKJV).

Pastor Gary O'Shell of Dulles Family Life Church, Chantilly, Virginia, wrote about Caleb in one of his devotionals¹:

In the long-ago days of my youth, I had a friend who, when wanting to emphasize the truth of what he was saying, would add the exclamation, "Square business!" That was brought to my memory by something British author and Pastor T. Austin-Sparks said, "If you mean business with the Lord, the Lord will mean business with you." As we enter into yet another new year, how many of us will truly "mean business" with the Father? How many of us will "transact"

business with Him? Business that involves every aspect of our lives. Business that will not exhibit a willingness to make minor life adjustments, spiritual tweaks, but does business with Him at the very root of our being?

In Numbers 14:24, it is said of Caleb that he walked in "another spirit" than the majority of the people of Israel in that he wholly followed and belonged to the Father. He meant business with God. God meant business with Him, and the result of it all showed forth in His life. Caleb, as Austin-Sparks said, "lived up to, and out from heaven." His heart and spirit lived in the throne room of God. On most days, where is mine found? Where is yours? In the midst of this comfort, safety, and pleasure obsessed culture, a culture that has fully invaded the church, where will yours and my heart be found?¹

In another devotional, Pastor O'Shell writes of being ruined in the presence of God²:

In Isaiah 6:5, Isaiah, in his encounter with the awesome wonder of God, says, "Woe is me.... I am *ruined*." Ruined in the Presence of the Lord. There can never be any other result for anyone who has such an encounter with Him. To see Him, to encounter Him, to know Him, is to be ruined. The Father told Moses that "No one may see Me and live," and He spoke truth. We cannot *see* Him and continue to live the same self-absorbed, pleasure obsessed, lovers of this world lives. That, along with our outlaw nature must die, so that we may truly live. Such an encounter is, I believe, alien to most of our church gatherings, where we sing a few hymns, or a snappy chorus or three that may touch our emotions, but not our hearts. We may hear a message that brings conviction, but not transformation. We call it worship, but really, we've just attended a meeting. We go out as we came in....the same.

Oswald Chamber said that God's deepest desire is to reveal to us who He is. Devotional writer Chris Tiegreen writes, "When we really understand who God is, the natural response is to offer Him whatever we can get our hands on....and all we have is ourselves.....If we have not yet gotten to that point of laying ourselves on the altar before Him - *without reservation* - we have not yet encountered the living God." We've not been wrecked. We've not been ruined. Make no mistake beloved, He most definitely desires to ruin us. To ruin us for all that works in our lives to hold us captive to all in life that is not

Him. Jesus said, "What does it profit a man if he would gain the whole world, but lose his soul." Saul of Tarsus encountered the risen Christ on the Damascus road. This encounter transformed him, he was ruined forever as to who he had been, made new by He who is. Saul of Tarsus was now the apostle Paul.²

The secret of Joshua's success was being sold out 100% to God and not only meditating on His word day and night, but also obeying what God had said. God's presence and God's word permeated every facet of Joshua's life. At some point, early in Joshua's life, he had a personal encounter with the living God and was forever changed. He made a commitment to serve the Lord wholeheartedly and never turned back.

Will you make a commitment to serve Him wholeheartedly?

CHAPTER 4

The First Appearance of Joshua in the Bible

The first appearance of Joshua in the Bible is Exodus 17, about one month after crossing the Red Sea in their escape from the Egyptians. (Exodus 16:1)

Before I go any further I must address the Exodus. There are many individuals, including many well-educated scholars that want to disprove the Bible and say the Exodus never occurred, because they say the Israelites were never in Egypt. Just as we have people today re-writing history and saying that the holocaust never happened! Well, just because they say it never happened doesn't make it true!

Even among Biblical scholars and archeologists there is much debate about the date of the Exodus. You can find all kinds of arguments out on the web, but even if they couldn't prove any of it, I would still believe. You see I believe the Bible is the inerrant word of God, divinely inspired of God. My faith in God and in the Bible, is simply that: faith.

¹Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

²For by it the elders obtained a good report.

³Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear (Hebrews 11:1–3 KJV).

But the fact of the matter is that archaeologists have found many things that prove the Biblical account, but even in the light of these findings there are those who refuse to believe

and will do anything in their power to discredit the Bible, the archaeologists, and their findings.

One notable archeologist is Ron Wyatt who found 4, 6, and 8-spoked chariot wheels in the Gulf of Aqaba in 1978 and 1988. The director of Antiquities in Cairo, Egypt, pronounced it to be from the 18th Dynasty of Ancient Egypt.¹

1446 BC is the date that most Bible-believing scholars recognize as the date of the Exodus. I found the information on Biblical Archeology² and Wyatt Archaeological Research³ to be very convincing. 1446 BC was during the 18th Dynasty which coincides with Ron Wyatt's discovery of the chariot wheels and coincides with the pottery found at the site of ancient Jericho.⁴

We find the account of the Red Sea crossing in Exodus 14. Exodus 15 is the "Song of Deliverance" that Moses and the people of Israel sang to the Lord; then, three days later they were complaining and turned against Moses.

Exodus 16, one month after leaving the land of Egypt, the people complain again to Moses and Aaron. It is here where God provided quail for them to eat in the evening and manna in the morning. From this day on for forty years the people ate manna which God provided each morning until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.

In Exodus 17, the warriors of Amalek attack the people of Israel. Moses commands Joshua:

"Choose some men to go out and fight the army of Amalek for us. Tomorrow I will stand at the top of the hill, holding the staff of God in my hand" (Exodus 17:9).

Using 1446 BC as the date of the Exodus, Joshua would have been born somewhere between 1465 and 1484 BC. He had to be at least nineteen years old at the time of the Exodus according to Numbers 14:29-30, but he could have been as old as thirty-eight or thirty-nine years old as Caleb, whom he is associated. These ages are used because the spies were not sent out until the 2nd year after the Exodus and Caleb was forty years old when he was sent out as a spy.

The Pulpit Commentary explains Caleb's age:

Verse 10. - Forty and five years. This marks the date of the present conversation as occurring seven years after the invasion. Caleb was forty years of age when he went to spy the land of Canaan. For thirty-eight years the Israelites wandered in the wilderness. And Caleb was now eighty-five years old. This remark has been made as far back as the time of Theodoret. Doubtless the apportionment of the land, and its occupation by the Israelites, was a long and tedious business (see also Joshua 13:1). Even since. Literally, from the time when (Joshua 14:10).⁵

I believe the argument for an older Joshua, thirty to forty years old, when the Israelites left Egypt, because soon after leaving Egypt we find Joshua in a position of leadership. Even though some maintain that Joshua was about nineteen to twenty years old when the Exodus occurred, one could argue that it is unlikely someone that age would be leading an army into battle and commanding men twice his age or older. Another argument for an older Joshua is the verse from Number 13:1–2, where God instructs Moses, “Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan which I give unto the children of Israel of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, everyone a ruler among them.” To be a ruler among a tribe, one would think that individual would have worked his way up over time and demonstrated leadership abilities and gained the trust and approval of the tribe.

Arguments for a young nineteen to twenty-year-old Joshua would be that God is not a respecter of persons by age and that God uses people at any age.

“For man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

Examples of this would be: David who killed Goliath at the age of fifteen⁶, Samuel who went to live and serve in the temple as a young child, perhaps three to five years of age, and Josiah, who became King of Judah at the age of eight years old and reigned in Jerusalem for thirty-one years.

The Bible records the following regarding King Josiah:

²He did what was pleasing in the Lord's sight and followed the example of his ancestor David. He did not turn away from doing what was right (2 Kings 22:2).

²⁵Never before had there been a king like Josiah, who turned to the Lord with all his heart and soul and strength, obeying all the laws of Moses. And there has never been a king like him since (2 Kings 23:25).

Regardless of his age, Joshua clearly stood out from among his peers and God's hand was clearly upon him.

Even though this is the first mention of Joshua in the Bible, it is clear that Joshua was known by Moses. Perhaps someone had recommended Joshua to Moses. We are not told how long Moses and Joshua had known each other prior to this, but they clearly had a history. In a camp of 600,000 men, plus women and children, Joshua stands out and apparently stood out even as a young man in Egypt. Joshua was a man that Moses could trust and apparently had leadership ability and natural military skills.

Can you imagine the job description had Moses solicited a military leader in today's world or even posted one in Joshua's day?

Wanted: Military leader

1. Required Qualifications:

- Post-Graduate degree from an accredited military academy
- Worked up through the ranks and be at least a Brigadier General
- 16 – 20 years of experience
- Proven track record of leading and executing successful missions
- Proven leadership skills
- Proven values of courage, candor, competence, and commitment⁷
- Proven ethics of loyalty, duty, and selfless service⁷
- Proven 23 traits of character⁷
- Proven eleven principles of good leadership⁷
- Experience in hand-to-hand combat
- Experience with latest military simulators
- Excellent procurement, recruitment and retention skills
- Experience in training and leading 300,000+ military personnel
- Excellent logistic skills
- Must score 300 on the Military Physical Fitness Test⁸
- Ability to travel for extended periods of time
- Must have excellent interpersonal and verbal communication skills
- Excellent writing skills

- Experience working with confidential and sensitive information
- Proficient in Microsoft Office 2016 (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, OneNote, Access, Outlook), and Windows 10
- Proficient in latest military software, data gathering and analyzing, logistics, and communications
- Satisfactory criminal history background check
- Pass drug test
- Pass polygraph/lie detector test

2. Preferred Qualifications:

- Four-star General or Five-star General of the Army
- Experience leading 600,000+ military personnel

3. Successful applicants will be given a scenario at the interview and must demonstrate the seven-step decision-making process⁷.

Joshua wouldn't have had a chance had Moses posted a job description based on even a fraction of these requirements!

Have you been unemployed or perhaps desired a better job position, but felt like getting the position you wanted was almost impossible? You knew you could do the job, but because of the requirements you either missed it by years of experience, or level of education, or both. Even though you applied, your application was never even considered because they ruled you out based on the fact that you didn't meet all of the requirements.

I have been unemployed a couple of times for 7-8 months at a time and have submitted hundreds of applications for jobs that I knew I could do, jobs I should have landed, jobs I should have at least been granted an interview, jobs that I met all the required qualifications, but the job applicant pool was anywhere from 80-300 so they could really be selective. Many times, I was unable to qualify for a job because I lack the education level they required, even though I have years of experience performing that same job and could do a better job than someone just graduating from college that has no experience.

Don't get me wrong, I am not against education, in fact I encourage young people to go to college or a trade school, but I also know that there is something to be said about real-life experience and on-the-job training that you will never get from a book or classroom.

In Joshua's case, he had neither formal military education nor experience as Joshua grew up as a slave in Egypt.

However, God had a plan for Joshua and His plan didn't involve Joshua needing to meet an extensive list of required qualifications.

Throughout the pages of scripture, we see how God used ordinary people for unordinary things, for unbelievable things, for incredible things in order to accomplish His will and bring Him honor and glory and praise. Yes, there were the highly educated individuals like Moses, Paul, and Dr. Luke, but the majority were ordinary people like Andrew, Peter, James and John, who were fisherman.

God calls and uses people where they are. He doesn't give them a list of qualifications they have to acquire before He can use them. God gives each one of us special talents or abilities that He can use, if we will let Him. When God calls us to do a job for Him, He will equip us and give us what we need to accomplish the task for Him.

Of course, there are times when we may need to have special training, or obtain specialized education in order to do our best, depending upon what He calls us to do. There are times when God uses the circumstances of life to train us for what lies ahead.

From a baby in the bulrushes, to the palace of the Pharaoh where he was educated by the Egyptians for forty years, to living in the desert for forty years with his father-in-law Jethro, God was preparing Moses to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt.

"Moses was taught all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was powerful in both speech and action" (Acts 7:22).

In Exodus 17:9, we find Moses giving Joshua a command to find some men and go out and fight the army of Amalek. Moses told Joshua that he would go to the top of the hill and hold the staff of God in his hand.

¹⁰So Joshua did what Moses had commanded and fought the army of Amalek.

Meanwhile, Moses, Aaron, and Hur climbed to the top of a nearby hill. ¹¹As long as Moses held up the staff in his hand, the Israelites had the advantage. But whenever he dropped his hand, the Amalekites gained the advantage. ¹²Moses' arms soon became so tired he could no longer hold them up. So Aaron and Hur found a stone for him to sit

on. Then they stood on each side of Moses, holding up his hands. So, his hands held steady until sunset.¹³ As a result, Joshua overwhelmed the army of Amalek in battle (Exodus 17:10–13).

Here we find Moses being quite confident that he can do this job of holding up the staff alone. Holding up the staff of God was not only a sign of encouragement to Joshua and his army, but was also representative of crying out to God, praying and interceding for Joshua and the army, acknowledging that they needed God's help; but soon Moses' arms become weary and he is no longer able to hold his arms in the air.

I think this is representative of many of us. We think we can do it by ourselves. We don't need anyone's help. We are independent and don't want to bother other people and don't want to get too involved with anyone, and certainly don't want anyone to know about our business, or our personal lives and the struggles we may be going through.

Is it not so with persevering in prayer and spiritual warfare, or with the struggles of life? We think we can do it alone, without anyone coming along side of us, but eventually it becomes too much for us. We get weary from the struggle, grow tired of trying to keep believing, and hoping that things will change. The pressure becomes too great and we feel like everything is stacked against us. The zeal we once had has been diminished and soon we feel discouraged and defeated.

It is so easy to simply quit and give up, to surrender to the enemy, to give in to the addiction, to stop believing, and stop praying for the miracle.

In this first battle of the newly freed Israelites with Joshua as commander, we find that as long as Moses held up the rod in his hands, Israel was winning; but whenever he rested his arms at his sides, the soldiers of Amalek were winning. Moses' arms became so tired he could no longer hold them up, so Aaron and Hur found a stone for him to sit on so they could stand on each side of him and hold up his hands.

I find it interesting that Moses never asks for help, but yet we see that Aaron and Hur took action. They could see that Moses was struggling and tired. They didn't wait to be asked, they took action and found a stone for Moses to sit on and literally came alongside Moses and held up his hands. Now that's what friends are for!

Aaron and Hur were no longer bystanders watching Moses in his struggle. They became active participants in standing with Moses and petitioning God for Joshua and the Israelite army to be successful.

When I was seventeen and a senior in high school my Dad died suddenly in a tragic farm accident. I was the only one present when he passed from this earth into heaven. When my best friend from church heard the news she immediately came to our home to be with me and even spent the night with me. I did not have to ask her, she came because she cared. Even though there was nothing she could do, her presence was a comfort to me. As we lay in bed she listened to me cry and talk and reminisce all night long. I don't remember sleeping at all that night, but I will always remember how she came alongside me when I was grieving the loss of my father.

There have been other times through the years that my friends have come along side of me and helped me through difficult times. There were times when they couldn't physically be with me as distance, time and money were prohibitive, but they came along side with their daily phone calls, prayers, thoughtful cards and letters and an occasional gift in the mail. Many times, they called and just listened to me cry and would pray for me over the phone. Now that is a friend!

I have been blessed to be able to come along side these dear friends in their hour of need, time of grieving, or difficult struggles.

The Pulpit Commentary said this about verse 11:

The elevation of Moses' hand, with the rod held in it, was an appeal to God for aid, and must be supposed to have been accompanied by fervent prayer to God, that he would help his people and give them victory over their enemies. So long as the hand was upraised, the Israelites prevailed; not because they saw it, and took it as directing them to continue the fight (Kalisch), but because God gave them strength, and vigour and courage, while Moses interceded, and left them to themselves when the intercession ceased. It may be said, that Moses might have continued to pray, though his hands were weary; but only those who have tried, know how difficult a thing it is to pray with any intensity for a continuance. Probably Moses' spiritual and physical powers collapsed together; and when he dropped his hand through physical fatigue, he rested also from his mental effort. To impress upon Israel the importance of intercessory prayer, God made success and failure alternate with its

continuance and discontinuance, thus teaching his people a lesson of inestimable value.⁹

Reading this commentary impressed upon me the importance of praying for others and what happens when we stop praying! I had never thought about it this way before. Perhaps it is because we don't always see the immediate results of our prayers as Moses, Aaron and Hur did that day, but if we could, would we see the enemy closing in and start to defeat our family and friends when we forget to pray for them?

What about our church, missionaries, government leaders, and on and on?

I think persistent prayer is especially important when we know someone is struggling and perhaps under attack that we do not grow weary and stop praying. Perhaps the person struggling is you! Moses couldn't do it alone and neither can we.

I see Moses, Aaron and Hur as a team. If you are not connected to a fellowship of believers or group of friends who can pray for you then perhaps it's time for you to seek out other believers in Jesus Christ. Like Moses, you too can have brothers and sisters in Christ come alongside you and hold you up!

Joshua and his men fought until sunset and defeated the army of Amalek. I believe this battle made a lasting impression upon Joshua. This battle lasted all day long, until sunset. Most battles started at sunrise, so no matter what time of year this battle was fought, but probably in the spring of the year, it was a long day of battle and they didn't finish until sunset.

This was hand to hand combat, fought with swords, daggers, spears and bows and arrows, so you can imagine how dangerous and bloody the battle would have been, not to mention how tired one would be at the end of the day. (See supplement pages in Appendix A, *Weapons in the Late Bronze Age* and Appendix B, *Weapons and Warfare in Ancient Israel*.)

The verse that follows the description of the battle is very special. It is God's special message to Joshua. I have included both the NLT and KJV:

¹⁴ After the victory, the LORD instructed Moses, "Write this down on a scroll as a permanent reminder, and read it aloud to Joshua: I will erase the memory of Amalek from under heaven" (Exodus 17:14 NLT).

¹⁴ And the LORD said unto Moses, “Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven” (Exodus 17:14 KJV).

God speaks to Moses and specifically mentions Joshua by name. The promise that God was making was a special promise He specifically wanted Joshua to hear. The promise was that He would erase the memory of Amalek from under heaven.

Although Joshua won that battle, he apparently did not wipe them out that day. In doing some research regarding Amalek, I found there is some disagreement as to who the people of Amalek are today, or if they survived at all.

¹⁵ Moses built an altar there and named it Yahweh-Nissi (which means “the LORD is my banner”). ¹⁶ He said, “They have raised their fist against the LORD’s throne, so now the LORD will be at war with Amalek generation after generation” (Exodus 17:15–16).

Forty years later while the people of Israel were camped on the east side of the Jordan River, before they entered the Promised Land, Moses spoke to them and reminded them of all of the commands that God had given to them. These commands, laws and instructions are recorded in the book of Deuteronomy. One of these commands was regarding the Amalekites.

¹⁷ “Never forget what the Amalekites did to you as you came from Egypt. ¹⁸ They attacked you when you were exhausted and weary, and they struck down those who were straggling behind. They had no fear of God. ¹⁹ Therefore, when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your enemies in the land he is giving you as a special possession, you must destroy the Amalekites and erase their memory from under heaven. Never forget this!” (Deuteronomy 25:17–19).

According to Rabbi Dr. Shmuly Yanklowitz, “Blotting out the memory of Amalek was no mere psychological activity. The Israelites were expected to kill every Amalekite--man, woman, and child. But was this just a theoretical imperative or was it meant to be carried out?

The book of Samuel implies that it required actual fulfillment: “Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both

man and woman, infant and suckling, ox, and sheep, camel and ass,"(1 Samuel 15:3 KJV). King Saul struck down Amalek as he was commanded but he then took mercy upon King Agag and upon some of the Amalekite animals. God and the prophet Samuel harshly criticized Saul for not fulfilling God's word."¹⁰

In 1 Chronicles 4 we read:

⁴² And some of them, even of the sons of Simeon, five hundred men, went to mount Seir, having for their captains Pelatiah, and Neariah, and Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi.

⁴³ And they smote the rest of the Amalekites that were escaped, and dwelt there unto this day (1 Chronicles 4:42–43 KJV).

Whether the people of Amalek were ever totally eradicated as would seem the case in 1 Chronicles 4:42–43, or not, is not really of utmost importance. The important point is that the Lord God Almighty has promised that they would be wiped out and that He would be at war with Amalek from generation to generation, and he wanted Joshua to know about it. If they have not yet been wiped off the face of the earth, they will be.

CHAPTER 5

Joshua On Mount Sinai With Moses

The next time Joshua appears in the Bible is in Exodus 24:13, when he accompanies Moses part way up the mountain where God gives Moses the tablets of stone on which He has inscribed the instructions and commands to teach the people.

¹²Then the LORD said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain. Stay there, and I will give you the tablets of stone on which I have inscribed the instructions and commands so you can teach the people.” ¹³So Moses and his assistant Joshua set out, and Moses climbed up the mountain of God.

¹⁴Moses told the elders, “Stay here and wait for us until we come back. Aaron and Hur are here with you. If anyone has a dispute while I am gone, consult with them.”

¹⁵Then Moses climbed up the mountain, and the cloud covered it. ¹⁶And the glory of the LORD settled down on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days. On the seventh day, the LORD called to Moses from inside the cloud. ¹⁷To the Israelites at the foot of the mountain, the glory of the LORD appeared at the summit like a consuming fire. ¹⁸Then Moses disappeared into the cloud as he climbed higher up the mountain. He remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights (Exodus 24:12–18).

Here we find that Joshua was Moses’ assistant, or minister, in the King James Version. Joshua was the only person, other than Moses to set foot on Mount Sinai and to be covered with the glory of the Lord! In verse 16 it says that the glory of the Lord settled down on

Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days. It wasn't until the seventh day that the Lord called to Moses from inside the cloud and Moses disappeared into the cloud as he climbed higher up the mountain.

It would appear that Moses and Joshua basked and rested in the glory of the Lord for six days before God called Moses to go higher up the mountain alone.

During those forty days and forty nights, God gave to Moses all of the commandments and instructions in Exodus 25–31.

We are not given any further information other than Joshua went part way up the mountain with Moses. Perhaps he kept watch and prayed like Peter, James, and John did when they went to the Garden of Gethsemane with Jesus in Matthew 26:36–46. Perhaps he fasted and prayed for the forty days and forty nights. Perhaps he actually heard God speak to Moses.

What we do know is that Joshua had a special privilege that no other person, other than Moses, had in going part way up the mountain and getting that close to God!

Joshua Remained on the Mountain and Did Not Sin Against God

We also know that Joshua did not sin against God like the other Israelites who remained at the bottom of the mountain.

The people got impatient waiting for Moses to come down off the mountain and told Aaron to make them a god to lead them that they could worship. So, Aaron told the people to take off the gold rings from the ears of their wives and sons and daughters and bring them to him. Aaron then melted them down and molded it into the shape of a calf. The King James Version says that he fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf (Exodus 32).

⁷The LORD told Moses, "Quick! Go down the mountain! Your people whom you brought from the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. ⁸How quickly they have turned away from the way I commanded them to live! They have melted down gold and made a calf, and they have bowed down and sacrificed to it. They are saying, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt' (Exodus 32:7–8).

We find Joshua still on the mountain in Exodus 32:17.

Joshua Hears the Noise from the People Down Below

¹⁷ When Joshua heard the boisterous noise of the people shouting below them, he exclaimed to Moses, “It sounds like war in the camp!”

¹⁸ But Moses replied, “No, it’s not a shout of victory nor the wailing of defeat. I hear the sound of a celebration.”

¹⁹ When they came near the camp, Moses saw the calf and the dancing, and he burned with anger. He threw the stone tablets to the ground, smashing them at the foot of the mountain. ²⁰ He took the calf they had made and burned it. Then he ground it into powder, threw it into the water, and forced the people to drink it.

²¹ Finally, he turned to Aaron and demanded, “What did these people do to you to make you bring such terrible sin upon them?”

²² “Don’t get so upset, my lord,” Aaron replied. “You yourself know how evil these people are. ²³ They said to me, ‘Make us gods who will lead us. We don’t know what happened to this fellow Moses, who brought us here from the land of Egypt.’ ²⁴ So I told them, ‘Whoever has gold jewelry, take it off.’ When they brought it to me, I simply threw it into the fire—and out came this calf!” (Exodus 32:17–24).

Moses can’t understand how Aaron could do such a terrible thing and demanded to know what it was that the people had done to him to make him do this.

Notice how Aaron doesn’t want to admit his part in all of this and blames it on the people and says that they told him to make them a god. Aaron says that he “threw” the gold into the fire and out came the calf, when the scriptures specifically state that Aaron molded it, and in the King James Version it goes on to state that Aaron fashioned it with an engraving tool!

God wanted to completely destroy the people of Israel, but Moses interceded for them before the Lord and asks God to forgive the people of their sin but, if not, to blot out or erase his name from the book that God had written.

Even though the Lord changed his mind about the terrible disaster he had threatened to bring on his people, He tells Moses, “Whoever sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book” (Exodus 32:33 KJV).

Exodus 32:35 goes on to say that the Lord sent a great plague upon the people, because they worshiped the calf Aaron made.

So, he stood at the entrance to the camp and shouted, “All of you who are on the Lord’s side, come here and join me.” And all the Levites gathered around him (Exodus 32:26).

Moses then instructs the Levites to take their swords and go back and forth across the camp and kill everyone, even their brothers, friends, and neighbors. The Levites obeyed Moses’ command and killed about 3,000 people that day.

CHAPTER 6

Joshua Accompanies Moses into the Tent of Meeting

We next find Joshua accompanying Moses into the Tent of Meeting, or in the King James Version it says, “Tabernacle”; however, this is not to be confused with the Tabernacle described in Exodus 26 and 36.

⁷It was Moses’ practice to take the Tent of Meeting and set it up some distance from the camp. Everyone who wanted to make a request of the LORD would go to the Tent of Meeting outside the camp.

⁸Whenever Moses went out to the Tent of Meeting, all the people would get up and stand in the entrances of their own tents. They would all watch Moses until he disappeared inside. ⁹As he went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and hover at its entrance while the LORD spoke with Moses. ¹⁰When the people saw the cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, they would stand and bow down in front of their own tents. ¹¹Inside the Tent of Meeting, the LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Afterward Moses would return to the camp, but the young man who assisted him, Joshua son of Nun, would remain behind in the Tent of Meeting (Exodus 33:7–11).

Wow, what a special privilege to accompany Moses into the Tent of Meeting while the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. If Joshua was in or near the tent, he must have heard the conversation between God and Moses.

The Tent of Meeting was a special place where anyone who wanted to make a request of the Lord would go. It was a place of prayer and worship. Joshua stayed behind to sit in the presence of God, to pray, to meditate on the words he had heard God speak to Moses, and to worship.

Why did Joshua stay behind in the Tent of Meeting, when Moses returned to the camp?

I liked the comments that Veronica Johnson of *Vision International Ministries* and Bill Johnson of *Bill Johnson Ministries* wrote:

In the Tent, Joshua learned to sit in the presence of God. He experienced what God's voice sounded like even though He was not speaking to him. In the Tent, Joshua learned that although your leader goes home, God is there.¹

When Moses went to meet with the Lord, Joshua would go to the tent door and wait. He was aware of God talking with Moses inside. Lying face down at the door while God was talking with Moses must have been the highlight of Joshua's life. All of Israel saw it...

Joshua stayed at the tent because of his love for God's presence, his love for His glory.²

How often do we stay behind in the Tent of Meeting because of our love for God and His presence? How often do we take time out of our busy lives to spend time alone with God and to sit quietly before the Lord and wait for Him to speak to us? How often do we stay behind after a powerful worship service and bask in the glory of God? How often do we just sit in the presence of God like Joshua with no other distractions?

How often does the busyness of our lives dictate that we quickly move on and get home for lunch or dinner or get to our next meeting or activity?

I have to admit that I have let the busyness of life and time constraints interfere with staying behind and lingering in God's presence. I admire Joshua in his total devotion to God and His desire to be in God's presence and in prayer for long periods of time.

Have you ever stayed behind in the Tent of Meeting and met with God alone? Were you thankful you did?

CHAPTER 7

Joshua Speaks Out to Moses

The next time Joshua is mentioned in the scriptures is when Joshua speaks out to Moses.

²⁸ Joshua, son of Nun, who had been Moses' assistant since his youth, protested, "Moses, my master, make them stop!" (Numbers 11:28 NLT).

²⁸ And Joshua the son of Nun, the minister of Moses, one of his chosen men, said, "My lord Moses, forbid them" (Numbers 11:28 RSV).

The context of this passage is at the time when God tells Moses to select seventy men who are recognized elders and leaders of Israel and to bring them to the Tabernacle to stand there with him. God would take some of the Spirit that was upon Moses and put it upon the seventy men so they could help bear the burden of the people, meaning that they would help hear the cases of the people that Moses would normally hear.

This was also at a time when the people were complaining about not having meat to eat and saying they wished they had never left Egypt.

¹⁰ Moses heard all the families standing in the doorways of their tents whining, and the LORD became extremely angry. Moses was also very aggravated. ¹¹ And Moses said to the LORD, "Why are you treating me, your servant, so harshly? Have mercy on me! What did I do to deserve the burden of all these people? ¹² Did I give birth to them? Did I bring them into the world? Why did you tell me to carry them in my arms like a mother carries

a nursing baby? How can I carry them to the land you swore to give their ancestors?

¹³Where am I supposed to get meat for all these people? They keep whining to me, saying, ‘Give us meat to eat!’ ¹⁴I can’t carry all these people by myself! The load is far too heavy! ¹⁵If this is how you intend to treat me, just go ahead and kill me. Do me a favor and spare me this misery!”

¹⁶Then the LORD said to Moses, “Gather before me seventy men who are recognized as elders and leaders of Israel. Bring them to the Tabernacle to stand there with you. ¹⁷I will come down and talk to you there. I will take some of the Spirit that is upon you, and I will put the Spirit upon them also. They will bear the burden of the people along with you, so you will not have to carry it alone.

¹⁸“And say to the people, ‘Purify yourselves, for tomorrow you will have meat to eat. You were whining, and the LORD heard you when you cried, “Oh, for some meat! We were better off in Egypt!” Now the LORD will give you meat, and you will have to eat it. ¹⁹And it won’t be for just a day or two, or for five or ten or even twenty. ²⁰You will eat it for a whole month until you gag and are sick of it. For you have rejected the LORD, who is here among you, and you have whined to him, saying, “Why did we ever leave Egypt?””

²¹But Moses responded to the LORD, “There are 600,000-foot soldiers here with me, and yet you say, ‘I will give them meat for a whole month!’ ²²Even if we butchered all our flocks and herds, would that satisfy them? Even if we caught all the fish in the sea, would that be enough?” (Numbers 11:10–22).

Here we find that Moses doubts God even after all that he has seen and experienced: his shepherd’s staff turned into a snake and back into a shepherd’s staff; water turned into blood; the plagues of frogs, gnats, flies, boils, hail, locust, darkness; plague against the livestock and death of the firstborn, which all touch the Egyptians, but not the Israelites. He has seen the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night that lead them and protected them. He has seen the Red Sea part and the Israelites cross over on dry ground with walls of water on each side! He has seen God destroy the entire Egyptian army that pursued them when the water rushed back to its usual place and covered and drowned them all. Moses has

been on Mount Sinai where he experienced the glory of God and in the Tent of Meeting where the Lord spoke to Moses face to face as a friend.

But here we find Moses questioning God and thinking that he has to take on all of this himself; that he has to find enough meat for all of the people for a whole month! This is in sharp contrast to the Moses that addressed the children of Israel when they were pinned up against the Red Sea with the Egyptians in hot pursuit.

¹³ But Moses told the people, “Don’t be afraid. Just stand still and watch the LORD rescue you today. The Egyptians you see today will never be seen again. ¹⁴ The LORD himself will fight for you. Just stay calm” (Exodus 14:13).

Joshua, being Moses assistant, has been there every step of the way, watching and listening.

²³ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Has my arm lost its power? Now you will see whether or not my word comes true!”

²⁴ So Moses went out and reported the LORD’s words to the people. He gathered the seventy elders and stationed them around the Tabernacle. ²⁵ And the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to Moses. Then he gave the seventy elders the same Spirit that was upon Moses. And when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But this never happened again.

²⁶ Two men, Eldad and Medad, had stayed behind in the camp. They were listed among the elders, but they had not gone out to the Tabernacle. Yet the Spirit rested upon them as well, so they prophesied there in the camp. ²⁷ A young man ran and reported to Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp!”

²⁸ Joshua, son of Nun, who had been Moses’ assistant since his youth, protested, “Moses, my master, make them stop!”

²⁹ But Moses replied, “Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit upon them all!” ³⁰ Then Moses returned to the camp with the elders of Israel (Numbers 11:23–30).

Apparently, Joshua thought that the two men, Eldad and Medad, who had stayed behind in the camp and who didn't show up at the Tabernacle shouldn't be allowed to prophesy. Perhaps he thought that they were doing so without Moses' knowledge and consent. Perhaps he was very protective of Moses and didn't want others usurping power he thought they shouldn't have.

When I look at this passage, I also see a very disgruntled Moses. Moses was tired of hearing all of the complaining and whining by all of the people. He was burnt out. He even complained to God and asked God how He expected him to feed all of the people and how He expected him to take care of all the people. Moses even said to God, ¹⁵“If this is how you intend to treat me, just go ahead and kill me. Do me a favor and spare me this misery!” (Numbers 11:15).

Notice in verse 10 that the Lord became extremely angry and Moses was also very aggravated. The children of Israel had pushed God and Moses to their limits.

Have we not encountered similar situations? Have we not been pushed to our limits? Have we not argued with God and those around us? Have we not snapped at those we love, when we feel like the world is caving in on us? Have we not had our pity party? Have we not felt at times that we could no longer go on?

Satan would like to have us feel guilty that we are so honest and blunt with God; however, God knows our hearts and minds anyway, whether we verbalize our thoughts and feelings, or not. It's nice to know that the examples we are given in the Bible are human and very much like us.

David in the Book of Psalms is also a wonderful example of how his prayers and how he talked to God were so honest and open, going from despair and questioning God to praise in the same Psalm.

I know a time in my life when I wished I was dead and never been born. We are not alone in these human emotions and feelings.

- Job curses the day of his birth and wished he had never been born (Job 3).
- Jonah was so angry that he wished he would die (Jonah 4:8–9).

- Jeremiah cursed the day he was born and wished he would have been killed at birth, or died in his mother's womb, and asked why he had ever been born (Jeremiah 20:14–18). Yet in Jeremiah 1:4–5 the Lord speaks to him and gives him this message: “I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations.”
- Elijah was so frustrated that he prayed that he would die in 1 Kings 19:4. Then he went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, LORD,” he said. “Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died.”

When I read this passage in Numbers 11, I can see the humor in it; although I'm sure that the Lord and Moses were not amused, nor laughing at the time! It is always easy to see the humor in a situation when you are not in the middle of it and are just an outside observer. Perhaps humor isn't the right word to use in this case, but I can just imagine the Lord and Moses speaking and all the time the direct cause is the complaining, whining children of Israel, who should think about what they are saying when they say that they wished they would have stayed in Egypt. How foolish and stupid can they be? I now know why they are called the “children” of Israel!

Look again at verses 10–23. Can you see the tempers flaring? Can you see the humor when God says to the complaining people of Israel in verse 20, “You will eat it for a whole month until you gag and are sick of it.”? They want meat, so God will give them so much of it that they will get so sick of it they will gag on it! Like a parent talking to a complaining child who is having a temper tantrum because they are not getting what they want, sometimes a parent will give in and let the child have their own way, only to find out it wasn't what they expected.

When I look at all of this, I see why Moses responded to Joshua the way he did. Moses didn't talk any nicer to God! If Moses had been in a better mood, I don't think he would have responded so harshly to Joshua. Instead, I think he would have softened his response and explained to Joshua why he should not be bothered by the two men who were prophesying and why they should be allowed to continue and ease some of Moses' burdens.

CHAPTER 8

Joshua is One of the Twelve Spies

Joshua was one of the twelve spies that were sent into the land of Canaan for 40 days by Moses to scout it out and bring back a report.

Only Joshua from the tribe of Ephraim and Caleb from the tribe of Judah came back with a favorable report and believed that they could take the land.

It takes a lot of courage and strength to go against the majority and to stand up for what you believe, but Joshua and Caleb stood firm on what they saw and what they believed God would do. I wonder how many of the other ten spies secretly wanted to stand with Joshua and Caleb, but didn't have the courage to go against the majority?

We find this even in our "politically correct" world we live in today. Very few people have the courage to stand up for what is right, especially if it means standing alone against the majority.

³⁰ But Caleb tried to quiet the people as they stood before Moses. "Let's go at once to take the land," he said. "We can certainly conquer it!"

³¹ But the other men who had explored the land with him disagreed. "We can't go up against them! They are stronger than we are!" ³² So they spread this bad report about the land among the Israelites: "The land we traveled through and explored will devour anyone who goes to live there. All the people we saw were huge. ³³ We even saw giants

there, the descendants of Anak. Next to them we felt like grasshoppers, and that's what they thought, too!" (Numbers 13:30-33).

¹Then the whole community began weeping aloud, and they cried all night. ²Their voices rose in a great chorus of protest against Moses and Aaron. "If only we had died in Egypt, or even here in the wilderness!" they complained. ³"Why is the LORD taking us to this country only to have us die in battle? Our wives and our little ones will be carried off as plunder! Wouldn't it be better for us to return to Egypt?" ⁴Then they plotted among themselves, "Let's choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!"

⁵Then Moses and Aaron fell face down on the ground before the whole community of Israel. ⁶Two of the men who had explored the land, Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, tore their clothing. ⁷They said to all the people of Israel, "The land we traveled through and explored is a wonderful land! ⁸And if the LORD is pleased with us, he will bring us safely into that land and give it to us. It is a rich land flowing with milk and honey. ⁹Do not rebel against the LORD, and don't be afraid of the people of the land. They are only helpless prey to us! They have no protection, but the LORD is with us! Don't be afraid of them!"

