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Brief Explanations of the Technical Resources Used in the “You Can Understand the Bible” Old Testament Commentary Series

I. Lexical

There are several excellent lexicons available for ancient Hebrew.

- A. *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* by Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. It is based on the German lexicon by William Gesenius. It is known by the abbreviation BDB.
- B. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* by Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, translated by M. E. J. Richardson. It is known by the abbreviation KB.
- C. *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* by William L. Holladay and is based on the above German lexicon (#A).
- D. A new five volume theological word study entitled *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, edited by Willem A. Van Gemeren. It is known by the abbreviation NIDOTTE.

Where there is significant lexical variety, I have shown several English translations (NASB, NKJV, NRSV, TEV, NJB) from both “word-for-word” and “dynamic equivalent” translations (cf. Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, pp. 28-44).

II. Grammatical

The grammatical identification is usually based on John Joseph Owens’ *Analytical Key to the Old Testament* in four volumes. This is cross checked with Benjamin Davidson’s *Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon of the Old Testament*.

Another helpful resource for grammatical and syntactical features which is used in most of the OT volumes of “You Can Understand the Bible” Series is “The Helps for Translators Series” from the United Bible Societies. They are entitled “A Handbook on _____.”

III. Textual

I am committed to the inspiration of the consonantal Hebrew text (not the Masoretic vowel points and comments). As in all hand-copied ancient texts, there are some questionable passages. This is usually because of the following:

- A. *hapax legomenon* (words used only once in the Hebrew OT)
- B. idiomatic terms (words and phrases whose literal meanings have been lost)
- C. historical uncertainties (our lack of information about the ancient world)
- D. the poly-semitic semantic field of Hebrew’s limited vocabulary
- E. problems associated with later scribes hand-copying ancient Hebrew texts
- F. Hebrew scribes trained in Egypt who felt free to update the texts they copied to make them complete and understandable to their day (NIDOTTE, pp. 52-54).

There are several sources of Hebrew words and texts outside the Masoretic textual tradition:

1. The Samaritan Pentateuch
2. The Dead Sea Scrolls
3. Some later coins, letters, and ostraca (broken pieces of unfired pottery used for writing), but for the most part, there are no manuscript families in the OT like those in the Greek NT manuscripts. For a good brief article on the textual reliability of the Masoretic Text (A.D.

900's) see "The Reliability of the Old Testament Text" by Bruce K. Waltke in the NIDOTTE, vol. 1, pp. 51-67.

The Hebrew text used is *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* from the German Bible Society, 1997, which is based on the Leningrad Codex (A.D. 1009). Occasionally, the ancient versions (Greek Septuagint, Aramaic Targums, Syriac Peshitta, and Latin Vulgate) are consulted if the Hebrew is ambiguous or obviously confused.

BRIEF DEFINITIONS OF HEBREW VERBAL FORMS WHICH IMPACT EXEGESIS

I. Brief Historical Development of Hebrew

Hebrew is part of the Shemitic (Semitic) family of southwest Asian languages. The name (given by modern scholars) comes from Noah's son, Shem (cf. Gen. 5:32; 6:10). Shem's descendants are listed in Gen. 10:21-31 as Arabs, Hebrews, Syrians, Arameans, and Assyrians. In reality, some Semitic languages are used by the nations listed in Ham's line (cf. Gen. 10:6-14): Canaan, Phoenicia, and Ethiopia.

Hebrew is part of the northwest group of these Semitic languages. Modern scholars have samples of this ancient language group:

- A. Amorite (*Mari Tablets* from 18th century B.C. in Akkadian)
- B. Canaanite (*Ras Shamra Tablets* from 15th century in Ugaritic)
- C. Canaanite (*Amarna Letters* from 14th century in Canaanite Akkadian)
- D. Phoenician (Hebrew uses Phoenician alphabet)
- E. Moabite (Mesha stone, 840 B.C.)
- F. Aramaic (official language of the Persian Empire used in Gen. 31:47 [2 words]; Jer. 10:11; Dan. 2:4-6; 7:28; Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26 and spoken by Jews in the first century in Palestine)

The Hebrew language is called "the lip of Canaan" in Isa. 19:18. It was first called "Hebrew" in the prologue of Ecclesiasticus (Wisdom of Ben Sirach) about 180 B.C. (and some other early places, cf. *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 4, pp. 205ff). It is most closely related to Moabite and the language used at Ugarit. Examples of ancient Hebrew found outside the Bible are

1. the Gezer calendar, 925 B.C. (a school boy's writing)
2. the Siloam Inscription, 705 B.C. (tunnel writings)
3. Samaritan Ostraca, 770 B.C. (tax records on broken pottery)
4. Lachish letters, 587 B.C. (war communications)
5. Maccabean coins and seals
6. some Dead Sea Scroll texts
7. numerous inscriptions (cf. "Languages [Hebrew]," ABD 4:203ff)

It, like all Semitic languages, is characterized by words made up of three consonants (tri-consonantal root). It is an inflected language. The three-root consonants carry the basic word meaning, while prefixed, suffixed, or internal additions show the syntactical function (later vowels, cf. Sue Green, *Linguistic Analysis of Biblical Hebrew*, pp. 46-49).

Hebrew vocabulary demonstrates a difference between prose and poetry. Word meanings are connected to folk etymologies (not linguistic origins). Word plays and sound plays are quite common (*paronomasia*).

II. Aspects of Predication

A. VERBS

The normal expected word order is VERB, PRONOUN, SUBJECT (with modifiers), OBJECT (with modifiers). The basic non-flagged VERB is the *Qal*, PERFECT, MASCULINE, SINGULAR form. It is how Hebrew and Aramaic lexicons are arranged.

VERBS are inflected to show

1. number—singular, plural, dual
2. gender—masculine and feminine (no neuter)

3. mood—indicative, subjunctive, imperative (relation of the action to reality)
 4. tense (aspect)
 - a. PERFECT, which denotes completed, in the sense of the beginning, continuing, and concluding, of an action. Usually this form was used of past action, the thing has occurred. J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament*, says

“The single whole described by a perfect is also considered as certain. An imperfect may picture a state as possible or desired or expected, but a perfect sees it as actual, real, and sure” (p. 36).

S. R. Driver, *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew*, describes it as,

“The perfect is employed to indicate actions the accomplishment of which lies indeed in the future, but is regarded as dependent upon such an unalterable determination of the will that it may be spoken of as having actually taken place: thus a resolution, promise, or decree, especially of Divine one, is frequently announced in the perfect tense” (p. 17, e.g., the prophetic perfect).

Robert B. Chisholm, Jr. *From Exegesis to Exposition*, defines this verbal form as one that

“. . .views a situation from the outside, as a whole. As such it expresses a simple fact, whether it be an action or state (including state of being or mind). When used of actions, it often views the action as complete from the rhetorical standpoint of the speaker or narrator (whether it is or is not complete in fact or reality is not the point). The perfect can pertain to an action/state in the past, present or future. As noted above, time frame, which influences how one translates the perfect into a tense-oriented language like English, must be determined from the context” (p. 86).
 - b. IMPERFECT, which denotes an action in progress (incomplete, repetitive, continual, or contingent), often movement toward a goal. Usually this form was used of present and future action.

J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament*, says,

“All IMPERFECTS represent incomplete states. They are either repeated or developing or contingent. In other words, or partially developed, or partially assured. In all cases they are partial in some sense, i.e., incomplete” (p. 55).

Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., *From Exegesis to Exposition*, says,

“It is difficult to reduce the essence of the imperfect to a single concept, for it encompasses both aspect and mood. Sometimes the imperfect is used in an indicative manner and makes an objective statement. At other times it views an action more subjectively, as hypothetical, contingent, possible, and so on” (p. 89).
 - c. The added *waw*, which links the VERB to the action of the previous VERB(s).
 - d. IMPERATIVE, which is based on the volition of the speaker and potential action by the hearer.
 - e. In ancient Hebrew only the larger context can determine the authorially-intended time orientations.
- B. The seven major inflected forms and their basic meaning. In reality these forms work in conjunction with each other in a context and must not be isolated.

1. *Qal (Kal)*, the most common and basic of all the forms. It denotes simple action or a state of being. There is no causation or specification implied.
2. *Niphal*, the second most common form. It is usually PASSIVE, but this form also functions as reciprocal and reflexive. It also has no causation or specification implied.
3. *Piel*, this form is active and expresses the bringing about of an action into a state of being. The basic meaning of the *Qal* stem is developed or extended into a state of being.
4. *Pual*, this is the PASSIVE counterpart to the *Piel*. It is often expressed by a PARTICIPLE.
5. *Hithpael*, which is the reflexive or reciprocal stem. It expresses iterative or durative action to the *Piel* stem. The rare PASSIVE form is called *Hothpael*.
6. *Hiphil*, the active form of the causative stem in contrast to *Piel*. It can have a permissive aspect, but usually refers to the cause of an event. Ernst Jenni, a German Hebrew grammarian, believed that the *Piel* denoted something coming into a state of being, while *Hiphil* showed how it happened.
7. *Hophal*, the PASSIVE counterpart to the *Hiphil*. These last two stems are the least used of the seven stems.

Much of this information comes from *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, by Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, pp. 343-452.

Agency and causation chart. One key in understanding the Hebrew VERB system is to see it as a pattern of VOICE relationships. Some stems are in contrast to other stems (i.e., *Qal - Niphal; Piel - Hiphil*)

The chart below tries to illustrate the basic function of the VERB stems as to causation.

VOICE or Subject	No Secondary Agency	An Active Secondary Agency	A Passive Secondary Agency
ACTIVE	<i>Qal</i>	<i>Hiphil</i>	<i>Piel</i>
MIDDLE PASSIVE	<i>Niphal</i>	<i>Hophal</i>	<i>Pual</i>
REFLEXIVE/ RECIPROCAL	<i>Niphal</i>	<i>Hiphil</i>	<i>Hithpael</i>

This chart is taken from the excellent discussion of the VERBAL system in light of new Akkadian research (cf. Bruce K. Waltke, M. O'Conner, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, pp.354-359).