¹⁰But the whole community began to talk about stoning Joshua and Caleb. Then the glorious presence of the LORD appeared to all the Israelites at the Tabernacle" (Numbers 14:1-10).

Can you believe that the people actually wanted to stone Joshua and Caleb, just because they gave a favorable and positive report and believed that the Lord would give them the land?

¹¹ And the LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? Will they never believe me, even after all the miraculous signs I have done among them?

¹² I will disown them and destroy them with a plague. Then I will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they are!" (Numbers 14:11-12).

The New Living Translation uses the word contempt in Numbers 14:23 when describing the attitude of the people of Israel towards the Lord. Contempt means: disgust, anger, disdain, scorn, and the feeling or attitude towards someone as being worthless, vile, mean, and inferior. Can you imagine these people having contempt for the living God who chose them

for His own people and brought them out of the land of Egypt with so many amazing miracles?

The New King James Version uses the word rejected in Numbers 14:23 when describing how the children of Israel treated and felt about God. This action of rejecting the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is exactly what will send people to hell.

There apparently was no question in God's mind as to the condition of the people's hearts and minds towards Him. They had made their choice and they did not choose Him!

Imagine your children rejecting you after you have done so much for them? How much more so when God sent His son Jesus to earth as a baby and then die on the cross to pay for the penalty of our sins and people reject His free gift of salvation.

Moses pleaded with God to not destroy them in a single blow, because, he argued, that all of the nations that had heard of His fame and what He had done to bring his people out of Egypt would now say that He was not able to give them the land He had promised to them, so He killed them with a single blow in the wilderness.

Because of Moses pleading for the people, God decided not to destroy them all in a single blow; however, he did pass judgment and gave them their sentence.

²⁸ As surely as I live, declares the Lord, I will do to you the very things I heard you say. ²⁹ You will all drop dead in this wilderness! Because you complained against me, every one of you who is twenty years old or older and was included in the registration will die. ³⁰ You will not enter and occupy the land I swore to give you. The only exceptions will be Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

³¹ “You said your children would be carried off as plunder. Well, I will bring them safely into the land, and they will enjoy what you have despised. ³² But as for you, you will drop dead in this wilderness. ³³ And your children will be like shepherds, wandering in the wilderness for forty years. In this way, they will pay for your faithlessness, until the last of you lies dead in the wilderness.

³⁴ ““Because your men explored the land for forty days, you must wander in the wilderness for forty years—a year for each day, suffering the consequences of your sins. Then you will discover what it is like to have me for an enemy.

³⁵ I, the LORD, have spoken! I will certainly do these things to every member of the community who has conspired against me. They will be destroyed here in this wilderness, and here they will die!”

³⁶ The ten men Moses had sent to explore the land—the ones who incited rebellion against the Lord with their bad report—³⁷ were struck dead with a plague before the Lord. ³⁸ Of the twelve who had explored the land, only Joshua and Caleb remained alive (Numbers 14:28–38).

Joshua and Caleb, although they did not die, had to wander in the wilderness for 40 years before they could enter the promised land, even though they did not sin, did not rebel, and did not complain before the Lord. They had to suffer the consequences of the others’ sin with 40 years of their lives.

Remember how Moses lived for forty years in the desert before God called him back to Egypt to lead the children of Israel out? Now Joshua and Caleb wander and live in the desert for forty years and watch all their family and friends, anyone over the age of 20 at the time, die.

We never find Joshua or Caleb complaining, or saying, “This isn’t fair!” We never find Joshua or Caleb wishing they would have stayed in Egypt. We never find Joshua or Caleb blaming the murmuring, complaining people. They could have said, “Now look what you have done by complaining. It’s all your fault that we have to wander around out here in the desert for 40 more years! We never find Joshua or Caleb murmuring against Moses or Aaron, or God.

This is quite a lesson for all of us to take to heart and learn. Even when the circumstances we may find ourselves in were not caused by us, but by someone else, we should not complain and whine, especially against God. No, it may not be fair and it may not be our fault, but we must go on and make the best of it, knowing that “God will work all things together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).

Through it all, God was working things out for Joshua's good and preparing him to be the next leader, spiritually and militarily, of Israel.

This reminds me of Joseph, Joshua's ancestor, who was sold into slavery by his brothers and taken to Egypt. What man meant for evil, God would use it for good and for his purpose. Eventually, Joseph became the 2nd most powerful man in all of Egypt, 2nd only to Pharaoh, and ended up providing for his family during a seven-year drought and eventually brought his entire family to the land of Egypt. Joseph's descendants are the very people that Moses led out of Egypt.

Joseph said to his brothers in Genesis 50:20, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people."

There is some speculation as to the age of Joshua when he was one of the twelve spies. We know from Joshua 14:7 that Caleb was forty years old when he went to spy out the land of Canaan and he was eighty-five when Joshua divided up the land.

Some scholars suggest that all the spies would have been about the same age, so that would make Joshua forty years old as well.

The very youngest Joshua would have been when he was sent as a spy was twenty years of age, as God said that everyone twenty years old or older would die in the wilderness and Joshua and Caleb were spared from that sentence.

Numbers 11:28 states that Joshua had been Moses' assistant since his youth, so, it would seem that Joshua had been with Moses for quite a few years.

It makes sense to me that all the spies would have been men in their prime of life, strong fighting men, men who had come up in the ranks of their tribe and were well respected. Joshua would have been somewhere between the ages of twenty and forty at the time the Israelites left Egypt and when he was sent to spy out the land, but I believe he was probably thirty to forty years of age.

CHAPTER 9

Joshua Wholeheartedly Followed the Lord

In Number 32:11–12 we see that this is what the Lord says:

¹¹‘Of all those I rescued from Egypt, no one who is twenty years old or older will ever see the land I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for they have not obeyed me wholeheartedly. ¹²The only exceptions are Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua son of Nun, for they have wholeheartedly followed the LORD.’

Out of 600,000 men, plus women and children that came out of Egypt, only **two** men fully and wholeheartedly followed the Lord. That is quite a testimony spoken by the living God of Joshua and Caleb! On the other hand, it is a very sad state of affairs for the Israelites, God’s chosen people, who had not followed the Lord, but have instead rejected and turned from the living God.

The past five months God has impressed upon me how He really wants all of us to live wholeheartedly for Him. To do this takes total commitment on our part and how many of us really do this? My heart’s desire is to live wholeheartedly for the Lord, but I find myself failing many times.

⁵And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. ⁶And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart (Deuteronomy 6:4–6 KJV).

CHAPTER 10

Joshua Chosen to Lead Israel

Fast forward forty years and we find that all the people who were twenty years old or older at the time the spies came back and the people rejected God, have died.

Imagine being twenty years old when God sentenced them to die in the wilderness over the next forty years. A twenty-year old had to face the fact that he or she would be dead by the age of sixty.

God sentenced them to the very thing they were complaining and whining about: dying in the wilderness. They could have entered into the land that was promised to them, a land flowing with milk and honey, but instead they had rejected God, grumbled and complained against Him and treated Him with contempt.

Hebrews 10:26-31 (NKJV)

²⁶ For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. ²⁸ Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on *the testimony of* two or three witnesses. ²⁹ Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Certainly, something we should think about. How casually do we treat the Son of the living God and His great sacrifice for us?

Joshua and Caleb chose to serve the living God, chose to be faithful to their decision and counted the cost. It didn't matter to them what others thought or what others did to them. They revered and feared the living God and knew they wanted to be on the side of the Lord.

Imagine being Joshua, Caleb, Moses and Aaron and watching all your friends and family die over the past 40 years. The only ones who survived were those who were younger than 20 at the time, plus the ones who were born during those forty years. The age of the Israelites at this point was 0-59 years of age, excluding Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Caleb.

Moses and Aaron Disobey God

Probably one of the saddest, most regrettable moments of the past forty years was when Moses and Aaron did not have enough faith to believe God, to take Him at His word, and to act upon faith and do as God commanded them. Instead, they did not do as God commanded them, but acted out of anger, dishonored God, and in so doing, they did not demonstrate the holiness of God, nor did they hallow God in the eyes of the people. The consequences of their actions in that moment made them pay a heavy price, one of which they could never overturn or reverse.

This incident took place in the first month of the fortieth year¹ in the wilderness of Zin when they were camped at Kadesh. While they were there, Miriam, the sister of Aaron and Moses died and was buried.

This was also a place that there was no water to drink, so the people once again rebelled against Moses and Aaron and blamed Moses for leading them out of Egypt into the wilderness to die.

Moses and Aaron turned away from the people and went to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting where they fell face down on the ground before the Lord.

The glorious presence of the Lord appears to them and instructs them what to do. The Lord tells them to take the staff and assemble the entire community. As the people watch, they are

to command the rock to pour out its water. The Lord continues to tell them that they will get enough water from the rock to satisfy all the people and their livestock.

Moses does as he was told and took the staff from where it was kept before the Lord and he and Aaron summon the people to gather at the rock that the Lord had indicated.

¹⁰“Listen, you rebels!” he shouted. “Must we bring you water from this rock?” ¹¹Then Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with the staff, and water gushed out. So, the entire community and their livestock drank their fill.

¹²But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust me enough to demonstrate my holiness to the people of Israel, you will not lead them into the land I am giving them!” ¹³This place was known as the waters of Meribah (which means “arguing”) because there the people of Israel argued with the LORD, and there he demonstrated his holiness among them (Numbers 20:10-13).

Notice how Moses did not speak to the rock, but in anger struck it. When he addresses the people in anger he says, “Must we bring you water from this rock?” He did not give credit to God alone.

Because he was angry with the people for their lack of faith and trust in God, Moses demonstrated his own lack of faith and belief that merely speaking and commanding a rock to give water as directed by God, would actually work. In many of the other miracles that God performed through Moses, never had Moses been instructed to simply speak a command, but rather was instructed to use his staff or rod to perform the miracle.

Not only did Moses not simply command the rock to bring forth water, but he struck the rock not once, but twice. Moses had disobeyed God’s command and had not honored God in the presence of the people. The punishment may seem rather harsh, after all that Moses and Aaron had to put up with from the Israelites for the past forty years of their whining and complaining, but Moses and Aaron were in the position of leadership and role models for the people. How could God let them off lightly and be treated any differently or with a lesser punishment than the people?

The Death of Aaron

Shortly after this incident, the people left Kadesh and traveled to Mount Hor. God speaks to Moses and Aaron and told them that the time has come for Aaron to die, as he would not be entering the promised land because they rebelled against His instructions to them concerning the waters of Meribah.

The Lord instructs Moses to take Aaron and Aaron's son Eleazar to the top of Mount Hor and remove the priestly garments from Aaron and put them on Eleazar. Moses did as the Lord commanded as all the people watched. Then Aaron died at the age of 123 years old, there on the top of Mount Hor, on the first day of the fifth month.² The people mourned for him thirty days.

When they finally arrive in the land of Moab, east of the Jordan, approximately six months after Aarons' death,³ Moses gave a series of speeches or sermons which God had commanded him to give. This is recorded in Deuteronomy, chapters 1-30. These addresses to the people were given over a period of approximately 40 days⁴ and gave the people a history lesson, a review of the Ten Commandments and other laws and regulations, call for commitment, and change of leadership.

Even though the people who had died during the past forty years had been present when the Ten Commandments and numerous laws and regulations were given at Mt. Sinai, the people who were now about to enter the Promised Land either hadn't yet been born, or had been very young, the oldest being eighteen or nineteen at the time. Before they cross the Jordan River, this new generation needed to be instructed about God's laws and reminded of where they have come from and how God has provided.

Faith in God and knowledge of His word does not come through osmosis. In other words, just because parents have a deep faith in God and a personal relationship with Jesus as their Savior and Lord, does not mean that the children will automatically have that same knowledge of God and faith and trust inherent in them.

In Romans 10:17 Paul writes, "So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Even though we may have a vast knowledge of the Bible and have had many firsthand experiences in walking with God and seeing Him provide for our needs, answer our prayers

and at times perform miracles, that does not automatically transfer to our children, unless we teach them God's word and tell them our personal stories.

So, it was with this new generation of people. They needed to hear God's word and commandments, be exhorted, encouraged and challenged to love and obey God. Along with hearing about the blessings of obeying God, they also needed to hear the consequences of disobeying God's laws.

It is now time for Moses to die and face the reality and gravity of that moment that he will never enter the land, after all these years.

¹²One day the LORD said to Moses, "Climb one of the mountains east of the river, and look out over the land I have given the people of Israel. ¹³After you have seen it, you will die like your brother, Aaron, ¹⁴for you both rebelled against my instructions in the wilderness of Zin. When the people of Israel rebelled, you failed to demonstrate my holiness to them at the waters." (These are the waters of Meribah at Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.) (Numbers 27:12-14).

Before Moses dies, he asks the Lord to appoint a new leader.

¹⁵Then Moses said to the LORD, ¹⁶"O LORD, you are the God who gives breath to all creatures. Please appoint a new man as leader for the community. ¹⁷Give them someone who will guide them wherever they go and will lead them into battle, so the community of the LORD will not be like sheep without a shepherd." (Numbers 27:15-17)

Up until this moment, there had never been any instructions or discussion of who would lead the people, if anyone, after Moses was gone.

Joshua Chosen by God as the New Leader

¹⁸The LORD replied, "Take Joshua son of Nun, who has the Spirit in him, and lay your hands on him. ¹⁹Present him to Eleazar the priest before the whole community, and publicly commission him to lead the people. ²⁰Transfer some of your authority to him so the whole community of Israel will obey him. ²¹When direction from the LORD is needed, Joshua will stand before Eleazar the priest, who will use the Urim—one of the sacred lots cast before the LORD—to determine his will. This is how Joshua and the rest

of the community of Israel will determine everything they should do” (Numbers 27:18–21)

Here we find God choosing Joshua to be the next leader of the children of Israel and the instructions to publicly commission him. Never was it ever assumed over the past forty years that Joshua would be the next leader.

CHAPTER 11

Joshua is Commissioned by God

One of the last addresses by Moses to the people was at the formal public commissioning of Joshua to be their next leader.

This must have been a very emotional time for both Moses and Joshua. Joshua had been with Moses most of his life and had been a faithful and trusted assistant. Not only was Joshua losing a close friend, but was also being given the enormous responsibility and task of leading the people.

Public Commissioning of Joshua

²² So Moses did as the LORD commanded. He presented Joshua to Eleazar the priest and the whole community. ²³ Moses laid his hands on him and commissioned him to lead the people, just as the LORD had commanded through Moses. (Numbers 27:22–23)

⁷ Then Moses called for Joshua, and as all Israel watched, he said to him, “Be strong and courageous! For you will lead these people into the land that the LORD swore to their ancestors he would give them. You are the one who will divide it among them as their grants of land. ⁸ Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you.” (Deuteronomy 31:7–8)

Following this public commissioning of Joshua, God calls Moses to bring Joshua with him into the tabernacle of meeting where He will commission him.

Private Commissioning of Joshua

In Deuteronomy 31:14-15 (NKJV), we find the private commissioning of Joshua by God.

¹⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, the days approach when you must die; call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of meeting, that I may inaugurate him.”

So, Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tabernacle of meeting.

¹⁵Now the LORD appeared at the tabernacle in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood above the door of the tabernacle.

During this private commissioning, God tells Moses that after he is gone, the people will begin worshipping foreign gods and will break the covenant that He has made with them.

God instructs Joshua with these words, “Be strong and courageous, for you must bring the people of Israel into the land I swore to give them. I will be with you” (Joshua 31:23).

During this private commissioning of Joshua, God also gives Moses the words of a song and tells him to write it down and to teach it to the people of Israel. Moses wrote down the words of the song, that very day, and taught it to the Israelites.¹

Moses Finished Writing the Pentateuch

During Moses last days, he also finished writing the words of the law in a book. It is unclear when Moses wrote the Torah, or Pentateuch, which consists of the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, but he finished writing it during this time during his last days.

Just reading Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy is no easy task or easy read. There are lists of names and genealogies, explicit instructions regarding sacrifices, gift offerings, established festivals and duties of the Levites, instructions for building the Tabernacle and manufacturing all the furnishings of the Tabernacle, altar, utensils, and making the special intricate clothing of the priests.

It is not clear when Moses wrote all the books. There is much speculation from various sources and traditional understandings about when and how Moses wrote the various books.² Some speculate that God revealed the entire Torah to Moses during the forty days and nights on Mt. Sinai. Others believe that when Moses came down from Mt. Sinai he wrote

from the beginning of the Torah until the end of the story of the Tabernacle and the rest was written at the end of the forty years. Still, others believe that some of it was written on Mt. Sinai and some in the wilderness of Sinai in the portable Tent of Meeting and the remainder at the end of the forty years. And, part of it may have been written prior to Mt. Sinai. Perhaps Moses wrote as God dictated, or passages were remembered orally until they were written down.

Regardless of how and when Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, it was spoken by God directly to Moses and was a tremendous responsibility and privilege, and labor of love and devotion to God.

After Moses finished writing the words of the law in a book, he commands the priests, who had carried the Ark of the Lord's covenant, to read the book to all the people of Israel at the end of every seventh year, when they assemble during the Festival of Shelters.

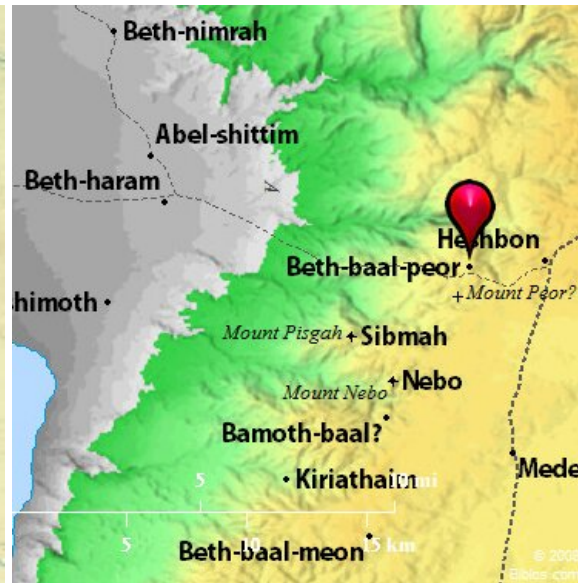
¹⁰Then Moses gave them this command: "At the end of every seventh year, the Year of Release, during the Festival of Shelters, ¹¹you must read this Book of Instruction to all the people of Israel when they assemble before the LORD your God at the place he chooses. ¹²Call them all together—men, women, children, and the foreigners living in your towns—so they may hear this Book of Instruction and learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully obey all the terms of these instructions. ¹³Do this so that your children who have not known these instructions will hear them and will learn to fear the LORD your God. Do this as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to occupy." (Deuteronomy 31:10-13)

The Death of Moses

Before Moses dies, he went up to Mount Nebo and climbs up Pisgah Peak. There God showed him the land that he promised to give to the children of Israel.



Map showing Mount Nebo³



Map showing Beth-peor⁴

⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, “This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when I said, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ I have now allowed you to see it with your own eyes, but you will not enter the land.” (Deuteronomy 34:4)

Moses dies at 120 years of age, even though his eyesight was clear and he was as strong as ever, and was buried by the Lord in a valley near Beth-peor in Moab, as described in Deuteronomy 34:5-7.

According to scripture, the only one with Moses when he died was the Lord and that he died on top of Mount Pisgah. From there God transported him to the valley of Beth-peor and buried him. God could have had Joshua or someone else bury him, but instead God buried Moses. To me, this act of burying Moses demonstrates God’s deep love for Moses and how he continually provided and cared for him. This truly shows the kind of relationship that Moses had with God and with whom the Lord knew face to face. Even though God had to punish Moses for his disobedience at the waters of Meribah, it must have also grieved Him to not see Moses enter the land after over forty years of leading the Israelites. He had come so far, been so close to crossing over, and in one heated moment of anger and perhaps pride, lost it.

At the end, God leans down from the heavens and ends Moses’ life with a soft, gentle kiss. This is derived from Deuteronomy 34:5, where it is written, “So Moses, the servant of the Eternal, died there, in the land of Moab, at the command of the

Eternal.” The Hebrew reads, *al pi Adonai*, “by the mouth of the Eternal.” Hence the legend about God kissing Moses at his moment of death.⁵

When the people found out that Moses had died they mourned for him thirty days.

⁹Now Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So, the people of Israel obeyed him, doing just as the LORD had commanded Moses (Deuteronomy 34:9).

It is also speculated that Joshua wrote the last chapter of Deuteronomy, or the last eight verses that records the death of Moses. Perhaps Moses wrote it all, just as God dictated, writing the last eight verses in tears.⁶

Joshua was between sixty and eighty years of age at this point.

Next, we come to the *Book of Joshua*, written by Joshua.

CHAPTER 12

The Boundaries of Israel

The book of Joshua begins with the Lord describing the boundaries of Israel.

¹After the death of Moses the LORD's servant, the LORD spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant. He said, ²"Moses my servant is dead. Therefore, the time has come for you to lead these people, the Israelites, across the Jordan River into the land I am giving them. ³I promise you what I promised Moses: 'Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you— ⁴from the Negev wilderness in the south to the Lebanon mountains in the north, from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west, including all the land of the Hittites.' ⁵No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you (Joshua 1:1–5).

This was not the first time that the boundaries of the Promised Land were given. We find in Genesis 15:18-21, that the Euphrates River is mentioned as well as the border of Egypt.

¹⁸ So the LORD made a covenant with Abram that day and said, "I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt to the great Euphrates River—
¹⁹ the land now occupied by the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, ²⁰ Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, ²¹ Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites." (Genesis 15:18–21)

The boundaries were also described in detail to Moses in Numbers 34:1–12.

¹Then the LORD said to Moses, ²“Give these instructions to the Israelites: When you come into the land of Canaan, which I am giving you as your special possession, these will be the boundaries. ³The southern portion of your country will extend from the wilderness of Zin, along the edge of Edom. The southern boundary will begin on the east at the Dead Sea. ⁴It will then run south past Scorpion Pass in the direction of Zin. Its southernmost point will be Kadesh-barnea, from which it will go to Hazar-addar, and on to Azmon. ⁵From Azmon the boundary will turn toward the Brook of Egypt and end at the Mediterranean Sea.

⁶“Your western boundary will be the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea.

⁷“Your northern boundary will begin at the Mediterranean Sea and run east to Mount Hor, ⁸then to Lebo-hamath, and on through Zedad ⁹and Ziphron to Hazar-enan. This will be your northern boundary.

¹⁰“The eastern boundary will start at Hazar-enan and run south to Shepham, ¹¹then down to Riblah on the east side of Ain. From there the boundary will run down along the eastern edge of the Sea of Galilee, ¹²and then along the Jordan River to the Dead Sea. These are the boundaries of your land.”

The boundaries were also mentioned in Deuteronomy and included Lebanon, the coastal plain and the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west.

⁷It is time to break camp and move on. Go to the hill country of the Amorites and to all the neighboring regions—the Jordan Valley, the hill country, the western foothills, the Negev, and the coastal plain. Go to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, and all the way to the great Euphrates River. ⁸Look, I am giving all this land to you! Go in and occupy it, for it is the land the LORD swore to give to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to all their descendants (Deuteronomy 1:7).

²⁴Wherever you set foot, that land will be yours. Your frontiers will stretch from the wilderness in the south to Lebanon in the north, and from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. ²⁵No one will be able to stand against you, for

the LORD your God will cause the people to fear and dread you, as he promised, wherever you go in the whole land (Deuteronomy 11:24–25).

When you look at these boundaries on a map, you will see that the people of Israel never fully conquered all the land that they were to possess. Today, the nation of Israel possesses just a small portion of what they controlled under King David and what they will someday control. See the Biblical Israel map and Israel Today map in Chapter 32.

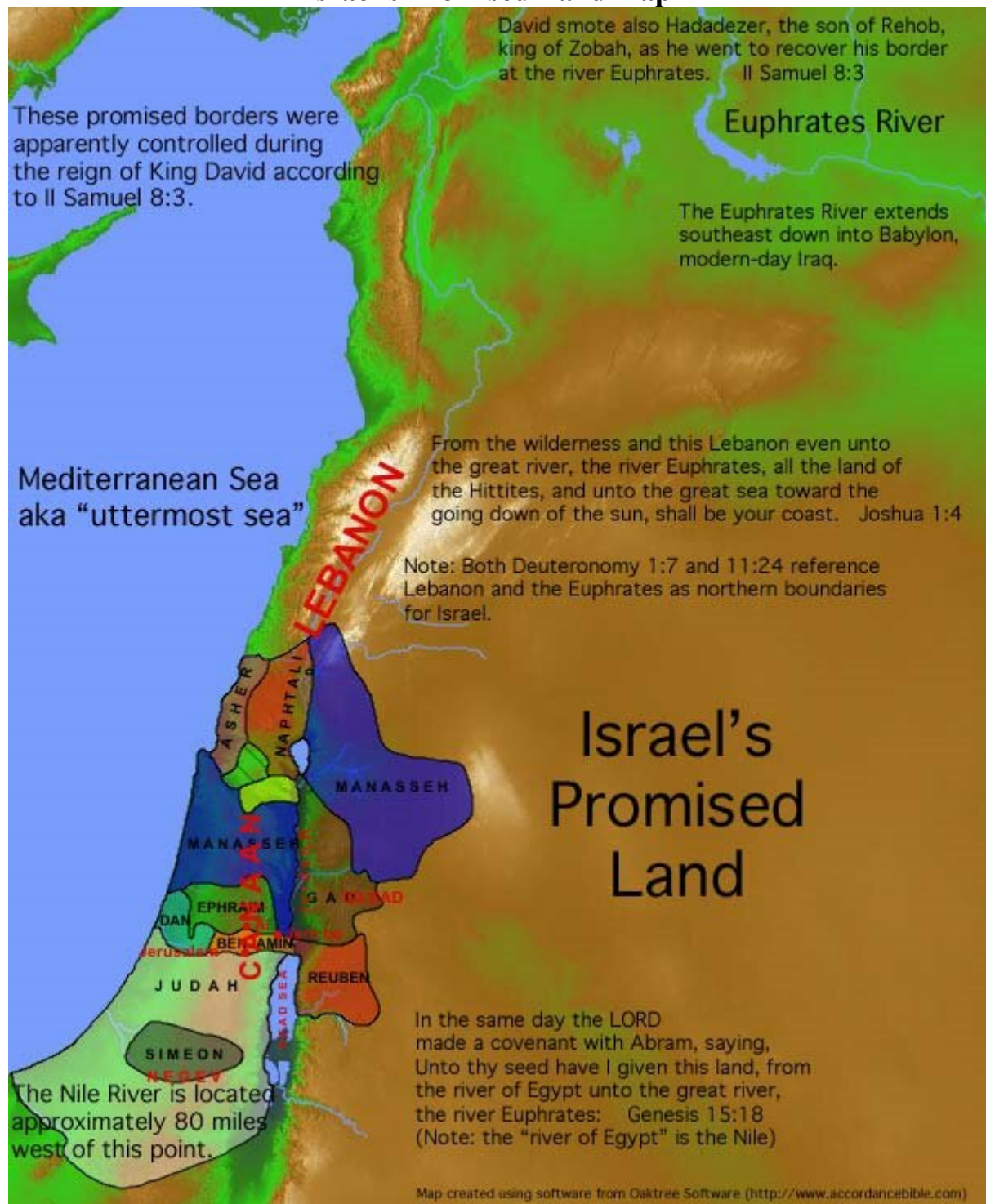
The map below shows the area that Israel controlled under King Solomon. The promise to Abraham included the coastal strip along the Mediterranean Sea from Gaza to Sidon.



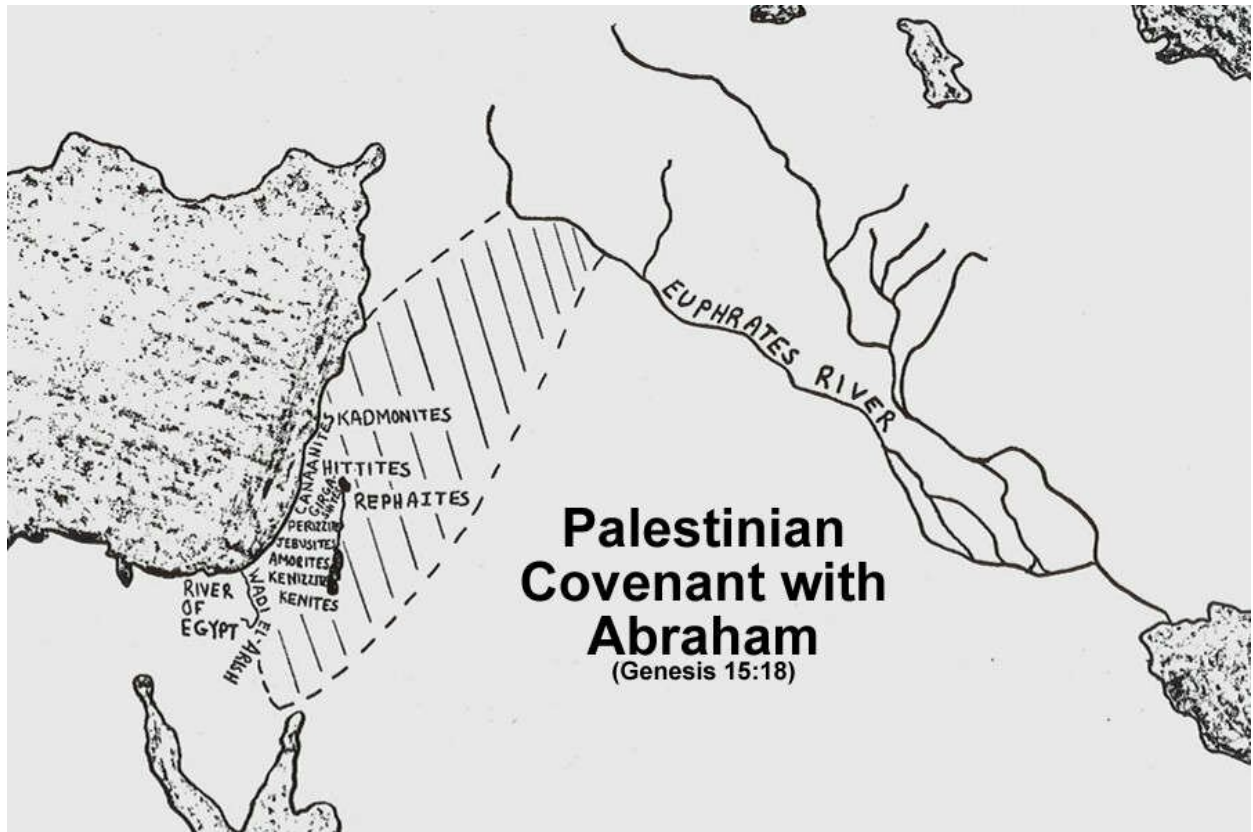
Boundaries of the Promised Land Map¹

If you take the scriptures very literally when it says from the Euphrates River to the Brook of Egypt and to the Mediterranean Sea on the west. Whether it is the “Brook of Egypt” which could be a branch of the Nile River or the Nile itself to the Euphrates River, that is still a lot of territory.

Israel's Promised Land map²



Map reprinted with permission of Pastor Wayne D. Turner, South Pointe Bible Fellowship in Fayetteville, Georgia.



Covenant with Abraham map³

Many suggest that the literal interpretation includes everything from the entire length of the Euphrates River to the Nile to the Mediterranean, which in some of the maps I have seen⁴, includes all of Saudi Arabia and everything east of the Nile River as far south as the tip of Saudi Arabia.

God's "promised land" covenant, and all the land that may include, with Abraham and his descendants through Isaac and Jacob has never yet been realized, but will be fulfilled during the millennial reign of Jesus.

CHAPTER 13

God's Promises and Conditions Given to Joshua

In Joshua 1:5-9, we find the promises and conditions given to Joshua.

- No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live.
- I will be with you as I was with Moses.
- I will not fail you, or abandon you.
- Be strong and courageous – you will lead these people to possess all the land promised their ancestors.
- Be strong and courageous. Obey to the letter every law Moses gave you. If you are careful to obey all of them – you will be successful in everything you do.
- Study the laws continually and meditate on them day and night and be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.
- Be bold and strong.
- Banish fear and doubt.
- The Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

Notice the unconditional promises that were given to Joshua by God:

- God would be with him as he was with Moses.
- God would not fail him
- God would not abandon him
- God would be with him wherever he went

This must have been a great comfort to Joshua as he assumed the responsibility of leading almost three million people into the Promised Land.

Notice the conditional promises that were set forth:

- Obey every law – only then will you be successful.
- Study the laws continually, meditate on them day and night and obey everything written in them – only then will you prosper and succeed.

The promises of prosperity and being successful were not just given out freely, there was a stipulation attached to the promise. God's conditional promises required total commitment, work and action on Joshua's part in order to receive the promises.

CHAPTER 14

Joshua's Name is Changed

All through scripture we see that names were associated to meanings. Babies were given names that expressed the parent or parent's hopes, fears, or feelings at the time. Some parents were told by God what to name their baby. Other names were given to describe the baby.

I think of the baby boy who was named Ichabod by his mother right before she died giving birth to him when she learned that her husband Phinehas, and his brother Hophni had died when the Ark of God had been taken by the Philistines. She also learned that her father-in-law had also died when he heard the news. She named her baby Ichabod because she said:

“The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured” (1 Samuel 4:22 NKJV).

Then, there was the baby who was named Jabez by his mother because his birth had been so painful she bore him with sorrow. Jabez means “sorrow; trouble”.¹

¹ and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow (1 Chronicles 4:9b KJV).

Rebekah gave birth to twins and the first-born was named what he looked like. The second-born was named by what he was doing at birth. Esau means “hairy”.² Jacob means “heel catcher”.³

²⁴ And when the time came to give birth, Rebekah discovered that she did indeed have twins! ²⁵ The first one was very red at birth and covered with thick hair like a fur coat. So, they named him, Esau. ²⁶ Then the other twin was born with his hand grasping Esau's heel. So, they named him Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when the twins were born (Genesis 25:24-26 NLT).

Moses was named by Pharaoh's daughter when she drew the baby out of the water. Moses means "drawn out of the waters".²

And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water (Exodus 2:10 KJV).

God Named the Babies:

1. **Ishmael** – ¹¹ And the angel also said, "You are now pregnant and will give birth to a son. You are to name him Ishmael (which means 'God hears'), for the LORD has heard your cry of distress (Genesis 16:11).
2. **Isaac** – ¹⁹ And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac (Genesis 17:19 NKJV). Isaac means "laughter".¹ God told Abraham to name his son Isaac (laughter) before Sarah even conceived and before Sarah secretly laughed in Genesis 18:12 when the Lord told Abraham that she would have a son in her old age.
3. **Solomon** – ⁹ Behold, a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies all around. His name shall be Solomon, for I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days (1 Chronicles 22:9 NKJV). Solomon means "peaceable; perfect".¹
4. **Josiah** – Then he cried out against the altar by the word of the Lord, and said, "O altar, altar! Thus, says the Lord: 'Behold, a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men's bones shall be burned on you.'" (1 Kings 13:2(NKJV). Josiah means "the Lord burns; the fire of the Lord".¹

5. **John** - But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John (Luke 1:13 NKJV). **John** means “the grace or mercy of the Lord”.¹
6. **Jesus** - ³⁰Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.” (Luke 1:30-33 NKJV). **Jesus** means “savior; deliverer”.¹

We also have examples in the Bible of names being changed when people were adults.

God renamed Abram when he was ninety-nine years old to Abraham. Abram means “high father”.¹ Abraham means “father of a great multitude”.¹

⁵ What’s more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram. Instead, you will be called Abraham, for you will be the father of many nations (Genesis 17:5).

God renamed Sarai to Sarah when she was eighty-nine years old. Sarai means “my lady; my princess”.¹ Sarah means “princess of the multitude”.¹

¹⁵ Then God said to Abraham, “Regarding Sarai, your wife—her name will no longer be Sarai. From now on her name will be Sarah. ¹⁶ And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings of nations will be among her descendants” (Genesis 17:15-16).

God renamed Jacob, Israel. Israel means “he that fights with God;² who prevails with God”.¹

¹⁰ And God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name.” So, He called his name Israel (Genesis 35:10 NKJV).

Joshua is Given a New Name

Moses changed Joshua’s name from Oshea or Hoshea to Joshua right before he sent out the twelve spies.

Twelve men were chosen to explore the land for forty days, one from each tribe, they were all rulers or leaders of their tribe. Numbers 13:1-15 lists each tribe and the leader from that tribe.

Numbers 13:8 lists Oshea (KJV) or Hoshea (NLT & NKJV) the son of Nun as ruler and leader of the tribe of Ephraim.

Immediately following the list of the twelve leaders from each tribe selected to scout out the land, we find the name change.

Moses called Oshea the son of Nun Jehoshua (Numbers 13:16 KJV).

Moses called Hoshea son of Nun by the name Joshua (Numbers 13:16 NLT).

Hoshea or Oshea means “salvation”.⁴ Joshua means “The Lord is Salvation.”⁴

According to the Talmud, Moses suspected that the scouts would rebel, and this is why he changed Joshua’s name: Moses was trying to grant his beloved pupil divine protection. The idea that a change of name can protect a person from harm is still prevalent in Judaism, where ritual name changes are often done for people who are ill or in danger. According to the Talmud, Moses changed Joshua’s name because he felt that his young pupil was in danger.