R. H. Kennett, *A Short Account of the Hebrew Tenses*, has provided a needed warning:

“I have commonly found in teaching, that a student’s chief difficulty in the Hebrew verbs is to grasp the meaning which they conveyed to the minds of the Hebrews themselves; that is to say, there is a tendency to assign as equivalents to each of the Hebrew Tenses a certain number of Latin or English forms by which that particular Tense may commonly be translated. The result is a failure to perceive many of these fine shades of meaning, which give such life and vigor to the language of the Old Testament.

The difficulty in the use of the Hebrew verbs lies solely in the point of view, so absolutely different from our own, from which the Hebrews regarded an action; the *time*, which with us is the first consideration, as the very word, ‘tense’ shows, being to them a matter of secondary importance. It is, therefore, essential that a student should

clearly grasp, not so much the Latin or English forms which may be used in translating each of the Hebrew Tenses, but rather the aspect of each action, as it presented itself to a Hebrew's mind.

The name 'tenses' as applied to Hebrew verbs is misleading. The so-called Hebrew 'tenses' do not express the *time* but merely the *state* of an action. Indeed were it not for the confusion that would arise through the application of the term 'state' to both nouns and verbs, 'states' would be a far better designation than 'tenses.' It must always be borne in mind that it is impossible to translate a Hebrew verb into English without employing a limitation (vix. of time) which is entirely absent in the Hebrew. The ancient Hebrews never thought of an action as past, present, or future, but simply as *perfect*, i.e., complete, or *imperfect*, i.e., as in course of development. When we say that a certain Hebrew tense corresponds to a Perfect, Pluperfect, or Future in English, we do not mean that the Hebrews thought of it as Perfect, Pluperfect, or Future, but merely that it must be so translated in English. The *time* of an action the Hebrews did not attempt to express by any verbal form" (preface and p. 1).

For a second good warning, Sue Groom, *Linguistic Analysis of Biblical Hebrew*, reminds us,

"There is no way of knowing whether modern scholars' reconstruction of semantic fields and sense relations in an ancient dead language are merely a reflection of their own intuition, or their own native language, or whether those fields existed in Classical Hebrew" (p. 128).

C. Moods (Modes)

1. It happened, is happening (INDICATIVE), usually uses PERFECT tense or PARTICIPLES (all PARTICIPLES are INDICATIVE).
2. It will happen, could happen (SUBJUNCTIVE)
 - a. uses a marked IMPERFECT tense
 - (1) COHORTATIVE (added h), first person IMPERFECT form which normally expresses a wish, a request, or self-encouragement (i.e., actions willed by the speaker)
 - (2) JUSSIVE (internal changes), third person IMPERFECT (can be second person in negated sentences) which normally expresses a request, a permission, an admonition, or advice
 - b. uses a PERFECT tense with *lu* or *lule*

These constructions are similar to SECOND CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCES in Koine Greek. A false statement (protasis) results in a false conclusion (apodosis).
 - c. uses an IMPERFECT tense and *lu*

Context and *lu*, as well as a future orientation, mark this SUBJUNCTIVE usage. Some examples from J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament* are Gen. 13:16; Deut. 1:12; I Kgs. 13:8; Ps. 24:3; Isa. 1:18 (cf. pp. 76-77).

D. *Waw* - Conversive/consecutive/relative. This uniquely Hebrew (Canaanite) syntactical feature has caused great confusion through the years. It is used in a variety of ways often based on genre. The reason for the confusion is that early scholars were European and tried to interpret in light of their own native languages. When this proved difficult, they blamed the problem on Hebrew being a "supposed" ancient, archaic language. European languages are TENSE (time) based VERBS. Some of the variety and grammatical implications were specified by the letter *waw* being added to the PERFECT or IMPERFECT VERB stems. This altered the way the action was viewed.

1. In historical narrative the VERBS are linked together in a chain with a standard pattern.
2. The *waw* prefix showed a specific relationship with the previous VERB(s).

3. The larger context is always the key to understanding the VERBS chain. Semitic VERBS cannot be analyzed in isolation.

J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament*, notes the distinctiveness of Hebrew in its use of the *waw* before PERFECTS and IMPERFECTS (pp. 52-53). As the basic idea of the PERFECT is past, the addition of *waw* often projects it into future time. This is also true of the IMPERFECT whose basic idea is present or future; the addition of *waw* places it into the past. It is this unusual time shift which explains the *waw*'s addition, not a change in the basic meaning of the tense itself. The *waw* PERFECTS work well with prophecy, while the *waw* IMPERFECTS work well with narratives (pp. 54, 68).

Watts continues his definition,

“As a fundamental distinction between *waw* conjunctive and *waw* consecutive, the following interpretations are offered:

1. *Waw* conjunctive appears always to indicate a parallel.
2. *Waw* consecutive appears always to indicate a sequence. It is the only form of *waw* used with consecutive imperfects. The relation between the imperfects linked by it may be temporal sequence, logical consequence, logical cause, or logical contrast. In all cases there is a sequence” (p. 103).

E. INFINITIVE - There are two kinds of INFINITIVES

1. INFINITIVE ABSOLUTES, which are “strong, independent, striking expressions used for dramatic effect. . .as a subject, it often has no written verb, the verb ‘to be’ being understood, of course, but the word standing dramatically alone” J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament*” (p. 92).
2. INFINITIVE CONSTRUCTS, which are “related grammatically to the sentence by prepositions, possessive pronouns, and the construct relationship” (p. 91).

J. Weingreen, *A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew*, describes the construct state this way:

“When two (or more) words are so closely united that together they constitute one compound idea, the dependent word (or words) is (are) said to be in the construct state” (p. 44).

F. INTERROGATIVES

1. They always appear first in the sentence.
2. Interpretive significance
 - a. *ha* - does not expect a response
 - b. *halo'* - the author expects a “yes” answer

NEGATIVES

1. They always appear before the words they negate.
2. The most common negation is *lo'*.
3. The term *'al* has a contingent connotation and is used with COHORTATIVES and JUSSIVES.
4. The term *lebhilit*, meaning “in order that. . .not,” is used with INFINITIVES.
5. The term *'en* is used with PARTICIPLES.

G. CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

1. There are four kinds of conditional sentences which are basically paralleled in Koine Greek.
 - a. something assumed to be happening or thought of as fulfilled (FIRST CLASS in Greek)
 - b. something contrary to fact whose fulfillment is impossible (SECOND CLASS)
 - c. something which is possible or even probable (THIRD CLASS)
 - d. something which is less probable, therefore, the fulfillment is dubious (FOURTH CLASS)

2. GRAMMATICAL MARKERS

- a. the assumed-to-be-true or real condition always uses an INDICATIVE PERFECT or PARTICIPLE and the protasis is usually introduced by
 - (1) *'im*
 - (2) *ki* (or *'asher*)
 - (3) *hin* or *hinneh*
- b. the contrary-to-fact condition always uses a PERFECT aspect VERB or a PARTICIPLE with the introductory PARTICLE *lu* or *lule*
- c. the more probable condition always uses IMPERFECT VERB or PARTICIPLES in the protasis, *'im* or *ki* are usually used as introductory PARTICLES
- d. the less probable condition uses IMPERFECT SUBJUNCTIVES in the protasis and always uses *'im* as an introductory PARTICLE

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS COMMENTARY

AB	<i>Anchor Bible Commentaries</i> , ed. William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> (6 vols.), ed. David Noel Freedman
AKOT	<i>Analytical Key to the Old Testament</i> by John Joseph Owens
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts</i> , James B. Pritchard
BDB	<i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> by F. Brown, S. R. Driver and C. A. Briggs
IDB	<i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> (4 vols.), ed. George A. Buttrick
ISBE	<i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i> (5 vols.), ed. James Orr
JB	Jerusalem Bible
JPSOA	<i>The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoretic Text: A New Translation</i> (The Jewish Publication Society of America)
KB	<i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> by Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner
LAM	<i>The Holy Bible From Ancient Eastern Manuscripts</i> (the Peshitta) by George M. Lamsa
LXX	Septuagint (Greek-English) by Zondervan, 1970
MOF	<i>A New Translation of the Bible</i> by James Moffatt
MT	Masoretic Hebrew Text
NAB	New American Bible Text
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NEB	New English Bible
NET	NET Bible: New English Translation, Second Beta Edition
NRSV	New Revised Standard Bible
NIDOTTE	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i> (5 vols.), ed. Willem A. VanGemeren
NIV	New International Version

NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
OTPG	<i>Old Testament Parsing Guide</i> by Todd S. Beall, William A. Banks and Colin Smith
REB	Revised English Bible
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SEPT	The Septuagint (Greek-English) by Zondervan, 1970
TEV	Today's English Version from United Bible Societies
YLT	<i>Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible</i> by Robert Young
ZPBE	<i>Zondervan Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia</i> (5 vols.), ed. Merrill C. Tenney

A WORD FROM THE AUTHOR: HOW CAN THIS COMMENTARY HELP YOU?

Biblical interpretation is a rational and spiritual process that attempts to understand an ancient inspired writer in such a way that the message from God may be understood and applied in our day.

The spiritual process is crucial but difficult to define. It does involve a yieldedness and openness to God. There must be a hunger (1) for Him, (2) to know Him, and (3) to serve Him. This process involves prayer, confession, and the willingness for lifestyle change. The Spirit is crucial in the interpretive process, but why sincere, godly Christians understand the Bible differently is a mystery.

The rational process is easier to describe. We must be consistent and fair to the text and not be influenced by our personal, cultural, or denominational biases. We are all historically conditioned. None of us is an objective, neutral interpreters. This commentary offers a careful rational process containing four interpretive principles structured to help us attempt to overcome our biases.

First Principle

The first principle is to note the historical setting in which a biblical book was written and the particular historical occasion for its authorship. The original author had a purpose and a message to communicate. The text cannot mean something to us that it never meant to the original, ancient, inspired author. His intent—not our historical, emotional, cultural, personal, or denominational need—is the key. Application is an integral partner to interpretation, but proper interpretation must always precede application. It must be reiterated that every biblical text has one and only one meaning. This meaning is what the original biblical author intended through the Spirit’s leadership to communicate to his day. This one meaning may have many possible applications to different cultures and situations. These applications must be linked to the central truth of the original author. For this reason, this study guide commentary is designed to provide a brief introduction to each book of the Bible.

Second Principle

The second principle is to identify the literary units. Every biblical book is a unified document. Interpreters have no right to isolate one aspect of truth by excluding others. Therefore, we must strive to understand the purpose of the whole biblical book before we interpret the individual literary units. The individual parts—chapters, paragraphs, or verses—cannot mean what the whole unit does not mean. Interpretation must move from a deductive approach of the whole to an inductive approach to the parts. Therefore, this study guide commentary is designed to help the student analyze the structure of each literary unit by paragraphs. Paragraph and chapter divisions are not inspired, but they do aid us in identifying thought units.

Interpreting at a paragraph level—not sentence, clause, phrase, or word level—is the key in following the biblical author’s intended meaning. Paragraphs are based on a unified topic, often called the theme or topical sentence. Every word, phrase, clause, and sentence in the paragraph relates somehow to this unified theme. They limit it, expand it, explain it, and/or question it. A real key to proper interpretation is to follow the original author’s thought on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis through the individual literary units that make up the biblical book. This study guide commentary is designed to help the student do that by comparing the paragraphing of modern English translations. These translations have been selected because they employ different translation theories:

- A. The United Bible Society’s Greek text is the revised fourth edition (UBS⁴). This text was paragraphed by modern textual scholars.
- B. The New King James Version (NKJV) is a word-for-word literal translation based on the Greek manuscript tradition known as the Textus Receptus. Its paragraph divisions are longer than the other translations. These longer units help the student to see the unified topics.

- C. The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) is a modified word-for-word translation. It forms a midpoint between NKJV and NJB. Its paragraph divisions are quite helpful in identifying subjects.
- D. The Today's English Version (TEV) is a dynamic equivalent translation published by the United Bible Society. It attempts to translate the Bible in such a way that a modern English reader or speaker can understand the meaning of the Greek text. Often, especially in the Gospels, it divides paragraphs by speaker rather than by subject, in the same way as the NIV. For the interpreter's purposes, this is not helpful. It is interesting to note that both the UBS⁴ and TEV are published by the same entity, yet their paragraphing differs.
- E. The New Jerusalem Bible (NJB) is a dynamic equivalent translation based on a French Catholic translation. It is very helpful in comparing the paragraphing from a European perspective.
- F. The printed text is the 1995 Updated New American Standard Bible (NASB), which is a word for word translation. The verse by verse comments follow this text.

Third Principle

The third principle is to read the Bible in different translations in order to grasp the widest possible range of meaning (semantic field) that biblical words or phrases may have. Often a Greek phrase or word can be understood in several ways. These different translations bring out these options and help to identify and explain the Greek manuscript variations. These do not affect doctrine, but they do help us to try to get back to the original text penned by an inspired ancient writer.

Fourth Principle

The fourth principle is to note the literary genre. Original inspired authors chose to record their messages in different forms (e.g., historical narrative, historical drama, poetry, prophecy, gospel [parable], letter, apocalyptic). These different forms have special keys to interpretation (see Gordon Fee and Doug Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* or Robert Stein, *Playing by the Rules*).

This commentary offers a quick way for the student to check his interpretations. It is not meant to be definitive, but rather informative and thought-provoking. Often, other possible interpretations help us not be so parochial, dogmatic, and denominational. Interpreters need to have a larger range of interpretive options to recognize how ambiguous the ancient text can be. It is shocking how little agreement there is among Christians who claim the Bible as their source of truth.

These principles have helped me to overcome much of my historical conditioning by forcing me to struggle with the ancient text. My hope is that it will be a blessing to you as well.

Bob Utley
East Texas Baptist University
June 27, 1996

A Guide to Good Bible Reading: A Personal Search For Verifiable Truth

Can we know truth? Where is it found? Can we logically verify it? Is there an ultimate authority? Are there absolutes which can guide our lives, our world? Is there meaning to life? Why are we here? Where are we going? These questions—questions that all rational people contemplate—have haunted the human intellect since the beginning of time (Eccl. 1:13-18; 3:9-11). I can remember my personal search for an integrating center for my life. I became a believer in Christ at a young age, based primarily on the witness of significant others in my family. As I grew to adulthood, questions about myself and my world also grew. Simple cultural and religious clichés did not bring meaning to the experiences I read about or encountered. It was a time of confusion, searching, longing, and often a feeling of hopelessness in the face of the insensitive, hard world in which I lived.

Many claimed to have answers to these ultimate questions, but after research and reflection I found that their answers were based upon (1) personal philosophies, (2) ancient myths, (3) personal experiences, or (4) psychological projections. I needed some degree of verification, some evidence, some rationality on which to base my world-view, my integrating center, my reason to live.

I found these in my study of the Bible. I began to search for evidence of its trustworthiness, which I found in (1) the historical reliability of the Bible as confirmed by archaeology, (2) the accuracy of the prophecies of the Old Testament, (3) the unity of the Bible message over the sixteen hundred years of its production, and (4) the personal testimonies of people whose lives had been permanently changed by contact with the Bible. Christianity, as a unified system of faith and belief, has the ability to deal with complex questions of human life. Not only did this provide a rational framework, but the experiential aspect of biblical faith brought me emotional joy and stability.

I thought that I had found the integrating center for my life—Christ, as understood through the Scriptures. It was a heady experience, an emotional release. However, I can still remember the shock and pain when it began to dawn on me how many different interpretations of this book were advocated, sometimes even within the same churches and schools of thought. Affirming the inspiration and trustworthiness of the Bible was not the end, but only the beginning. How do I verify or reject the varied and conflicting interpretations of the many difficult passages in Scripture by those who were claiming its authority and trustworthiness?

This task became my life's goal and pilgrimage of faith. I knew that my faith in Christ had (1) brought me great peace and joy. My mind longed for some absolutes in the midst of the relativity of my culture (post-modernity); (2) the dogmatism of conflicting religious systems (world religions); and (3) denominational arrogance. In my search for valid approaches to the interpretation of ancient literature, I was surprised to discover my own historical, cultural, denominational and experiential biases. I had often read the Bible simply to reinforce my own views. I used it as a source of dogma to attack others while reaffirming my own insecurities and inadequacies. How painful this realization was to me!

Although I can never be totally objective, I can become a better reader of the Bible. I can limit my biases by identifying them and acknowledging their presence. I am not yet free of them, but I have confronted my own weaknesses. The interpreter is often the worst enemy of good Bible reading!

Let me list some of the presuppositions I bring to my study of the Bible so that you, the reader, may examine them along with me:

I. Presuppositions

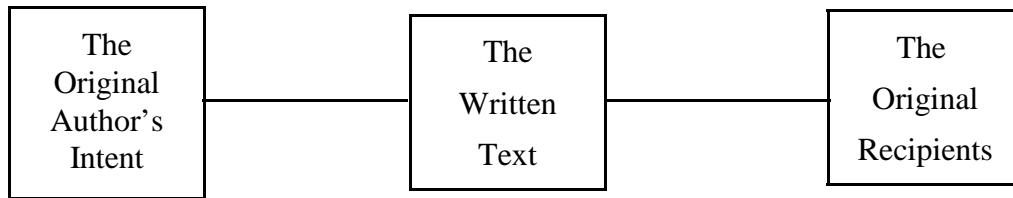
- A. I believe the Bible is the sole inspired self-revelation of the one true God. Therefore, it must be interpreted in light of the intent of the original divine author (the Spirit) through a human writer in a specific historical setting.
- B. I believe the Bible was written for the common person—for all people! God accommodated Himself to speak to us clearly within a historical and cultural context. God does not hide truth—He wants us to understand! Therefore, it must be interpreted in light of its day, not ours. The Bible should not mean to us what it never meant to those who first read or heard it. It is understandable by the average human mind and uses normal human communication forms and techniques.
- C. I believe the Bible has a unified message and purpose. It does not contradict itself, though it does contain difficult and paradoxical passages. Thus, the best interpreter of the Bible is the Bible itself.
- D. I believe that every passage (excluding prophecies) has one and only one meaning based on the intent of the original, inspired author. Although we can never be absolutely certain we know the original author's intent, many indicators point in its direction:
 - 1. the genre (literary type) chosen to express the message
 - 2. the historical setting and/or specific occasion that elicited the writing
 - 3. the literary context of the entire book as well as each literary unit
 - 4. the textual design (outline) of the literary units as they relate to the whole message
 - 5. the specific grammatical features employed to communicate the message
 - 6. the words chosen to present the message
 - 7. parallel passages

The study of each of these areas becomes the object of our study of a passage. Before I explain my methodology for good Bible reading, let me delineate some of the inappropriate methods being used today that have caused so much diversity of interpretation, and that consequently should be avoided:

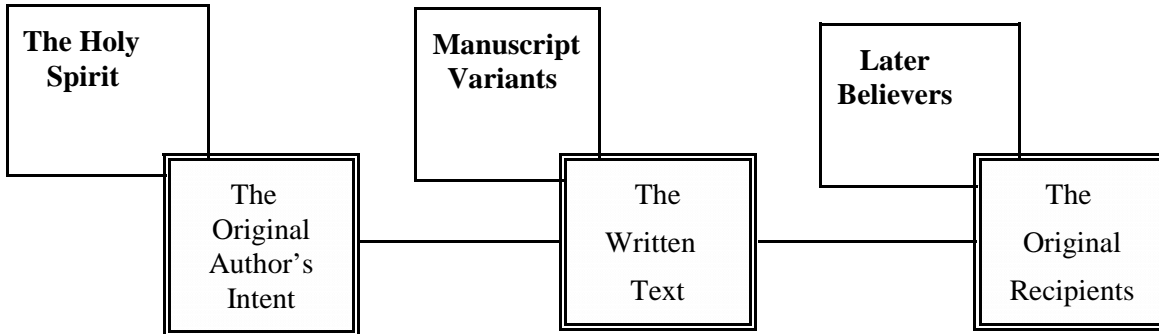
II. Inappropriate Methods

- A. Ignoring the literary context of the books of the Bible and using every sentence, clause, or even individual words as statements of truth unrelated to the author's intent or the larger context. This is often called "proof-texting."
- B. Ignoring the historical setting of the books by substituting a supposed historical setting that has little or no support from the text itself.
- C. Ignoring the historical setting of the books and reading it as the morning hometown newspaper written primarily to modern individual Christians.
- D. Ignoring the historical setting of the books by allegorizing the text into a philosophical/theological message totally unrelated to the first hearers and the original author's intent.
- E. Ignoring the original message by substituting one's own system of theology, pet doctrine, or contemporary issue unrelated to the original author's purpose and stated message. This phenomenon often follows the initial reading of the Bible as a means of establishing a speaker's authority. This is often referred to as "reader response" ("what-the-text-means-to-me" interpretation).