Although it is possible that Moses was simply worried that his young attendant could get captured or killed during his reconnoitering of enemy territory, the Talmud suggests, that Moses has an inkling that something terrible is about to happen with the behavior of the scouts themselves. This may even be why he chooses Joshua for this mission in the first place—he needs at least one person whom he trusts on this mission.⁵

CHAPTER 15

Joshua Sends Out Two Spies Across the Jordan River

We find Joshua giving his first two commands as the new leader of the people immediately following God's promises to him.

His first command was given to his officers with a command and instructions for the people:

¹⁰Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, ¹¹“Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, ‘Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess’” (Joshua 1:10–11).

The second command was to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh:

¹³“Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, ‘The LORD your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land.’ ¹⁴Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But you shall pass before your brethren armed, all your mighty men of valor, and help them, ¹⁵until the LORD has given your brethren rest, as He *gave* you, and they also have taken possession of the land which the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD's servant gave you on this side of the Jordan toward the sunrise” (Joshua 1:13–15).

The response of the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh was an acknowledgement and affirmation of the transition of power from Moses to Joshua and of their loyalty and allegiance to Joshua and must have been very encouraging to Joshua.

¹⁶ So they answered Joshua, saying, “All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. ¹⁷ Just as we heeded Moses in all things, so we will heed you.

Only the LORD your God be with you, as He was with Moses. ¹⁸ Whoever rebels against your command and does not heed your words, in all that you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and of good courage” (Joshua 1:16–18).

Even though God had described the boundaries of the Promised Land, and even though God had given promises to Joshua, there was still work to be done by Joshua and the people of Israel. Joshua had to have a game plan, a military strategy of how to proceed in leading the people and conquering the land.

We find Joshua executing his first military strategy in Joshua Chapter 2.

In Joshua Chapter 2, Joshua secretly sends out two spies to check things out across the Jordan River, especially the fortified city of Jericho. It is interesting that Joshua did not send out twelve spies, one from every Tribe, as did Moses forty years earlier. Perhaps it was from his experience forty years earlier when ten of the twelve came back with negative reports and demonstrated that they had no faith in God. The number two could represent the two faithful spies, Joshua and Caleb, who went out forty years earlier. The number two could also represent Joshua’s eyes. Two spies could easily sneak in unnoticed and undetected; however, a larger number could easily be detected and have a greater chance of being captured or found out. The two spies were sent on a reconnaissance mission to report back to Joshua what they had seen.

We are not told who the two spies’ identities were; however, Jewish tradition¹ has it that Caleb, Joshua’s faithful companion and one of the twelve spies forty years earlier, and Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest and grandson of Aaron were the two spies.

Caleb would seem to be the logical choice for one of the spies since he had been faithful to God and had been in the land before. Sending Caleb would have been like a reward to him for his faithfulness and his trust in God.

Can you imagine how Caleb must have felt going back into the land after patiently waiting forty years? He had waited for this moment for forty long years and now it was finally here.

The two spies cross the river, enter Jericho and end up at the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there that night.

Someone told the King of Jericho that the Israelites had sent spies to spy on them and the men had been to Rahab's house. The king sent orders to Rahab demanding that she turn the men over to him as they are spies. Rahab says that the men were there earlier, but she didn't know where they were from and they had left the city just as the gates were closing. She further adds that if they hurry they might be able to catch them! The city officials then go all the way to the Jordan River looking for them.

Rahab had actually hidden the two spies on the top of her roof beneath bundles of flax she had laid out.

Rahab goes up and talks to the spies before they retire for the night. She tells them that she knows the Lord has given them the land and that all of the people in the land have heard how the Lord made a dry path through the Red Sea when they left Egypt and what they did to the two kings East of the Jordan River and how they completely destroyed all of the people. Rahab goes on to tell them how all of the people in the land live in terror and no one has the courage to fight after hearing such things. Rahab goes on to make this remarkable statement, "For the LORD your God is the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below" (Joshua 2:11).

Rahab realizes that the God of the Israelites is the one and only true God and declares her faith in Him. She knows that she and her people do not stand a chance against Him and His people. She then asks the two spies to be kind to her and her family (father, mother, brothers, sisters and all their families) and let them live when they come to conquer Jericho since she has helped them. She even asks them to swear to her by the Lord!

The two spies agree and even offer their own lives as a guarantee for her and her family's safety as long as she does not betray them.

Since Rahab's house was built into the wall of the city, she lets them down by a rope through the window and instructs them to escape to the hill country and to hide three days until the men who are searching for them have returned to the city; then they can be on their way.

Before the spies leave, they say to Rahab:

¹⁷“We will be bound by the oath we have taken only if you follow these instructions.

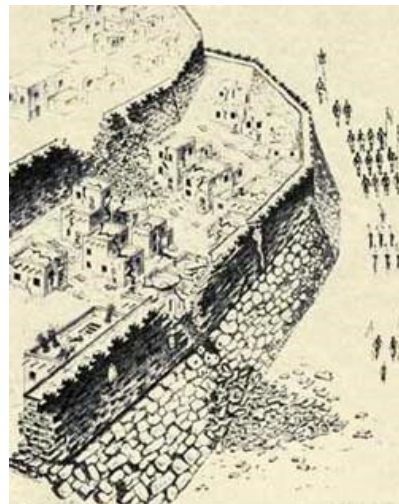
¹⁸When we come into the land, you must leave this scarlet rope hanging from the window through which you let us down. And all your family members—your father, mother, brothers, and all your relatives—must be here inside the house. ¹⁹If they go out into the street and are killed, it will not be our fault. But if anyone lays a hand on people inside this house, we will accept the responsibility for their death. ²⁰If you betray us, however, we are not bound by this oath in any way.” ²¹“I accept your terms,” she replied. And she sent them on their way, leaving the scarlet rope hanging from the window (Joshua 2:17–21).

This was no coincidence that the spies end up at Rahab’s house! This was a divine appointment! Archeologists agree that perhaps several thousand-people lived within the upper and lower walls of Jericho. In the city of several thousand people, God led the two spies to Rahab, who risks her own life to hide the spies.

Archaeologists made some astounding discoveries that seem to relate to Rahab. According to archaeologists, Rahab’s house was built on the lower wall and probably located in the slum district on the North Side of Jericho, only a short distance to the hills of the Judean wilderness where she instructed the spies to escape to and hide for three days.²



Schematic cross-section diagram of the fortification system at Jericho based on Kenyon's west trench. ³



Artist's reconstruction of the north side of ancient Jericho based on the German excavations of 1907-1909. ⁴

God chose Rahab for a very important task: to hide and protect the spies. He saw her heart and that she believed in Him and wanted salvation for herself and for her family. Notice that God directs the two spies to her house, but after that Rahab takes the lead. The spies never ask her to protect or hide them; she does this on her own, at great risk to her own life. In all of this, Rahab demonstrates great strength, courage and faith.

Rahab is the one who comes up with the plan to let down the spies on a long rope through the window and even tells them where to hide! She knows the country side and knows that the King's officials will head east towards the Jordan River to try and find the spies, thinking that they are headed back across the river to their people. Rahab sends the spies north and west to the hill country, in the opposite direction!

Rahab must now wait and walk by faith believing that the two spies would keep their word. There must have been great anticipation as she waited; not knowing when the Israelites would attack her city. Since her house was built on the wall and her roof was on top of the wall, I'm sure she went up there a lot and looked for any sign of the Israelite army.

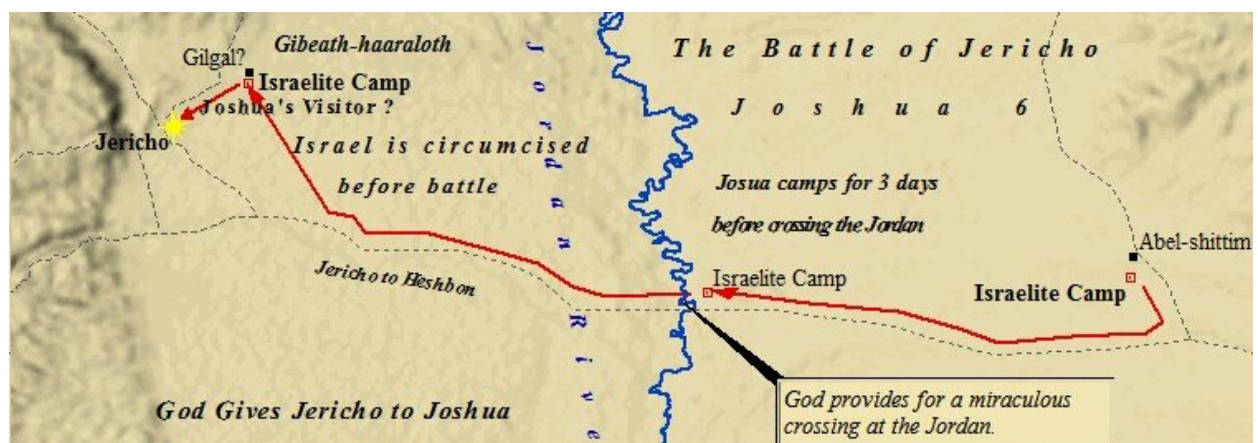
CHAPTER 16

Crossing the Jordan River

The two spies return to the Israelite camp and give their report to Joshua of all that had happened to them.

²⁴ “The LORD has given us the whole land,” they said, “for all the people in the land are terrified of us” (Joshua 2:24).

Early the next morning the Israelites left Shittim, the Acacia Grove, and arrived at the banks of the Jordan River where they camped before crossing.



The Battle of Jericho Map¹

²Three days later the Israelite officers went through the camp, ³giving these instructions to the people: ³ “When you see the Levitical priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD your God, move out from your positions and follow them. ⁴Since you have

never traveled this way before, they will guide you. Stay about a half mile behind them, keeping a clear distance between you and the Ark. Make sure you don't come any closer" (Joshua 3:2–4).

The Ark of the Covenant was God's visible presence to His people and contained the Golden Pot of Manna, the Ten Commandments that were written on the tablets of stone, and Aaron's rod that budded. During their forty years in the wilderness the Ark had gone before the people and had led the people each time they moved camp.

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Ark; He is Immanuel, which is translated "God with Us."

²³ "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us" (Matthew 1:23 NKJV).



Ark of the Covenant image²

We no longer have the Ark as a visible presence in our lives, but we something even better! We have the Holy Spirit who lives inside those of us who are believers. We also have God's promise to us that He will be with us wherever we go (Joshua 1:9) and He will never leave us nor forsake us. For He hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5 KJV).

Just as the Ark of the Covenant led the way for the children of Israel in the desert wilderness, God is ever present in our lives, showing us and leading us where He wants us to go.

⁵ Then Joshua told the people, "Purify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do great wonders among you" (Joshua 3:5).

In the morning Joshua told the priests to lift up the Ark of the Covenant and lead the people across the river. It was the harvest season and the Jordan River was overflowing its banks, but as soon as the feet of the priests touched the water at the river's edge, the flow of water upstream began backing up a great distance away at a town called Adam, about 18 miles North of Jericho and the water below that point flowed on to the Dead Sea.

An Arabian historian asserts that about 1265 AD the Jordan was here blocked by a land slide. The inner gorge of the Jordan is narrow there with high banks which would facilitate such an obstruction and allow the waters to "pile up" above to the city of Adam and run out below, permitting Joshua's host to cross on dry land.³

Even though God may have used and caused a natural event such as a land slide to dam up the Jordan, it was still all in God's timing and under God's control. The fact that they crossed over on "dry ground" was a miracle. To dry up a riverbed and the entire area around it where it had been flooded would take a week of hot, dry weather and this all happened as soon as the priests' feet touched the water!

It took an act of faith on the priests' part to step into the water. Not only were they to touch the water with their feet, but they were ordered to take several steps into the river once they reached its banks. The water wasn't cut off upstream until after they took that first step of faith.

I have seen rivers at flood stage that were overflowing their banks. One may have to walk quite a distance in water at varying depths just to reach the normal bank of the river. We don't know how far the priests had to walk before they reached the banks of the Jordan, nor do we know how long they had to stand there before all of the water was gone and the river bed was dry, but we do know that they did what they were commanded to do and they stepped out in faith!

Just as it may have looked impossible for an entire nation of millions of people with all of their children, livestock and possessions to cross the Jordan River at flood stage and walk on dry ground, so it may seem that the unknown future and the adversities that we face seem impossible, as well. God expects us to step out in faith believing that He will guide us, that He will go before us, that He will be our strength, that He will be our provider and that HE CAN DO THE IMPOSSIBLE!

After the priests who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant reached the banks of the Jordan River and took a few steps in, they stopped and waited for the water to recede and the river bed to dry up. Then they proceeded to the middle of the river and stood there and waited for all of the people to cross.

Behind the priests came 40,000 armed men, ready for battle, from the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh who went before the people and followed the priests as they crossed the Jordan River. These men left their families on the east side of the Jordan River as agreed upon previously with Moses in Numbers 32 and with Joshua in Joshua 1:12–18.

Neither the fighting men nor their families knew when they would see each other again. They were commanded and had agreed that in exchange for the land and the cities on the east side of the river, that they would help the other tribes conquer the land. They would not be able to go back to their families or their land until the others were able to settle their land.

This reminds me of our service men and women who leave their families to go and serve our country. Sometimes they are gone for a year and sometimes longer. There are other careers and jobs, as well, that cause families to be apart for extended periods of time. It is hard on both the one who leaves and the ones who are left behind.

At least in today's world we have cell phones and the internet to help families, friends and loved ones stay in touch. Back then they had no way of communicating. I'm sure there must have been some tearful goodbyes.

Following the 40,000-armed men were the rest of the tribes and their families, flocks and herds. This would have been done in a very orderly fashion, just as they had done for the past forty years. Numbers 2 gave specific instructions of how the tribes were to camp and travel. They camped and traveled in a specific order. Crossing the Jordan River would have been no different, because once they crossed the Jordan River they would have set up camp exactly as they always had.

It is hard to imagine how wide the line of people would have been, but with the Jordan River backing up a "great distance" at a town called Adam, there would have been adequate room for a wide parade of people crossing at one time.

Forty years earlier Joshua and the Israelites who were nineteen years of age and younger at the time, crossed the Red Sea on dry ground with a wall of water on each side. Now they

were crossing the Jordan River and God was once again doing an amazing miracle during flood season and allowing them to cross the river on dry ground!

When all of the people had crossed the Jordan River, the Lord told Joshua to call together twelve men, one from each tribe, and have them go into the middle of the river to the place where the priests were standing and each take out a stone and pile them up at the place where they camped that night.

When I hear the word “stone” I think of a small rock, but these were probably more like a large rock or small boulder, since they were to be piled on top of one another to make a memorial. The size of the stone was probably comparable to the maximum size and weight that each man could carry out on his shoulder.

⁶“We will use these stones to build a memorial. In the future, your children will ask you, ‘What do these stones mean?’ ⁷Then you can tell them, ‘They remind us that the Jordan River stopped flowing when the Ark of the LORD’s Covenant went across.’ These stones will stand as a memorial among the people of Israel forever” (Joshua 4:6–7).

⁹Joshua also set up another pile of twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan, at the place where the priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant were standing. And they are there to this day (Joshua 4:9).

¹⁴That day the LORD made Joshua a great leader in the eyes of all the Israelites, and for the rest of his life they revered him as much as they had revered Moses (Joshua 4:14).

The Lord told Joshua to command the priests who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant to come up out of the river bed and as soon as their feet were on high ground, the water returned and overflowed the banks as before.

¹⁹The people crossed the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month. Then they camped at Gilgal, just east of Jericho. ²⁰It was there at Gilgal that Joshua piled up the twelve stones taken from the Jordan River.

²¹Then Joshua said to the Israelites, “In the future your children will ask, ‘What do these stones mean?’ ²²Then you can tell them, ‘This is where the Israelites crossed the Jordan on dry ground.’ ²³For the LORD your God dried up the river right before your eyes, and

he kept it dry until you were all across, just as he did at the Red Sea when he dried it up until we had all crossed over. ²⁴ He did this so all the nations of the earth might know that the LORD's hand is powerful, and so you might fear the LORD your God forever" (Joshua 4:19–24).

They crossed the Jordan River on the tenth day of the first month of the Hebrew calendar which corresponds to March and April on our Gregorian calendar.⁴

Notice the reason why God allowed the Israelites to cross the Jordan River on dry ground was so that all the nations of the earth would know of His power and so that the Israelites would fear the Lord forever.

When all the kings west of the Jordan River heard that the Israelites had crossed on dry ground they "lost heart and were paralyzed with fear" (Joshua 5:1).

CHAPTER 17

Joshua Circumcises the Second Generation

Circumcision was a physical sign of the covenant that God had made with Abraham back in Genesis 17.

⁷ “I will confirm my covenant with you and your descendants after you, from generation to generation. This is the everlasting covenant: I will always be your God and the God of your descendants after you. ⁸ And I will give the entire land of Canaan, where you now live as a foreigner, to you and your descendants. It will be their possession forever, and I will be their God.”

The Mark of the Covenant

⁹ Then God said to Abraham, “Your responsibility is to obey the terms of the covenant. You and all your descendants have this continual responsibility. ¹⁰ This is the covenant that you and your descendants must keep: Each male among you must be circumcised. ¹¹ You must cut off the flesh of your foreskin as a sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹² From generation to generation, every male child must be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. This applies not only to members of your family but also to the servants born in your household and the foreign-born servants whom you have purchased. ¹³ All must be circumcised. Your bodies will bear the mark of my everlasting covenant. ¹⁴ Any male who fails to be circumcised will be cut off from the covenant family for breaking the covenant” (Genesis 17:7–14).

I like this comment from Pastor Jeffrey W. Hamilton of LaVista Church of Christ, Omaha, Nebraska:

Centuries later, God revealed what circumcision represented. *"But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me, and that I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt- then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land"* (Leviticus 26:40-42). Hence, uncircumcision represented stubborn sinfulness. Circumcision was done on the outward flesh, but it represented the acceptance of the covenant in the mind, including the willingness to obey the laws within the covenant. When God told Israel, *"Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer"* (Deuteronomy 10:16), it meant that they were to remove their stubborn sinful thoughts from their minds. In other words, they were to purge sin from their lives and become obedient to the laws of God. *"And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live"* (Deuteronomy 30:6).¹

God now instructs Joshua to circumcise this second generation of Israelites as the first generation who had been circumcised before they left Egypt had all died in the wilderness.

² At that time the LORD told Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise this second generation of Israelites." ³ So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the entire male population of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth. *Gibeath-haaraloth* means "hill of foreskins."

⁴ Joshua had to circumcise them because all the men who were old enough to fight in battle when they left Egypt had died in the wilderness (Joshua 5:2–4).

⁷ So Joshua circumcised their sons—those who had grown up to take their fathers' places—for they had not been circumcised on the way to the Promised Land. ⁸ After all the males had been circumcised, they rested in the camp until they were healed (Joshua 5:7–8).

Now Joshua does the work of a physician! We do not know exactly how many males there were at the time, but we know that the second registration and census of Israel's fighting men age twenty and older took place in Numbers 26 at the end of the forty years and the total number was 601,730. This is comparable to the number that had been in the first registration in Numbers 2 that came out of Egypt, which was 603,550 males.

We can compare the number of registered fighting males over 20 at the coming out of Egypt with the number at the end of the 40 years.

Granted, the young men and boys who were under the age of twenty when they came out of Egypt who had been circumcised back in Egypt were now 40-60 years of age did not need to be circumcised; however, all those age 40 and under had never been circumcised since leaving Egypt.

For simplicity sake let's say that half of the fighting men were already circumcised, those ages 40-60, and half of the fighting men ages 20-40 were not circumcised. That would leave approximately 300,000 fighting age men from 20-40 who would need to be circumcised.

We could then possibly figure that there were another 300,000 boys and male babies under the age of twenty that would also need to be circumcised.

Can you imagine performing surgery on approximately 600,000 males? No wonder the place is called "hill of foreskins." The scriptures do not say specifically that Joshua received help, but it says that God told Joshua to make flint knives. He could have ordered the knives to be made and with Passover approaching, the process of making the knives and performing circumcision on that many males had to be done quickly, possibly with the help of the Levites, priests, or other circumcised men² who would now be between 40-60 years of age.

The scriptures tell us that after all of the males were circumcised they rested in camp until they were healed.

CHAPTER 18

Passover Observed and Manna Ceases

In Joshua 5:11–12 we find that the Israelites crossed the Jordan River on the 10th day of the first month and they celebrated the Passover on the evening of the 14th day of the first month. The very next day they began to eat unleavened bread and roasted grain they harvested from the land. No manna appeared on the first day they ate from the crops of the land and it was never seen again.

Can you imagine how thrilled the Israelites were to eat unleavened bread and roasted grain, real food from the crops of the land? Can you imagine eating the same thing day after day, three meals a day for forty years? I don't know about you, but I get tired of eating leftovers three days in a row!

I guess the positive side of this was that they did not have to cook! All they had to do was to go and gather up enough manna for each person in their family for that day.

CHAPTER 19

Joshua Encounters the Commander of the Army of the LORD

Immediately following Passover, we find Joshua near Jericho, probably meditating on God's word and promises that were made to him by God and thinking about how to conquer Jericho.

¹³When Joshua was near the town of Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with sword in hand. Joshua went up to him and demanded, "Are you friend or foe?"

¹⁴"Neither one," he replied. "I am the commander of the LORD's army."

At this, Joshua fell with his face to the ground in reverence. "I am at your command," Joshua said. "What do you want your servant to do?"

¹⁵The commander of the LORD's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did as he was told (Joshua 5:13–15).

Imagine being Joshua checking out the land, probably thinking he was alone when suddenly there is a man standing in front of him! What strikes me in verse 13 is that he looked up, which leads me to believe that he must have been deep in thought or in prayer with his head down.

When he looked up, he saw a man standing in front of him with a sword in his hand. This must have been a little startling. This man standing in front of him is probably not dressed

like anyone from the Israeli camp and perhaps not dressed like anyone from the surrounding area, or like anyone he has ever seen.

Joshua asks a direct question. He needs to know if this man is for him or against him, if he is a friend or an enemy.

The man answers, ¹⁴“Neither one,” he replied. “I am the commander of the LORD’s army.”

This is really powerful! Joshua has a personal encounter with the living God in the person of Jesus Christ and is told to remove his sandals for the place he is standing is holy!

The last time this happened was back in Exodus 3 when Moses was tending the flocks of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian. Moses was far into the wilderness and came to Mt. Sinai, the mountain of God.

Moses had been born a Hebrew, but had been raised in the palace of Pharaoh as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, Hatshepsut.¹ When he was grown he went out to visit his own people and saw how hard they were forced to work. During one such visit he saw an Egyptian beating one of his fellow Hebrews and when he didn’t think anyone was looking, he killed the Egyptian and hid the body in the sand. Pharaoh, Tutmoses III,¹ found out about it and tried to kill Moses. Moses then fled to the land of Midian.

Moses at this point had been hiding in the wilderness of Midian for forty years when he saw a bush engulfed in flames

²So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush *was* not consumed. ³Then Moses said, “I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn.”

⁴So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!”

And he said, “Here I am.”

⁵Then He said, “Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand *is* holy ground.” ⁶Moreover He said, “I *am* the God of your

father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God (Exodus 3:2–6 NKJV).

God speaks to Moses from out of a burning bush and tells Moses to take off the sandals from his feet as the place he is standing is holy ground. It is at this point in Moses’ life that God calls him to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt.

Now we have Joshua preparing to lead the Israelites into battle against Jericho and the rest of the people living in the land. In fact, we find Joshua near the town of Jericho, rather than in the Israelite camp at Gilgal, perhaps looking at the fortified walls and sizing up the town and surrounding countryside, wondering how he should best launch an attack on Jericho.

Since the individual speaking to both Moses and Joshua tells both of them to remove their sandals because the place they are standing is holy and the individual receives worship, we know that this is not an angel, as angels do not receive worship as we see in the *Book of Revelation*.

⁹ And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.” And he added, “These are true words that come from God.”

¹⁰ Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said, “No, don’t worship me. I am a servant of God, just like you and your brothers and sisters who testify about their faith in Jesus. Worship only God. For the essence of prophecy is to give a clear witness for Jesus” (Revelation 19:9–10).

The commander of the armies of heaven is Jesus Christ as we see in Revelation 19:11–16.

I like what J. Hampton Keathley III, Th.M., wrote in his article, *The Captain of the Lord’s Army (Joshua 5:13–15)*.

Verse 14 will tell us that this man came as the “captain of the hosts of the Lord,” the commander of the Lord’s army. Joshua’s response in verse 14b and the statement of the captain in verse 15 show this was a theophany, or better, based on the truth of John 1:1-18, it was a Christophany. A Christophany is a manifestation of the preincarnate Christ, who, as the Logos, is the one who reveals God. If only a man or an angel, he would certainly have repelled Joshua’s worshipful response (vs. 14).

Compare the response of Paul in Acts 14:8-20 to those who wanted to make them into gods and the response of the angel to John in Revelation 19:10.

Here then, the preincarnate Christ appears to Joshua to teach, guard, and reinforce certain vital truths for God's people and especially for those in positions of leadership, which really includes all believers to some degree.

Removing the sandals was a sign of servanthood and a sign of respect and submission.

Joshua had an encounter with the living *Logos*, the very revelation of God. It was an encounter that lifted a great burden from his shoulders.²

Logos: In the Bible, it is translated to mean 'word' or another name for Jesus.³

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John. ⁷This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. ⁸He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. ⁹That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. ¹²But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:1–14 NKJV).

There is no doubt in my mind that the Commander of the Army of the Lord was none other than the pre-incarnate, Jesus Christ!

Pre-incarnate: Previous to incarnation: said chiefly of Christ as existing before his assumption of human nature.⁴

Can you imagine how Joshua felt coming face to face with the living God and in this case with the preincarnate Jesus Christ? Here he was, near the city of Jericho, probably looking things over and contemplating his military strategy, when he has a personal face to face encounter with the living God! Talk about God showing up when you need Him! If there was any doubt in Joshua's mind that he was right where God wanted him, and that God would be with him as he led the children of Israel against the peoples living in the Promised Land, I think they quickly vanished at this point. Now he had the commander of the Lord's Army standing right there with him!

Have you ever had an experience where God showed up in your life just when you needed Him the most? Perhaps it was through answered prayer, or by sending someone to minister to you at just the right time. Perhaps it was giving you confirmation regarding a decision you needed to make, or opening a door for a particular job, or any job! Perhaps it was healing you or a loved one. If we really look closely at our lives, we find that God does indeed show up in so many ways in our lives, showing us that He loves us and takes care of us.

Sometimes we are so weighed down by the struggles and battles of life that we have our heads down and solely focus on the task at hand and the busyness of life and fail to acknowledge and worship and inquire of the one who can truly guide, direct and protect our steps.

When we finally look up and acknowledge Jesus Christ, the Captain of the Armies of Heaven, we can then throw down the weight, surrender to Him and have the peace that He is right there with us and will lead us into battle, guide us through the storm and give us the strength we need to accomplish His will.

In Moses and Joshua's case, God showed up and made Himself physically and verbally known to them right before they lead the children of Israel. In Moses case, God gave him the assignment of leading the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. In Joshua's case, it was right before he led the children of Israel into the first battle of conquering the Promised Land.

CHAPTER 20

The Destruction of Jericho

Jericho's gates were secure and tightly shut and no one went in and no one went out because the people were afraid of the Israelites.

The Lord told Joshua "I have given you Jericho, its king, and all its strong warriors.

³You and your fighting men should march around the town once a day for six days.

⁴Seven priests will walk ahead of the Ark, each carrying a ram's horn. On the seventh day, you are to march around the town seven times, with the priests blowing the horns.

⁵When you hear the priests give one long blast on the rams' horns, have all the people shout as loud as they can. Then the walls of the town will collapse, and the people can charge straight into the town" (Joshua 6:2–5).

The city of Jericho was only about nine acres total and protected several thousand people, so it wasn't a large city; however, it was very important strategically and very important because it was heavily fortified. The city had a spring inside its walls, so the people had water and the harvest had just ended so they had plenty of food to sustain them in the case of a long siege.¹

The march around Jericho would have been about one-half mile. According to Bryant Wood PhD:

The upper city of Jericho occupied an area of about 6 acres. If the fortification rampart around the upper city is included, the total area of Jericho was about 9 acres, with a circumference of about ½ mile.²

The exact size of Joshua's army is not specified; however, we do have the exact number of military age men from the census that God commanded Moses to take in Numbers 26.

The total number of men age twenty and over was 601,730. If we look at the number of "armed men" that the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh sent along with Joshua when they crossed the Jordan it was .361792% of their total military age men.

Census of Military Age Men 20 Years and Older – Numbers 26:1-51

		Census .361792% of military age men		
Reuben	43,730	Reuben	43,730	
Simeon	22,200	Gad	40,500	
Gad	40,500	Manasseh – 1/2	26,350	
Judah	76,500	Subtotal:	110,580	40,000
Issachar	64,300	Simeon	22,200	
Zebulun	60,500	Judah	76,500	
Ephraim	32,500	Issachar	64,300	
Manasseh	52,700	Zebulun	60,500	
Benjamin	45,600	Ephraim	32,500	
Dan	64,400	Manasseh – 1/2	26,350	
Asher	53,400	Benjamin	45,600	
Naphtali	45,400	Dan	64,400	
Total:	601,730	Asher	53,400	
		Naphtali	45,400	
		Subtotal:	491,150	177,694
		Total:	601,730	217,694

If we use that percentage as an example of what the numbers of armed men would have been from the other tribes that would have been actively participating and fighting with Joshua we come up with 217,694. For simplicity sake, I will round it to 217,700, so roughly a little over one-third of the military age men.

In Numbers 11:21 Moses states that there are 600,000-foot soldiers there with him. It would make sense that even though the number of military age men numbered over 600,000 men, that not all of them would leave the camp. Some would stay behind to defend and help take care of the women, children, flocks and herds.

Bottom line is that Joshua had over 600,000 military age men that he could draw upon or rotate anytime. Whether we use 217,700 or 601,730 men for these battles really doesn't matter. The fact is that Joshua had enough to cover all his bases and get the job done.

God has even used very small numbers to accomplish his purpose as with Gideon in Judges Chapter 7. Gideon started out with 32,000 men and God said that it was too many warriors. God told Gideon that if there were too many warriors they would boast that they had saved themselves by their own strength. God sorted out who would go with Gideon and who would not by a test at the stream by how they drank water and narrowed it down to 300 warriors to do the job!

Just picture this scene. Early in the morning, some of the 217,700 or 601,730-armed men go first, followed by seven priests blowing ram's horns, followed by The Ark of the Covenant carried by priests. Bringing up the rear are the remainder of the 217,700 fighting men. The quiet procession starts at one end or one corner of the city and by the time the priests, the Ark and Joshua have gone around the city once, there are fighting men still coming to start their first round, or the last of the fighting men have just arrived to start their procession around the city. No one says a word and the only sound that is heard are the ram's horns.

¹² Joshua got up early the next morning, and the priests again carried the Ark of the LORD. ¹³ The seven priests with the rams' horns marched in front of the Ark of the LORD, blowing their horns. Again, the armed men marched both in front of the priests with the horns and behind the Ark of the LORD. All this time the priests were blowing their horns. ¹⁴ On the second day they again marched around the town once and returned to the camp. They followed this pattern for six days (Joshua 6:12–14).

Think about the logistics of having enough space for over 200,000 fighting men to march together. There must have been existing roads, fields, and trees for them to navigate through and around. How many men wide was the procession to enable them to fit into one-half mile? Did Joshua have a "parade or staging ground" where they lined up in preparation?

They probably marched by tribes and were very well organized into companies or battalions. They probably split the army in half and had half go in front of the Ark of the Covenant and half go behind.

Did they need over 200,000 or 600,000 men to defeat Jericho? No, but this was the very first battle they were going to fight and the very first city they were going to defeat. I believe they all marched as a show of force. I'm sure the people in Jericho were paralyzed with fear when they saw so many armed fighting men that completely surrounded their city.

From the high points in Jericho, the inhabitants of Jericho must have been able to see the huge camp of the Israelites that stretched out for miles and miles on the horizon as far as they could see.

The fighting men of Israel must have looked like a mighty swarm of ants that surrounded their tiny city and they just kept coming and coming!

Can you imagine the eerie feeling that came over the city of Jericho as over 200,000 – 600,000 fighting men marched in silence! After that first day, I'm sure they were much relieved when the army left after marching around their city only once. They must have also been wondering what would happen next. What were they planning? Did they just come to look things over and prepare for their first attack?

“Look, here they come again! Man your positions!” shouts the lookout on the wall.

And the procession marches around the city again early in the morning on the second day. This goes on day after day for six days.

Then, on the seventh day something different happens! They don't stop marching after just one time around; they keep going around and around and around for a total of seven times!

Suddenly, the priests blow one long blast on the rams' horns and Joshua commands, “Shout! For the LORD has given you the town!” All the men shout as loud as they can and the walls fall down and the army charges in and captures it.



Jericho is well identified with Tell es-Sultan, five miles west of the Jordan River and seven miles north of the Dead Sea. The mound covers about eight acres.

Aerial view of Jericho, looking south. The trenches and squares visible today are from Kathleen Kenyon's excavations in the 1950s and the more recent Italian-Palestinian excavation which began in 1997.³

²¹They completely destroyed everything in it with their swords—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep, goats, and donkeys.

²²Meanwhile, Joshua said to the two spies, “Keep your promise. Go to the prostitute’s house and bring her out, along with all her family.”

²³The men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, mother, brothers, and all the other relatives who were with her. They moved her whole family to a safe place near the camp of Israel.

²⁴Then the Israelites burned the town and everything in it. Only the things made from silver, gold, bronze, or iron were kept for the treasury of the LORD’s house. ²⁵So Joshua

spared Rahab the prostitute and her relatives who were with her in the house, because she had hidden the spies Joshua sent to Jericho. And she lives among the Israelites to this day (Joshua 6:21–25).

I'm sure Rahab kept a watchful eye towards Gilgal, wondering when the Israelite army would attack her city. She did not know the hour or the day, but she was watching and she was ready and she had her scarlet rope hanging from the window. Rahab had informed her family and they were all safe in her house.

The scarlet rope hanging from the window reminds me of the blood of the sacrificial lamb or goat that the Israelites were to smear upon the top and sides of the doorframe at Passover so when the Lord saw the blood, the plague of death would Passover their house.

The blood of Passover saved the Israelites from destruction and death of all first-born sons and animals. The scarlet rope saved Rahab and her family from being killed when the Israelite army attacked her city and destroyed it. Both the blood of the lamb at Passover and the scarlet rope point to the ultimate and final salvation of our souls through the blood of Jesus Christ, the perfect lamb who was slain to pay for the sins of all mankind.

During the battle at Jericho, the two spies went in and rescued Rahab and her father, mother, brothers, sisters and all of the other relatives who were with her in her house and moved them to a place of safety near the camp of Israel.

But the story doesn't end there! Rahab marries Salmon of the tribe of Judah and they had a son, Boaz, the great grandfather of King David! Boaz takes Ruth for his wife; so, Rahab was Ruth's mother-in-law! From those ancestors, our Lord Jesus Christ was born! Please see the supplement in Appendix C for the complete genealogy of Jesus.

⁵ Salmon was the father of Boaz (whose mother was Rahab).

Boaz was the father of Obed (whose mother was Ruth).

Obed was the father of Jesse.

⁶ Jesse was the father of King David (Matthew 1:5–6).

In the camp of Israel lived several million people, but Rahab marries into the Tribe of Judah. Perhaps God used Caleb, who was of the Tribe of Judah, to introduce Rahab to Salmon, Tribe of Judah.

The fact that the two spies end up at the house of Rahab was no accident. It was all coordinated by God. It was no accident that Rahab marries Salmon of the Tribe of Judah and becomes the Great, Great Grandmother of King David. It seems very plausible to me that God used Caleb to introduce Rahab to Salmon.

Rahab is even listed as one of the great examples of faith in Hebrews 11:

³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. ³¹ By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace (Hebrews 11:30–31 NKJV).

Notice that it states that “Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe”. Not only did Rahab not perish or die physically when the Israelites destroyed Jericho, but she did not perish spiritually unto eternal damnation as do those who do not believe.

Rahab is an excellent example of how God can use anyone, no matter who they are and no matter what they have done in the past.

²⁶ At that time Joshua invoked this curse:

“May the curse of the LORD fall on anyone
who tries to rebuild the town of Jericho.
At the cost of his firstborn son,
he will lay its foundation.
At the cost of his youngest son,
he will set up its gates.”

²⁷ So the LORD was with Joshua, and his reputation spread throughout the land (Joshua 6:26–27).

The curse that Joshua invoked was fulfilled in I Kings 16:34 while Ahab was king of Israel.

³⁴ It was during his reign that Hiel, a man from Bethel, rebuilt Jericho. When he laid its foundations, it cost him the life of his oldest son, Abiram. And when he completed it and set up its gates, it cost him the life of his youngest son, Segub. This all happened

according to the message from the LORD concerning Jericho spoken by Joshua son of Nun (I Kings 16:34).

Why is it that people disregard God's word? Did Hiel not believe that this curse would not come true? Apparently not, or he would not have risked or disregarded the lives of his sons.

CHAPTER 21

Defeat at Ai

Imagine how Joshua and his fighting men must have felt after defeating Jericho, knowing that God had miraculously intervened on their behalf and toppled the impenetrable walls of Jericho! All they had to do was to march around the city for seven days and give a mighty shout!

They had just seen God dry up the Jordan River before their very eyes and provide a way for them to cross on dry ground! Surely God was with them as He said He would be and surely God would give them the land just as He said He would do. They would be undefeated!

7 But Israel violated the instructions about the things set apart for the LORD. A man named Achan had stolen some of these dedicated things, so the LORD was very angry with the Israelites. Achan was the son of Carmi, a descendant of Zimri son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah (Joshua 7:1).

Joshua sends some of his men to go and scout out the town of Ai. They come back with a report that there are so few of them that they don't need to bother to struggle to take their entire army. This report confirms my belief that they took their entire army of over 200,000 or 600,000-armed fighting men to defeat Jericho.

Approximately 3,000 men were sent and were totally defeated; in fact, the men of Ai put the Israelite army on the run and thirty-six of Joshua's fighting men were killed while fleeing.

The Israelites were shocked and became totally paralyzed with fear and their courage melted away. How can this be? Why did God allow them to be defeated?

⁶Joshua and the elders of Israel tore their clothing in dismay, threw dust on their heads, and bowed face down to the ground before the Ark of the LORD until evening. ⁷Then Joshua cried out, “Oh, Sovereign LORD, why did you bring us across the Jordan River if you are going to let the Amorites kill us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side! ⁸Lord, what can I say now that Israel has fled from its enemies? ⁹For when the Canaanites and all the other people living in the land hear about it, they will surround us and wipe our name off the face of the earth. And then what will happen to the honor of your great name?” (Joshua 7:6–9).

Joshua and the elders of Israel were totally shocked by the defeat at Ai and demonstrated their grief and humiliation by tearing their clothes and throwing dirt on their heads. They fell to the earth upon their faces before the Ark of the Lord, until the evening in a posture of adoration and prayer.

Joshua begins to question God and pleads for Israel.

I’m so thankful that we can be honest with God about our feelings and what we are thinking! We see so many examples of this in the Bible: Moses, Joshua, King David, Job, Jonah, Jeremiah, Elijah and others. God, of course, knows our thoughts anyway, so even if we don’t say it, He knows what we are thinking and how we are feeling.

Joshua was being prepared for this moment his entire life. He had learned to trust God; he believed what God said was true; he believed God would give them the land, so what just happened?

¹⁰But the LORD said to Joshua, “Get up! Why are you lying on your face like this?

¹¹Israel has sinned and broken my covenant! They have stolen some of the things that I commanded must be set apart for me. And they have not only stolen them but have lied about it and hidden the things among their own belongings. ¹²That is why the Israelites are running from their enemies in defeat. For now, Israel itself has been set apart for destruction. I will not remain with you any longer unless you destroy the things among you that were set apart for destruction.

¹³ “Get up! Command the people to purify themselves in preparation for tomorrow. For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Hidden among you, O Israel, are things set apart for the LORD. You will never defeat your enemies until you remove these things from among you.

¹⁴ “In the morning you must present yourselves by tribes, and the LORD will point out the tribe to which the guilty man belongs. That tribe must come forward with its clans, and the LORD will point out the guilty clan. That clan will then come forward, and the LORD will point out the guilty family. Finally, each member of the guilty family must come forward one by one. ¹⁵ The one who has stolen what was set apart for destruction will himself be burned with fire, along with everything he has, for he has broken the covenant of the LORD and has done a horrible thing in Israel” (Joshua 7:10–15).

I love the New Living Translation of verse 10. “Get up! Why are you lying on your face like this?” And verse 13 another command to “Get up!” God is honest and direct with Joshua! Even the KJV says, “Get thee up; wherefore liest thus thou upon thy face?”

This reminds me so much of Exodus 14:15 when Moses and the Israelites were pushed up against the Red Sea with the Egyptian army in hot pursuit. Moses was praying and telling the people how God would deliver them. Then in verse 15 of the Living Bible, God says to Moses, “Quit praying and get the people moving! Forward, march! Use your rod—hold it over the water, and the sea will open a path before you.”

These are direct commands from God to take action and to take action now! How many times do we pray and pray and pray about a situation and at the same time God is telling us and requiring us to take action?

Notice how one man’s sin affected all of the Israelites. One man’s sin caused God to become angry with the “Israelites” to the point that His blessing and protection was not only taken from them, but “Israel” was now set apart for destruction and God had removed His presence from them. God further states that they will never defeat their enemies until the guilty person is found and destroyed along with everything he has.

God did not take stealing or lying lightly. God had given them this command prior to the battle of Jericho.

¹⁷“Jericho and everything in it must be completely destroyed as an offering to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and the others in her house will be spared, for she protected our spies.

¹⁸Do not take any of the things set apart for destruction, or you yourselves will be completely destroyed, and you will bring trouble on the camp of Israel. ¹⁹Everything made from silver, gold, bronze, or iron is sacred to the LORD and must be brought into his treasury” (Joshua 6:17–19).

Now the whole camp was subject to the wrath of God and would need to purify and present themselves by tribes, clans and families, and God would single out the tribe, clan, family and person who was guilty.

The tribe of Judah was singled out, the clan of Zerah was singled out, the family of Zerhah was singled out, the family of Zimri was singled out and then every person of Zimri’s family came forward person by person until Achan was singled out.

¹⁹Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, by telling the truth. Make your confession and tell me what you have done. Don’t hide it from me.”

²⁰Achan replied, “It is true! I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. ²¹Among the plunder I saw a beautiful robe from Babylon, 200 silver coins, and a bar of gold weighing more than a pound. I wanted them so much that I took them. They are hidden in the ground beneath my tent, with the silver buried deeper than the rest” (Joshua 7:19–20).

A search party was sent to Achan’s tent and they found the stolen goods there just as Achan had said and they brought them to Joshua in the presence of the Lord.

²⁴Then Joshua and all the Israelites took Achan, the silver, the robe, the bar of gold, his sons, daughters, cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, tent, and everything he had, and they brought them to the valley of Achor. ²⁵Then Joshua said to Achan, “Why have you brought trouble on us? The LORD will now bring trouble on you.” And all the Israelites stoned Achan and his family and burned their bodies. ²⁶They piled a great heap of stones

over Achan, which remains to this day. That is why the place has been called the Valley of Trouble ever since. So, the LORD was no longer angry (Joshua 7:24–26).

Now that is what I call a huge deterrent to prevent future lying and stealing! One man's sin also has huge reaching affects upon his family.

How do you stone to death that many people, cattle, donkeys, sheep, and goats? Animals would run away and how could you contain them? Here is how. I found many pictures on the internet that claim to be The Valley of Achor and many have the label of Wadi-al-Qelt. It doesn't really matter which picture is the actual place the stoning took place. The important theme of all these pictures is the terrain and the narrow valley and steep side walls, what we would call a canyon. If thousands of people were standing above the valley/canyon along the valley/canyon walls, neither the animals nor the people would be able to escape. Even if this valley extended for miles, the Israelites had enough fighting men to line many miles of canyon walls. In verse 25 it says that all of the Israelites stoned Achan and his family and all that he had. That number would be a couple million people throwing rocks on Achan, his family and livestock. I believe all the Israelites went including women and children. They all needed to see the consequences of stealing and lying.



Photo of Wadi Qelt¹



Photo taken from Jericho (Tell es-Sultan)²

Early writers thought that the valley was north of Jericho, but Joshua 15:7 describes it as part of the border between Judah and Benjamin which would put it south of Jericho. The Hyrcania Valley or El-Buqei'a is probably too far south. In the picture to the left, taken from Jericho (Tell es-Sultan), we see the entrance to a deep valley in the hills. This is *Wadi al-Qelt* which originates near Jerusalem. I also like this picture as it shows the outlines of the foundations of several buildings in Jericho. Achan would have taken the items from a building in Jericho and then met his demise within site of his crime.²



Photo 3



Photo 4

The *shevarim* (שברים) pictured here is not far below Kh. Nisya in Wadi Sheiban which becomes Wadi Qelt going down to Jericho. The left photo shows volunteers going through the defile; the right photo is up close. On the right large boulders are *shevaring* off the outcrop on that side and falling into the stream. With only a little imagination, one can visualize that this was a very narrow place 3400 years ago. Since then, large boulders splitting and falling off have filled the stream while increasing the width of this originally very narrow defile.³

The picture above on the left makes it seem very plausible that the Israelites could have easily pushed huge boulders from the top of the valley/canyon walls. Imagine huge boulders falling from every direction at one time, an avalanche of rocks. Nothing would have escaped.

CHAPTER 22

The Defeat of Ai

Now that Achan's sin had been dealt with, God was once again for and with His people.

¹Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid or discouraged. Take all your fighting men and attack Ai, for I have given you the king of Ai, his people, his town, and his land. ²You will destroy them as you destroyed Jericho and its king. But this time you may keep the plunder and the livestock for yourselves. Set an ambush behind the town" (Joshua 8:1–2).

We find God's encouragement and promise in the verses above. God also tells them to take all of the fighting men to Ai and also tells Joshua the military strategy to use: set an ambush behind the town.

Even though God tells Joshua to set an ambush behind the town, it is still up to Joshua to execute a plan.

- Joshua and all the fighting men set out to attack Ai (Joshua 8:3). I believe this to be literal, that all 200,000+ fighting men leave their encampment near Gilgal and move their camp towards Ai. God tells Joshua in verse 1 to take all the fighting men.
- Joshua chooses 30,000 of his best fighting men and sends them out at night with these orders:



Map of Jericho and Ai¹

“Hide in ambush close behind the town and be ready for action. ⁵When our main army attacks, the men of Ai will come out to fight as they did before, and we will run away from them. ⁶We will let them chase us until we have drawn them away from the town. For they will say, ‘The Israelites are running away from us as they did before.’ Then, while we are running from them, ⁷you will jump up from your ambush and take possession of the town, for the LORD your God will give it to you. ⁸Set the town on fire, as the LORD has commanded. You have your orders” (Joshua 8:4–8).

- The 30,000 men leave at night to the place of ambush between Bethel and the west side of Ai (Joshua 8:9).
- Joshua remains in camp that night among the people (Joshua 8:9).
- Early in the morning Joshua and the leaders of Israel and the rest of the army march in front of the town and camp on the north side of Ai (Joshua 8:10–11). Notice that not only Joshua, but the leaders of Israel go with the army. They have a vested interest in this battle after being defeated by Ai because of the sin of Achan. What an encouragement this must have been for Joshua’s army! How many leaders in today’s world actually go to battle with their troops? Joshua and the leaders of Israel set an example.

- That night Joshua sends 5,000 men to lie in ambush between Bethel and Ai and on the west side of Ai (Joshua 8:12).
- Main army north of Ai, Ambush troops west of Ai. Joshua spends the night in the valley (Joshua 8:13).
- The King of Ai saw the Israelite army across the valley in the morning and attacks the Israelites at a place overlooking the Jordan Valley, but doesn't realize there is an ambush behind him (Joshua 8:14).
- Joshua and the Israelite army flee into the wilderness as though badly beaten (Joshua 8:15).
- All the men of Bethel and Ai are called out to chase after the Israelites and are lured away leaving the town unprotected (Joshua 8:16-17).
- The Lord tells Joshua, "Point the spear in your hand toward Ai, for I will hand the town over to you" (Joshua 8:18).
- As soon as Joshua gave this signal, the men in ambush jump up, pour into Ai, capture the city and set it on fire (Joshua 8:19).
- When the men of Ai looked behind them they saw the smoke from their town filling up the sky and they were trapped and had nowhere to go. Joshua and his army turn on them and the ambush party from town comes in from behind them (Joshua 8:20–22).
- Not one of the men of Ai survived. Only the King of Ai was taken alive and brought to Joshua (Joshua 8:23).
- When the Israelite army finished chasing and killing all the men of Ai in the open fields, they went back and finished off everyone inside in the city (Joshua 8:24).
- Joshua kept holding up his spear toward Ai until everyone who lived in Ai was completely destroyed (Joshua 8:26).
- The entire population of Ai was destroyed that day, a total of 12,000 people (Joshua 8:25).

- Only the livestock and the treasures of the town were not destroyed, for the Israelites kept these as plunder for themselves, as the LORD had commanded Joshua. (This time the Lord allowed them to keep the plunder for themselves, unlike the plunder of Jericho where everything had to be destroyed and burned, except anything made of iron, bronze, silver, and gold that was to be kept for the treasury of the Lord's house.) (Joshua 8:27).
- Joshua burned the town of Ai, and it became a permanent mound of ruins, desolate to this very day (Joshua 8:28).
- Joshua impaled the King of Ai on a sharpened pole and left him there until evening.
- At sunset, the Israelites took down the body, as Joshua commanded, and threw it in front of the town gate. They piled a great heap of stones over him that can still be seen today (Joshua 8:29).

We see in this passage of scripture another glimpse of Joshua's military skills. He follows God's orders, doesn't flinch, stands firm and is an excellent example to his people and his army.

The act of Joshua holding up his spear and pointing it toward Ai reminds me of how Moses held up his staff while Joshua and the Israelites fought the army of Amalek in Exodus 17. It was to remind the Israelites to acknowledge God in everything and to keep their eyes on Him and to follow Him wholeheartedly. It was to remind them that their strength comes from God, their success comes from God, their protection comes from God, and every victory comes from God.

CHAPTER 23

Joshua Renews the Covenant

Immediately following the defeat of Ai, Joshua builds an altar to the Lord. The first word of Joshua 8:30 is “Then”.

³⁰**Then** Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God of Israel in Mount Ebal,

³¹As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron (Joshua 8:30–31a KJV).

Joshua recognizes that it is God who provides, protects, delivers, sustains, and has given them the land. Joshua follows the instructions given to him by Moses back in Deuteronomy 27:1–8:

¹Now Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying: “Keep all the commandments which I command you today. ²And it shall be, on the day when you cross over the Jordan to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, that you shall set up for yourselves large stones, and whitewash them with lime. ³You shall write on them all the words of this law, when you have crossed over, that you may enter the land which the LORD your God is giving you, ‘a land flowing with milk and honey’, just as the LORD God of your fathers promised you. ⁴Therefore it shall be, when you have crossed over the Jordan, that on Mount Ebal you shall set up these stones, which I command you today, and you shall whitewash them with lime. ⁵And there you shall build an altar

to the LORD your God, an altar of stones; you shall not use an iron tool on them. ⁶ You shall build with whole stones the altar of the LORD your God, and offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God. ⁷ You shall offer peace offerings, and shall eat there, and rejoice before the LORD your God. ⁸ And you shall write very plainly on the stones all the words of this law” (Deuteronomy 27:1–8 NKJV).

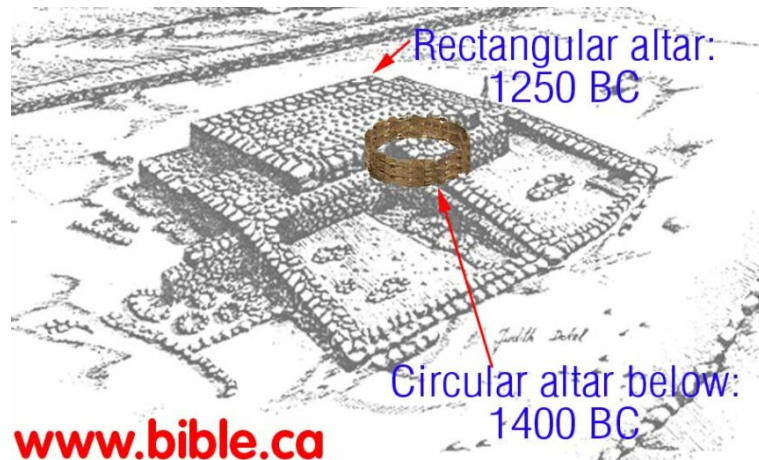
The command above was fulfilled in the verse below:

³¹ And they offered on it burnt offerings to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings.

³² And there, in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the Law of Moses, which he had written (Joshua 8:31b–32 NKJV).



Joshua's Altar on Mt. Ebal¹



Rectangular Altar and Circular Altar²

1. On April 6, 1980, Adam Zertal, Ph.D, Professor Of Archeology, University of Haifa, was doing a formal archaeological survey of the traditional lands of Manasseh and discovered a Hebrew Altar that dated to 1250 BC.
2. The site at Mt. Ebal had two occupation levels. Zertal calls the older occupation "level II" which he dates 1300 BC and the younger "level I" to 1250 BC.
3. If this site is no older than 1300 BC, then none of it could be built by Joshua, because the exodus took place in 1400 BC. However, this is a Hebrew altar built during the time of Deborah the Judge and underneath we believe is the actual altar of Joshua that should be dated to 1400 BC since a scarab from Tuthmosis III was found but wrongly dated to 1250 BC.

4. We agree that there are clearly two occupation levels. The rectangular altar we see today was built about 1250 BC. The 6.5-foot circular stone structure with burnt kosher bones inside was located directly beneath the rectangular altar and was built about 1400 BC by Joshua. (We call it an altar, Zertal does not. We date it to 1400 BC, Zertal dates it to 1300 BC.)
5. We speculate that since Abraham and Isaac lived in the area and built altars, we believe that the site dates back to the time of Abraham and that Joshua built his altar on top of Isaac's who in turn built his altar on top of Abraham's. In other words, the site has a long tradition of use as an altar from 2000 BC down to 1250 BC. ³



Above is the altar on Mt. Ebal as seen today³



A reconstruction at Garden of Biblical Samaria Park⁴

What a powerful testimony to the people of Israel! Joshua demonstrates his faith, follows the instructions given to him by Moses and by God, and takes his responsibility as a spiritual leader seriously. Notice how this task was not given to one of the priests. It is not the priests who build the altar, but Joshua. Joshua points the Israelites back to God and back to the decision and commitment they had made to Him in Deuteronomy 26:17:

¹⁷ You have declared today that the LORD is your God. And you have promised to walk in his ways, and to obey his decrees, commands, and regulations, and to do everything he tells you.

In the presence of all of the children of Israel, Joshua writes the words of the law on the stones of the altar.

³³ Then all the Israelites—foreigners and native-born alike—along with the elders, officers, and judges, were divided into two groups. One group stood in front of Mount Gerizim, the other in front of Mount Ebal. Each group faced the other, and between

them stood the Levitical priests carrying the Ark of the LORD's Covenant. This was all done according to the commands that Moses, the servant of the LORD, had previously given for blessing the people of Israel.

³⁴Joshua then read to them all the blessings and curses Moses had written in the Book of Instruction. ³⁵Every word of every command that Moses had ever given was read to the entire assembly of Israel, including the women and children and the foreigners who lived among them (Joshua 8:33–35).

Notice what it says in verse 35: “Every word of every command that Moses had ever given was read to the entire assembly of Israel, including the women and children and the foreigners who lived among them” (Joshua 8:35).

That would be more than just what was given in Deuteronomy 27-28 regarding the blessings and curses. That would be any of the laws or commands from the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy! Genesis is part of the Pentateuch as well, and is considered part of the Law of God; however, Moses did not give any commands in Genesis. This was no quick read! This probably would have taken Joshua the better part of a day to read every command Moses had ever given.

The instructions to read to all the people all the blessing and curses written was given in Deuteronomy 27:12–13:

¹²“When you cross the Jordan River, the tribes of Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin must stand on Mount Gerizim to proclaim a blessing over the people.

¹³And the tribes of Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali must stand on Mount Ebal to proclaim a curse.

Notice that the tribes were divided into two groups, those who would stand on Mount Gerizim and proclaim a blessing over the people and those who would stand on Mount Ebal to proclaim a curse.

Mount Gerizim: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin

Mount Ebal: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali



Photo of Shechem⁵

Located between Mt. Gerizim (left) and Mt. Ebal (right) Shechem is preeminent in the Biblical record, beginning with God's promise of the land to Abraham.⁵

During the Conquest, the twelve tribes gathered on these two hills to recite God's Law and the blessings and curses that accompanied obedience and disobedience.⁵

Natural Amphitheater at Shechem photo⁶



The town of Shechem is a natural amphitheater which has been tested several times to see if the ceremony of Joshua 8 is possible. Each test proved the ceremony was easily possible, especially if 22,000 priests are shouting and one million people are replying!⁶

In Deuteronomy 27:12–13, Moses told the people that when they crossed the Jordan River they were to stand on these two mountains; however, in Joshua 8:33, Joshua states that the people divided into two groups and stood at the foot of Mount Gerizim, the other at the foot of Mount Ebal. Some translations say, “stand in front of” and face each other.

When I first read the passage in Deuteronomy, I was thinking that to “stand on these two mountains” meant standing “on top of each of the mountains”, but after reading the passage in Joshua and looking at the photo on the previous page of the natural amphitheater I now understand what both passages mean. Both mean the same thing, but use different phrases to describe where the people actually stood.

Whether you stand at the foot of the mountain, half way up the mountain, or at the top of the mountain, you are still standing on the mountain. To utilize the natural amphitheater acoustics for those listening and those speaking or shouting, the people would have to be located below the top of the mountains to capture the sound. I can imagine the several million people would have been standing from the base or foot of each mountain to three-quarters of the way up the sides of each mountain just like the photo on the previous page shows the housing developments going up the sides of each mountain. Each group would have stood and faced the other group that was located opposite them on the other side of the valley on the side of the other mountain. According to Joshua 8:33, the Levitical priests stood in the valley between the two mountains with the Ark of the Lord’s Covenant.

The curses and blessings that are found in Deuteronomy 27–28 that Moses commanded the people to shout were in three parts:

1. Curses shouted by the Levites with a response by the people. These curses were not conditional; they were curses against anyone who committed these acts.
2. Blessings for Obedience were conditional. If the people fully obeyed the Lord and kept all of His commands then they would receive the blessings. Notice Deuteronomy 28:1.
3. Curses for Disobedience were conditional. If the people refused to listen to the Lord and did not obey his commands then they would receive all the curses that were listed. Deuteronomy 28:20–22 states:

²⁰The LORD himself will send on you curses, confusion, and frustration in everything you do, until at last you are completely destroyed for doing evil and abandoning me. ²¹The LORD will afflict you with diseases until none of you are left in the land you are about to enter and occupy. ²²The LORD will strike you

with wasting diseases, fever, and inflammation, with scorching heat and drought, and with blight and mildew. These disasters will pursue you until you die.

Curses Shouted by the Levites

¹⁴ “Then the Levites will shout to all the people of Israel:

¹⁵ ‘Cursed is anyone who carves or casts an idol and secretly sets it up. These idols, the work of craftsmen, are detestable to the LORD.’

And all the people will reply, ‘Amen.’

¹⁶ ‘Cursed is anyone who dishonors father or mother.’

And all the people will reply, ‘Amen.’

¹⁷ ‘Cursed is anyone who steals property from a neighbor by moving a boundary marker.’

And all the people will reply, ‘Amen.’

¹⁸ ‘Cursed is anyone who leads a blind person astray on the road.’

And all the people will reply, ‘Amen.’

¹⁹ ‘Cursed is anyone who denies justice to foreigners, orphans, or widows.’

And all the people will reply, ‘Amen.’

²⁰ ‘Cursed is anyone who has sexual intercourse with one of his father’s wives, for he has violated his father.’

And all the people will reply, ‘Amen.’

²¹ ‘Cursed is anyone who has sexual intercourse with an animal.’

And all the people will reply, ‘Amen.’

²² ‘Cursed is anyone who has sexual intercourse with his sister, whether she is the daughter of his father or his mother.’

And all the people will reply, ‘Amen.’

²³ ‘Cursed is anyone who has sexual intercourse with his mother-in-law.’

And all the people will reply, ‘Amen.’

²⁴ ‘Cursed is anyone who attacks a neighbor in secret.’

And all the people will reply, ‘Amen.’

²⁵ ‘Cursed is anyone who accepts payment to kill an innocent person.’

And all the people will reply, ‘Amen.’

²⁶‘Cursed is anyone who does not affirm and obey the terms of these instructions.’

And all the people will reply, ‘Amen’ (Deuteronomy 27:11–26).

Blessings for Obedience

¹If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully keep all his commands that I am giving you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the world. ²You will experience all these blessings if you obey the LORD your God:

³Your towns and your fields
will be blessed.

⁴Your children and your crops
will be blessed.

The offspring of your herds and flocks
will be blessed.

⁵Your fruit baskets and breadboards
will be blessed.

⁶Wherever you go and whatever you do,
you will be blessed.

⁷The LORD will conquer your enemies when they attack you. They will attack you from one direction, but they will scatter from you in seven!

⁸The LORD will guarantee a blessing on everything you do and will fill your storehouses with grain. The LORD your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.

⁹If you obey the commands of the LORD your God and walk in his ways, the LORD will establish you as his holy people as he swore he would do. ¹⁰Then all the nations of the world will see that you are a people claimed by the LORD, and they will stand in awe of you.

¹¹The LORD will give you prosperity in the land he swore to your ancestors to give you, blessing you with many children, numerous livestock, and abundant crops. ¹²The LORD will send rain at the proper time from his rich treasury in the heavens and will bless all the work you do. You will lend to many nations, but you will never need to borrow from them. ¹³If you listen to these commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today, and if you carefully obey them, the LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you will always be on top and never at the bottom. ¹⁴You must not turn away from any of the commands I am giving you today, nor follow after other gods and worship them (Deuteronomy 28:1–14).

The curses for disobedience are quite extensive and are listed in Deuteronomy 28:15–68.

All of these blessing and curses were shouted or read that day in the valley between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, along with every word of every command that Moses had ever given to the people.

CHAPTER 24

The Treaty with the Gibeonites, Joshua's Ishmael

Amidst all the remarkable things Joshua accomplished, there was one very specific time that he made a decision on his own, without asking God first. This comes immediately after the defeat of Ai and the renewal of the covenant, the building of the altar, writing the law on the stones, and reading to the people all the blessings and curses that Moses had written in the Book of the Law.

How often do we find that after our biggest triumphs and just when we seem the closest to God, along comes our biggest downfall or defeat? Satan does not want us to succeed spiritually and he will throw everything he can to trip us up even in what might seem to be the little things.

This little thing was taking the word of strangers and looking at the evidence they presented and rushing in and making a decision rather than waiting and going before the Lord to get God's answer.

We find this account in Joshua 9.

Here we find the inhabitants of Gibeon afraid for their lives when they heard how Joshua and the children of Israel totally destroyed and wiped out the cities of Jericho and Ai. They had heard of all that the Israelites' God had done in Egypt and what He had done to the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan River—King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan (who lived in Ashtaroth). They knew that they were probably next on the list of cities to be destroyed as their city was located south and west of Ai and almost straight west of Jericho.

Joshua's army was marching west and systematically taking each city in its path and killing everyone in it.

Instead of uniting their army with other armies and preparing for battle against Joshua and Israel, like all the other kings west of the Jordan River, they devised a plan whereby tricking Joshua and the leaders of Israel into making a peace pact with them so they wouldn't be destroyed.

They gathered together old, patched wineskins, weathered saddlebags, dry and moldy bread, and sent ambassadors who donned ragged clothes and worn-out sandals to Joshua to make a treaty with them.

When they arrived at the camp of Israel at Gilgal they tell Joshua and the men of Israel that they have come from a far country to make a peace treaty with them.

⁷The Israelites replied to these Hivites, "How do we know you don't live nearby? For if you do, we cannot make a treaty with you."

⁸They replied, "We are your servants."

"But who are you?" Joshua demanded. "Where do you come from?"

⁹They answered, "Your servants have come from a very distant country. We have heard of the might of the LORD your God and of all he did in Egypt. ¹⁰We have also heard what he did to the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan River—King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan (who lived in Ashtaroth). ¹¹So our elders and all our people instructed us, 'Take supplies for a long journey. Go meet with the people of Israel and tell them, 'We are your servants; please make a treaty with us.'"

¹²"This bread was hot from the ovens when we left our homes. But now, as you can see, it is dry and moldy. ¹³These wineskins were new when we filled them, but now they are old and split open. And our clothing and sandals are worn out from our very long journey" (Joshua 9:7–12).

Notice how the Gibeonites (Hivites) never answer the questions demanded of them by Joshua, "Who are you? Where do you come from?" Instead of answering the direct questions

they evade the questions and say “servants” and “from a far distant country”. They never do answer the question of who they are or where exactly they come from.

The men of Israel examine their food and wineskins. Then, Joshua makes a peace treaty with them guaranteeing them their safety and the leaders of Israel ratified the agreement with a binding oath.

Remember God’s provision and instructions for Joshua to determine God’s will that was given to him when he was chosen to lead the Israelites back in Numbers 27:21.

²¹ When direction from the LORD is needed, Joshua will stand before Eleazar the priest, who will use the Urim—one of the sacred lots cast before the LORD—to determine his will. This is how Joshua and the rest of the community of Israel will determine everything they should do.”

In his haste, Joshua neglected to follow these instructions and seek direction from the Lord. Instead he made a decision to trust these “ambassadors from a far country” based upon the Hivites answers and the evidence they provided without really investigating the men’s story and thoroughly checking them out.

You can imagine the surprise and almost disbelief when Joshua and the Israelites learned, three days later, that these people actually lived nearby! They, of course, set out immediately to investigate!

Their surprise and disbelief turned into anger when they reached the Hivites’ towns in three days’ time, but they did not attack the towns because they had made a vow to them in the name of the Lord, the God of Israel.

²² Joshua called together the Gibeonites and said, “Why did you lie to us? Why did you say that you live in a distant land when you live right here among us? ²³ May you be cursed! From now on you will always be servants who cut wood and carry water for the house of my God.”

²⁴ They replied, “We did it because we—your servants—were clearly told that the LORD your God commanded his servant Moses to give you this entire land and to destroy all

the people living in it. So, we feared greatly for our lives because of you. That is why we have done this. ²⁵ Now we are at your mercy—do to us whatever you think is right.”

²⁶ So Joshua did not allow the people of Israel to kill them. ²⁷ But that day he made the Gibeonites the woodcutters and water carriers for the community of Israel and for the altar of the LORD—wherever the LORD would choose to build it. And that is what they do to this day (Joshua 9:22–27).

Dr. Phil McGraw in his book *Life Code*, states in his Introduction:

“We have a world infected with a fungus of certain human beings whose primary purpose in life is to get up every day and take advantage of others, and *who* these people are, and *how* they do what they do, is knowable. It’s knowable! And if it’s knowable, then it should be avoidable. We can at least take away the element of surprise.”

He goes on to say, “So, later in this book, I’m going to tell you about what I call the “Evil Eight” —the eight identifying characteristics that are dead giveaways when you see these people coming down the pike... Like I said, I’m going to tell you about the “Evil Eight” identifying characteristics of the bad guys, and then I’m going to tell you about what I call the “Nefarious 15” tactics that these people use to get to you and me and everybody else they target. I’m going to show you their secret “playbook;” I’m going to show you exactly, precisely how they do what they do.” ¹

Sin and these types of people have been around since Cain killed Abel, but perhaps it has just become more noticeable and more commonplace here in the United States in recent years. The United States used to be a “Christian nation”. In fact, our founding fathers were mostly born-again believers that based our country, its laws and moral values on Biblical principles. Our previous president had stated while he was in office that the United States was no longer a Christian nation and he seemed to be proud of that fact! Perhaps the fact that we are no longer a Christian nation is a direct cause of the moral decay in our country.

As in any society, such as the Canaanites, if God’s moral code and laws are not followed, evil will prevail.

The King James Version uses the term “wily” in reference to how the Gibeonites worked. The word “wily” means: crafty, sly, cunning, marked by skill in achieving a desired end,

especially with cunning or craft. Satan is described as being wily and we are to “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the **wiles** of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11. KJV).

This indicates to me the type of people the Gibeonites were and the kind of character they had. After all, these people were to be totally and utterly destroyed as commanded by God because of their sin and idol worship. The Gibeonites were part of the Canaanites and as such were part of a very degraded, depraved, morally corrupt and perverted society. Their immorality had caused them to be filled with sexually transmitted diseases.

I thought the comments below by Alden Bass, Ph.D., of Apologetics Press, were right on in describing the sin and God's judgment:

“The events of the Israelite conquest of Canaan are often misrepresented, and all the facts are not explained. Enemies of the Bible frequently select the most incriminating parts of a story without giving the surrounding information explaining it. Although the nation of Israel was selected by God to be the vehicle of the Messiah, God placed no other special value upon them, and their sin was just as inexcusable as that of the Canaanites. From the heights of Ebal, curses were leveled to those who would dare to disobey the pronouncements of God through His law. “And all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee” (Deuteronomy 28:45). The curses mentioned in this chapter are horrible beyond compare, and represent to His own people God's judgment against sin. He is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), and He did not punish the Canaanites because of their ethnicity, race, or anything other than their wickedness. It seems that God actually was sterner with His own people than with the other nations; after all, they were the chosen people who were deemed worthy by God of special privilege, and visited by numerous miracles and prophets. They, of all peoples, should have known better than to disobey God. It is reasonable, therefore, to conclude that God did not single out the Canaanites for punishment, nor did His divine standard differ from nation to nation. His hatred of sin crossed all borders, and included even Israel.

This indicates that the sin of the Canaanites was especially horrendous, and that they had been adequately warned of the consequences of their mischief. The Biblical

record, together with archaeology, reveals in Canaan a degraded society that practiced any number of atrocities in the name of religion. These nations engaged in ritual prostitution, self-mutilation, and human sacrifice. Their societies were filled with incest, idolatry, and violence. As a result of this immorality, God weighed them in the balance and found them wanting.”²

I especially appreciated this comment: “He is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), and He did not punish the Canaanites because of their ethnicity, race, or anything other than their wickedness.” Notice too, how Dr. Bass comments on the curses from Deuteronomy 27 & 28.

Wow, prostitution, self-mutilation, and human sacrifice! Is our society and country any different today than theirs? Our country may not physically sacrifice their children on an altar, but we have been sacrificing the unborn in the name of women’s rights and pro-choice through abortion for forty-four years since the U.S. Supreme Court Decision on Roe v. Wade³ legalizing abortion nationwide.

In defense of Joshua, it states in verse 14 that the Israelites examined their food, but did not consult the Lord. Later in verse 18 it states that the people of Israel grumbled against their leaders because of the treaty.

There seems to be a group decision which involved the leaders, but in the end Joshua was still their leader and he was ultimately responsible for the decision. I’m sure they never even imagined that some of the people living in nearby towns would even dare to walk into their camp and try such a stunt!

For people who tell the truth and would never even think to lie or deceive others, it doesn’t even occur to them that there would be those who would deliberately lie to them or try and deceive them. I have been one of those people. I have been a very trusting person, believing that others tell me the truth. After all, I tell the truth and am very transparent and what you see is what you get; why would others be any different? I give people the benefit of the doubt and since I have no reason to believe otherwise, I believe what people tell me. This naivety on my part has caused me to trust people I shouldn’t have trusted and I have been taken in, deceived, and duped just like Joshua and the Israelites. I need to heed Dr. Phil McGraw’s advice.

It is sad that we have to be wary and mistrusting of other people, but that is the world of sin that we live in. Joshua and the leaders trusted the words of the strangers and did not take the time to go before the Lord and ask for direction and wisdom in the matter. We, too, must take the time to seek the Lord in our relationships and the covenants and business deals we make with others. What we may think is love and the good intentions of another to love, honor, and cherish us may be nothing more than someone trying to take advantage of us for their own ulterior motives.

This peace pact or covenant that Joshua made with these men was a direct violation of what God had commanded them. We find God strictly forbids making a covenant with any of the inhabitants of the land. In fact, God instructs them to utterly destroy them! We find this repeated over and over in the instructions and commands that were given to the children of Israel:

¹¹ Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I am driving out from before you the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. ¹² Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst. ¹³ But you shall destroy their altars, break their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their wooden images ¹⁴ (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous God), ¹⁵ lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods, and *one of them* invites you and you eat of his sacrifice, ¹⁶ and you take of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the harlot with their gods and make your sons play the harlot with their gods (Exodus 34:11–16 NKJV).

¹ “When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, ² and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them *and* utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. ³ Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son (Deuteronomy 7:1–3 NKJV).

²⁷ “I will send my terror ahead of you and create panic among all the people whose lands you invade. I will make all your enemies turn and run. ²⁸ I will send terror ahead of you to drive out the Hivites, Canaanites, and Hittites. ²⁹ But I will not drive them out in a single year, because the land would become desolate and the wild animals would multiply and threaten you. ³⁰ I will drive them out a little at a time until your population has increased enough to take possession of the land. ³¹ And I will fix your boundaries from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, and from the eastern wilderness to the Euphrates River. I will hand over to you the people now living in the land, and you will drive them out ahead of you.”

³² “Make no treaties with them or their gods. ³³ They must not live in your land, or they will cause you to sin against me. If you serve their gods, you will be caught in the trap of idolatry” (Exodus 23:27–33).

In the three passages above, the Hivites are listed. The people of Gibeon were the Hivites.

The commands in the passages above were to:

- Conquer and utterly destroy the people living in the land
- Have no mercy upon them
- Destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images
- Do not make a covenant with them nor with their gods
- Do not marry them

The reason for the commands was to prevent the following consequences:

- The inhabitants would become a snare and a trap to them
- They would inter-marry with the inhabitants of the land
- They would then worship their gods and “play the harlot” with their gods
- They would sin against God

One of the warnings in Exodus 34:15, is to not play the harlot with their gods. Worshipping other gods is like committing adultery against the Lord; we are commanded to worship no other gods but the Lord. If we do worship other gods, we are being unfaithful to God like a

woman who is unfaithful to her husband. Exodus 34:14 says that the Lord is a jealous God. God wants all of our hearts, love, devotion and worship.

God knew that if they made a covenant with the people of the land that eventually they would live as one and intermarry and the Israelites would soon be worshipping the gods of the very people God wanted to destroy because of their idol worship.

Rather than waiting on God and getting direction from Him, Joshua and the Israelite leaders rushed ahead and made the decision to make a covenant with the Hivites/Gibeonites.