At least three related components may be found in all written human communication:



In the past, different reading techniques have focused on one of the three components, but to truly affirm the unique inspiration of the Bible, a modified diagram is more appropriate:



In truth all three components must be included in the interpretive process. For the purpose of verification, my interpretation focuses on the first two components: the original author and the text. I am probably reacting to the abuses I have observed (1) allegorizing or spiritualizing texts and (2) “reader response” interpretation (what-it-means-to-me). Abuse may occur at each stage. We must always check our motives, biases, techniques, and applications, but how do we check them if there are no boundaries to interpretations, no limits, no criteria? This is where authorial intent and textual structure provide me with some criteria for limiting the scope of possible valid interpretations.

In light of these inappropriate reading techniques, what are some possible approaches to good Bible reading and interpretation which offer a degree of verification and consistency?

III. Possible Approaches to Good Bible Reading

At this point, I am not discussing the unique techniques of interpreting specific genres but general hermeneutical principles valid for all types of biblical texts. A good book for genre-specific approaches is *How To Read The Bible For All Its Worth*, by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, published by Zondervan.

My methodology focuses initially on the reader allowing the Holy Spirit to illumine the Bible through four personal reading cycles. This makes the Spirit, the text, and the reader primary, not secondary. This also protects the reader from being unduly influenced by commentators. I have heard it said: “The Bible throws a lot of light on commentaries.” This is not meant to be a depreciating comment about study aids, but rather a plea for an appropriate timing for their use.

We must be able to support our interpretations from the text itself. Five areas provide at least limited verification:

1. the original author’s
 - a. historical setting
 - b. literary context

2. the original author's choice of
 - a. grammatical structures (syntax)
 - b. contemporary work usage
 - c. genre
3. our understanding of appropriate
 - a. relevant parallel passages

We need to be able to provide the reasons and logic behind our interpretations. The Bible is our only source for faith and practice. Sadly, Christians often disagree about what it teaches or affirms. It is self-defeating to claim inspiration for the Bible and then for believers not to be able to agree on what it teaches and requires!

The four reading cycles are designed to provide the following interpretive insights:

- A. The first reading cycle
 1. Read the book in a single sitting. Read it again in a different translation, hopefully from a different translation theory
 - a. word-for-word (NKJV, NASB, NRSV)
 - b. dynamic equivalent (TEV, JB)
 - c. paraphrase (Living Bible, Amplified Bible)
 2. Look for the central purpose of the entire writing. Identify its theme.
 3. Isolate (if possible) a literary unit, a chapter, a paragraph or a sentence which clearly expresses this central purpose or theme.
 4. Identify the predominant literary genre
 - a. Old Testament
 - (1) Hebrew narrative
 - (2) Hebrew poetry (wisdom literature, psalm)
 - (3) Hebrew prophecy (prose, poetry)
 - (4) Law codes
 - b. New Testament
 - (1) Narratives (Gospels, Acts)
 - (2) Parables (Gospels)
 - (3) Letters/epistles
 - (4) Apocalyptic literature
- B. The second reading cycle
 1. Read the entire book again, seeking to identify major topics or subjects.
 2. Outline the major topics and briefly state their contents in a simple statement.
 3. Check your purpose statement and broad outline with study aids.
- C. The third reading cycle
 1. Read the entire book again, seeking to identify the historical setting and specific occasion for the writing from the Bible book itself.
 2. List the historical items that are mentioned in the Bible book
 - a. the author
 - b. the date
 - c. the recipients

- d. the specific reason for writing
- e. aspects of the cultural setting that relate to the purpose of the writing
- f. references to historical people and events
- 3. Expand your outline to paragraph level for that part of the biblical book you are interpreting. Always identify and outline the literary unit. This may be several chapters or paragraphs. This enables you to follow the original author's logic and textual design.
- 4. Check your historical setting by using study aids.
- D. The fourth reading cycle
 - 1. Read the specific literary unit again in several translations
 - a. word-for-word (NKJV, NASB, NRSV)
 - b. dynamic equivalent (TEV, JB)
 - c. paraphrase (Living Bible, Amplified Bible)
 - 2. Look for literary or grammatical structures
 - a. repeated phrases, Eph. 1:6,12,13
 - b. repeated grammatical structures, Rom. 8:31
 - c. contrasting concepts
 - 3. List the following items
 - a. significant terms
 - b. unusual terms
 - c. important grammatical structures
 - d. particularly difficult words, clauses, and sentences
 - 4. Look for relevant parallel passages
 - a. look for the clearest teaching passage on your subject using
 - (1) "systematic theology" books
 - (2) reference Bibles
 - (3) concordances
 - b. Look for a possible paradoxical pair within your subject. Many biblical truths are presented in dialectical pairs; many denominational conflicts come from proof-texting half of a biblical tension. All of the Bible is inspired, and we must seek out its complete message in order to provide a Scriptural balance to our interpretation.
 - c. Look for parallels within the same book, same author or same genre; the Bible is its own best interpreter because it has one author, the Spirit.
 - 5. Use study aids to check your observations of historical setting and occasion
 - a. study Bibles
 - b. Bible encyclopedias, handbooks and dictionaries
 - c. Bible introductions
 - d. Bible commentaries (at this point in your study, allow the believing community, past and present, to aid and correct your personal study.)

IV. Application of Bible interpretation

At this point we turn to application. You have taken the time to understand the text in its original setting; now you must apply it to your life, your culture. I define biblical authority as "understanding what the original biblical author was saying to his day and applying that truth to our day."

Application must follow interpretation of the original author's intent both in time and logic. We cannot apply a Bible passage to our own day until we know what it was saying to its day! A Bible passage should not mean what it never meant!

Your detailed outline, to paragraph level (reading cycle #3), will be your guide. Application should be made at paragraph level, not word level. Words have meaning only in context; clauses have meaning only in context; sentences have meaning only in context. The only inspired person involved in the interpretive process is the original author. We only follow his lead by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. But illumination is not inspiration. To say "thus saith the Lord," we must abide by the original author's intent. Application must relate specifically to the general intent of the whole writing, the specific literary unit and paragraph level thought development.

Do not let the issues of our day interpret the Bible; let the Bible speak! This may require us to draw principles from the text. This is valid if the text supports a principle. Unfortunately, many times our principles are just that, "our" principles—not the text's principles.

In applying the Bible, it is important to remember that (except in prophecy) one and only one meaning is valid for a particular Bible text. That meaning is related to the intent of the original author as he addressed a crisis or need in his day. Many possible applications may be derived from this one meaning. The application will be based on the recipients' needs but must be related to the original author's meaning.

V. The Spiritual Aspect of Interpretation

So far I have discussed the logical and textual process involved in interpretation and application. Now let me discuss briefly the spiritual aspect of interpretation. The following checklist has been helpful for me:

- A. Pray for the Spirit's help (cf. I Cor. 1:26-2:16).
- B. Pray for personal forgiveness and cleansing from known sin (cf. I John 1:9).
- C. Pray for a greater desire to know God (cf. Ps. 19:7-14; 42:1ff.; 119:1ff).
- D. Apply any new insight immediately to your own life.
- E. Remain humble and teachable.

It is so hard to keep the balance between the logical process and the spiritual leadership of the Holy Spirit. The following quotes have helped me balance the two:

- A. from James W. Sire, *Scripture Twisting*, pp. 17-18:

"The illumination comes to the minds of God's people—not just to the spiritual elite. There is no guru class in biblical Christianity, no illuminati, no people through whom all proper interpretation must come. And so, while the Holy Spirit gives special gifts of wisdom, knowledge and spiritual discernment, He does not assign these gifted Christians to be the only authoritative interpreters of His Word. It is up to each of His people to learn, to judge and to discern by reference to the Bible which stands as the authority even to those to whom God has given special abilities. To summarize, the assumption I am making throughout the entire book is that the Bible is God's true revelation to all humanity, that it is our ultimate authority on all matters about which it speaks, that it is not a total mystery but can be adequately understood by ordinary people in every culture."

- B. on Kierkegaard, found in Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, p. 75:

According to Kierkegaard, the grammatical, lexical, and historical study of the Bible was necessary but preliminary to the true reading of the Bible. "To read the Bible *as God's word* one must read it with his heart in his mouth, on tip-toe, with eager expectancy, in

conversation with God. To read the Bible thoughtlessly or carelessly or academically or professionally is not to read the Bible as God's Word. As one reads it as a love letter is read, then one reads it as the Word of God."