It is hard to wait on the Lord at times, but if we rush ahead of God, or are disobedient, or don't seek the Lord for an answer to an important decision, we may create a situation or set of circumstances far worse than we had before we rushed ahead of God's timing and end up with an Ishmael and suffer the consequences.

I have created an Ishmael by not waiting on God. I took the word of someone, didn't take the time to investigate the facts, and rushed into a marriage that should have never happened. That decision and action created a nightmare in my life and that of my family's lives and destroyed me financially.

Have you ever created an Ishmael? The first thing that comes to my mind is the baby that was born to Sarah's handmade Hagar. Ishmael was conceived and born out of Sarah's impatience to wait for the promised child that God had promised to her and Abraham. Ishmael came into being because Sarah took things into her own hands, rushed ahead of God, and gave Hagar her handmade to her husband to sleep with so she could have a child. Once Ishmael was born there was no turning back the hand of time. There was no saying, "I'm sorry, I made a mistake!"

Once an Ishmael is created and born, you then have to change the dirty diapers and deal with the ensuing mess.

There is an old saying, "You made your bed, now you'll have to lie in it." In other words, we will have to suffer the consequences of our actions both good and bad.

Sarah suffered the consequences of her impatience and the whole world has suffered and is still suffering the consequences of the Ishmael she created.

Even before Hagar gave birth an angel came to Hagar and told her.

“This son of yours will be a wild man, as untamed as a wild donkey! He will raise his fist against everyone, and everyone will be against him. Yes, he will live in open hostility against all his relatives” (Genesis 16:12).

We see the results of this prophecy regarding Ishmael and his descendants today as we look at the Middle East and the anger, hatred, bitterness and war that is ongoing.

Once Joshua and the leaders of Israel made a covenant with the Gibeonites, they had to honor it. However, God was not pleased with this hasty decision by Joshua and the resulting covenant that was made. I call this Joshua’s Ishmael.

This treaty made by Joshua was forever, perpetual, and did not go away. God takes covenants, treaties, and oaths, seriously.

We now travel 400 years forward to the time of King David. There had been a famine in the land for three years and King David inquires of the Lord. The Lord tells him it is because King Saul killed the Gibeonites and broke the covenant that Joshua had made with them.

David Avenges the Gibeonites

² So the king summoned the Gibeonites. They were not part of Israel but were all that was left of the nation of the Amorites. The people of Israel had sworn not to kill them, but Saul, in his zeal for Israel and Judah, had tried to wipe them out. ³ David asked them, “What can I do for you? How can I make amends so that you will bless the Lord’s people again?”

⁴ “Well, money can’t settle this matter between us and the family of Saul,” the Gibeonites replied. “Neither can we demand the life of anyone in Israel.”

“What can I do then?” David asked. “Just tell me and I will do it for you.”

⁵ Then they replied, “It was Saul who planned to destroy us, to keep us from having any place at all in the territory of Israel. ⁶ So let seven of Saul’s sons be handed over to us, and we will execute them before the Lord at Gibeon, on the mountain of the Lord.”

“All right,” the king said, “I will do it.”⁷ The king spared Jonathan’s son Mephibosheth, who was Saul’s grandson, because of the oath David and Jonathan had sworn before the Lord.⁸ But he gave them Saul’s two sons Armoni and Mephibosheth, whose mother was Rizpah daughter of Aiah. He also gave them the five sons of Saul’s daughter Merab, the wife of Adriel son of Barzillai from Meholah.⁹ The men of Gibeon executed them on the mountain before the Lord. So, all seven of them died together at the beginning of the barley harvest.

¹⁰ Then Rizpah daughter of Aiah, the mother of two of the men, spread burlap on a rock and stayed there the entire harvest season. She prevented the scavenger birds from tearing at their bodies during the day and stopped wild animals from eating them at night.¹¹ When David learned what Rizpah, Saul’s concubine, had done,¹² he went to the people of Jabesh-gilead and retrieved the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan. (When the Philistines had killed Saul and Jonathan on Mount Gilboa, the people of Jabesh-gilead stole their bodies from the public square of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hung them.)¹³ So David obtained the bones of Saul and Jonathan, as well as the bones of the men the Gibeonites had executed.

¹⁴ Then the king ordered that they bury the bones in the tomb of Kish, Saul’s father, at the town of Zela in the land of Benjamin. After that, God ended the famine in the land (2 Samuel 21:2–14).

King Saul broke the covenant three hundred plus years after Joshua had made it with the Gibeonites; however, even though God had instructed the Israelites to completely destroy these very people, once they made a covenant with them it was perpetual and they needed to honor it for all time – forever. Saul’s decision to wipe out, destroy and murder the Gibeonites was a direct violation of that covenant.

God would not let this wrong go unpunished and for three years during David’s reign the land suffered from famine. The entire land of Israel suffered because of one man’s sin (Hmm, where have we heard this before? Remember Achan’s sin?). David was wise and inquired of the Lord and found out that the land suffered famine because of what Saul had done to the Gibeonites.

David then summoned what was left of the Gibeonites and asked them what they wanted for atonement or reparation for what had been done to them by Saul. The remedy sought by the Gibeonites is found in Numbers 35:33 NKJV:

So, you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it.

Here we see in God's word that blood that is shed by the hands of unpunished murderers defiles a land and that God will one day require atonement, or blood from that nation, or those who shed it. In this case, Saul was already dead, so the blood of his offspring was required to right the wrong that had been done by Saul to the Gibeonites.

Notice in 2 Samuel 21, that the killing of Saul's seven sons was at Gibeon, the town and the very people that deceived Joshua; however, once Joshua made the treaty with the Gibeonites, it was perpetual and needed to be passed down from one generation to another. Saul disobeyed the treaty, which demanded atonement and reparation by the Gibeonites, but also demanded a penalty or punishment to be paid by Saul's family.

So, Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the LORD, because he did not keep the word of the LORD, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance (1 Chronicles 10:13).

So, we see how Joshua's failure to consult the Lord regarding the Gibeonites and the perpetual peace treaty he made with them had lasting and far reaching consequences.

CHAPTER 25

Gibeon Attacked by Five Amorite Kings

King Adoni-Zedek of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had destroyed Jericho and Ai and how the Gibeonites had made a treaty with the Israelites. He and his people became very afraid because Gibeon was a large town—as large as the royal cities and larger than Ai. And the Gibeonite men were strong warriors.

King Adoini-Zedek solicits the help from four other Amorite kings and they combine their armies and attack Gibeon.

Notice that the king of Jerusalem and the other four Amorite kings did not attack the Israelites, but Gibeon. The Gibeonites were one of their own, why would they directly attack them? I believe it was because they felt betrayed. The Gibeonites had turned their backs on them and sided with the enemy and made a peace treaty with them. The Gibeonites were now their enemies and in some way this attack upon the Gibeonites was a form of punishment for betraying them; it was instant retaliation. In part, it was out of fear. Rather than having the Gibeonites, who were strong warriors, as an ally who could fight with them against the Israelites, they were now on the other side.

⁶The men of Gibeon quickly sent messengers to Joshua at his camp in Gilgal. “Don’t abandon your servants now!” they pleaded. “Come at once! Save us! Help us! For all the Amorite kings who live in the hill country have joined forces to attack us.”

⁷So Joshua and his entire army, including his best warriors, left Gilgal and set out for Gibeon. ⁸“Do not be afraid of them,” the LORD said to Joshua, “for I have given you

victory over them. Not a single one of them will be able to stand up to you” (Joshua 10:6–8).

The Gibeonites knew what they were doing when they tricked the Israelites into making a treaty with them, for they knew that not only would the Israelites not destroy them, but they would also have to protect them from their enemies once a treaty was made. Joshua and the Israelites are faithful to their vow to the Gibeonites.

Joshua does not hesitate, does not “sleep on it”, does not call a meeting to discuss it, and does not have second thoughts about helping the Gibeonites. Joshua knows what he must do. It’s a done deal. He’s already made the treaty and he must honor it. Joshua doesn’t even question his obligation or responsibility or the validity of their request.

Other leaders may have said, “Serves them right. They tricked us, so let them fight their own battles; if they get wiped out, good riddance!” However, Joshua is an honorable man and a man of his word. It didn’t matter that the Gibeonites were deceitful and tricked them into making the treaty. Joshua honors the treaty. Joshua takes immediate action. Joshua and his entire army, including his best warriors pack up their gear and get going.

Normally the trip from Gilgal to Gibeon would take three days, as seen in Joshua 9:16–17; however, Joshua and his army travel all night from Gilgal to Gibeon and take the Amorite armies by surprise.

This took hard work and initiative on Joshua’s part. The march from Gilgal to Gibeon involved a climb of around 4,000 feet, and the distance was about twenty miles, taking eight to ten hours of hard marching, all through the night.

CHAPTER 26

The Long Day of Joshua

The logistics and length of this day of battle amazes me, but before this day ever gets started, Joshua and his men have been marching all night long ascending about 4,000 feet and covering about twenty miles! This army is on foot! There are no horses, no donkeys or camels!

When we lived on the ranch in Montana, we lived 21 miles from Miles City. I think about walking that distance at night. They didn't have the fine highways and roads we have nowadays. We had some hills between our ranch and Miles City, but we certainly didn't ascend 4,000 feet over rough terrain!

Just to get a little prospective of what ascending 4,000 feet looks like, just think of the Grand Canyon which has an average depth of 1 mile or 5,280 feet.

From the Colorado River to the top of the South Rim, going up the Bright Angel Trail is an elevation change of 4,460 feet over 7.8 miles.

Just because they went 20 miles does not mean that the 4,000 feet was spread out over 20 miles!

The elevation of the Jordan River at the Dead Sea, which is where the most recent archeological research, puts Gilgal, at -1,384 ft. below sea level. Gibeon's elevation is 2,400 ft. above sea level. That is a difference of 3,784 ft. I'm not sure exactly where the other sources on the internet took their elevation measurements from, but whether it's 3,784 ft. or

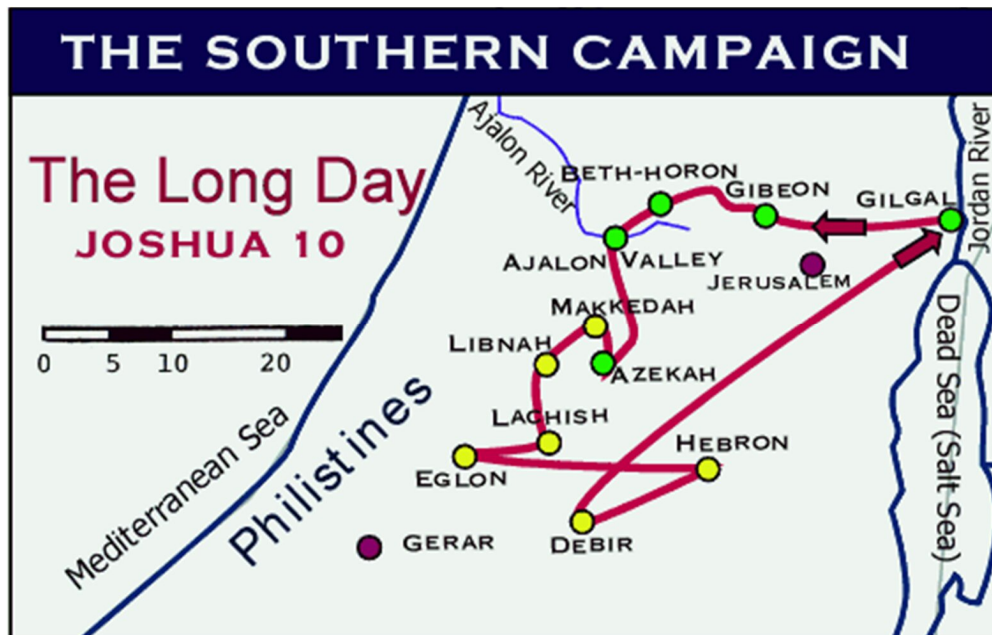
4,000 ft. the fact is that Joshua's army had a bit of a climb that night to get to the top of what is now called the West Bank.

Imagine covering that amount of ground all through the night and then launching an attack by dawn! This works to Joshua's advantage as he is attacking from the East so the enemy armies have to look into the rising sun.

⁹Joshua traveled all night from Gilgal and took the Amorite armies by surprise. ¹⁰The LORD threw them into a panic, and the Israelites slaughtered great numbers of them at Gibeon. Then the Israelites chased the enemy along the road to Beth-horon, killing them all along the way to Azekah and Makkedah. ¹¹As the Amorites retreated down the road from Beth-horon, the LORD destroyed them with a terrible hailstorm from heaven that continued until they reached Azekah. The hail killed more of the enemy than the Israelites killed with the sword (Joshua 10:9–11).

One cannot truly understand the Long Day of Joshua and everything God did for him and his army that day until you look at the ground they covered, all they conquered and the supernatural miracles God did for them.

The Ground They Covered and What They Conquered



The Southern Campaign Map¹

- Traveled all night from Gilgal to Gibeon, 20 miles ascending about 4,000 feet.
- Launched a surprise attack at dawn on the Amorite armies camped at Gibeon.
- Chased & killed the survivors from Gibeon to Beth-Horon, 7-10 miles on a gradual ascent through a long and precipitous ravine.
- Continued on down through the Valley of Aijalon to Azekah about 15 miles.
- From Azekah went to Makkedah, about 2 miles, and destroyed the town and everyone in it in. Some suggest this was back up the mountains 11 miles.
- From Makkedah go to Libnah 4 miles and destroyed the town and everyone in it including the king.
- Returned to the camp at Makkedah, 4 miles, and killed the 5 Amorite kings from: Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon.

In my research on the Long Day of Joshua, there are varying opinions as to the actual distances between the towns, partly because many of these towns were destroyed and do not exist today and there is some speculation as to which site was the exact site of a particular town. I have used the distances that seem to be the general consensus. Using these distances, one can quickly see that Joshua and his army covered 52-55 miles on this Long Day.

The terrain in the ground they covered was rugged and rough, a lot of ascending and descending in elevation.

John Gill's Exposition of The Entire Bible states regarding Beth-Horon:

“for being built on a hill, it had an ascent on one side, and a descent on the other, after mentioned, and both were very narrow passages; of the former it is said in the Talmud, that if two camels go up the ascent to Bethhoron, they both fall; upon which the glossary says, it is a narrow place, and there is no way to turn to the right hand, or the left.”²

The *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary* states regarding Beth-Horon:

“There were two contiguous villages of that name, upper and nether. Upper Beth-horon was nearest Gibeon—about ten miles distant, and approached by a gradual ascent through a long and precipitous ravine. This was the first stage of the flight.

The fugitives had crossed the high ridge of Upper Beth-horon, and were in full flight down the descent to Beth-horon the Nether. The road between the two places is so rocky and rugged that there is a path made by means of steps cut in the rock.”³

The Terrain Works to Joshua’s Advantage

“As the Amorites retreated down the road from Beth-horon, the LORD destroyed them with a terrible hailstorm from heaven that continued until they reached Azekah” (Joshua 10:11).

At this point Joshua and his army are at the top and the Amorites are retreating down the steep descent to the Valley of Aijalon. They are in full view of Joshua’s army and very vulnerable because of the steep terrain. From this high vantage point Joshua’s army can launch an assault on the Amorites below with arrows shot from bows and rocks thrown from slings. They could also roll boulders down the steep descent towards the Amorites. It is also from this vantage point that Joshua and his army can watch the hailstorm.

The Supernatural Miracles God Did for Joshua and His Army

It amazes me that even among Christians there are so many skeptics of God’s miracles. They seem to be unable to comprehend and accept by simple faith that God can do anything! These same skeptics want to put God in a box and make everything fit into a neat little package that they can understand. In their quest to understand, they try to explain what could have happened and end up diminishing and explaining away the miracle.

For instance, they cannot understand, humanly speaking, how Joshua and this army could travel so far in one day. The fact is that in mere human strength they could not. Why is it so hard to believe that when God answers prayer and does a miracle, He provides supernatural assistance in more ways than one?

Can you imagine wearing only one pair of shoes or sandals for several years and not wearing them out? Or, how about wearing a set of clothing for several years and not wearing them out?

Most of us have so many different pairs of shoes and sets of clothes for every occasion and different purposes that we do not need to wear the same pair of shoes or the same set of clothing every day all day long, week after week and year after year, so we really don’t see a

lot of wear and tear for quite some time; unless, however, it is your set of work boots, or work clothes.

God supernaturally and miraculously kept the Israelites' sandals and clothes from wearing out for forty years. Imagine walking all those years through the desert and never seeing any wear and tear on your sandals! This wasn't walking on nice carpet or sidewalks or pavement. This was walking on rough terrain made of sand, gravel and rocks.

⁵ For forty years I led you through the wilderness, yet your clothes and sandals did not wear out (Deuteronomy 29:5).

Not only did the Lord keep their sandals and clothes from wearing out, but he also kept their feet from blistering and swelling!

⁴ For all these forty years your clothes didn't wear out, and your feet didn't blister or swell (Deuteronomy 8:4).

Surely the God, who kept the Israelites' sandals and clothes from wearing out and kept their feet from blistering and swelling, could also give Joshua and his army supernatural strength and endurance that long day and keep Joshua's feet and his army's feet from blistering and swelling even after walking 55 miles!

We find that God supernaturally kept Caleb young and strong for forty-five years:

⁷ I was forty years old when Moses, the servant of the LORD, sent me from Kadesh-barnea to explore the land of Canaan. I returned and gave an honest report, ⁸ but my brothers who went with me frightened the people from entering the Promised Land. For my part, I wholeheartedly followed the LORD my God. ⁹ So that day Moses solemnly promised me, 'The land of Canaan on which you were just walking will be your grant of land and that of your descendants forever, because you wholeheartedly followed the LORD my God.'

¹⁰ "Now, as you can see, the LORD has kept me alive and well as he promised for all these forty-five years since Moses made this promise—even while Israel wandered in the wilderness. Today I am eighty-five years old. ¹¹ I am as strong now as I was when Moses

sent me on that journey, and I can still travel and fight as well as I could then (Joshua 14:7–11).

The Lord who kept Caleb as strong at eighty-five years old as he was at forty years old, is the same Lord who gave Joshua and his army extra strength and endurance to cover fifty-five miles, fight five Amorite Kings and their armies, and conquer and destroy everyone living in the land from Gibeon to Libnah in a period of forty-eight hours.

Instead of taking the Bible and Joshua's account for face value and accepting the fact that God can indeed cause the sun and the moon to stand still in their place by slowing the earth's rotation, the skeptics try and speculate that it was a full moon that was so bright they could keep fighting at night.

The article I have attached in Appendix D entitled *Joshua's Long Day, Did It Really Happen-and How?* by Russell M. Grigg, Creationist, Chemist, former missionary and staff writer for Creation Ministries International, is an excellent discussion on this subject.

¹² On the day the LORD gave the Israelites victory over the Amorites, Joshua prayed to the LORD in front of all the people of Israel. He said,

“Let the sun stand still over Gibeon, and the moon over the valley of Aijalon.”

¹³ So the sun stood still and the moon stayed in place and did not set for about a whole day.

Is this event not recorded in *The Book of Jashar*? The sun stayed in the middle of the sky, and it did not set as on a normal day. ¹⁴ There has never been a day like this one before or since, when the LORD answered such a prayer. Surely the LORD fought for Israel that day! (Joshua 10:12–14).

When Joshua prayed for the sun to stand still over Gibeon and the moon over the Valley of Aijalon it was around noon midday. The position of the sun, according to Joshua's prayer, was overhead and the position of the moon was to the West.

I believe that when Joshua prayed for the sun and the moon to stand still that God answered the prayer of this one man whose heart was totally and wholeheartedly dedicated to God and that God did indeed have the sun stand still over Gibeon and the moon over the Valley of

Aijalon for the period of a twenty-four-hour day. The additional twenty-four hours tagged onto the regular hours of the sun in the sky from sunrise to sunset would have been a total of about thirty-six hours. Notice verse 14, “There has never been a day like this one before or since, when the LORD answered such a prayer.”

Joshua believed that God could and would do the incredible, the miraculous, and the unheard of. Joshua believed God’s promise in Joshua 10:8:

⁸ “Do not be afraid of them,” the LORD said to Joshua, “for I have given you victory over them. Not a single one of them will be able to stand up to you.”

Even though God promised Joshua that He would give him victory over the Amorites, Joshua and his army still had to do the work. They still had to cover the ground and do the work of hand to hand combat and overtake and kill the enemy. Joshua looked at the task before him and knew that he was running out of daylight, even though it was still mid-morning or midday. He knew that with the Amorites on the run, they would need to go after them and destroy them and finish the job before the sun went down. Once the sun went down they would not be able to pursue them and it would allow the Amorites time to escape, hide, warn the others and time to regroup.

We see Joshua’s strategy in Joshua 10:19, “The rest of you continue chasing the enemy and cut them down from the rear. Don’t give them a chance to get back to their towns, for the LORD your God has given you victory over them.”

I like this quality in Joshua. Even though he had marched twenty miles all night with his army and launched a surprise attack at dawn on the Amorites at Gibeon, then continued the battle another 7-10 miles to Beth-Horon, rather than saying, “I think we’ve done enough for one day. Let’s just take a rest. Tomorrow will be another day and we’ll catch up with them tomorrow.” Joshua takes stock of the situation and weighs the matter carefully and knows exactly what it will take to get the job done; he needs more daylight!

Joshua doesn’t even flinch, doesn’t hesitate, doesn’t doubt, and doesn’t even question if he should even ask this of the Lord. In fact, he boldly prays in front of all the people of Israel, “Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon” (Joshua 10:12 KJV).

In the King James Version, it reads like a command to the sun and to the moon to stand still. Joshua doesn't pray, "Lord, if it be thy will, let the sun and moon stand still."

This reminds me of the verses in Matthew where Jesus was telling his disciples about faith.

²⁰ So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. (Matthew 17:20 NKJV).

²¹ So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. ²² And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive" (Matthew 21:21–22 NKJV).

How many of us pray secretly to the Lord for a request, because we don't want anyone to know about it, just in case God doesn't do what we've asked him for? That way if it doesn't happen, we won't feel ashamed or feel like we didn't have enough faith for it to happen.

Joshua was on a mission, on an assignment from God, and it was his job to defeat the Canaanites and conquer the land. He already had a promise from God that He would be with him and would give him the victory, so Joshua boldly asks for the help he needs to accomplish this task – more daylight, a longer day!

In our world today, it is hard to find someone of such character, someone who is willing to go the extra mile, put in the extra work, and go above and beyond the normal expectations. Employers have problems just finding people who will show up regularly and on time for work!

But even more so, to find true born-again believers who are totally sold out for God and willing to go the distance for Him. People who are wholeheartedly committed to Jesus Christ and care not for the things of this world, but care only to do God's will, be witnesses for Him and carry out the Great Commission.

Notice too, how we don't find any complaining from Joshua's army. How could they complain when their leader was probably 80 years old, twenty years older than the oldest of them and another one of their leaders, Caleb, was also 80 years old?

Long Day of Joshua – Flow of Battle⁴



This direction of the flow of the battle explains why Joshua was requesting, "Sun, be at rest over Gibeon; and you, O moon, in the Valley of Aijalon." The Aijalon Valley was an important military and caravan route through the approximately 1500 feet high rocky plateau called the Shephelah, a major connection route between the Bethel/Gibeon/Jerusalem area and the coastal plain. It was quite an endurance feat for Joshua and his army. Hike a three quarters marathon distance overnight, win a decisive battle in the morning, begin the pursuit and witness the partial destruction of the surviving foes by a world class hailstorm and then continue the pursuit for another three quarters marathon distance to complete the destruction of the foes.⁴

Not only did God cause the sun and the moon to stand still, God also created a world class hailstorm to help Joshua defeat and kill the enemy. "The hail killed more of the enemy than the Israelites killed with the sword" (Joshua 10:11).

That's a lot of casualties from hail. We're talking thousands of men!

The *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary* states:

"The Oriental hailstorm is a terrific agent; the hailstones are masses of ice, large as walnuts, and sometimes as two fists; their prodigious size, and the violence with which they fall, make them always very injurious to property, and often fatal to life. The miraculous feature of this tempest, which fell on the Amorite army, was the entire preservation of the Israelites from its destructive ravages."³

I decided to find out just how large hailstones have been that have fallen here in the United States. I found the following statistics:



Vivian, South Dakota Hail Stone⁵

Largest hailstone ever recorded in the United States.

Vivian, South Dakota

23 July 2010

Weight: 1 lb., 15 oz. (878.8 g)

Diameter: 8" (20.3 cm)

Circumference: 18.6" (47.3 cm)

Record for weight and diameter.

The previous record holder fell in Coffeyville, Kansas, September 3, 1970, and held the record for almost 33 years for size, weight, and circumference. A giant hailstone that fell in Aurora, Nebraska, on June 22, 2003, surpassed the Coffeyville, Kansas, hailstone and still holds the record for largest circumference of 18.75 inches.

Coffeyville, Kansas

3 September 1970

Weight: 1 lb., 11 oz. (765 g)

Diameter: 5.7" (14.5 cm)

Circumference: 17.5" (44.5 cm)

Aurora, Nebraska

22 June 2003

Weight: No official wt. recorded

Diameter: 7" (17.78 cm)

Circumference: 18.75" (47.63 cm)



Hail swath in Airdrie, Alberta, Canada⁶

A strong thunderstorm produced a major hail storm across parts of Alberta, Canada, (July 6, 2013). The storm hit parts of Airdrie, Alberta and pushed to the east into parts of Irricana, Alberta. This storm produced a significant accumulation of hail in just about 15 minutes, where many spots had at least 3 inches of hail accumulation. Patrick J. claimed up to 12" in one place.

This 20-mile hail swath in Alberta reminded me of the hail swath that would have been seen from Beth-Horon to Azekah about fifteen miles in length, except the hail that fell on the

Long Day of Joshua would have been a lot larger and the swath would have also included thousands of dead bodies.

We find the summary of the day and battle in Joshua 10:9–14. We find the details of the day and the battle in Joshua 10:16–43. Let's look at some of the details of what happened during the battle.

Details of the Battle

During the battle, the five kings had escaped and hid in a cave at Makkedah. When Joshua hears that they have been found he issues an order to block the opening of the cave with large rocks and place guards at the entrance to keep the kings inside. Joshua and the rest of the army continue the slaughter. Rather than stopping what he is doing and rushing in and killing the kings, Joshua continues on with the battle where he is at and lets the kings sweat it out! The kings know they are trapped and must wait to find out what will happen to them! That in itself must have been sheer torture!

- Joshua orders his men to continue chasing the enemy and to cut them down from the rear and not give them a chance to get back to their towns.
- Joshua encourages his men, “The Lord your God has given you victory over them” (Joshua 10:19b).

Joshua and his army destroy the towns of Makkedah and Libnah and killed everyone in them including their kings, killing them the same way he killed the king of Jericho.

We do not find any specific account of how the king of Jericho was killed, but God told Joshua to do to the king of Ai as he did to the king of Jericho, and the king of Ai was hanged.

² And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king (Joshua 8:2 NKJV).

²⁹ And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until evening. And as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his corpse down from the tree, cast it at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raise over it a great heap of stones that remains to this day (Joshua 8:29 NKJV).

After Joshua and his army killed everyone in Libnah they return to the camp at Makkedah. We find in verse 20 that they totally wiped out the five armies except for a tiny remnant that managed to reach their fortified towns. Those towns would have been: Lachish, Eglon, and Hebron.

When they finally return to Makkedah, Joshua then deals with the five Amorite kings: Adoni-zedek of Jerusalem, Hoham of Hebron, Piram of Jarmuth, Japhia of Lachish, and Debir of Eglon. He has them brought out of the cave to him and told the commanders of his army to put their feet upon the necks of the kings and they did.

After the commanders of his army put their feet upon the necks of the kings, Joshua tells his men, “Don’t ever be afraid or discouraged. Be strong and courageous, for the LORD is going to do this to all of your enemies” (Joshua 10:25).

The Pulpit Commentary makes an interesting statement regarding Joshua and why he had his commanders put their feet on the kings’ necks.

The fact that this was done, not by Joshua, but by the captains (קָצָוּ; from קָצַץ to cut off), i.e., the inferior officers of the Israelitish army, makes a wide distinction between this and the usual arrogance of Oriental conquerors, and marks the very great moral superiority of Joshua over any other leader known to history either in his own time or in subsequent ages. For whereas the act was usually an act of arrogant triumph on the part of the leader himself, here the leader modestly disclaims any such superiority, and calls upon his subordinates to assume it, as a sign that the Israelitish people, whose representatives they were, should triumph over all their enemies.⁷

After they do this, Joshua then kills the five kings and impales their bodies on five sharpened poles until evening. As the sun was going down Joshua gives instructions for their bodies to be taken down and thrown into the cave in which they had been hiding and to cover the opening of the cave with a large pile of rocks.

Finally, the long day ends and Joshua and his men can finally rest.

CHAPTER 27

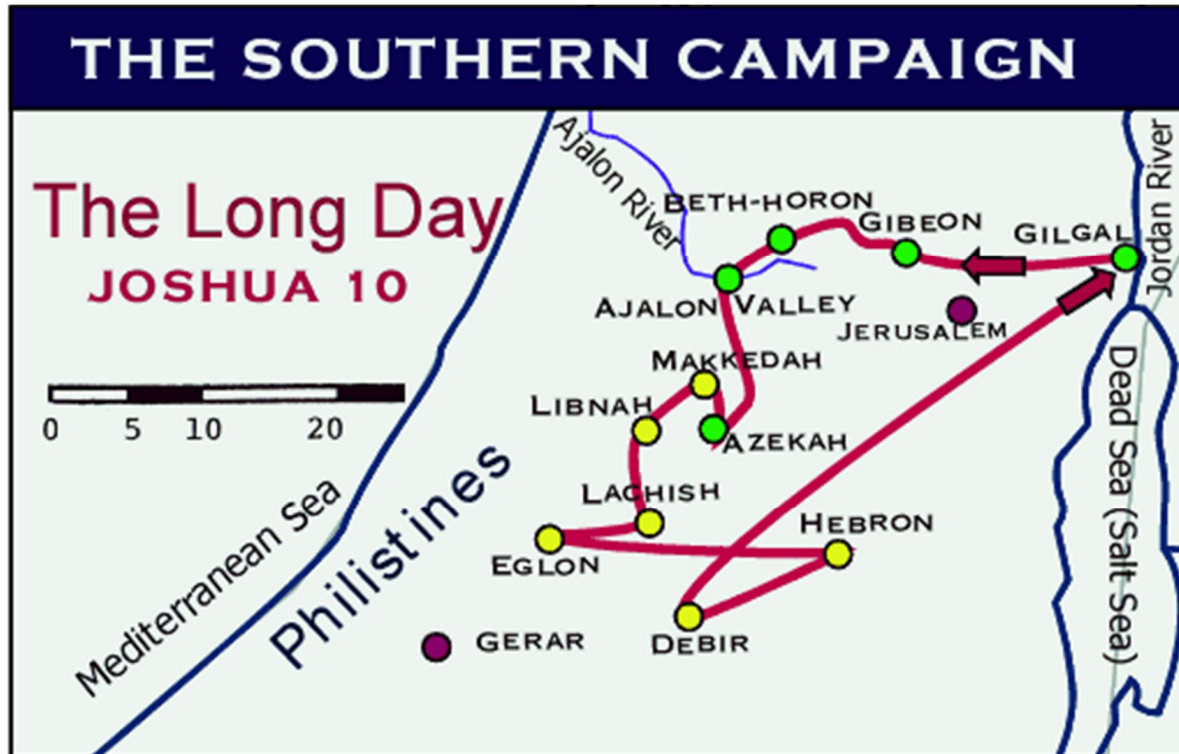
The Second Day of Battle

Joshua starts the second day of the campaign from his camp in Makkedah. We saw in verse 21 of Joshua 10 that Joshua's army returned to the camp in Makkedah after the Long Day to finish dealing with the kings. We know from verse 29 that they had defeated Libnah on the Long Day.

We begin the narration of the second day in verse 31 of Joshua 10 as it specifically mentions that the Lord gave them Lachish and Joshua took it on the second day.

³¹ From Libnah, Joshua and the Israelites went to Lachish and attacked it. ³² Here again, the LORD gave them Lachish. Joshua took it on the second day and killed everyone in it, just as he had done at Libnah. ³³ During the attack on Lachish, King Hiram of Gezer arrived with his army to help defend the town. But Joshua's men killed him and his army, leaving no survivors (Joshua 10:31–33).

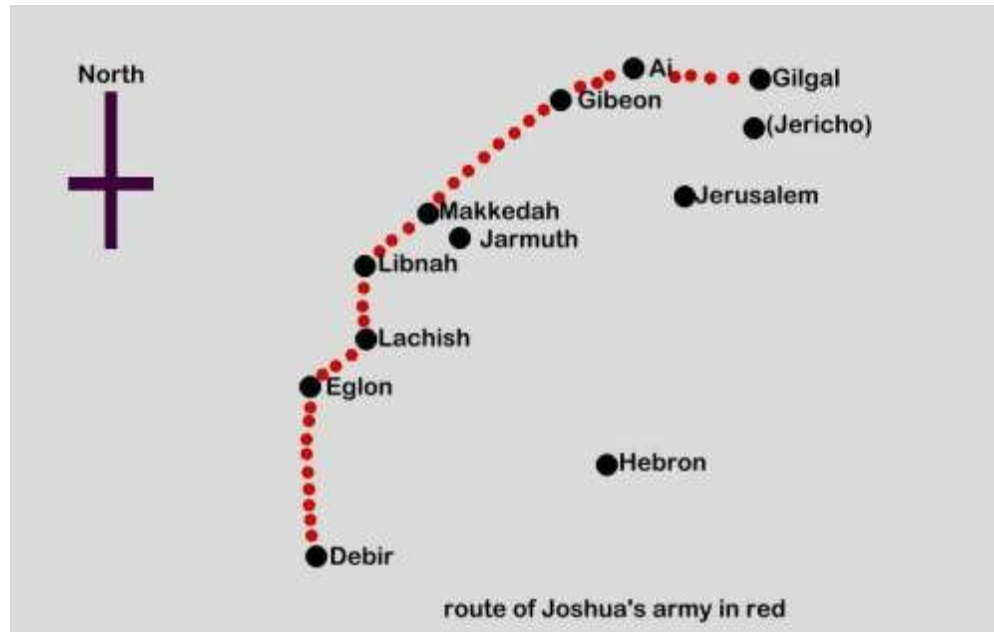
- Makkedah to Lachish – 12 miles
- Lachish to Eglon – 8 miles²
- Eglon to Hebron – 16 miles³
- Hebron to Debir – 13 miles
- Debir to Gilgal – 25 miles



Southern Campaign Map¹

³⁴Then Joshua and the Israelite army went on to Eglon and attacked it. ³⁵They captured it that day and killed everyone in it. He completely destroyed everyone, just as he had done at Lachish. ³⁶From Eglon, Joshua and the Israelite army went up to Hebron and attacked it. ³⁷They captured the town and killed everyone in it, including its king, leaving no survivors. They did the same thing to all of its surrounding villages. And just as he had done at Eglon, he completely destroyed the entire population.

³⁸Then Joshua and the Israelites turned back and attacked Debir. ³⁹He captured the town, its king, and all of its surrounding villages. He completely destroyed everyone in it, leaving no survivors. He did to Debir and its king just what he had done to Hebron and to Libnah and its king (Joshua 10:34–39).



Route of Joshua's army – showing Jarmuth⁴

The route of Joshua's army on the map above is in error as it should show the route from Eglon to Hebron and then to Deir. What I do like about the map above is that it shows the location of Jarmuth, which is one of the cities of the five kings that went up against Gibeon. It was the king of Jerusalem who was the ring leader of the bunch.

Even though the account of the Long Day does not mention the defeat of Jarmuth specifically, we know that they were defeated because of verses 40-42 which states that he completely destroyed everyone in the land, leaving no survivors and even gives the boundaries of the conquered land. We also find in verses 37 and 38 in speaking of Hebron and Deir that they did the same thing to the surrounding villages.

Joshua has an army of 200,000 – 600,000 men and as in any military assault they spread out and take not only the city, but the surrounding outlying areas. I believe this included Jarmuth because of its close proximity to Makkedah.

One main city, however, was not taken. That was Jerusalem, one of the five confederates. Jerusalem had been out of the way as Joshua had pursued the fleeing enemy on the way south. It remained a tiny island, not incorporated into Israelite territory, until King David seized it later.⁵

⁴⁰ So Joshua conquered the whole region—the kings and people of the hill country, the Negev, the western foothills, and the mountain slopes. He completely destroyed everyone in the land, leaving no survivors, just as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded. ⁴¹ Joshua slaughtered them from Kadesh-barnea to Gaza and from the region around the town of Goshen up to Gibeon. ⁴² Joshua conquered all these kings and their land in a single campaign, for the LORD, the God of Israel, was fighting for his people.

⁴³ Then Joshua and the Israelite army returned to their camp at Gilgal (Joshua 10:40–43).



4 Corners of Judah Map – Joshua's Conquered Land in a Single Campaign⁶

I take the Bible literally and believe that this campaign only lasted two days. We do not find any mention of a third day, or any subsequent days beyond the mention of the second day in verse 32.

The Lord, the God of Israel, was fighting for his people. God gave Joshua and his army the victory. He didn't just hand it to them without a fight. They had to work for it, but he did give them the wisdom, the ability, the strength and the endurance to press on and do the impossible.

Joshua and his men never thought it was impossible. Joshua believed by faith that God would help him just as He said He would. Joshua never wavered. He stood strong in his faith and what he believed. He was a leader that his men and all of the Israelites could look up to and follow.

We must remember that Joshua and Caleb are now about eighty years old, twenty years older than the oldest men in the Israelite army and camp. What remarkable examples for the army and for the people to follow.

Joshua never sought fame or glory, but always pointed his men and his people to God and what God had done for them.



Tell Lachish – aerial from northwest⁷

Identified first as Lachish by Albright in 1929, the tell was excavated by James Leslie Starkey 1932-38 and by Tel Aviv University 1973-87.⁷

Lachish is generally regarded as the second most important city in the southern kingdom of Judah. It enters the biblical narrative in the battle accounts of Joshua, Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar.⁷



Approach Ramp⁸

The city was surrounded by two walls including a lower retaining wall. The approach ramp led to the outer gatehouse which in turn led to the inner triple-chambered gatehouse.⁸

Lachish is the only tell in the country that is owned by the Israel Antiquities Authority. They inherited it from the British who purchased the site for excavation.⁸

CHAPTER 28

Israel Defeats the Northern Armies

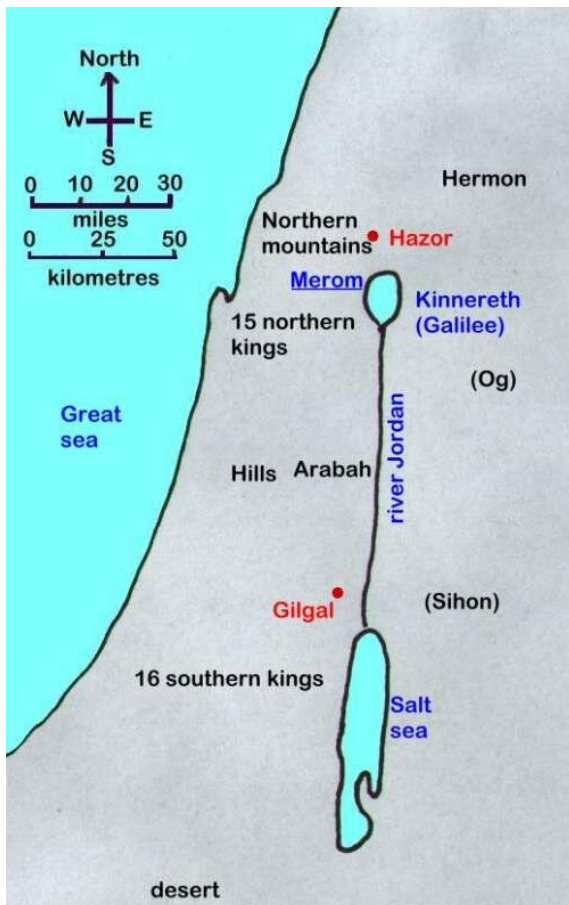
We find in Joshua 11 that King Jabin of Hazor found out what had happened to the kings of the south. You can imagine his state of mind! This man is frantic! He sends messages to the following kings:

- King Jobab of Madon
- The King of Shimron
- The King of Acshaph
- All the kings of the northern hill country
- The kings in the Jordan Valley south of Galilee
- The kings in the Galilean foothills
- The kings of Naphoth-dor on the west
- The kings of Canaan, both east and west
- The kings of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites in the hill country, and the Hivites in the towns on the slopes of Mount Hermon in the land of Mizpah.

All of these kings and their armies combine their armies to fight against Joshua and his army. They establish their camp around the water near Merom.

Waters of Merom

The site of the battle is not clear but a likely place for “the waters of Merom” is near the foot of Har Merom (on modern Israeli maps), or on older maps, Jabel Marun — the highest mountain in Israel (3,962 feet, or 1,207.1 meters). Near the base of the mountain is the town of Merom, where several roads leading into northern Galilee converge. It is on the road between Hazor and Acco on the coast; hence, it was a convenient place for Joshua’s enemies to rendezvous. Merom is about eight miles (12.9 kilometers) southwest of Hazor. The “waters of Merom,” therefore, would be the springs that emerge from the mountain to flow down Wadi Leimun into the Sea of Galilee... The allied forces defeated by Joshua fled northwest, in the direction of Sidon, suggesting an attack by Joshua from the southeast, from the area west of the Sea of Galilee, the natural approach from the south.¹



Map of Merom & Hazor²



Battle at the Waters of Merom Map³

Kings from the north joined together to battle the Israelites and gathered by the waters of Merom.

Joshua attacked them by surprise--the enemies' chariots were useless in the dense forests. It seems likely they intended to only use this area as a rendezvous and staging area for their combined forces.⁹

⁴ All these kings came out to fight. Their combined armies formed a vast horde. And with all their horses and chariots, they covered the landscape like the sand on the seashore. ⁵The kings joined forces and established their camp around the water near Merom to fight against Israel (Joshua 11:4–5).

Notice it says a vast horde and with all of their horses and chariots, they covered the landscape like the sand on the seashore. Imagine that sight and knowing you are going against them!

An article on the website rationalchristianity.net suggests that the Israelites probably did not have horses or chariots at this time. It cites the verses in Exodus 12:35–38 where the Israelites left on foot with their livestock, which probably did not include horses. The Egyptians had given them clothing and jewelry, but probably not horses. The article goes on to cite verses in Deuteronomy that imply that the Israelites had neither horses nor chariots which would have made them considerably more powerful.⁴

¹“When you go out to fight your enemies and you face horses and chariots and an army greater than your own, do not be afraid. The LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, is with you! ³Do not lose heart or panic or tremble before them. ⁴For the LORD your God is going with you! He will fight for you against your enemies, and he will give you victory!” (Deuteronomy 20:1, 3, 4).

That same promise and assurance that God would go with them, fight for them and give them the victory is given again to Joshua and his men:

⁶Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid of them. By this time tomorrow I will hand all of them over to Israel as dead men. Then you must cripple their horses and burn their chariots” (Joshua 11:6).

The command is given to cripple their horses and burn their chariots. In the NKJV it says to hamstring their horses.

To “hock” or “hamstring” a horse was to cut the sinew in the back legs so as to cripple, render lame and prevent those horses from being used in warfare.

I spoke with Dr. Stewart Hales, a veterinarian from Orange County, California, whom Pastor Richard Cathers of Calvary Chapel, Fullerton, CA, quoted in his Sunday night Bible study on Joshua 10-11 on April 18, 1999. This is what he had to say about hamstringing a horse:

It cuts the tendon just above the hock (like the knee on a horse's back legs, or like just above our heel). Renders the back legs useless and immobile. It would essentially kill the horse because the horse wouldn't be able to stand up. Horses need their back legs to get up.⁵

One reason for God's command (to hamstring the horses) could have been to keep the Israelites from using the horses and chariots in their future battles and then attributing their success to having the horses and chariots, instead of attributing it to God. Throughout Israel's history, God wanted them to trust in Him, not in themselves or their military strength. He deliberately used a weak, small army to show his power.⁴

God was showing the Israelites that he was bigger and better than the best that man had to offer. The Egyptians were known and feared for their use of horses and chariots in military campaigns. In the ancient world, the army with the horses and chariots had a significant upper hand in any battle. Horses of the day were trained not to stop for anything. They were essentially trained to run over any and everything in their way. Thus, a single horse-drawn chariot could be an extremely powerful weapon. The only way to stop it would be to kill the horse or the driver. But even with all the advantages that horses and chariots offered an army, those advantages were nothing compared to having God on your side and fighting for you. I think this was something the Israelites needed to see: God is infinitely better than anything man could offer. And when you have God on your side, things like horses and chariots seem to pale in comparison.⁶

John Karmelich of BibleStudyemail.com in his Bible study lesson on Joshua 11 states,

“There was a first century historian named Josephus. He wrote a history of the Jewish nation up to that time. His account of this battle is that the group of the northern kings had 300,000 soldiers, 10,000 cavalry ("soldiers on horses") and

another 20,000 chariots. The chariots of this group were designed to be pulled by four horses each. They were designed for attack. It was the ancient equivalent of the "tank".⁷

According to Josephus the northern kings had 90,000 horses!

20,000 chariots x 4 horses per chariot

= 80,000 horses

+ 10,000 horses, 1 per cavalry soldier

= 90,000 horses

There were basically two types of battle chariots: 2-wheelers, and 4-wheelers. A typical 4-wheeler carried two soldiers, a warrior and his driver. These chariots were usually pulled by four animals, not necessarily horses; wild asses or onagers, a subspecies of the Asiatic wild ass may have been used. The fact that four animals were needed suggests that the chariot was heavy. The wheels were heavy, solid and without spokes. The later 2-wheelers were lighter and each wheel had four spokes and was pulled by three horses: two in harness and one in reserve. Even though chariot horses were protected in battle by special armor, it was easy for the enemy to disable a horse, so a third horse was kept as a replacement. The function of these chariots was to charge the enemy with a direct frontal assault: to charge, terrify, mow them down and then engage them with javelins and spears and an ax.⁸

Joshua and all of his fighting men travel from Gilgal to the waters of Merom about sixty-five miles and attack suddenly.

As soon as Joshua learns of King Jabin of Hazor and the coalition of forces from the north, Joshua goes on the offensive. He doesn't wait for Jabin to come to him; instead he marches his entire army north, deep into enemy territory. We know from past battles that Joshua and his troops like to move at night under the cover of darkness and launch a surprise attack at dawn, when the enemy least expect it. We know too, that Joshua liked to send scouts well in advance to do some reconnaissance so he knew exactly where the enemy was located, the size of their forces, their habits, and what he was up against.

In this particular case, he knows that the combined forces have converged and set up their headquarters around the waters of Merom. This confederacy included Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, and Hivites, all whom are normally very independent of one another. There was no central government and each city had its own king.

The Canaanite coalition forces had probably just recently arrived at the waters or springs of Merom and were not yet totally prepared to encounter Joshua and his army. Combining numerous multiple troops is not an easy task as there are details to work out and questions that need to be answered. Who will be in charge? Who will be second in command and so forth? Who will determine the battle strategy? What will be their plan of attack? Who will determine the formation for the various armies?

When Joshua arrives on the scene at dawn they are probably still asleep, or just getting up and getting their day started: preparing and eating breakfast, gathering up their gear, feeding the horses and getting them saddled and harnessed to the chariots, and leaders discussing the plan for the day.

You can imagine the utter surprise and confusion of the Canaanite coalition forces as they scramble to fight and flee. One group of Joshua's men quickly rush in where the chariots are parked and start them on fire while others hamstring the horses preventing the enemy to escape on them. Others in Joshua's army pounce on the enemy in their beds, eating breakfast or down by the water washing themselves or getting water for the day.

Perhaps there were those Canaanite soldiers, who had their chariots and horses ready to go, but, alas, they were useless in the dense forests and it is very hard to hide in the forest with a horse!

Merom was centrally located among the cities of the Northern Federation. Its disadvantage lay in the fact that this was an area of rolling hills and thick forests, thus negating the strength and mobility of their chariot corps. It seems likely that they had intended to use this area only as a rendezvous for their combined forces (Joshua 11:7 indicates that this was a surprise attack).⁹

In ancient times, the hills were heavily forested and Israelite guerilla tactics proved successful in this territory. However, in the coastal plain the Canaanite and Philistine iron chariots proved to be the tanks of their period, racing across the flat country. But chariots were ineffective on wooded hills.¹⁰

John Karmelich states in his Bible study lesson, "Joshua's tactics are studied at West Point (The U.S. Army Military Academy.) It is said that Hitler's generals studied Joshua. Jewish soldiers today are taught about Joshua's military strategy. The point is such teaching focuses on Joshua using speed, cunning and knowledge of the local

territory (geography) all to his advantage. Usually these teachers avoid the issue of God helping Joshua and simply focus on Joshua's battle tactics."¹¹

Have you ever heard a horse scream? I have. While driving one night on a major highway, my husband and I came up over a hill and right in front of us was a herd of horses crossing the highway! My husband tried to stop, but couldn't before we hit a big mare. She came up onto the hood of the pickup and crashed into the window before sliding off into the ditch and we finally came to a stop. I love horses and did not have the heart or the stomach to look, but my husband went to see how she was. I'll never forget her constant screaming. My husband said that one of her front legs had been severed off from the impact. Fortunately, a highway patrol officer came along soon after the accident and put her out of her misery and gave us a ride back to the nearest town as our pickup was totaled. He said that we were lucky to be alive as most vehicles that hit a horse, the occupants are usually dead as the horse will usually crash completely through the windshield, especially if they are in a car. We weren't lucky; we were protected by the hand of God.

In speaking with Dr. Steward Hales, I asked him if there would have been a lot of screaming horses. He told me that his experience as a veterinarian when a horse has been injured and is down they generally don't scream. They usually are in the moment and try to get up. However, some horses when in a lot of pain will scream.

Although I love horses, I understand why God told the Israelites to hamstring the horses, but I can also imagine the screaming of 90,000 or more horses. Many people will lose their focus on the bigger issue here and focus in on only what they consider the suffering of animals. Let's look at the human factor. War is war; and war is ugly.

I have never experienced war and I hope and pray I never do, but I'm sure many of our men and women in our armed forces and our veterans can describe firsthand the gruesome reality of war. The United States lost 405,399 lives in WWII and 625,000 in the Civil War.

This battle would have seen up to 350,000 soldiers killed, not to mention all of the people in the cities and surrounding countryside. That's a lot of bodies and blood and guts. Joshua and his men fought a bloody battle and saw a lot of death and dying. Even though these numbers seem like a lot, they pale in comparison to the Battle of Armageddon that has yet to be waged in the Plain of Meggido in Revelation 16.

In Ezekiel 39 we find a battle yet to come that will take Israel seven months to bury the dead and they will have enough weapons to burn for fuel that will last them seven years!

One of the bloodiest battles yet to come is prophesied in Revelation 14 where the blood will be up to the horses' bridles for 200 miles long and 22 yards wide!

¹⁹ So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. ²⁰ And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs (Revelation 14:19–20 NKJV).

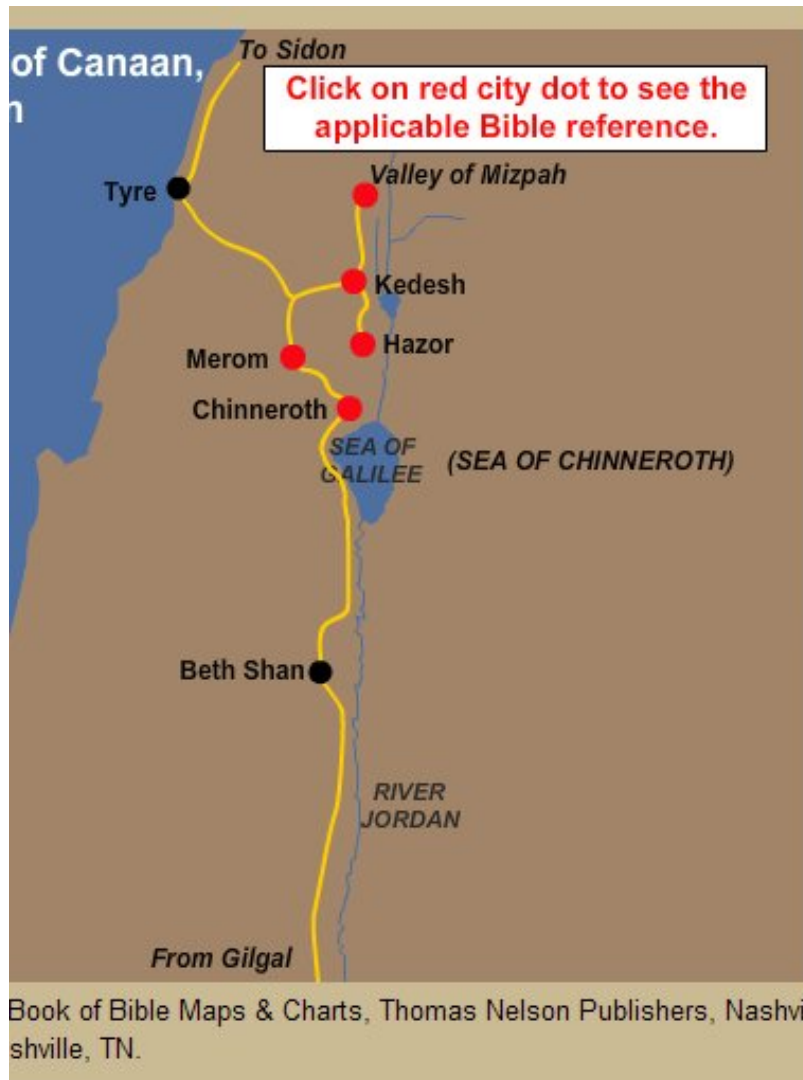
I thought this excerpt from a teaching by Tom Bradford from *The Torah Class* is right on and so very true:

“Can it be that in modern times the same dynamic and pattern is still playing out among essentially the same ancient people? Can it be that the same ancient enemies of Israel, living with Israel and nearby Israel, are still having their hearts hardened by the Lord so that they do NOT do the very thing that would seem to be in their own self-interest and result in such a good thing to most people on this earth; to establish peace in the Middle East? Maybe what seems to be such a good and worthy goal of the US, Europe, the UN, most of Christianity and all of Israel itself to find a way to peace with its neighbors is running exactly counter to God's will. Remember: God's stated goal concerning Canaan and the Hebrew people was to eradicate false gods and the people who are dedicated to worshipping them. And central to that goal is that those who are God's people will not be tempted into including those false gods in their own worship, and thus setting themselves up for God's wrath.

Do you see this? Do you see that peace in the Middle East is not really on God's agenda, per se? His goal is to WIN! His goal is not to find a way to common ground or to coexist with an enemy and a false deity named Allah (or any other for that matter) but to, in time, draw these enemies out of their strongholds and into a final decisive battle with the Lord as the Divine Warrior. Of course, as with the book of Joshua, they think they are primarily fighting Israel when actually they are fighting Israel's God.

Armageddon is but the final chapter of the 3300-year-old conquest of Canaan that to this day has never been completed. Even the name of the leader of the conquest remains the same: Y'hoshua, long hand for Yeshua."¹²

Now back to our battle. From Merom they chase them to Sidon, to the Brook Misrephoth, and to the Valley of Mizpah. After they killed everyone, they turned back and took Hazor and burned it.



Northern Campaign Map¹³

⁸ And the LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, who defeated them and chased them to Greater Sidon, to the Brook Misrephoth, and to the Valley of Mizpah eastward; they attacked them until they left none of them remaining. ⁹ So Joshua did to them as the LORD had told him: he hamstringing their horses and burned their chariots with fire (Joshua 11:8-9 NKJV).

¹⁰ Joshua turned back at that time and took Hazor, and struck its king with the sword; for Hazor was formerly the head of all those kingdoms. ¹¹ And they struck all the people who *were* in it with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying *them*. There was none left breathing. Then he burned Hazor with fire (Joshua 11:10-11 NKJV).

The only location missing on this map is the Brook of Misrephoth, or Misrephoth-maim in the NLT, which is located South of Tyre along the coast and almost straight west of Kedesh.

Known in Joshua's day as "the head of all those kingdoms," at its height in the Canaanite period, the city encompassed the entire tell. Later when it was inhabited by Israelites, the fortified city included only the Upper City.¹⁴

Tell Hazor is today the largest in Israel at 200 acres. It was the largest Canaanite Center in Galilee.¹⁴



An excavator sits amidst the ashes and broken storage jars of the destruction layer. The oil stored in these jars brought the fire that destroyed the palace to a scorching 2350° F. Studio Sztulman-Kessel, Jerusalem¹⁵



Tell Hazor¹⁶

A recent archaeological discovery confirms the Joshua account that Hazor was burned!

The recent discovery of massive jars of scorched wheat at Canaanite Tel Hazor may shed new light on the destruction of one of Israel's most prominent sites. The discovery of the 3,400-year-old wheat in a Late Bronze Age palace structure give a more complete image of the area's agriculture before the destruction, and can help date the fire through carbon-14 analysis. This destruction is a highly debated subject in Biblical archaeology. Whatever the case, the destruction is well attested. The jugs of wheat are far from the only evidence of a large fire in the palace: excavations have produced burnt cedar beams, a collapsed ceiling, bricks cemented from heat exposure, and soot on the walls. The palatial building containing the massive wheat jugs is attached to another palace. The two structures would have served differing purposes; one administrative, the other ceremonial.¹⁷

A fierce conflagration marked the end of Canaanite Hazor. Across the site, a thick layer of ashes and charred wood—in places 3 feet deep—attests to the intensity of the blaze in the northern Galilee city. Within the walls of Hazor's palace, the fire was especially fierce: The unusual amount of timber used in the construction of the building, and the large quantity of oil stored in huge pithoi (storage jars) throughout the palace, proved a fatal combination—creating an inferno with temperatures exceeding 2350° Fahrenheit. In this intense heat, the palace's mudbrick walls vitrified, basalt slabs cracked, and clay vessels melted.¹⁷

¹¹ And they struck all the people who were in it with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them. There was none left breathing. Then he burned Hazor with fire.

¹² Joshua slaughtered all the other kings and their people, completely destroying them, just as Moses, the servant of the LORD, had commanded. ¹³ But the Israelites did not burn any of the towns built on mounds except Hazor, which Joshua burned. ¹⁴ And the Israelites took all the plunder and livestock of the ravaged towns for themselves. But they killed all the people, leaving no survivors. ¹⁵ As the LORD had commanded his servant Moses, so Moses commanded Joshua. And Joshua did as he was told, carefully obeying all the commands that the LORD had given to Moses (Joshua 11:11–15).

Verse 11 seems to be the end of the narrative of the battle at the waters of Merom and Hazor and the pursuit to Sidon, to the Brook Misrephoth, and to the Valley of Mispah.

Verse 12 appears to be a general statement regarding all the other kings and their people in the area.

Verse 13 distinguishes Hazor from the rest of the cities in the northern campaign as Hazor was the only town that was burned. This makes logical and practical sense to me in the fact that Hazor was the largest Canaanite center in Galilee and the “head of all those kingdoms” in Joshua’s day and burning it was an example to “all of those kingdoms” that they were next. If Hazor could fall and be taken, so could they. It was also an example of toppling the center of extremely depraved idol worship. We must remember that part of their idol worship included sacrificing their own children and temple prostitution.

The picture below from the Biblical Archaeological Society shows how detailed Joshua’s army was in destroying the idols and things of worship, even down to this 15-inch tall Canaanite statue.¹⁸



The destroyers of Hazor deliberately beheaded this 15-inch tall Canaanite statue of a seated man. In this photo of the statue in situ, the head lies behind the figure’s high-backed chair. Yigael Yadin Expedition¹⁸

It makes logical sense that Joshua would not burn and level every town. We must remember that back at Gilgal there were probably 2–3 million people still sitting in a camp. The families of the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half-tribe of Manasseh were on the other side or east of the Jordan River living in their homes and walled cities, grazing their sheep and settling the land, while their fighting men were with Joshua and the rest of the army on the west side of the Jordan River.

They had made this agreement with Moses way back in Numbers 32:

¹The tribes of Reuben and Gad owned vast numbers of livestock. So, when they saw that the lands of Jazer and Gilead were ideally suited for their flocks and herds, ²they came to Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the other leaders of the community. They said, ³“Notice the towns of Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sibmah, Nebo, and Beon. ⁴The LORD has conquered this whole area for the community of Israel, and it is ideally suited for all our livestock. ⁵If we have found favor with you, please let us have this land as our property instead of giving us land across the Jordan River” (Numbers 32:1–5).

¹⁶But they approached Moses and said, “We simply want to build pens for our livestock and fortified towns for our wives and children. ¹⁷Then we will arm ourselves and lead our fellow Israelites into battle until we have brought them safely to their land. Meanwhile, our families will stay in the fortified towns we build here, so they will be safe from any attacks by the local people. ¹⁸We will not return to our homes until all the people of Israel have received their portions of land. ¹⁹But we do not claim any of the land on the other side of the Jordan. We would rather live here on the east side and accept this as our grant of land” (Numbers 32:16–19).

Moses gave them permission to build the towns for their families and pens for their livestock, but makes them promise to keep their word that they will lead their fellow Israelites into battle and keep fighting until the Lord has driven out His enemies.

Moses at that time assigned the territory of King Sihon and King Og and all their land and cities that had been defeated east of the Jordan River to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh. The tribes of Reuben and Gad built their fortified towns and livestock pens, and some of the clans of the half-tribe of Manasseh conquered many of the towns and villages of Gilead and lived there.

The scriptures do not tell us how long this process took, but I suspect very little time as the cities they had their eyes on in verse 3 that had already been conquered, Moses divided up between the tribes of Gad and Reuben so they, in essence, already had towns and homes to work with.

In Numbers 34:34–38, it lists the same cities again as the ones that Reuben and Gad built and the cities that Gad built were all fortified cities with sheepfolds.

I'm sure they went in and made the cities their own and fortified them to their satisfaction since they were leaving their wives and children behind in them, but the point is that they already had something to work with. It would be like buying a home or farm or ranch and making changes, doing repairs, building fences or pens or modifying as needed.

The rest of the tribes and their families, however, were still sitting in camp at Gilgal, sitting in a camp like they had been for the past forty years. I think most people would agree that they like to go camping, but probably not for forty years!

These people need a place to go, a place to call home. Why level completely good cities and all the homes and infrastructure, when you have millions of people who need a home. Why level something of value that you will only have to build back up again?

We must remember that Joshua's troops were made up of farmers, herdsmen, and craftsmen, not professional soldiers. So, every day at battle meant another day that they could not be with their families and get settled in a home and establish a field, orchard, or vineyard.

Verse 14 of Joshua 11 states that they took all the plunder and livestock for themselves.

Verse 15 states that as the Lord had commanded Moses, Moses had commanded Joshua and Joshua did as he was told, carefully obeying all the commands that the Lord had given to Moses. We go back to Deuteronomy to find out what those commands were:

¹“When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, ²and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. ³Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. ⁴For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so, the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. ⁵But thus you shall deal with them: you shall

destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire (Deuteronomy 7:1–5 NKJV).

There is a span of time between verse 15 and verse 16. The end of verse 15 speaks of the end of this particular battle/campaign at Merom and Hazor. Verses 16-23 give the summary of the conquests, and also mention dividing up the land and list some of the land not yet conquered.

Joshua only gives us the highlights and major battles of the entire conquest:

¹⁶ So Joshua conquered the entire region—the hill country, the entire Negev, the whole area around the town of Goshen, the western foothills, the Jordan Valley, the mountains of Israel, and the Galilean foothills. ¹⁷ The Israelite territory now extended all the way from Mount Halak, which leads up to Seir in the south, as far north as Baal-gad at the foot of Mount Hermon in the valley of Lebanon. Joshua killed all the kings of those territories, ¹⁸ waging war for a long time to accomplish this. ¹⁹ No one in this region made peace with the Israelites except the Hivites of Gibeon. All the others were defeated.

²⁰ For the LORD hardened their hearts and caused them to fight the Israelites. So, they were completely destroyed without mercy, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

²¹ During this period Joshua destroyed all the descendants of Anak, who lived in the hill country of Hebron, Debir, Anab, and the entire hill country of Judah and Israel. He killed them all and completely destroyed their towns. ²² None of the descendants of Anak were left in all the land of Israel, though some still remained in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod.

²³ So Joshua took control of the entire land, just as the LORD had instructed Moses. He gave it to the people of Israel as their special possession, dividing the land among the tribes. So the land finally had rest from war (Joshua 11:16–23).

“Be careful not to take this as if everybody's finished with their jobs. There will still be some land that needs to be taken. But from Joshua's perspective, they're done. Joshua has completed the work he was to do. He's done the main part of the conquering. The rest will be up to the individual tribes themselves.”¹⁹

Verse 18 states that they waged war for a long time to accomplish this.

There are varying opinions on how long “a long time” is. Josephus says five years, and the common notion of most Jews is that it took seven years. I believe it only took five years and I base that on Caleb’s words in Joshua 14:7, 10 when they are still in Gilgal and Joshua is dividing up the land and he asks Joshua for the land that Moses had promised to him. Caleb states that he was forty years old when he was sent out as a spy and how God has kept him alive and well for forty-five years and he is now eighty-five years old and he is still as strong and can travel and fight just as well as he could when he was forty years old!

No matter how long this “long time” was, there is still more land for the individual tribes to conquer in their given allotments or territories. We find the reason why God did not allow them to conquer the entire land quickly in Exodus:

²⁹ But I will not drive them out in a single year, because the land would become desolate and the wild animals would multiply and threaten you. ³⁰ I will drive them out a little at a time until your population has increased enough to take possession of the land. ³¹ And I will fix your boundaries from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, and from the eastern wilderness to the Euphrates River. I will hand over to you the people now living in the land, and you will drive them out ahead of you (Exodus 23:29–31).

This reason that God gives them for not allowing the Israelites to conquer the land quickly is sandwiched between a command and a promise and another command.

²⁵ “You must serve only the LORD your God. If you do, I will bless you with food and water, and I will protect you from illness. ²⁶ There will be no miscarriages or infertility in your land, and I will give you long, full lives (Exodus 23:25).

³² “Make no treaties with them or their gods. ³³ They must not live in your land, or they will cause you to sin against me. If you serve their gods, you will be caught in the trap of idolatry” (Exodus 23:32–33).

The overall theme and command to the Israelites is to serve only the Lord. Obeying this command comes with promise of great blessings of food and water, protection from illness, no miscarriages or infertility and long, full lives.

Repeatedly the command is given not to make any treaties with these people or to allow them to live in the land because if they do the Canaanites will cause them to sin and to serve their gods and be caught in idolatry. Idolatry in God's eyes is equal to adultery.

We are reminded in verse 19 of Joshua 11 of the treaty that was made with the Hivites of Gibeon, which was a direct violation of God's commands.

Tom Bradford of *The Torah Class* gives a perfect synopsis of Joshua 11:20:

Thus, we have this interesting statement in verse 20 that says that it was the God of Israel who actively CAUSED the kings of Canaan to come against His people. Why would God do such a thing? Why would the Lord arrange for Israel's enemies to attack them, especially since this was not an act of God punishing Israel? The next few words of Joshua 11 answers that question: it was so that these Canaanites be utterly destroyed, which was the Lord's goal. But Yehoveh affecting the minds of these Canaanite kings and tribal princes was also because Israel had made peace with a Canaanite kingdom that approached them with a desire for peace: Gibeon. And God did NOT want this to happen again so He simply put it in the enemies' hearts to NOT to seek peace with Israel. Problem solved.²⁰

Verses 21 & 22 of Joshua 11 refer to the descendants of Anak. The Anakites are associated with the Rephaim, a race of evil giants from before the time of the Great Flood. These fierce warriors of old are said to have originally come from fallen angels impregnating human women. The Anakites were giants as much as eight or nine feet tall. Goliath was an Anakite who lived near Gaza. They were troublesome for everyone in the region, not just Israel. Most of them were killed and their towns completely destroyed; however, some still remained in the area occupied by the Philistines in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod, located along the coastal plain near the Mediterranean.



View of Mount Hermon from Tell Hazor²¹

Mount Hermon is the southern tip of the anti-Lebanon mountain range. Its highest peak is 9,230 feet. The highest point of Mount Hermon under Israeli control today is Mizpe Shelagim at 7,295 feet. The mountain is the only place with snow skiing in the country.²²

The mountain has been known as Ba'al Hermon, Senir, Sirion, Sion, and by Josephus as Mt. Lebanon. Today the Arabs call it "Jabel A-talg" which translates as "the snow mountain." More than twenty ancient temples have been found on the mountain or in its vicinity.²²



Mount Hermon with snow²²



Mount Hermon towers over the green Hula Valley. The right side of the Hermon is in Syria, the left is in Lebanon. It is a contested area.²³



The Hula Valley is the most productive agricultural area in Israel. What had been a swampland for much of history was turned into fertile fields in the 20th Century.²³

Mount Halak, A mountain that marked the southern limit of the conquests of Joshua (Joshua 11:17; 12:7). It is spoken of as the "mount Halak (literally, "the bare" or "smooth mountain") that goeth up to Seir." The latter passage locates it on the West of the Arabah. The southern boundary of the land is defined by the ascent of Akrabbim (Numbers 34:4; Joshua 15:3). This may with some certainty be identified with the pass known today as naqb es-Safa, "pass of the smooth rock," through which runs the road from the South to Hebron. To the Southwest opens Wady Maderah, a continuation of Waddy el-Fiqrah, in which there rises a conspicuous hill, Jebel Maderah, composed of limestone, answering well the description of a bare or smooth mountain.²⁴



The Conquest of Canaan

Numbers 13–14; 21–32; Deuteronomy 2–3; Joshua 12

The map is based on three distinct traditions which were eventually combined in a single narrative. The mission of the spies in Numbers 13–14 reflects an immigration into Canaan from the south. The conquest of Transjordan is recounted in Numbers 21–32 and Deuteronomy 2–3. The conquest of Canaan is finally summarized in Joshua 12 by a list of conquered lands and cities. These three traditions account for all the territory of Palestine and the southern Transjordan later claimed by Israel.

Conquest of Canaan Map²⁵

So, Joshua conquered the entire region—the hill country, the entire Negev, the whole area around the town of Goshen, the western foothills, the Jordan Valley, the mountains of Israel, and the Galilean foothills. ¹⁷ The Israelite territory now extended all the way from Mount Halak, which leads up to Seir in the south, as far north as Baal-gad at the foot of Mount Hermon in the valley of Lebanon. Joshua 11:16–17

Mount Halak – bottom-center

Seir – bottom right

Negev – lower left, above Halak

Mount Hermon – upper right

Valley of Lebanon – top center

Galilean foothills – upper left – northwest of Lake Chinneret (Sea of Galilee)

Jordan River Valley – center

Goshen – not on the map – but some speculate that it was located in the area of Debir about 12 miles southwest of Hebron – lower left above Negev

CHAPTER 29

List of Kings Joshua Defeated

Joshua and his Israelite army defeated 31 kings west of the Jordan River as recorded in Joshua 12:9-24:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. The King of Jericho | 15. The King of Makkedah |
| 2. The King of Ai, near Bethel | 16. The King of Bethel |
| 3. The King of Jerusalem | 17. The King of Tappuah |
| 4. The King of Hebron | 18. The King of Hephher |
| 5. The King of Jarmuth | 19. The King of Aphek |
| 6. The King of Lachish | 20. The King of Lasharon |
| 7. The King of Eglon | 21. The King of Madon |
| 8. The King of Gezer | 22. The King of Hazor |
| 9. The King of Debir | 23. The King of Shimron-meron |
| 10. The King of Geder | 24. The King of Acshaph |
| 11. The King of Hormah | 25. The King of Taanach |
| 12. The King of Arad | 26. The King of Megiddo |
| 13. The King of Libnah | 27. The King of Kedesh |
| 14. The King of Adullam | 28. The King of Jokneam in Carmel |

29. The King of Dor in the town of
Naphoth-dor

30. The King of Goyim in Gilgal

31. The King of Tirzah.

The first thing we notice is the sheer number of kings. We skim through the list of 31 kings, but do we really grasp what conquering these cities and their kings entailed? Each king and city also included their surrounding territory. It is by conquering these kings and their respective cities that the Israelites gained their respective territory that they could settle into.

CHAPTER 30

Land Still to Be Conquered

When Joshua was well advanced in years, the Lord said, “You are growing old, and much land remains to be conquered” (Joshua 13:1). The Lord then described the land that still needed to be conquered in Joshua 13:2-6.

- Land of the Philistines – the area along the coast given to the tribes of Judah and Simeon – which included the land of the five Philistine rulers:
 - Gaza
 - Ashdod
 - Ashkelon
 - Gath
 - Ekron
- Land of the Geshurites – east side of the Jordan – northern part of Bashan – part of the allotment given to the half-tribe of Manasseh
- Land of the Maacathites – east side of the Jordan – part of Bashan – part of the allotment given to the half-tribe of Manasseh
- Land of the Avvites – possibly part of the allotment given to Benjamin

- Land of the Canaanites in the north which includes:
 - Mearah – which belongs to the Sidonians – probably that land given to Asher
 - North to Aphek to the border of the Amorites – probably that land given to Asher, Ephraim and the half-tribe of Manasseh west of the Jordan River
- Land of the Gebalites – Gebal – situated north of Beirut, Lebanon, was the most important port on the Phoenician coast in the 3rd and 2nd millennia B.C. – to Asher?
- Mountains of Lebanon – probably the land given to Asher
- Mount Hermon to Hamath – land given to Naphtali
- Lebanon to Misrephoth-maim, including all the land of the Sidonians – probably the land given to Asher?

In my research, the best map I found regarding the land conquered and not yet conquered is the map on the following page. The areas not conquered as listed in Joshua 13 are in green and the areas that were conquered are in pink.

I could not find a map that included these unconquered lands as part of the tribal allotments. Most of the maps fall very short of including all the land that is included in the map on the next page.



Limits of Israelite Settlement and the Land Yet to Be Conquered Map¹

Notice the extent of the unconquered land that was promised to Israel that was listed in Joshua 13:1-6, shown in green above.

The land that was still unconquered was to be part of the allotment given to the nine tribes and the half tribe of Manasseh:

“I myself will drive these people out of the land ahead of the Israelites. So be sure to give this land to Israel as a special possession, just as I have commanded you. ⁷ Include all this territory as Israel’s possession when you divide this land among the nine tribes and the half-tribe of Manasseh” (Joshua 13:6–7).

I believe the land was divided out accordingly; however, I have not found an accurate map that reflects these boundaries. I suppose part of the problem is that many of these towns or locations were destroyed and no longer exist so there is much speculation as to the exact location of many towns. It seems that no two maps are the same.