C. H. H. Rowley in *The Relevance of the Bible*, p. 19:

"No merely intellectual understanding of the Bible, however complete, can possess all its treasures. It does not despise such understanding, for it is essential to a complete understanding. But it must lead to a spiritual understanding of the spiritual treasures of this book if it is to be complete. And for that spiritual understanding something more than intellectual alertness is necessary. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and the Bible student needs an attitude of spiritual receptivity, an eagerness to find God that he may yield himself to Him, if he is to pass beyond his scientific study unto the richer inheritance of this greatest of all books."

VI. This Commentary's Method

The *Study Guide Commentary* is designed to aid your interpretive procedures in the following ways:

- A. A brief historical outline introduces each book. After you have done "reading cycle #3" check this information.
- B. Contextual insights are found at the beginning of each chapter. This will help you see how the literary unit is structured.
- C. At the beginning of each chapter or major literary unit the paragraph divisions and their descriptive captions are provided from several modern translations:
 - 1. The United Bible Society Greek text, fourth edition revised (UBS⁴)
 - 2. The New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update (NASB)
 - 3. The New King James Version (NKJV)
 - 4. The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)
 - 5. Today's English Version (TEV)
 - 6. The Jerusalem Bible (JB)

Paragraph divisions are not inspired. They must be ascertained from the context. By comparing several modern translations from differing translation theories and theological perspectives, we are able to analyze the supposed structure of the original author's thought. Each paragraph has one major truth. This has been called "the topic sentence" or "the central idea of the text." This unifying thought is the key to proper historical, grammatical interpretation. One should never interpret, preach or teach on less than a paragraph! Also remember that each paragraph is related to its surrounding paragraphs. This is why a paragraph level outline of the entire book is so important. We must be able to follow the logical flow of the subject being addressed by the original inspired author.

- D. Bob's notes follow a verse-by-verse approach to interpretation. This forces us to follow the original author's thought. The notes provide information from several areas:
 - 1. literary context
 - 2. historical, cultural insights
 - 3. grammatical information
 - 4. word studies
 - 5. relevant parallel passages

- E. At certain points in the commentary, the printed text of the New American Standard Version (1995 update) will be supplemented by the translations of several other modern versions:
1. The New King James Version (NKJV), which follows the textual manuscripts of the “Textus Receptus.”
 2. The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), which is a word-for-word revision from the National Council of Churches of the Revised Standard Version.
 3. The Today’s English Version (TEV), which is a dynamic equivalent translation from the American Bible Society.
 4. The Jerusalem Bible (JB), which is an English translation based on a French Catholic dynamic equivalent translation.
- F. For those who do not read Greek, comparing English translations can help in identifying problems in the text:
1. manuscript variations
 2. alternate word meanings
 3. grammatically difficult texts and structure
 4. ambiguous texts
- Although the English translations cannot solve these problems, they do target them as places for deeper and more thorough study.
- G. At the close of each chapter relevant discussion questions are provided which attempt to target the major interpretive issues of that chapter.

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS IN JOSHUA

This commentary does not attempt to locate all of the sites mentioned. There are numerous Bible Atlases that plot their locations as accurately as modern researchers can. If the location has some historical or theological significance, then this will be noted!

THE OLD TESTAMENT AS HISTORY

Christianity and Judaism are historical faiths. They base their faith on historical events (accompanied by their interpretations). The problem comes in trying to define or describe what is “history” or “historical study.” Much of the problem in modern theological interpretation rests on modern literary or historical assumptions projected back onto ancient Near Eastern biblical literature. Not only is there not a proper appreciation of the temporal and cultural differences, but also of the literary differences. As modern western people we simply do not understand the genres and literary techniques of ancient Near Eastern writings, so we interpret them in light of western literal genres.

The nineteenth century’s approach to biblical studies atomized and depreciated the books of the Old Testament as historical, unified documents. This historical scepticism has affected hermeneutics and historical investigation of the Old Testament. The current trend toward “canonical hermeneutics” (Brevard Childs) has helped focus on the current form of the Old Testament text. This, in my opinion, is a helpful bridge over the abyss of German higher criticism of the nineteenth century. We must deal with the canonical text that has been given us by an unknown historical process whose inspiration is assumed.

Many scholars are returning to the assumption of the historicity of the OT. This is surely not meant to deny the obvious editing and updating of the OT by later Jewish scribes, but it is a basic return to the OT as a valid history and the documentation of true events (with their theological interpretations).

A quote from R. K. Harrison in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, in the article, “Historical and Literary Criticism of the Old Testament” is helpful:

“Comparative historiographic studies have shown that, along with the Hittites, the ancient Hebrews were the most accurate, objective, and responsible recorders of Near Eastern history. . . Form-critical studies of books such as Genesis and Deuteronomy, based on specific types of tablets recovered from sites that include Mari, Nuzi, and Boghazköy, have shown that the canonical material has certain nonliterary counterparts in the cultures of some Near Eastern peoples. As a result, it is possible to view with a new degree of confidence and respect those early traditions of the Hebrews that purport to be historiographic in nature” (p. 232).

I am especially appreciative of R. K. Harrison’s work because he makes it a priority to interpret the Old Testament in light of contemporary events, cultures and genres.

In my own classes on early Jewish literature (Genesis - Deuteronomy and Joshua), I try to establish a credible link with other ancient Near Eastern literature and artifacts:

A. Genesis literary parallels from the ancient Near East

1. Earliest known literary parallel of the cultural setting of Genesis 1-11 is the Ebla cuneiform tablets from northern Syria dating about 2500 B.C., written in Akkadian.
2. Creation
 - a. The closest Mesopotamian account dealing with creation, *Enuma Elish*, dating from about 1900-1700 B.C., was found in Ashurbanipal’s library at Nineveh and several other places. There are seven cuneiform tablets written in Akkadian which describe creation by Marduk.
 - 1) the gods, *Apsu* (fresh water-male) and *Tiamat* (salt water-female) had unruly, noisy children. These two gods tried to silence the younger gods.

- 2) one of the god's children, *Marduk*, helped defeat *Tiamat*. He formed the earth from her body.
- 3) *Marduk* formed humanity from another defeated god, *Kingu*, who was the male consort of *Tiamat* after the death of *Apsu*. Humanity came from *Kingu's* blood.
- 4) *Marduk* was made chief of the Babylonian pantheon.
- b. "The creation seal" is a cuneiform tablet which is a picture of a naked man and woman beside a fruit tree with a snake wrapped around the tree's trunk and positioned over the woman's shoulder as if talking to her.
3. Creation and Flood - *The Atrahasis Epic* records the rebellion of the lesser gods because of overwork and the creation of seven human couples to perform the duties of these lesser gods. Because of (1) over population and (2) noise, human beings were reduced in number by a plague, two famines and finally a flood, planned by *Enlil*. These major events are seen in the same order in Gen. 1-8. This cuneiform composition dates from about the same times as *Enuma Elish* and the *Gilgamesh Epic*, about 1900-1700 B.C. All are in Akkadian.
4. Noah's flood
 - a. A Summerian tablet from Nippur, called *Eridu Genesis*, dating from about 1600 B.C., tells about *Zivsudra* and a coming flood.
 - 1) *Enka*, the water god, warned of a coming flood
 - 2) *Zivsudra*, a king-priest, saved in a huge boat
 - 3) The flood lasted seven days
 - 4) *Zivsudra* opened a window on the boat and released several birds to see if dry land had appeared
 - 5) He also offered a sacrifice of an ox and sheep when he left the boat
 - b. A composite Babylonian flood account from four Summerian tales known as the *Gilgamesh Epic*, originally dating from about 2500-2400 B.C., is much later. It tells about a flood survivor, *Utnapishtim*, who tells *Gilgamesh*, the king of *Uruk* how he survived the great flood and was granted eternal life.
 - 1) *Ea*, the water god, warns of a coming flood and tells *Utnapishtim* (Babylonian form of *Zivsudra*) to build a boat
 - 2) *Utnapishtim* and his family, along with selected healing plants, survived the flood
 - 3) The flood lasted seven days
 - 4) The boat came to rest in northeast Persia, on Mt. Nisir
 - 5) He sent out three different birds to see if dry land had yet appeared
5. The Mesopotamian literature which describes an ancient flood draws from the same source. The names often vary, but the plot is the same. An example is that *Zivsudra*, *Atrahasis*, and *Utnapishtim* are all the same human king.
6. The historical parallels to the early events of Genesis can be explained in light of man's pre-dispersion (Genesis 10-11) knowledge and experience of God. These true historical core memories have been elaborated and mythologicalized into the current flood accounts common throughout the world. The same can also be said of creation (Genesis 1-2) and human and angelic unions (Genesis 6).