The main point that we need to take away from all of this is that the tribes never did conquer and obtain all the land that was promised to them by God. This was not God’s fault. He promised that He would go before them and drive them out. The tribes, however, needed to take action and step out in faith believing they would obtain what was promised to them. They needed to fight for the land and eradicate the people and their sin just as God had commanded them.

Perhaps they were like many of us, tired of the battle, and willing to settle for less. How many of us settle for less, and even let go of our dreams because we are tired of the battle, tired of trying and not succeeding?

It seems that the battle in the Old Testament was physical compared to the New Testament where we are in a spiritual battle against the forces of evil:

¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12 NKJV).

There are people who struggle every day with addictions who never win the battle, many do not want out of their addictions, they’ve become accustomed to them and have learned to live with them.

The problem with not conquering the entire land and ridding the land of all idolatry and sin is that it is like a little yeast that spreads through the whole dough:

Don't you realize that this sin is like a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough (I Corinthians 5:6)?

It's like the people I know who allowed a skunk to live under their mobile home. They didn't do anything to get rid of it and soon there was a family of skunks with baby skunks. As the years went by they just got used to the occasional stench they made when they got scared or excited and sprayed. They allowed the skunks to stay and gradually got used to them.

In the history of Israel, we find that by not conquering all of the territory, Israel eventually slips into idolatry and takes on all of the detestable sinful ways of their neighbors, just as God had predicted.

CHAPTER 31

Joshua and Eleazar Divide the Land

We find that right before Moses dies and before Joshua leads the people across the Jordan River into the Promised Land, a lot of instructions are given by the Lord in Numbers 28–36. One of the instructions is that Joshua and Eleazar the priest, are given the responsibility to divide the land among the tribes of Israel. This is a huge responsibility, but what better person to divide the land than the military leader who will conquer much of the land?

¹⁶ And the LORD said to Moses, ¹⁷ “Eleazar the priest and Joshua son of Nun are the men designated to divide the grants of land among the people (Numbers 34:16–17).

When reading Joshua 13–21 we find the description of the land that was given to each tribe, including the six cities of refuge and the forty-eight towns and their grasslands given to the Levites. The descriptions read like whoever wrote them knew the land like the back of his hand. This person would have been Joshua. Joshua had traveled all over the land by foot as a scout and later as the leader of the Israelites. He had waged war against the people who had lived in these cities, camped for days and weeks on end along the rivers, streams, and springs in the mountains, hill country, valleys and ravines. Although Joshua is personally familiar with every inch of this land, he also requests the help of some of the tribes for this task.

We find in Joshua 18 that seven of the tribes have yet to take possession of the remaining land the Lord had given to them. Joshua tells them to select three men from each of the seven tribes to explore the land and return with a written report of **their** proposed divisions of their new homeland:

³Then Joshua asked them, “How long are you going to wait before taking possession of the remaining land the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has given to you? ⁴Select three men from each tribe, and I will send them out to explore the land and map it out. They will then return to me with a written report of their proposed divisions of their new homeland. ⁵Let them divide the land into seven sections, excluding Judah’s territory in the south and Joseph’s territory in the north. ⁶ And when you record the seven divisions of the land and bring them to me, I will cast sacred lots in the presence of the LORD our God to assign land to each tribe (Joshua 18:3–6 NKJV).

I suspect that this is where the problem lies, not with God, but with man who re-writes the boundaries. Instead of taking what God had given to them, they settle for less and re-write the land descriptions and don’t include the land that they haven’t conquered and have decided **not** to conquer.

It wasn’t until after the events of Joshua 11 that the land within Canaan started to be officially divided and distributed to the various Israelite tribes, except Reuben, Gad, and part of the half-tribe of Manasseh, who received their land on the east side of the Jordan River prior to the Israelites crossing of the Jordan River. As noted in Joshua 18, it didn’t happen evenly or all at once:

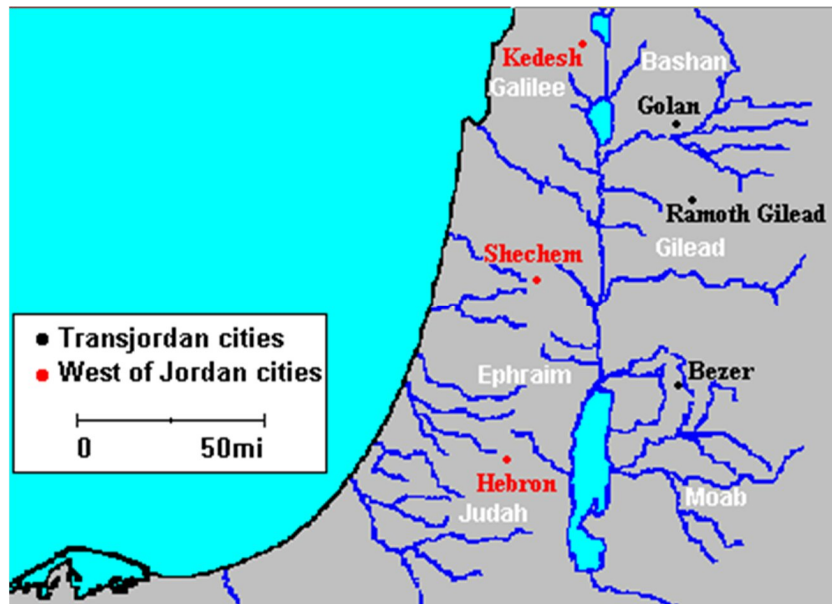
Tom Bradford of *The Torah Class* stated this:

“Essentially tribes were deeded (so to speak) their territory and the boundaries to that territory were fairly well defined, but it was that tribe’s duty to take control of it and to establish and maintain tribal authority each over their own territory. Some tribes moved quickly to that end, others more slowly. Some established a real dominance, while others had only the weakest of footholds. Some got their territory early on, some not until later.”²



Division of Land to the 12 Tribes of Israel¹

This map is probably the best map I have found thus far that shows the division of land among the twelve tribes. (Notice Caleb's name written on the map over the area he inherited).



Map of Six cities of Refuge³

The six cities of refuge:

- Kedesh
- Shechem
- Hebron
- Golan
- Ramoth Gilead
- Bezer

The Tabernacle Set Up at Shiloh

As mentioned in Chapter 27, most of the Israelites had been camped at Gilgal until Joshua and his army had conquered a good portion of the land and until Joshua divided up the land. The tabernacle and tent of meeting would have also been located at Gilgal.

We find in Joshua 18 that the Tabernacle was moved to Shiloh, a location within the tribe of Ephraim's allotment. Shiloh is basically centrally located in relationship to the outer boundaries of the Israelite territory.

Now that the land was under Israelite control, the entire community of Israel gathered at Shiloh and set up the Tabernacle (Joshua 18:1).

"Shiloh was in the lot of Ephraim, the tribe to which Joshua belonged, and it was proper that the tabernacle should be near the residence of the chief governor. It is supposed by some that the city was thus called, when it was chosen for the resting-place of the ark, which typified our great Peace-maker, and the way by him to a reconciled God."⁴

We find that the entire community of Israel gathered together to set up the Tabernacle at Shiloh. It is after the tabernacle was set up at Shiloh that Joshua confronted the seven tribes about why they had not yet taken possession of the remaining land.

“By this time, the Canaanites were, in most places, so weakened that they were no longer a threat. Instead of fulfilling God’s command to destroy the remaining Canaanites, however, these seven tribes would often take the path of least resistance. As nomadic people, they may have been reluctant to settle down, preferring to depend economically on the people they were supposed to eliminate. Others may have feared the high cost of continued warfare. It is easier and more profitable to trade for goods than to destroy the suppliers and have to provide for themselves.”⁵



The map to the left shows the six cities of refuge and the 48 cities given to the Levites.

Distribution of Levitical Cities Map⁶

They gathered at Shiloh where Joshua cast sacred lots to determine which tribe would get which piece of land:

“Using the sacred lottery, God would make the choice, not Joshua or any other human leader.”⁷

As I mentioned back in Chapter 27, Caleb asked Joshua for the land that Moses had promised to him way back when he had been a spy, forty-five years earlier. Caleb is given Kiriath-arba or Hebron, in Joshua 14, the same town and area they had defeated in Chapter 10 on day two of the Long Day of Joshua. He was from the tribe of Judah and his land also fell inside the tribe of Judah's boundaries.

¹³Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as his inheritance.

¹⁴So Hebron has belonged to Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite ever since, because he followed the LORD, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly. ¹⁵(Hebron used to be called Kiriath Arba after Arba, who was the greatest man among the Anakites.) (Joshua 14:13–15).

¹³The LORD commanded Joshua to assign some of Judah's territory to Caleb son of Jephunneh. So, Caleb was given the town of Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), which had been named after Anak's ancestor. ¹⁴Caleb drove out the three groups of Anakites—the descendants of Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai, the sons of Anak (Joshua 15:13–14).

Joshua Also Gets a Special Portion of Land

“After all the land was divided among the tribes, the Israelites gave a piece of land to Joshua as his allocation. For the LORD had said he could have any town he wanted. He chose Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim. He rebuilt the town and lived there” (Joshua 19:49–50 NKJV).

Women Also Request an Allotment of Land

The great, great, great granddaughters of Manasseh go before Eleazar the priest, Joshua and the rulers and ask for the land that the Lord had commanded Moses to give to them for an inheritance as their father Zelophehad had no sons, only five daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

Back in Numbers 27, the daughters of Zelophehad the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, from the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph stood before Moses, Eleazar and the leaders and all of the congregation of Israel by the door of the tabernacle of meeting and said,

³“Our father died in the wilderness; but he was not in the company of those who gathered together against the LORD, in company with Korah, but he died in his own sin; and he had no sons. ⁴Why should the name of our father be removed from among his family because he had no son? Give us a possession among our father’s brothers” (Numbers 27:3–4).

⁵So Moses brought their case before the LORD (Numbers 27:5).

⁶And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ⁷“The daughters of Zelophehad speak what is right; you shall surely give them a possession of inheritance among their father’s brothers, and cause the inheritance of their father to pass to them (Numbers 27:6–7).

Up to this point, the Hebrew law gave sons alone the right to inherit. Although women did not traditionally inherit property in Israelite society, Moses put justice ahead of tradition and brought their case before the Lord.

In fact, God told Moses to add a law that would help other women in similar circumstances inherit property as well.⁷

The Law is Changed

⁸And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘If a man dies and has no son, then you shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter...¹¹And it shall be to the children of Israel a statute of judgment, just as the LORD commanded Moses (Numbers 27:8, 11b NKJV).

God told Moses that if a man died without sons, his inheritance would go to his daughters. This law was amended in Numbers 36:5–12 when the Clan of Gilead, descendants of Manasseh, came to Moses and the leaders with a petition. Their claim was that if the daughters who were given land married someone from another tribe that the total land area of their tribe would be reduced because the land would then go to the tribe of the husband. Moses then gave a new command from the Lord that the daughters could marry anyone they like, as long as it was within their own ancestral tribe. None of the land may pass from tribe to tribe but must remain in its original tribe.

Joshua is now carrying out this law and command of God given to Moses:

Therefore, according to the commandment of the LORD, he gave them an inheritance among their father's brothers. ⁵Ten shares fell to Manasseh, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which were on the other side of the Jordan, ⁶because the daughters of Manasseh received an inheritance among his sons; and the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead (Joshua 17:3–6 NKJV).

Caleb Offers His Daughter as a Prize

Caleb offers his daughter Acsah's hand in marriage to the man who attacks and conquers Debir, (formerly called Kiriath-sepher):

Othniel, the son of Caleb's brother Kenaz, was the one who conquered it, so Acsah became Othniel's wife (Joshua 15:17).

When Othniel married Acsah, she urged him to ask her father for a field and he apparently gives them land in the Negev (South), because Acsah then gets off her donkey and when Caleb asks her what is wrong, or what she wants, she replies, "Give me a blessing; since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water." So, he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs (Joshua 15:19 NKJV).

Joshua Reprimands and Empowers the Tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim

The children of Joseph, the half-tribe of Ephraim and the half-tribe of Manasseh, came to Joshua and asked why they had only been given one portion of land to share as there were so many of them in their tribe. What really happened is that they could not drive out the inhabitants of their land. The scripture states that the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land and when the children of Israel grew strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labour, but didn't utterly drive them out. When you read the passage of scripture it almost appears as if it was a complaining and whining session.

I really like Joshua's response:

¹⁵ So Joshua answered them, "If you are a great people, then go up to the forest country and clear a place for yourself there in the land of the Perizzites and the giants, since the mountains of Ephraim are too confined for you" (Joshua 17:15).

Joshua is reprimanding them and telling them to go up to the forest country and cut down some trees and build homes for themselves.

The children of Joseph whine to Joshua that the mountain country or hill country is not big enough for all of them and they can't live in the valley because the Canaanites that live there have chariots of iron.

Joshua then empowers them by telling them that they are a great people and have great power and they will drive out the Canaanites, even though they have iron chariots and are strong. He also gives them more land in the mountain country to its farthest extent, but it will not come without work on their part.

¹⁷ And Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph—to Ephraim and Manasseh—saying, “You *are* a great people and have great power; you shall not have only one lot, ¹⁸ but the mountain country shall be yours. Although it *is* wooded, you shall cut it down, and its farthest extent shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots and are strong” (Joshua 17:17 NKJV).

I wonder if Joshua ever thought to himself, “Can't they do anything for themselves?” Or, if he thought that if he were younger and had more time, he would like to go in and lead another campaign himself and get it done?

CHAPTER 32

Israel Then and Now

Israel today is much smaller than the land promised by God to the Israelites and much smaller than in Joshua's day.



Israel today is very small in comparison to most of the states in the United States. Israel is around 8,367 square miles, about the size of New Jersey that has a total of 8,721.30 square miles compared to Montana at 147,042.40 square miles and North Dakota at 70,699.79 square miles. Beaverhead County, the largest county in Montana has 5,573 sq. mi.

If you take Beaverhead, Ravalli and half of Silver Bow Counties in Montana, that is the size of Israel!

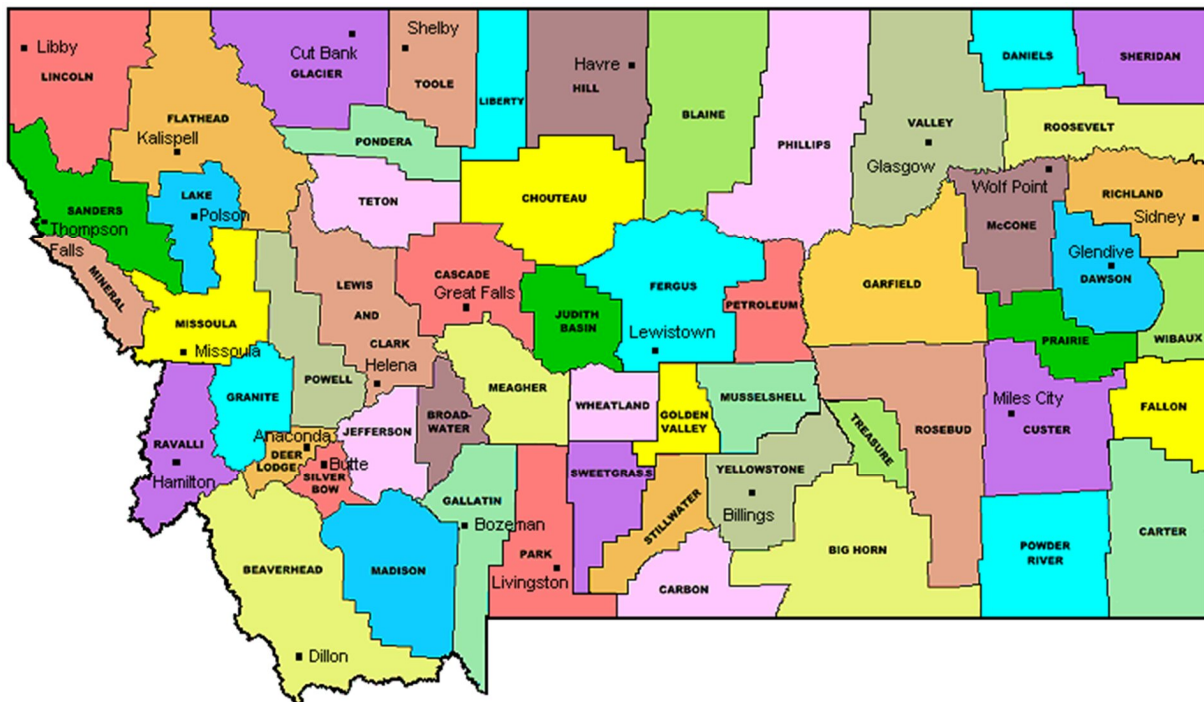
5,573 sq. mi. Beaverhead County⁴

2,400 sq. mi. Ravalli County

359 sq. mi. Silver Bow County $718 \div 2 = 359$

8,332 sq. mi. = about the size of Israel

If you take Custer County, Powder River County and 70% of Prairie County, you would have the size of Israel. Or, if you take Carter, Fallon, Wibaux, and Richland Counties and put them together you would have almost the size of Israel.



State of Montana Map³

3,793 Custer County⁴

3,298 Powder River County

1,219 Prairie County $1,742 \times .70 = 1,219$

8,310 = about the size of Israel

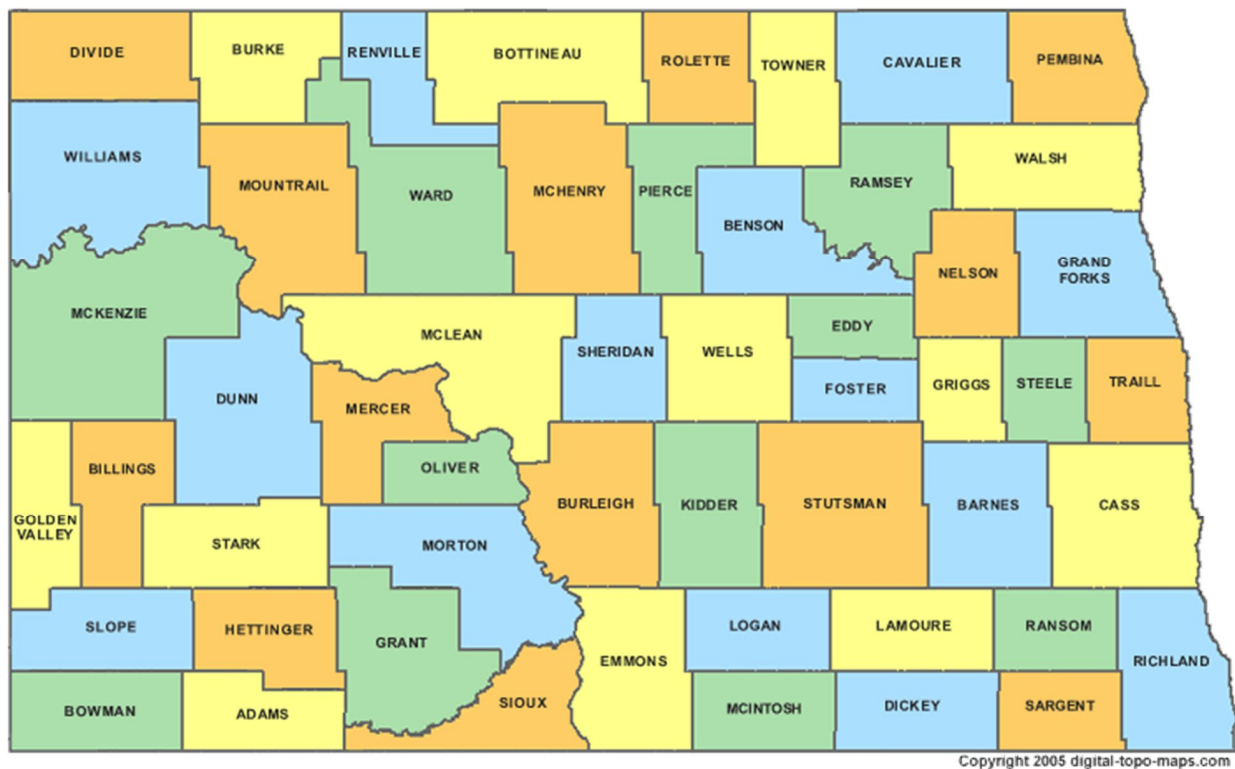
3,348 Carter County⁴

1,622 Fallon County

889 Wibaux County

2,104 Richland County

7,963 = about the size of Israel

State of North Dakota Map⁵

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1,122 Pembina County⁶

1,294 Walsh County

1,440 Grand Forks County

863 Trail County

1,768 Cass County

1,446 Richland County

427 Steele County 712 x .60 = 427

8,360 = about the size of Israel

1,295 Divide County⁶

2,148 Williams County

2,861 McKenzie County

1,002 Golden Valley

694 Billings County 1,151 x .90 = 1,035

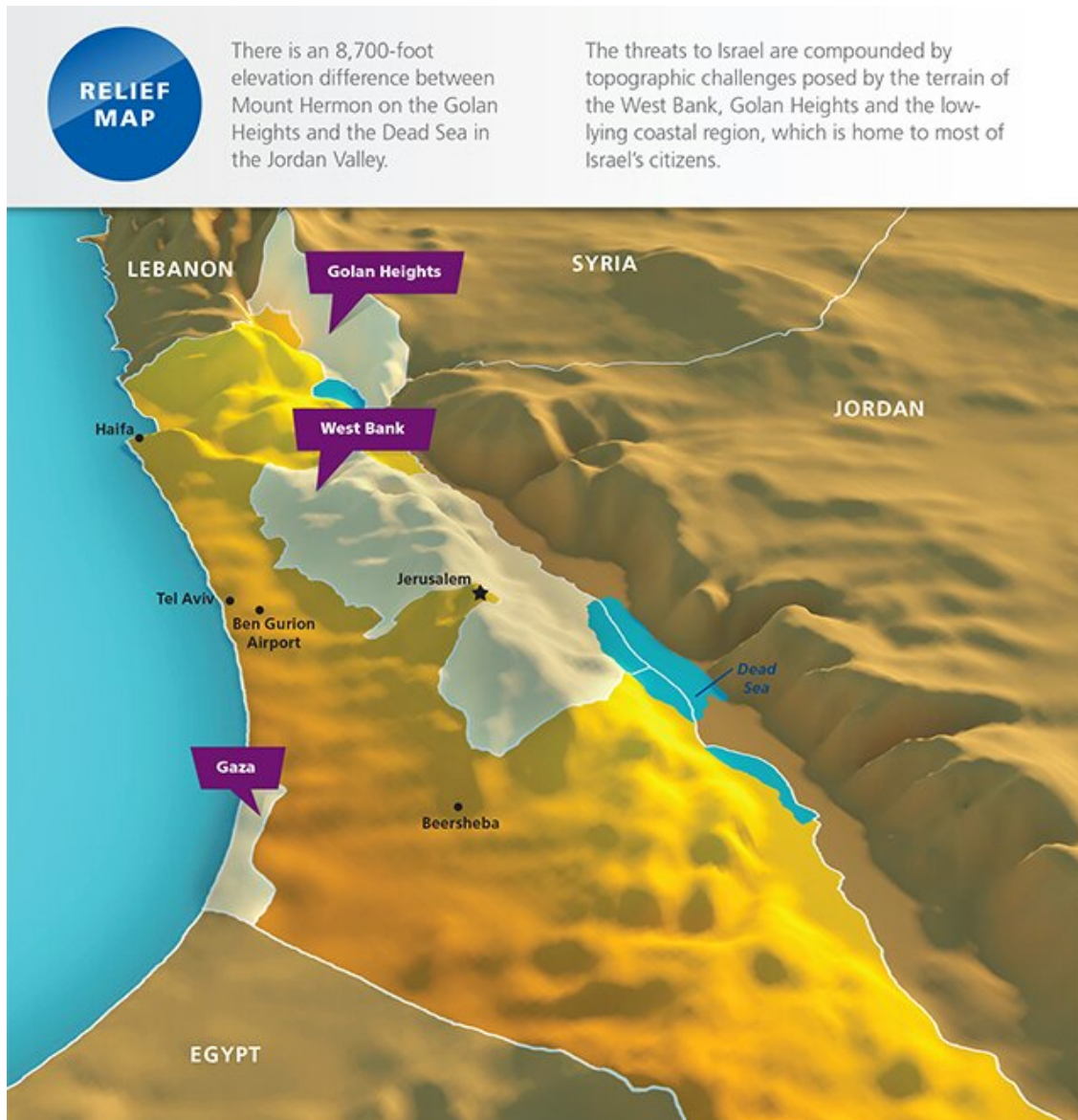
8,341 = the size of Israel

Now imagine that Minnesota is the Mediterranean Sea and Richland, Cass, Trail, Grand Forks, Walsh, Pembina and 60% of Steele Counties in eastern North Dakota are the nation of Israel. This is what Israel looks like squished up against the Sea, surrounded by her enemies. Of course, this scenario is just flipped-flopped from where Israel lies in relationship to the Sea, and you would have to imagine Canada and all of the Western United States and states south of these six counties as Israel's enemies, but I'm just using this as a comparison for the size of Israel.

Now imagine that Montana is the Mediterranean Sea and Divide, Williams, McKenzie, 90% of Billings County, and Golden Valley Counties are the nation of Israel. This is what Israel looks like squished up against the Sea, surrounded by her enemies. Imagine all of Canada and all of the United States east and south of these five counties as Israel's enemies.

Israel's Narrow Waistband Map⁷Israel's Proximity to Neighbors Map⁸

The threats to Israel are compounded by topographic challenges posed by the terrain of the West Bank, Golan Heights and the low-lying coastal region, which is home to most of Israel's citizens.



Relief Map of Israel⁹

CHAPTER 33

Joshua Sends the Eastern Tribes Home

Joshua calls together the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh and tells them that:

They have done all that Moses commanded them to do.

- They have obeyed all his (Joshua's) commands.
- They have not left or deserted their brethren all these many days, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord.
- God has now given rest to their brethren.

And they can now return home to their families on the east side of the Jordan River.

Joshua gave them a charge to be sure and keep all the commandments and the law which Moses had commanded them:

- To Love the Lord your God
- To Walk in all His ways
- To Keep His commandments
- To Hold fast to Him
- To Serve Him with all your heart and all your soul

⁵ But take careful heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, to keep

His commandments, to hold fast to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.”⁶ So Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their tents (Joshua 22:5–6).

Joshua Blesses Them and Sends Them Home

As Joshua sent them away and blessed them,⁸ he said to them, “Go back to your homes with the great wealth you have taken from your enemies—the vast herds of livestock, the silver, gold, bronze, and iron, and the large supply of clothing. Share the plunder with your relatives” (Joshua 22:7–8).

This is a group of 40,000 fighting men who have been away from their families they left behind on the east side of the river. That was the bargain they had made with Moses back in Numbers 32, and I covered this in Chapters 15 and 27.

Before the men cross the Jordan River and leave the land of Canaan they build an altar near the Jordan River at a place called Geliloth.

When the rest of Israel heard that they had built an altar at Geliloth, west of the Jordan River in Canaan, the whole assembly gathered together at Shiloh and prepared to go to war against their brothers.

First, they sent a delegation led by Phinehas, son of Eleazar the priest, along with ten leaders of Israel, one from each of the ten tribes and the head of his family, to talk with the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

They demand to know why they have built an altar for themselves in rebellion against the God of Israel. They continue and recount the past sin of Israel at Peor as recorded in Numbers 25 when some of the men of Israel had defiled themselves by sleeping with the local Moabite women. These women invited them to attend sacrifices to their gods and soon Israel had joined in the worship of Baal. God sent a plague that struck the entire community and 24,000 people died.

They accuse them of turning away from following the Lord and say that if they rebel against God today, He will be angry with all of them tomorrow.

They continue and remind them of Achan's sin and how even though it was his sin, he was not the only one who died because of his sin.

The delegation pleads with the men of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh to join them in their land and share their land with them where the Tabernacle of the Lord is situated if their land is defiled and they need an altar, but not to rebel against the Lord or them by building an altar other than the one true altar of the Lord their God.

These men have truly jumped to conclusions and assumed immediately that the men of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh have rebelled against them and against God. These men are also very serious and afraid of any rebellion against God as they have learned from past experience that the sin of one or a few affects everyone and everyone suffers the consequences.

The men of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh reply,

²² “The LORD, the Mighty One, is God! The LORD, the Mighty One, is God! He knows the truth, and may Israel know it, too! We have not built the altar in treacherous rebellion against the LORD. If we have done so, do not spare our lives this day. ²³ If we have built an altar for ourselves to turn away from the LORD or to offer burnt offerings or grain offerings or peace offerings, may the LORD himself punish us” (Joshua 22:22–23).

The men of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh explain that they did not build an altar of rebellion against the Lord and they did not build an altar to sacrifice burnt offerings or grain or peace offerings, but they built the altar as a symbol, or memorial to their children and the tribes' children across the river, that they too worship the Lord at His sanctuary with their burnt offerings, sacrifices and peace offerings.

²⁴ “The truth is, we have built this altar because we fear that in the future your descendants will say to ours, “What right do you have to worship the LORD, the God of Israel? The LORD has placed the Jordan River as a barrier between our people and your people. You have no claim to the LORD” (Joshua 22:24–25).

They explain that they feared that the ten tribes' descendants across the river would prevent their descendants from worshiping the Lord so that is why they built it as a memorial to

remind all of their descendants of the relationship they all have with the Lord. They assured them that the only altar they would use for burnt offerings, grain offerings or sacrifices was the altar of the Lord their God that stood in front of the Tabernacle.

Phinehas, the priest and the leaders of the community were satisfied and Phinehas replied,

“Today we know the LORD is among us because you have not committed this treachery against the LORD as we thought. Instead, you have rescued Israel from being destroyed by the hand of the LORD” (Joshua 22:31).

The delegation returns to the ten tribes on the west side of the river and told them what had happened and they were all pleased and praised God and spoke no more of war with their brethren.

³⁴The people of Reuben and Gad named the altar “Witness,” for they said, “It is a witness between us and them that the LORD is our God, too” (Joshua 22:34).

CHAPTER 34

Joshua's Farewell to the Leaders

When Joshua is very old he calls together all the elders, leaders, judges, and officers of Israel and speaks to them. He summarizes all that has happened and reminds them that they have seen everything the Lord their God has done for them during his lifetime. He reminds them how God has fought for them against their enemies and how he has allotted to them all the land as an inheritance, both conquered and unconquered.

He tells them that the land will be theirs for the Lord their God will drive out all of the people living there now. Joshua says, “You will live there instead of them, just as the Lord your God promised you” (Joshua 23:5b).

Joshua then gives them a charge:

⁶Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, ⁷and lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you. You shall not make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause anyone to swear by them; you shall not serve them nor bow down to them, ⁸but you shall hold fast to the Lord your God, as you have done to this day.

⁹“For the LORD has driven out great and powerful nations for you, and no one has yet been able to defeat you. ¹⁰Each one of you will put to flight a thousand of the enemy,

for the LORD your God fights for you, just as he has promised. ¹¹ So be very careful to love the LORD your God” (Joshua 23:6–8 NKJV).

Along with the charge and command to be faithful to the Lord, Joshua also gives a warning that if they turn away from God, cling to the customs of the survivors of the nations among them, or intermarry with them that God will no longer drive them out of the land.

“Instead, they will be a snare and a trap to you, a whip for your backs and thorny brambles in your eyes, and you will vanish from this good land the LORD your God has given you” (Joshua 23:13b).

Joshua tells them that soon he will die and finishes with this message:

Deep in your hearts you know that every promise of the LORD your God has come true. Not a single one has failed! ¹⁵ But as surely as the LORD your God has given you the good things he promised, he will also bring disaster on you if you disobey him. He will completely destroy you from this good land he has given you. ¹⁶ If you break the covenant of the LORD your God by worshiping and serving other gods, his anger will burn against you, and you will quickly vanish from the good land he has given you” (Joshua 23:14–16).

CHAPTER 35

The Lord's Covenant Renewed

Joshua now summons all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, including their elders, leaders, judges, and officers and the people come and present themselves before God.

Why did he call them to Shechem? I used to read this and think that it was a place that had a special meaning not realizing that it was special because of its rich history, but also because of its formation and special acoustic amenity. As I mentioned back in Chapter 22 Shechem was a natural amphitheater. Since they didn't have electricity and microphones and speaker systems back then, and even if they did it would have been quite a challenge to speak to several million people in one place, what better place than this natural amphitheater to gather the people and speak to them?



Mount Ebal on the right and Mt. Gerizem on the left with the valley and town of Shechem in the middle. The current Israeli settlement of Itamar on the West Bank in the Samarian Hills is in the foreground.¹

Photo of Itamar settlement overlooking Nablus (Shechem) and Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim¹

²Joshua said to the people, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Long ago your ancestors, including Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River, and they worshiped other gods. ³But I took your ancestor Abraham from the land beyond the Euphrates and led him into the land of Canaan. I gave him many descendants through his son Isaac. ⁴To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau I gave the mountains of Seir, while Jacob and his children went down into Egypt.

⁵“Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I brought terrible plagues on Egypt; and afterward I brought you out as a free people. ⁶But when your ancestors arrived at the Red Sea, the Egyptians chased after you with chariots and charioteers. ⁷When your ancestors cried out to the LORD, I put darkness between you and the Egyptians. I brought the sea crashing down on the Egyptians, drowning them. With your very own eyes you saw what I did. Then you lived in the wilderness for many years.

⁸“Finally, I brought you into the land of the Amorites on the east side of the Jordan. They fought against you, but I destroyed them before you. I gave you victory over them, and you took possession of their land. ⁹Then Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, started a war against Israel. He summoned Balaam son of Beor to curse you, ¹⁰but I would not listen to him. Instead, I made Balaam bless you, and so I rescued you from Balak (Joshua 24:2–10).

The account of Balak, Balaam and the talking donkey is found in Numbers 22 – 24. This happened while the Israelites were camped on the east side of the Jordan River right after they defeated King Shion and King Og, before the second census and before Moses dies.

¹¹“When you crossed the Jordan River and came to Jericho, the men of Jericho fought against you, as did the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Gergashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. But I gave you victory over them. ¹²And I sent terror ahead of you to drive out the two kings of the Amorites. It was not your swords or bows that brought you victory. ¹³I gave you land you had not worked on, and I gave you towns you did not build—the towns where you are now living. I gave you vineyards and olive groves for food, though you did not plant them (Joshua 24:11–13).

Here we find the Lord reminding the Israelites that He is the one who gave them the land, not their swords or bows. The Lord also reminds them that He is the one who gave them the towns they did not build that they are now living in. He is the one who gave them the land they did not work, nor the vineyards and olive groves for food that they now eat from, that they did not plant.

Joshua commands them to:

- Fear the Lord
- Serve Him wholeheartedly
- Put away forever idol worship
- Serve the Lord alone

Joshua challenges them to choose today whom they will serve: will they serve the Lord, will they serve the gods their ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or will they serve the gods of the Amorites in whose land they now live?

¹⁴ “So fear the LORD and serve him wholeheartedly. Put away forever the idols your ancestors worshiped when they lived beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD alone. ¹⁵ But if you refuse to serve the LORD, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live?” (Joshua 24:14–15a).

Then we have the verse that Joshua is famous for:

“But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15b NKJV).

Joshua once again displays his spiritual leadership and makes a commitment to serve the Lord, no matter what the others decided. Joshua never wavered throughout his life regarding his decision to serve the Lord wholeheartedly.

The people replied to Joshua,

“We would never abandon the LORD and serve other gods. ¹⁷ For the LORD our God is the one who rescued us and our ancestors from slavery in the land of Egypt. He performed mighty miracles before our very eyes. As we traveled through the wilderness

among our enemies, he preserved us. ¹⁸ It was the LORD who drove out the Amorites and the other nations living here in the land. So, we too, will serve the LORD, for he alone is our God” (Joshua 24:16–18)

Joshua warns the people that they will never be able to serve the Lord for He is a holy and jealous God and He will not forgive their rebellion or their sins. He then tells them the consequences of abandoning the Lord and serving other gods:

²⁰ If you abandon the LORD and serve other gods, he will turn against you and destroy you, even though he has been so good to you.”

²¹ But the people answered Joshua, “No, we will serve the LORD!”

²² “You are a witness to your own decision,” Joshua said. “You have chosen to serve the LORD.”

“Yes,” they replied, “we are witnesses to what we have said.”

²³ “All right then,” Joshua said, “destroy the idols among you, and turn your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel.”

²⁴ The people said to Joshua, “We will serve the LORD our God. We will obey him alone.”

²⁵ So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day at Shechem, committing them to follow the decrees and regulations of the LORD (Joshua 24:20-25).

²⁶ Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone, and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. ²⁷ And Joshua said to all the people, “Behold, this stone shall be a witness to us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD which He spoke to us. It shall, therefore, be a witness to you, lest you deny your God.” ²⁸ So Joshua let the people depart, each to his own inheritance (Joshua 24:26-28 NKJV).

“Behold this stone shall be a witness to us, for it has heard all the words of the Lord.” This is an interesting statement that cannot be taken lightly. I used to skim over this and over verses

that mention rocks and stones being a witness and crying out thinking that it was symbolic or a personification; however, recently an idea came to me, perhaps from the Lord, that this statement is very literal. After all, I take most of the Bible literally, unlike others who think passages are symbolic. Why should passages like this be any different?

We think we live in such an advanced scientific age with advanced technology in media, communications and information technology, but where do you think that knowledge came from? We are only fooling ourselves if we think that man invented and created all this technology. The God who created the heavens and the earth and everything in it, including life, time and space, allowed mankind to discover some of the knowledge that God had already put in place.