7. Patriarch's Day (Middle Bronze)
 - a. Mari tablets - cuneiform legal (Ammonite culture) and personal texts written in Akkadian from about 1700 B.C.
 - b. Nuzi tablets - cuneiform archives of certain families (Horite or Hurrian culture) written in Akkadian from about 100 miles SE of Nineveh about 1500-1300 B.C. They record family and business procedures. For further specific examples, see Walton, pp. 52-58.
 - c. Alalak tablets - cuneiform texts from Northern Syria from about 2000 B.C.
 - d. Some of the names found in Genesis are named as place names in the Mari Tablets: Serug, Peleg, Terah, Nahor. Other biblical names were also common: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Laban, and Joseph.
8. "Comparative historiographic studies have shown that, along with the Hittites, the ancient Hebrews were the most accurate, objective and responsible recorders of Near Eastern history," R. K Harrison in *Biblical Criticism*, p. 5.
9. Archaeology has proven to be so helpful in establishing the historicity of the Bible. However, a word of caution is necessary. Archaeology is not an absolutely trustworthy guide because of:
 - a. poor techniques in early excavations
 - b. various, very subjective interpretations of the artifacts that have been discovered
 - c. no agreed-upon chronology of the Ancient Near East (although one is being developed from tree rings)
- B. Egyptian creation accounts can be found in John W. Walton's, *Ancient Israelite Literature in Its Cultural Context*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990. pp. 23-34, 32-34.
 1. In Egyptian literature creation began with an unstructured, chaotic, primeval water. Creation was seen as developing structure out of watery chaos.
 2. In Egyptian literature from Memphis, creation occurred by the spoken word of Ptah.
- C. Joshua literary parallels from the ancient Near East
 1. Archaeology has shown that most of the large walled cities of Canaan were destroyed and rapidly rebuilt about 1250 B.C.
 - a. Hazor
 - b. Lachish
 - c. Bethel
 - d. Debir (formerly called Kerioth Sepher, 15:15)
 2. Archaeology has not been able to confirm or reject the biblical account of the fall of Jericho (cf. Joshua 6). This is because the site is in such poor condition:
 - a. weather/location
 - b. later rebuildings on old sites using older materials
 - c. uncertainty as to the dates of the layers
 3. Archaeology has found an altar on Mt. Ebal that might be connected to Joshua 8:30-31 (Deuteronomy 27:2-9). It is very similar to a description found in the Mishnah (Talmud).
 4. The Ras Shamra texts found at Ugarit show Canaanite life and religion of 1400's B.C.:
 - a. polytheistic nature worship (fertility cult)
 - b. El was chief deity

- c. El's consort was Asherah (later she is consort to Ba'al) who was worshiped in the form of a carved stake or live tree, which symbolized "the tree of life"
 - d. their son was Ba'al (Haddad), the storm god
 - e. Ba'al became the "high god" of the Canaanite pantheon. Anat was his consort
 - f. ceremonies similar to Isis and Osiris of Egypt
 - g. Ba'al worship was focused on local "high places" or stone platforms (ritual prostitution)
 - h. Ba'al was symbolized by a raised stone pillar (phallic symbol)
5. The accurate listing of the names of ancient cities fits a contemporary author, not later editor(s):
- a. Jerusalem called Jebus, 15:8; 18:16,28 (15:28 said the Jebusites still remained in part of Jerusalem)
 - b. Hebron called Kiriath-arba, 14:15; 15:13,54; 20:7; 21:11
 - c. Kiriath-jearim is called Baalah, 15:9,10
 - d. Sidon is referred to as the major Phoenician city, not Tyre, 11:8; 13:6; 19:28, which later became the chief city

OLD TESTAMENT HISTORIOGRAPHY COMPARED WITH CONTEMPORARY NEAR EASTERN CULTURES

Mesopotamian sources

1. Like most ancient literature the subject is usually the king or some national hero.
2. The events are often embellished for propaganda purposes.
3. Usually nothing negative is recorded.
4. The purpose was to support current status quo institutions or explain the rise of new regimes.
5. The historical distortions involve
 - a. embellished claims of great victories
 - b. earlier achievements presented as current achievements
 - c. only positive aspects recorded
6. The literature served not only a propagandistic function, but also a didactic function

Egyptian sources

1. They support a very static view of life, which was not affected by time.
2. The king and his family are the object of much of the literature.
3. It, like Mesopotamian literature, is very propagandistic
 - a. no negative aspects
 - b. embellished aspects

Rabbinical sources (later)

1. Attempts to make Scripture relevant by Midrash, which moves from the faith of the interpreter to text and does not focus on authorial intent nor historical setting of the text:
 - a. *Halakha* deals with truths or rules for life
 - b. *Haggada* deals with application and encouragement for life
2. Peshet - later development seen in Dead Sea Scrolls. It used a typological approach to see the prophetic fulfillment of past events in the current setting. The current setting was the prophesied eschaton (coming new age).

It is obvious that ancient Near Eastern genres and later Jewish literature are different from Old Testament Scripture. In many ways the genres of the OT, though often sharing characteristics of contemporary literature, are unique, especially in their depiction of historical events. The closest to Hebrew historiography is the Hittite literature.

It must be acknowledged how different ancient historiography is from modern, western historiography. Herein lies the problem for interpretation. Modern historiography attempts to be objective (non-propaganda, if this is possible) and to document and record in chronological sequence what “really happened!” It attempts to document “cause and effect” of historical events. It is characterized by details!

Just because Near Eastern histories are not like modern histories does not make them wrong, inferior, or untrustworthy. Western modern histories reflect the biases (presuppositions) of their writers. Biblical history is by its very nature (inspiration) different. There is a sense in which biblical history is seen through the eyes of the faith of the inspired author and for the purposes of theology, but it is still a valid historical account.

This historicity of the Old Testament is important to me as a way of advocating my faith to others. If the Bible can be demonstrated to be historical then its faith claims have stronger appeal to non-believers. My faith does not rest on the historical confirmation of archaeology and anthropology, but these help to introduce the message of the Bible, and to give it a credibility that otherwise it would not have.

To summarize then, historicity does not function in the area of inspiration, but in the area of apologetics and evangelism.

GENRE AND INTERPRETATION: OLD TESTAMENT NARRATIVE

I. OPENING STATEMENTS

- A. The relationship between the OT and other ways of the chronicling of events
 - 1. Other ancient Near Eastern literature is mythological
 - a. polytheistic (usually humanistic gods reflecting the powers of nature but using interpersonal conflict motifs)
 - c. Based on the cycles of nature (dying and rising gods)
 - 2. Greco-Roman is for entertainment and encouragement rather than the recording of historical events per se (Homer in many ways reflects Mesopotamian motifs)
- B. Three German terms illustrate the difference in types or definitions of history
 - 1. "Historie," the recording of events (bare facts)
 - 2. "Geschichte," the interpretation of events showing their significance to mankind
 - 3. "Heilsgeschichte" refers uniquely to God's redemptive plan and activity within the historical process
- C. The OT and NT narratives are "Geschichte" which leads to an understanding of Heilsgeschichte. They are selected theologically oriented historical events
 - 1. selected events only
 - 2. chronology not as significant as theology
 - 3. events shared to reveal truth
- D. Narrative is the most common genre in the OT. It has been estimated that 40% of the OT is narrative. Therefore, this genre is useful to the Spirit in communicating God's message and character to fallen mankind. But, it is done, not propositionally (like the NT Epistles), but by implication, summation or selected dialog/monolog. One must continue to ask why this is recorded. What is it trying to emphasize? What is its theological purpose?

This in no way is meant to depreciate the history. But, it is history as the servant and channel of revelation.

II. Biblical Narratives

- A. God is active in His world. Inspired Bible authors chose certain events to reveal God. God is the major character of the OT.
- B. Every narrative functions in several ways:
 - 1. who is God and what is He doing in His world
 - 2. mankind is revealed through God's dealing with individuals and national entities
 - 3. as an example, specifically notice Joshua's military victory linked to covenant performance (cf. 1:7-8; 8:30-35)
- C. Often narratives are strung together to make a larger literary unit which reveals a single theological truth.

III. Interpretive principles of OT narratives

- A. The best discussion I have seen about interpreting OT narratives is by Douglas Stuart in *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, pp. 83-84:
 - 1. An OT narrative usually does not directly teach a doctrine.
 - 2. An OT narrative usually illustrates a doctrine or doctrines taught propositionally elsewhere.

3. Narratives record what happened—not necessarily what should have happened or what ought to happen every time. Therefore, not every narrative has an individual identifiable moral of the story.
 4. What people do in narratives is not necessarily a good example for us. Frequently, it is just the opposite.
 5. Most of the characters in OT narratives are far from perfect, and their actions are also.
 6. We are not always told at the end of a narrative whether what happened was good or bad. We are expected to be able to judge that on the basis of what God has taught us directly and categorically elsewhere in the Scripture.
 7. *All* narratives are selective and incomplete. Not all the relevant details are always given (cf. John 21:25). What does appear in the narrative is everything that the inspired author thought important for us to know.
 8. Narratives are not written to answer all our theological questions. They have particular, specific, limited purposes and deal with certain issues, leaving others to be dealt with elsewhere, in other ways.
 9. Narratives may teach either explicitly (by clearly stating something) or implicitly (by clearly implying something without actually stating it).
 10. In the final analysis, God is the hero of all biblical narratives.
- B. Another good discussion on interpreting narratives is in Walter Kaiser's *Toward Exegetical Theology*:

“The unique aspect of the narrative portions of Scripture is that the writer usually allows the words and actions of the people in his narrative to convey the main thrust of his message. Thus, instead of addressing us through direct statements, such as are found in doctrinal or teaching portions of Scripture, the writer tends to remain instead somewhat in the background as far as direct teaching or evaluative statements are concerned. Consequently, it becomes critically important to recognize the larger context in which the narrative fits and to ask why the writer used the specific selection of events in the precise sequence in which he placed them. The twin clues to meaning now will be *arrangement* of episodes and *selection* of detail from a wealth of possible speeches, persons, or episodes. Furthermore, the divine reaction to and estimate of these people and events must often be determined from the way the author allows one person or a group of people to respond at the climax of the selected sequence of events; that is, if he has not interrupted the narration to give his own (in this instance, God's) estimate of what has taken place” (p. 205).

- C. In narratives the truth is found in the whole literary unit and not the details. Beware of proof-texting or using OT narratives as a precedent for your life.

IV. Two levels of interpretation:

- A. YHWH's redemptive, revelatory acts for Abraham's seed
- B. YHWH's will for every believer's life (in every age)
- C. The first focuses on knowing God (salvation); the second on serving Him (the Christian life of faith, cf. Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 10:6,11)

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA

I. NAME OF THE BOOK

- A. The name comes from Moses' successor and the chief character of the book
- B. His name (BDB 221) is made up of two Hebrew terms:
 - 1. YHWH (J plus a vowel)
 - 2. salvation (Hoshea)
- C. It is exactly the same Hebrew name (cf. Acts 7:45) as Jesus (Matt. 1:21).