We have DVD recorders, video cameras and we can now use our phones as video recorders. Why is it not possible that God could not use the very things around us to play back our conversations or even play back both sound and images of what happened in that place?

The stone in Joshua 24:27 was not the only inanimate object that the scriptures talk about hearing, crying out and echoing what was said.

Let's look at Micah 6:1 and Habakkuk 2:11 where we find mountains and hills hearing, stones of the walls crying out and beams of the woodwork and ceiling echoing what was said.

¹Listen to what the LORD says:

“Stand up, plead my case before the mountains;
let the hills hear what you have to say.

²“Hear, you mountains, the LORD's accusation;
listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth.

For the LORD has a case against his people;
he is lodging a charge against Israel (Micah 6:1–2 NIV).

⁹“Woe to you for getting rich by evil means, attempting to live beyond the reach of danger. ¹⁰By the murders you commit, you have shamed your name and forfeited your lives. ¹¹The very stones in the walls of your homes cry out against you, and the beams in the ceilings echo what they say (Habakkuk 2:9–11 LB).

We find in Isaiah that the mountains and hills will burst into song and the trees of the field will clap their hands!

¹²You will live in joy and peace.

The mountains and hills will burst into song,
and the trees of the field will clap their hands (Isaiah 55:12)!

I believe that on judgment day, or any day God chooses for that matter, that He can call as witnesses those stones, hills, mountains, and beams in the ceiling and they will play back what was said and done. Even the mountains and hills will sing and the trees of the field will clap their branches and leaves in praise and adoration of the living God who created all things!

After all, our cameras, video cameras, cell phones, iphones, and ipads are all inanimate objects, are they not? Yet, they can record and play back. Why is it so hard to believe that God can use other inanimate objects in this world that he has created to do the same thing? Just because we can't explain it and we can't fully understand it, doesn't mean that it isn't possible, or that it won't happen.

⁸For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8–9 KJV).

Who said animals can't talk! Remember the story of Balaam and how God allowed the donkey to speak?

Balaam and His Donkey

²¹ So the next morning Balaam got up, saddled his donkey, and started off with the Moabite officials. ²² But God was angry that Balaam was going, so he sent the angel of the LORD to stand in the road to block his way. As Balaam and two servants were riding along, ²³ Balaam's donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand. The donkey bolted off the road into a field, but Balaam beat it and turned it back onto the road. ²⁴ Then the angel of the LORD stood at a place where the road narrowed between two vineyard walls. ²⁵ When the donkey saw the angel of the

LORD, it tried to squeeze by and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall. So Balaam beat the donkey again. ²⁶Then the angel of the LORD moved farther down the road and stood in a place too narrow for the donkey to get by at all. ²⁷This time when the donkey saw the angel, it lay down under Balaam. In a fit of rage Balaam beat the animal again with his staff.

²⁸Then the LORD gave the donkey the ability to speak. "What have I done to you that deserves your beating me three times?" it asked Balaam.

²⁹"You have made me look like a fool!" Balaam shouted. "If I had a sword with me, I would kill you!"

³⁰"But I am the same donkey you have ridden all your life," the donkey answered. "Have I ever done anything like this before?"

"No," Balaam admitted.

³¹Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the roadway with a drawn sword in his hand. Balaam bowed his head and fell face down on the ground before him.

³²"Why did you beat your donkey those three times?" the angel of the LORD demanded. "Look, I have come to block your way because you are stubbornly resisting me. ³³Three times the donkey saw me and shied away; otherwise, I would certainly have killed you by now and spared the donkey."

³⁴Then Balaam confessed to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned. I didn't realize you were standing in the road to block my way. I will return home if you are against my going."

³⁵But the angel of the LORD told Balaam, "Go with these men, but say only what I tell you to say." So, Balaam went on with Balak's officials (Numbers 22:21–35).

I believe God can use inanimate objects of any kind and any animal he chooses to be witnesses of the things that have been done and said on this earth and that all living things will eventually worship their creator.

²³ Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has done this wondrous thing.

Shout for joy, O depths of the earth!

Break into song,

O mountains and forests and every tree!

For the LORD has redeemed Jacob

and is glorified in Israel.

²⁴ This is what the LORD says—

your Redeemer and Creator:

“I am the LORD, who made all things.

I alone stretched out the heavens.

Who was with me

when I made the earth?” (Isaiah 44:23-24).

Psalm 148

¹ Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD from the heavens!

Praise him from the skies!

² Praise him, all his angels!

Praise him, all the armies of heaven!

³ Praise him, sun and moon!

Praise him, all you twinkling stars!

⁴ Praise him, skies above!

Praise him, vapors high above the clouds!

⁵ Let every created thing give praise to the LORD,

for he issued his command, and they came into being.

⁶ He set them in place forever and ever.

His decree will never be revoked.

⁷ Praise the LORD from the earth,

you creatures of the ocean depths,

⁸ fire and hail, snow and clouds,

wind and weather that obey him,
⁹ mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars,
¹⁰ wild animals and all livestock,
small scurrying animals and birds,
¹¹ kings of the earth and all people,
rulers and judges of the earth,
¹² young men and young women,
old men and children.

¹³ Let them all praise the name of the LORD.
For his name is very great;
his glory towers over the earth and heaven!

¹⁴ He has made his people strong,
honoring his faithful ones—
the people of Israel who are close to him.

Praise the LORD!

CHAPTER 36

Joshua Dies and Leaders are Buried

Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, dies soon after addressing all the people of Israel at the age of 110.

They bury him in the land he had inherited at Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

³¹The people of Israel served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him—those who had personally experienced all that the LORD had done for Israel.

³²The bones of Joseph, which the Israelites had brought along with them when they left Egypt, were buried at Shechem, in the parcel of ground Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor for 100 pieces of silver. This land was located in the territory allotted to the descendants of Joseph.

³³Eleazar son of Aaron also died. He was buried in the hill country of Ephraim, in the town of Gibeah, which had been given to his son Phinehas (Joshua 24:31–33).

Joshua 24:32, gives us a partial history lesson regarding Shechem, but let's go back to the time of Abraham.

In Genesis 12 we have the record of the Lord calling Abram to leave his country, his relatives and his father's house and go to the land that he will show him. The Lord also promises to

bless him and make him the father of a great nation. So, Abram leaves Haran with his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all his wealth – livestock and all of the people who had joined his household at Haran and he travels to the land of Canaan. When he arrives in Canaan he travels to a place near Shechem and sets up camp beside the oak at Moreh.

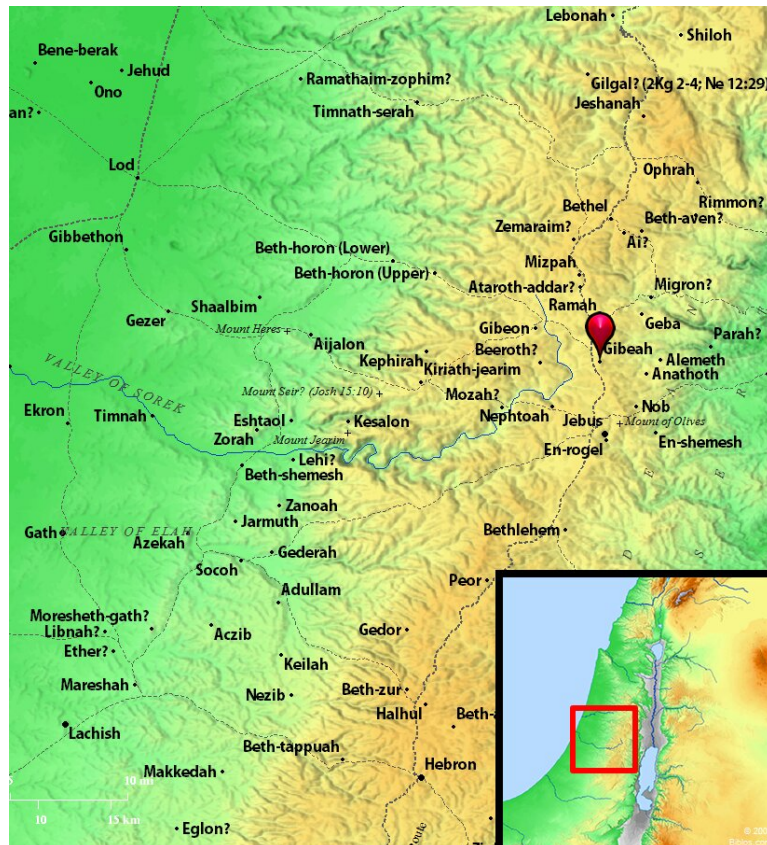
- **Abram** arrives in Canaan and camps at Shechem – Genesis 12:6
- **The Lord** appears to Abram at Shechem and tells him that He is going to give this land to his offspring. Abram builds an altar there – Genesis 12:7
- **Jacob** and his household arrive in Shechem after he left Haran and his Uncle Laban – Genesis 33:18
- **Jacob** buys the land he camps on from the family of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of silver and builds an altar – Genesis 33:19–20
- **Dinah**, Jacob & Leah's daughter, is raped by the local prince, Shechem, son of Hamor. Shechem and Hamor speak to Jacob and his sons and beg them to allow Shechem to marry Dinah. Dinah's brothers deceive Shechem and Hamor and tell them that if they become circumcised they will allow Shechem to marry Dinah and they will intermarry with them and live among them and become one people. Three days after all the men of the town and Shechem's family were circumcised, Dinah's brothers Simeon and Levi took their swords and slaughtered every man there and plundered the town and took all of the livestock, wealth and women and children – Genesis 34
- **While Jacob** and his family were living in the valley at Hebron, Jacob sends his sons to Shechem to graze their flocks. After some time, Jacob sends his favorite son Joseph, age seventeen, to go check on his brothers to see how they are doing. When Joseph arrived in Shechem he discovers that his brothers have moved on to Dothan with the flocks. When Joseph's brothers see Joseph coming a long way off, they plot to kill him, but Reuben intervenes and argues that they do not want blood on their hands, but instead should throw him into a dry well and let him die there. Reuben secretly planned to help Joseph escape and return him to his father. Meanwhile, when Reuben is out tending the flock, Judah proposes they sell Joseph to the Ishmaelite traders who were coming by, that way they wouldn't have Joseph's death

give them a guilty conscience. Joseph's brothers sell Joseph for twenty pieces of silver to the Ishmaelite traders who take him to Egypt – Genesis 37

- **Joseph** is taken to Egypt and sold into slavery and over time goes from being a slave, being accused of rape and going to prison, to being elevated to the 2nd highest position in the land of Egypt directly under Pharaoh – Genesis 39–41
- **Joseph's brothers** end up going to Egypt to buy grain at the direction of Jacob their father during a terrible drought and famine in the land of Canaan. Little did they know that Joseph, the brother they had sold to the Ishmaelite traders, was now 2nd in command in the land of Egypt and had stored up grain for seven years in preparation for the seven years of drought – Genesis 42–44
- **In a dramatic finale**, Joseph finally reveals his true identity and gives his brothers wagons and provisions to go back to the land of Canaan and bring back his father Jacob and all of their families and their cattle and goods to the land of Egypt – Genesis 45–47
- **Before Jacob dies**, he adopts Joseph's two sons: Manasseh and Ephraim. He tells Joseph that Manasseh and Ephraim will inherit from him just as Reuben and Simeon would inherit – Genesis 48
- **Jacob** instructs Joseph to bury him back in the land of Canaan, in the cave of Machpelah with his father Isaac and grandfather Abraham. Joseph has Jacob's body embalmed and takes his body back to Canaan as instructed. A large company of high-level Egyptians accompanied Joseph and his family back to the land of Canaan to bury his father Jacob. However, they left their little children and flocks and herds behind in the land of Goshen – Genesis 49–50
- **Before Joseph dies** he made his brethren swear to take his body with them when God leads them back to Canaan. They embalmed Joseph and placed his body in a coffin in Egypt – Genesis 50:25–26
- **Moses** takes the bones of Joseph when they leave Egypt – Exodus 13:19
- **Descendants** of Manasseh, son of Joseph, inherit Shechem within their allotted territory – Joshua 17

- **Joseph's bones are returned** to Shechem years later and buried in the parcel of ground that Jacob had purchased from the sons of Hamor – Joshua 24:32 & Exodus 12:40–41

Jacob is buried in the cave in Ephron's field, the cave in the field of Machpelah in Hebron, near Mamre, which Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite for a permanent burial place. Sarah, Abraham, Isaac, Rebecca, and Leah were all buried there – Genesis 49:29–32



Gibeah, Timnath-serah, Shechem map¹

Hebron – bottom center

Jacob is buried in the cave in the field of Machpelah in Hebron, near Mamre, which Abraham bought from Ephron, the Hittite, for a permanent burial place.

Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca and Leah were all buried there as well.

Eleazar, the priest, son of Aaron, is buried at Gibeah (see red balloon marker), which had been given to his son Phinehas.

Timnath-serah – where Joshua is buried – top center

Shechem – where Joseph is buried is located north of Lebonah – top right

What I find most interesting is that Jacob is buried in Hebron in the field of Machpelah in the territory of Judah with Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, and Leah, but Joseph is buried in Shechem in the territory of Manasseh, his first-born son.

Rachel, Joseph's mother, had been buried on the road to Ephrath (Bethlehem), shortly after giving birth to Benjamin, while enroute from Paddan-aram to Hebron where Jacob's father Isaac still lived at that time.

Joshua is of the tribe of Ephraim, Joseph's second born son, and buried in the land he had inherited at Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash, in the territory of Ephraim.

God used Joseph to lead his father Jacob and his brothers and their families out of Canaan into the land of Egypt to preserve their lives during the famine. God told Abraham back in Genesis 15:13–16 that his descendants would be strangers and slaves in a foreign land for four hundred years and after the fourth generation He would bring them back to the land of Canaan after the sin of the Amorites had run its course.

Although Moses led the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, it was Joseph's descendent Joshua who led the children of Israel back into the land of Canaan.

This was no accident. God's ways and plans are always perfect and what a wonderful correlation of having Joshua, a direct descendant of Joseph, lead the children and descendants of Israel (Jacob), Joseph's father, back into the land of Canaan.

Joshua and Eleazar are both buried in the hill country of Ephraim; Joshua at Timnath-serah, north of Mount Gaash and Eleazar in the town of Gibeah.



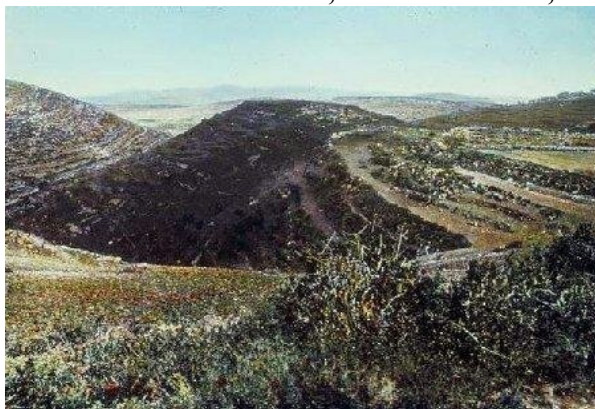
Shechem, Timnath-serah, Gibeah map²

Joseph buried at:
Shechem – top center

Joshua buried at:
Timnath-serah – left
center

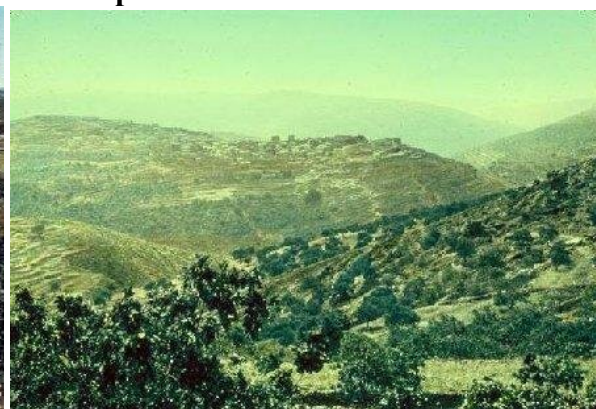
Eleazar buried at:
Gibeah – lower center –
straight south of
Shechem

Jacob, Leah, Isaac,
Rebecca, Abraham and
Sarah are buried at
Hebron – not on this
map, but south west of
Bethlehem – bottom
center



"Hill of Timnath"
Public domain / copyright expired

Hill of Timnath³



"The Hill-Country of Ephraim"
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The Hill Country of Ephraim⁴



Gibeah today⁵

Leah Goldsmith writes of Shechem and the current nearby Jewish settlement of Itamar (See picture on page 217):

It was from here that Yosef was sold down to Mitzrayim, Dina taken... and a place where today- Arabs have rights to carry weapons and have used them against us. It is a place of war against the enemy, who sit upon the gravesites of kivrey avot desecrating and burning.

We live in a heartbreakingly beautiful landscape, surrounded by mountains all around- hugging you, facing the very place that Am Yisrael were gathered together for "Shechem echad al achecha". It is the exact place that Yosef was later returned to for a final rest after he forgave and forgot that his brothers sold him out and threw him out of his home. He didn't war against THEM, despite what they had done.⁶

The promised land of Israel still remains unconquered today and is in constant turmoil. The Jewish people who currently live in this land face the possibility of death every day by attacks from their enemies. They face uncertainty about their future as nations debate how to parcel out the land and who gets what. This "land for peace" is totally against God's plan for the descendants of Jacob. Even the site where Joseph is buried in Shechem (the modern-

day city of Nablus) is no longer under Israel's control, but went under the Palestinian Authority (PA) control in 1993 with the Oslo Accords.

Under the Oslo Accords, signed by Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Shechem was assigned as Area A, and is under PA civilian and security control. The PA committed to allowing Jews to visit and pray at Joseph's Tomb, and is supposed to ensure security for visiting worshipers. However, the PA has rarely, if ever, lived up to its commitment, and attacks by rioting Arabs against Jews at the site are common.⁷

Hebron is the largest city in the West Bank and the second largest in the Palestinian territories after Gaza, and home to around 175,000 to 250,000 Palestinians, and between 500 and 850 Jewish settlers. The city is divided into two sectors: H1, controlled by the Palestinian Authority and H2, roughly 20% of the city, administered by Israel.⁸

Timnath-serah and Gibeah are also located in the West Bank which is under Palestinian control.

We are definitely living in the last days before our Lord Jesus Christ's return to rule and reign upon this earth from Jerusalem. From Micah 4:1–7:

¹In the last days, the mountain of the LORD's house
will be the highest of all—

the most important place on earth.

It will be raised above the other hills,
and people from all over the world will stream there to worship.

²People from many nations will come and say,
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of Jacob's God.

There he will teach us his ways,
and we will walk in his paths.”

For the LORD's teaching will go out from Zion;
his word will go out from Jerusalem.

³The LORD will mediate between peoples
and will settle disputes between strong nations far away.

They will hammer their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nations will no longer fight against nations,
nor train for war anymore.

⁴ Everyone will live in peace and prosperity,
enjoying their own grapevines and fig trees,
for there will be nothing to fear.

The LORD of Heaven's Armies
has made this promise!

⁵ Though the nations around us follow their idols,
we will follow the LORD our God forever and ever.

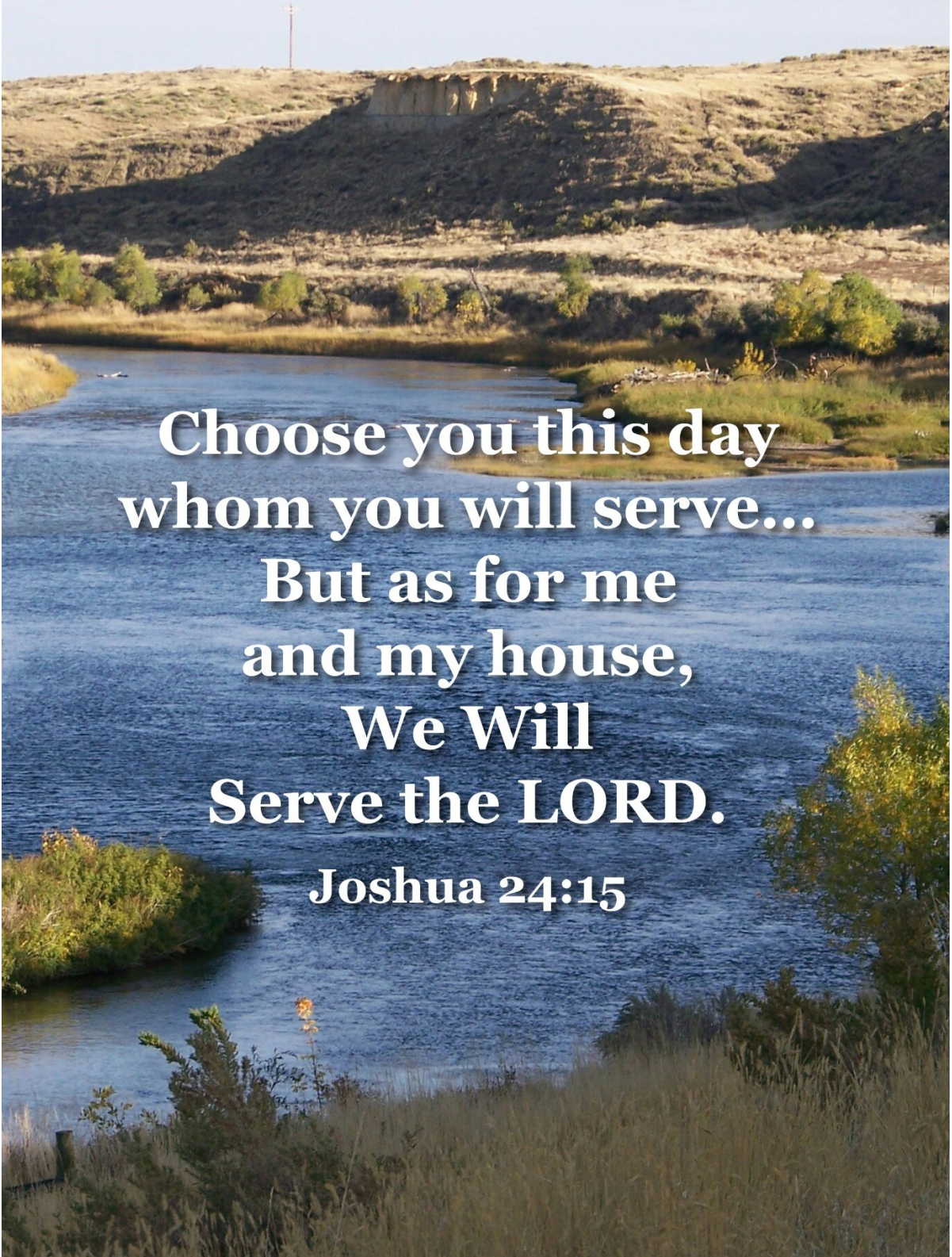
⁶ "In that coming day," says the LORD,
"I will gather together those who are lame,
those who have been exiles,
and those whom I have filled with grief.

⁷ Those who are weak will survive as a remnant;
those who were exiles will become a strong nation.

Then I, the LORD, will rule from Jerusalem
as their king forever".

**²⁰ He which testifieth these things saith, Surely, I come quickly. Amen.
Even so, come, Lord Jesus.**

**²¹ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen (Revelation
22:20–21 KJV).**



**Choose you this day
whom you will serve...**

**But as for me
and my house,
We Will
Serve the LORD.**

Joshua 24:15

APPENDIX A

Weapons in the Late Bronze Age

by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson

Part of a study of the Book of Joshua

We're used to weapons such as rifles and automatic weapons. But warfare in the Late Bronze Age was mostly hand to hand, with some use of longer range weapons such as bows and arrows, slings and stones. Fighting was a pretty dangerous, personal, and bloody business. These are some of the weapons:

Club. Often made from a single piece of wood, usually larger at the striking end. It could break bones and shatter skulls. A variation (though probably not used in Joshua's period) was the mace, a hand-held stick with a stone attached to the striking end.

Battle Axe. Probably in this period they would have a bronze or copper blade attached to a wooden handle.

Spear. A sharp blade was attached to the end of a stick, a hand-held stabbing weapon. The spear was used by defenders of besieged cities to keep shock troops at bay when they tried to scale the wall by ladders. (Numbers 25:7-8; Judges 5:8)

Sword. Used chiefly as a stabbing instrument. This was the most important weapon in Canaan, mentioned 400 times in the OT. The sword probably developed along with the advance of metallurgy. Swords and daggers were made of copper. While iron didn't generally appear in weapons until about 1200 BC in the area, iron and even steel swords are known much earlier on a limited basis. **Sickle Sword.** The curved shape and sharp cutting edge were used for striking or hacking a foe rather than for stabbing, functioning somewhat like a battle axe but easier to handle. This was probably used by the Israelites during the Conquest, since we read much about "smiting with the edge of the sword" (Joshua 10:28,30, 32, 37). Specimens of this type of sword have been discovered in Canaanite sites of the Late Bronze Age.

Bow and Arrow. This was a second widely used weapon in Joshua's army. "I sent the hornet ahead of you, which drove them out before you -- also the two Amorite kings. You did not do it with your own sword and bow" (Joshua 24:12). Bows were of two types. The self-bow was made of a single piece of wood. The composite bow was more powerful, and was made of laminated wood, horn, and sinew. The composite bow had an effective range of 500 to 550 feet (160-175 meters). Arrows were made of feather fletching, a shaft of a reed or some sort of wood, and flint, copper, bronze, and, later, iron tips.

Sling and Stone. This was made of inexpensive materials, and was a significant part of Israel's arsenal. The sling could be made of woven materials, such as wool or palm fiber rope, or of leather. Excavations in Israel, especially around fortification systems, usually reveal hundreds of sling stones. Stones were often worked to make them as round as possible, and they range from 2 to 3 inches (5 to 7.5 cm.) in diameter. Stones could be flung by a warrior at 100 to 150 miles per hour (160 to 240 km/hr).

Shield. There were two types of shields. The small round or rectangular shield used in hand-to-hand combat, and a long, full-length shield used by besiegers as they approached a city wall, so archers could fire arrows and still be protected. Shields for the typical soldier were probably made of leather stretched over a wood frame, and maintained by oiling (2 Samuel 1:21).

Armor was probably not used by the Israelites during the Conquest, but high-ranking leaders had body armor by the time of Saul (1 Samuel 17:8).

Helmet. A helmet to protect the head was probably of leather or bronze, but is not mentioned in Joshua.

Chariot. The Israelites did not have chariots in Joshua's day. The areas of the hill country where many of the tribes lived weren't conducive to chariots, which needed flat, open areas to be effective. The Canaanites (Philistines) along the coastal plain used iron chariots (Joshua 11:6, 9; Judges 1:19) that were a formidable obstacle to the complete conquest of the land.

APPENDIX B

Weapons and Warfare in Ancient Israel

By James Moyer, Ph.D., chairman of the Department of Religious Studies,

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Offensive weapons in use at this time can be divided into three categories according to their range. Short-range weapons were used in hand-to-hand combat and included the sword or dagger and the spear. Medium-range weapons were designed to be thrown at enemies a short distance away. Occasionally spears were light enough to be thrown, but the shorter and lighter javelin was better suited for throwing. Long-range weapons could be thrown or fired at an enemy further away. Examples of long-range weapons include the sling, used to hurl stones, and the bow, for propelling arrows. <http://www.gci.org/bible/hist/weapons>

APPENDIX C

The Ancestors of Jesus the Messiah

Matthew 1:1–17

¹ This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David and of Abraham:

² Abraham was the father of Isaac.

Isaac was the father of Jacob.

Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers.

³ Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah (whose mother was Tamar).

Perez was the father of Hezron.

Hezron was the father of Ram.

⁴ Ram was the father of Amminadab.

Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.

Nahshon was the father of Salmon.

⁵ Salmon was the father of Boaz (whose mother was Rahab).

Boaz was the father of Obed (whose mother was Ruth).

Obed was the father of Jesse.

⁶ Jesse was the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon (whose mother was Bathsheba, the widow of Uriah).

⁷ Solomon was the father of Rehoboam.

Rehoboam was the father of Abijah.

Abijah was the father of Asa.

⁸ Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat.

Jehoshaphat was the father of Jehoram.

Jehoram was the father of Uzziah.

⁹ Uzziah was the father of Jotham.

Jotham was the father of Ahaz.

Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah.

¹⁰ Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh.

Manasseh was the father of Amon.

Amon was the father of Josiah.

¹¹ Josiah was the father of Jehoiachin and his brothers (born at the time of the exile to Babylon).

¹² After the Babylonian exile:

Jehoiachin was the father of Shealtiel.

Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel.

¹³ Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud.

Abiud was the father of Eliakim.

Eliakim was the father of Azor.

¹⁴ Azor was the father of Zadok.

Zadok was the father of Akim.

Akim was the father of Eliud.

¹⁵ Eliud was the father of Eleazar.

Eleazar was the father of Matthan.

Matthan was the father of Jacob.

¹⁶ Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary.

Mary gave birth to Jesus, who is called the Messiah.

¹⁷ All those listed above include fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the Babylonian exile, and fourteen from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah.

APPENDIX D

Joshua's Long Day

Did it Really Happen—and How?

by Russell Grigg

The key question in any discussion about the meaning of difficult Bible passages is: What did the author intend to convey? Joshua records in great detail the occupation of Canaan by Israel and the allotment of the land among the tribes, around 1400 BC, so the author is obviously writing a historical account of what happened. The occasion of the long day was during a battle between the combined armies of the five Amorite kings and the army of Israel, early in the campaign.¹ With the help of God, the Israelites were winning the battle and needed more time on this day to complete the victory.

Joshua 10:11–13 reads: ‘And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died ... Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and He said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher?² So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.’

It appears to have been midday or after (Hebrew: *sun in the midst of the sky*).³ And the author is telling us that the sun did not proceed to set for a period of a completed day, which many commentators take to be approximately a 24-hour period, rather than just a daylight period.

Many cultures have legends that seem to be based on this event. For example, there is a Greek myth of Apollo's son, Phaethon, who disrupted the sun's course for a day. And since Joshua 10 is historical, cultures on the opposite side of the world should have legends of a long night. In fact, the New Zealand Maori people have a myth about how their hero Maui

slowed the sun before it rose, while the Mexican *Annals of Cuauhtitlan* (the history of the empire of Culhuacan and Mexico) records a night that continued for an extended time.⁴

It should also be noted that the Amorites were sun and moon worshippers. For these ‘deities’ to have been forced to obey the God of Israel must have been a devastating experience for the Amorites, and this might well have been the reason why God performed this particular miracle at that time, i.e. near the beginning of the occupation of the land of Canaan by the Israelites.⁵

Geocentrism and the language of appearance

Joshua’s command to the sun to stand still does not support geocentrism, i.e. the idea that the sun moves around the Earth. The Bible uses the language of appearance and observation.⁶

Today people do exactly the same thing. For example, scientists who prepare weather reports for TV announce the times of ‘sunrise and sunset’. In fact, the mention of the moon also standing still seems to confirm both the divine authorship of the account and the fact that it is the Earth which moves. Since all Joshua needed was extra sunlight, and most ancients believed the sun moves, not the Earth, a human author of a fictitious account would only have needed to refer to the sun stopping.

NASA and the missing day

A rumor surfaces from time to time that scientists ‘using computers’ at NASA to check planetary positions discovered that a day was ‘missing’ from history.

This story is an ‘urban myth’. The alleged research seems never to have been published—no wonder, because to make such a calculation one would need to know the planets’ positions before any missing day, as well as after. This is impossible.

Similar considerations apply to the book *Joshua’s Long Day*, written in 1890 by Charles Totten, purporting to prove that a day went missing, without reproducing his calculations. All such calculations can show only where the sun and moon should have been at any time in the past (based on where they are now, assuming the rates of movements have not changed), not where they actually were.

What actually happened?

Suggested answers may be divided into three main categories:

1. Some form of refraction (bending) of the light from the sun and the moon. According to this view, God miraculously caused the sunlight and moonlight to continue in Canaan for ‘about a whole day’. Supporters of this view point out:⁷
 - a. It was light that Joshua needed, not a slowing of the Earth.
 - b. God promised Noah that ‘while the Earth remaineth ... day and night shall not cease’ (Genesis 8:22). This could be seen to mean that God promised that the Earth would not stop rotating on its axis until the end of human history. (However, it would not seem to preclude a temporary slowing down of the Earth’s rotation.)
 - c. Some form of light refraction appears to have been what happened in the reign of Hezekiah when the shadow on Ahaz’s sundial retreated ten degrees (2 Kings 20:11)—an event that appears to have occurred only in the land of Palestine (2 Chronicles 32:31).

2. A wobble in the direction of the Earth’s axis of rotation.

This involves a precession⁸ of the axis of the Earth, wobbling slowly so as to trace an ‘s’-shaped or circular path in the sky. Such an event could have made it appear to an observer that the sun and the moon were standing still, but need not have involved any actual slowing of the rotation of the Earth.

One suggestion was that this was caused by the orbits of the Earth and Mars being close together on this date.¹ One problem is that these authors postulate an ancient orbit for Mars different from its present one, and there is no proof that this ever happened. Other suggested causes have included impacts of asteroids on the Earth.

3. A slowing of the Earth’s rotation.

According to this view, God caused the rotation of the Earth to slow down so that it made one full revolution in about 48 hours rather than 24. Simultaneously, God stopped the cataclysmic effects that would have naturally occurred, such as monstrous tidal waves. Some people have objected to this on the erroneous assumption that, if the Earth slowed down, people and loose objects would fly off into

space. In fact, the apparent centrifugal force (tending to throw things off the Earth) is only about one-three-hundredth of the gravitational force. If the Earth stopped rotating (whether suddenly or not), this outward ‘force’ would cease and we would actually be held more firmly by gravity.

The Earth at the equator moves at about 1,600 km/h (1,000 mph). The velocity needed to escape from the Earth’s gravity is about 40,000 km/h (25,000 mph). If the Earth was spinning as fast as this, we would all fly off into space anyway, regardless of whether the Earth stopped suddenly or not!

What about the momentum of people and objects travelling at 1,600 km/h on the Earth?

Answer: A car travelling at 100 km/h can be stopped comfortably for the occupants in a few seconds; something travelling at 1,600 km/h could stop comfortably for passengers in a few minutes.

This scenario need only imply that God slowed the rotation of the atmosphere, oceans, and Earth simultaneously to prevent any tidal-wave effect, and any heat build-up inside the Earth due to friction from still-rotating liquid layers of the Earth’s core. And after the long day was over, the whole process would need to start up again.

It is certainly not impossible for God to have done all this, despite representing a major interruption of the natural order of things with respect to the Earth set up by God in Genesis 1.

Conclusion

Christianity is a religion of the miraculous—from God’s creative acts of Genesis 1 to the wonderful events of Revelation 22. The Bible does not tell us how any of these happen, other than that God wills them to happen and they do. He may use (intensify) some existing natural law (as in Noah’s Flood), or all participation of nature may be excluded (as in the Resurrection). Often the miraculous effect lies in the providential timing of natural events (as in God’s partition of the Red Sea by a strong wind that blew all night—Exodus 14:21).

Miracles rest on testimony, not on scientific analyses. While it is interesting to speculate on how God might have performed any particular Biblical miracle, including Joshua’s long day, ultimately those claiming to be disciples of Jesus Christ (who authenticated the divine record of the Bible) must accept them, by faith.⁹ There is not one logical, scientific reason to claim

that, given a God powerful enough to create a universe in six days, Joshua's long day 'could not have happened'. Those who balk at this account are almost invariably those who have already rejected 6-day creation through compromise with evolution's fictitious long ages, and have thus rejected the authority of the Bible.

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2. The book of Jasher (KJV) or Jashar (some modern translations) was an ancient collection of poems written to honor Israel's leaders (cf. 2 Samuel 1:17–27). Joshua's words to the sun (which appear to be quoted from this book) are in poetic form and are printed in this way in most modern Bible versions. This use of poetry here does not invalidate a literal interpretation of the event, any more than those Psalms which describe events in David's life invalidate the literalness of the events they poetically portray. In any case, verse 13b reverts to Hebrew prose to describe what happened in answer to Joshua's prayer.
3. It would have made no sense early on the morning of a battle, with a whole day ahead, for Joshua to have prayed for a lengthening of the daylight.
4. Immanuel Velikovsky, *Worlds in Collision*, Dell, New York, 1950, p. 61 note 3. See also other historical references to long days or nights in this book.
5. Instead of, for example, using hornets (Exodus 23:28), or confusing the enemy (2 Kings 7:6).
6. In this connection, Henry Morris writes, 'All motion is relative motion, and the sun is no more "fixed" in space than the Earth is. ... The scientifically correct way to specify motions, therefore, is to select an arbitrary point of assumed zero velocities and then to measure all velocities relative to that point. The proper point to use is the one which is most convenient to the observer for the purposes of his particular calculations. In the case of movements of the heavenly bodies, normally the most suitable point is the Earth's surface at the latitude and longitude of the observer, and this, therefore, is the most "scientific" point to use. David [Psalm 19:6] and Joshua are more scientific than their critics in adopting such a convention for their

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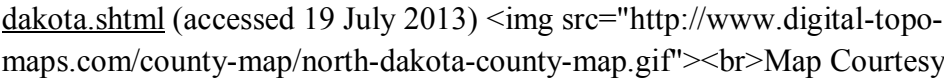
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Cyndee Leppke is a new author in the world of book publishing as this is her first endeavor; however, she has written many devotionals and short stories for family and friends.

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She enjoys spending time with family and friends and, of course, the granddaughters. Hiking, horseback riding, photography and working in the yard are favorite pastimes.

Her desire is to see people come to know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord and to grow in their faith and trust in Him.