II. CANONIZATION—Joshua is the first book of the section of the Hebrew canon known as “the Prophets.” This section is divided into two parts:

- A. the former prophets which included Joshua—Kings (except Ruth)
- B. the latter prophets which included Isaiah—Malachi (except Daniel and Lamentations)

III. GENRE

- A. These historical books continue the history of God's people which began in Genesis. It is not a western chronological history, but a selective theological history. This does not mean to imply that it is not true or accurate, but it does mean that it selected out certain events to teach theological truths about God, man, sin, salvation, etc. In this sense it is similar to the Gospels and Acts of the New Testament.
- B. History for the Jews was not cyclical, like its surrounding neighbors, based on the cycles of nature, but it was “teleological.” It had a goal, a purpose. God was moving toward a predetermined goal, i.e., the redemption of a fallen world.

IV. AUTHORSHIP

- A. The book itself is anonymous.
- B. The traditional author is the chief character of the book.
 - 1. His name was originally Hoshea (“salvation”), Num. 13:8
 - 2. Moses changed his name to Joshua (“YHWH” and “salvation”), Num. 13:16; Deut. 32:44
 - 3. For some unknown reason his name is spelled in four different ways.
 - a. Yeshoshu's, (common) Joshua 1
 - b. Yehoshu's Deut. 3:21
 - c. Hoshe'a, Deut. 32:44
 - d. Yeshu'a, Neh. 8:17

- C. *Baba Bathra* 14b (a book of the Talmud) says that Joshua wrote the book except for the account of his death which was recorded by Eleazar, the priest (24:29-30). Eleazar's son, Phinehas (Num. 25:7-13; 31:6-8; Josh. 22:10-34), wrote the portion of the book which records Eleazar's death (24:31-33).
- D. Joshua the man
1. born in slavery in Egypt
 2. one of the twelve spies (from the tribe of Ephraim cf. 19:50; 24:30; I Chr. 7:27), only he and Caleb brought a faith report (Num. 14:26-34)
 3. Moses' faithful helper throughout the Exodus experience. The only one who went up Mt. Sinai with Moses (half-way—Exod. 24:13-14)
 4. Commander of the Israeli army (Exod. 17:8-13)
 5. Named Moses' successor in Num. 27:15-23; Deut. 3:18-22; 31:1-8
 6. Led the conquest of Canaan as Moses' successor (Deut. 31:23)
- E. Some evidence for contemporary (immediately after Joshua's day) authorship:
1. The book states Joshua could write (cf. 8:32; 24:26).
 2. It is obviously eye-witness material.
 - a. "We" 5:1 (MSS variation)
 - b. "Joshua circumcised them" (5:7-8)
 - c. Joshua's private encounter with the Angel of the LORD (5:13-15).
 - d. "She (Rahab) has lived in the midst of Israel to this day" (6:25). This is not a later editor but an eye-witness contemporary.
 3. He used some written sources.
 - a. The Book of Jashar, (10:13, cf. II Sam. 1:18) which were war poems of Israel.
 - b. "In a book," 18:9
 4. The accurate listing of the names of ancient cities fits a contemporary author, not a later editor(s).
 - a. Jerusalem called Jebus (15:8,63; 18:16, 28)
 - b. Hebron called Kiriath-arba (14:15; 15:13-14)
 - c. Kiriath—jerrim is called Baalah (15:9, 10)
 - d. Sidon is referred to as the major Phoenician city, not Tyre (11:8; 13:6; 19:28), which later became the chief city.
 5. Joshua, like the Pentateuch, has some editorial additions.
 - a. Joshua's death
 - b. the later conquest of Hebron (14:6-15, 15:13-14)
 - c. the later conquest of Debir (15:14, 49)
 - d. Dan's migration north (19:47)
 - e. the phrase "until this day" occurs many times which shows a later edition (4:9; 5:9; 6:25; 7:26 [twice]; 8:28-29; 9:27; 10:27; 13:13; 14:14; 15:63; 16:10; 22:3).
- E. Modern Scholarship
1. Note the similarities between the Pentateuch and Joshua (hexateuch theory).
 - a. style

- b. vocabulary
- 2. The Documentary Hypothesis of J, E, D, P sees the book as written over a long period of time by an editorial process.
 - a. J source wrote the parts of chapters 1-12 which focus on individual battles (950-850 B.C.).
 - b. E source wrote the parts of chapter 1-12 which focus on united campaign (750 B.C.).
 - c. A combination of J & E occurred around 650 B.C. in which most of J was excluded.
 - d. The book was reedited by the priest/prophet of Josiah's day who wrote Deuteronomy. This person or group is called the Deuteronomist source. This source also wrote the book of Deuteronomy in order to strengthen Josiah's reform in 621 B.C. by focusing on Jerusalem as the only true sanctuary.
 - e. The P source was a group of priests who wrote chapters 13-21 in the 400 B.C. period.
 - f. Still further supposed additions were made in the third century B.C.
- 3. Notice the presuppositions of the theory! Notice how it cuts the text from its historical setting and contemporary author. I reject this as a modern attempt to analyze ancient texts in light of modern literary theories. However, it must be stated:
 - a. The book is anonymous.
 - b. Joshua's death, like Moses, is recorded in the book.
 - c. There has been some on-going editing of the OT books.
 - d. We accept the process of formation that produced the OT as inspired.
- 4. Evidence against a Hexateuch (Genesis — Joshua).
 - a. in Jewish tradition there is clear distinction between the five books of Moses (the Pentateuch) and Joshua, which starts "the prophets" section of the Hebrew canon:
 - (1) Ben Sira, the author of *Ecclesiasticus* written about 185 B.C., makes a distinction, 48:22-45:12.
 - (2) Flavius Josephus in his book *Contra Apioness* 1:7ff makes a distinction.
 - (3) The closing scribal note of the Masoretic Text (MT) of the Pentateuch makes a distinction.
 - (4) The weekly Bible readings of the Synagogue called "the Haphtaroth" make a distinction.
 - (5) the Samaritans took the Pentateuch as Scripture but not Joshua.
 - b. Internal evidence (Young, p. 158).
 - (1) There is a special use of the personal pronoun in Joshua that is not in the Pentateuch.
 - (2) The city of Jericho is spelled differently.
 - (3) The title for Deity, "the God of Israel," occurs in Joshua 14 times but never in the Pentateuch. We must admit that there is so much we do not know about the formation of these OT books into their current state.

V. SOURCES FOR CORROBORATION OF HISTORICAL SETTING

- A. Archaeology has shown that most of the large walled cities of Canaan were destroyed and rapidly rebuilt about 1250 B.C.
 - 1. Hazor

2. Lachish
 3. Bethel
 4. Debir (formerly called Keriath Sepher, 15:15).
- B. Archaeology has not been able to confirm or reject the biblical account of the fall of Jericho. This is because the site is in such poor condition.
1. Weather/location
 2. Later rebuildings on old sites using older materials
 3. Uncertainty as to the dates of the layers
- C. Archaeology has found an altar on Mt. Ebal that might be connected to Josh. 8:30-31 (Deut. 27:2-9). It is very similar to a description found in the Mishnah (Talmud).
- D. The Ras Shamra texts found at Ugarit show the Canaanite life and religion of 1400s B.C.
1. Theirs was a polytheistic nature worship (fertility cult).
 2. El was chief deity.
 3. El's consort was Asherah (later she is consort to Ba'al).
 4. Their son was Ba'al (Haddad), the storm god.
 5. Ba'al became the "high god" of the Canaanite pantheon. Anat was his consort.
 6. Their ceremonies were similar to Isis and Osiris of Egypt
 7. Ba'al worship was focused on local "high places" or stone platforms (ritual prostitution)
 8. Ba'al was symbolized by a raised stone pillar (phallic symbol), while Asherah or Astarte was symbolized by a carved wooden stake, or live tree, which symbolized "the tree of life"
- E. Archaeology has confirmed that the major empires of the region (Anatolia, Egypt, or Mesopotamia) were unable to exercise influence in Palestine during this period known as the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 B.C.)
- F. The accurate listing of the names of ancient cities fits a contemporary author, not a later editor(s).
1. Jerusalem called Jebus (15:8; 18:16, 28)
 2. Hebron called Kiriath-arba (14:15; 15:13, 54; 20:7; 21:11)
 3. Kiriath-jearim is called Baalah (15:9, 10)
 4. Sidon is referred to as the major Phoenician city not Tyre (11:8; 19:28), which later became the chief city
- G. The Hittite Treaty Pattern of the Second Millennium B.C.
1. The Hittite treaties of the second millennium B.C. offer us an ancient, historically contemporary parallel to the structure of Deuteronomy (as well as Exodus - Leviticus and Joshua 24). This treaty pattern changed by the first millennium B.C. This gives us evidence for the historicity of Deuteronomy. For further reading in this area, see G. E. Mendenhall's *Law and Covenants in Israel and the Ancient Near East*.
 2. The Hittite Treaty of the Second Millennium B.C. and its Deuteronomy parallels
 - a. preamble (Deut. 1:1-5, introduction of speaker, YHWH)
 - b. review of the past acts of the King (Deut. 1:6-4:49, God's past acts for Israel)

- c. treaty terms (Deut. 5-26)
 - (1) general (Deut. 5-11)
 - (2) specific (Deut. 12-26)
 - d. results of treaty (Deut. 27-29)
 - (1) benefits (Deut. 28)
 - (2) consequences (Deut. 27)
 - e. witness of deity (Deut. 30:19; 31:19, also 32, Moses' son functions as a witness)
 - (1) a copy in temple of the deity
 - (2) a copy with the vassal to be read annually
 - (3) uniqueness of the Hittite treaties from the later Assyrian and Syrian treaties
 - (a) the historical review of the past acts of the king
 - (b) the cursing section was last pronounced
3. The Hittite Treaty Pattern of the Second Millennium and Its Parallels in Joshua
- a. identification of the King (24:2)
 - b. narrative of the King's great acts (24:2-13)
 - c. covenant obligations (24:14,23)
 - d. instructions for depositing the treaty in the sanctuary (24:25-26)
 - e. the deities of the parties involved invoked as witnesses (24:22)
 - f. blessing of fidelity; curses for violation (24:20)

VII. LITERARY UNITS (context)

- A. The geographical movements also form an outline for the book.
 - 1. on the Plains of Moab, 1-2
 - 2. crossing the Jordan River to Gilgal near Jericho, 3-4
 - 3. the central Canaan military campaign, 5:1-10:15
 - 4. the southern Canaan military campaign, 10:16-43
 - 5. the northern Canaan military campaign, 11:1-23
 - 6. geographical division of the land among the tribes, 13-21
- B. A Brief Outline
 - 1. the conquest of Canaan, 1-12
 - 2. the dividing of the Promised Land among the tribes, 13-21
 - 3. Joshua's final words and death, 22-24

VIII. MAIN TRUTHS

- A. It demonstrates God's faithfulness to His promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) about the land (Gen. 15:16).
- B. It continues the history begun in Genesis and brings it into a new period. During this time, tribal associations were the central unifying factor. There was no central government.

- C. The concept of “Holy War” seems so cruel to us but God warned the Israelites against the sins of the Canaanites. As God removed them from the land because of their sins (cf. Gen. 15:16; Deut. 9:5), so too, will He remove the Jews for the same sins (the Exile, by Assyria and Babylon).

JOSHUA 1

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
God's Charge to Joshua 1:1-9	God's Commission to Joshua 1:1-9	The Lord's Address to Joshua 1:1-9	God Commands Joshua to Conquer Canaan 1:1-9	The Summons to Enter the Promised Land 1:1-5 God's Help Conditional on Faithfulness to the Law 1:6-9
Preparations to Cross Jordan 1:10-11 1:12-18	The Order to Cross the Jordan 1:10-11 1:12-15 1:16-18	Joshua's Address to the People 1:10-11 1:12-15 1:16-18	Joshua Gives Orders to the People 1:10-11 1:12-15 1:16-18	Support From the Trans-Jordanian Tribes 1:10-18

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. xvi). Compare your subject divisions with the five modern translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

* Although they are not inspired, paragraph divisions are the key to understanding and following the original author's intent. Each modern translation has divided and summarized the paragraphs in chapter one. Every paragraph has one central topic, truth, or thought. Each version encapsulates that topic in its own distinct way. As you read the text, which translation fits your understanding of the subject and verse divisions?

In every chapter we must read the Bible first and try to identify its subjects (paragraphs). Then compare our understanding with the modern versions. Only when we understand the original author's intent by following his logic and presentation can we truly understand the Bible. Only the original author is inspired—readers have no right to change or modify the message. Bible readers do have the responsibility of applying the inspired truth to their day and their lives.

Note that all technical terms and abbreviations are explained fully in Appendices One, Two and Three.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: JOSHUA 1:1-9

¹Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying, ²"Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel. ³Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses. ⁴From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and as far as the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun will be your territory. ⁵No man will *be able to* stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. ⁶Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. ⁷Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. ⁸This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. ⁹Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

1:1 "Now it came about" This book begins with the Hebrew phrase "And it came to pass," which shows that Joshua is continuing the history which began in the Pentateuch (Torah), although it must be stated that ancient Hebrew regularly started books with "and."

▣ **"after the death of Moses"** The chosen leader is dead, but Israel's God is not! See Deuteronomy 34.

▣ **"the servant of the LORD"** The title "Servant of the LORD" is an honorific one which is used of Abraham in Gen. 26:24; of David in I Kgs. 8:66; and of Joshua only after his death in Josh. 24:29. This seems to be the background for the Servant Songs of Isaiah 40-53 and possibly the background of Paul's famous phrase "slaves of Christ."

For "LORD" see Special Topic following.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE NAMES FOR DEITY

A. *El*

1. The original meaning of the generic ancient term for deity is uncertain, though many scholars believe it comes from the Akkadian root "to be strong" or "to be powerful" (cf. Gen. 17:1; Num. 23:19; Deut. 7:21; Ps. 50:1).
2. In the Canaanite pantheon the high god is *El* (Ras Shamra texts).
3. In the Bible *El* is not usually compounded with other terms. These combinations became a way to characterize God.
 - a. *El-Elyon* (God Most High), Gen. 14:18-22; Deut. 32:8; Isa. 14:14
 - b. *El-Roi* ("God who sees" or "God who reveals Himself"), Gen. 16:13

- c. *El-Shaddai* (“God Almighty” or “God the All Compassion” or “God of the mountain”), Gen. 17:1; 35:11; 43:14; 49:25; Exod. 6:3
 - d. *El-Olam* (the Everlasting God), Gen. 21:33. This term is theologically linked to God’s promise to David, II Sam. 7:13,16
 - e. *El-Berit* (“God of the Covenant”), Jdgs. 9:46
4. *El* is equated with
- a. *YHWH* in Ps. 85:8; Isa. 42:5
 - b. *Elohim* in Gen. 46:3; Job 5:8, “I am *El*, the *Elohim* of your father”
 - c. *Shaddai* in Gen. 49:25
 - d. “jealousy” in Exod. 34:14; Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15
 - e. “mercy” in Deut. 4:31; Neh. 9:31;
 - f. “faithful” in Deut. 7:9; 32:4
 - g. “great and awesome” in Deut. 7:21; 10:17; Neh. 1:5; 9:32; Dan. 9:4
 - h. “knowledge” in I Sam. 2:3
 - i. “my strong refuge” in II Sam. 22:33
 - j. “my avenger” in II Sam. 22:48
 - k. “holy one” in Isa. 5:16
 - l. “might” in Isa. 10:21
 - m. “my salvation” in Isa. 12:2
 - n. “great and powerful” in Jer. 32:18
 - o. “retribution: in Jer. 51:56
5. A combination of all the major OT names for God is found in Joshua 22:22 (*El, Elohim, YHWH*, repeated)

B. *Elyon*

- 1. Its basic meaning is “high,” “exalted,” or “lifted up” (cf. Gen. 40:17; I Kgs. 9:8; II Kgs. 18:17; Neh. 3:25; Jer. 20:2; 36:10; Ps. 18:13).
- 2. It is used in a parallel sense to several other names/titles of God.
 - a. *Elohim*, Ps. 47:1-2; 73:11; 107:11
 - b. *YHWH*, Gen. 14:22; II Sam. 22:14
 - c. *El-Shaddai*, Ps. 91:1,9
 - d. *El*, Num. 24:16
 - e. *Elah*, used often in Daniel 2-6 and Ezra 4-7, linked with *illair* (Aramaic for “High God”) in Dan. 3:26; 4:2; 5:18,21
- 3. It is often used by non Israelites.
 - a. Melchizedek, Gen. 14:18-22
 - b. Balaam, Num. 24:16
 - c. Moses, speaking of the nations in Deut. 32:8

- d. Luke's Gospel in the NT, writing to Gentiles, also uses the Greek equivalent *Hupsistos* (cf. 1:32,35,76; 6:35; 8:28; Acts 7:48; 16:17)

C. *Elohim* (PLURAL), *Eloah* (SINGULAR), used primarily in poetry

1. This term is not found outside the Old Testament.
2. This word can designate the God of Israel or the gods of the nations (cf. Exod. 12:12; 20:3). Abraham's family were polytheistic (cf. Josh. 24:2).
3. It can refer to Israeli judges (cf. Exod. 21:6; Ps. 82:6).
4. The term *elohim* is also used of other spiritual beings (angels, the demonic) as in Deut. 32:8 (LXX); Ps. 8:5; Job 1:6; 38:7. It can refer to human judges (cf. Exod. 21:6; Ps. 82:6)
5. In the Bible it is the first title/name for deity (cf. Gen. 1:1). It is used exclusively until Gen. 2:4, where it is combined with *YHWH*. It basically (theologically) refers to God as creator, sustainer, and provider of all life on this planet (cf. Psalm 104).

It is synonymous with *El* (cf. Deut. 32:15-19). It can also parallel *YHWH*, as Psalm 14 (*Elohim*) is exactly like Psalm 53 (*YHWH*), except for the change in divine names.

6. Although PLURAL and used of other gods, this term often designates the God of Israel, but usually it has the SINGULAR VERB to denote the monotheistic usage.
7. This term is found in the mouths of non-Israelites as the name for deity.
 - a. Melchizedek, Gen. 14:18-22
 - b. Balaam, Num. 24:2
 - c. Moses, when speaking of the nations, Deut. 32:8
8. It is strange that a common name for the monotheistic God of Israel is PLURAL! Although there is no certainty, here are the theories.
 - a. Hebrew has many PLURALS, often used for emphasis. Closely related to this is the later Hebrew grammatical feature called "the plural of majesty," where the PLURAL is used to magnify a concept.
 - b. This may refer to the angelic council, with whom God meets in heaven, and that does His bidding (cf. I Kgs. 22:19-23; Job 1:6; Ps. 82:1; 89:5,7).
 - c. It is even possible this reflects the NT revelation of the one God in three persons. In Gen. 1:1 God creates; in Gen. 1:2 the Spirit broods; and in the NT, Jesus is God the Father's agent in creation (cf. John 1:3,10; Rom. 11:36; I Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:2; 2:10).

D. *YHWH*

1. This is the name which reflects deity as the covenant making God, God as savior, redeemer! Humans break covenants, but God is loyal to His word, promise, covenant (cf. Ps. 103).

This name is first mentioned in combination with *Elohim* in Gen. 2:4. There are not two creation accounts in Gen. 1-2, but two emphases: (1) God as the creator of the universe (the physical) and (2) God as the special creator of humanity. Genesis 2:4 begins the special revelation about the privileged position and purpose of mankind, as well as the problem of sin and rebellion associated with the unique position.

2. In Gen. 4:26 it is said “*men* began to call upon the name of the LORD ” (*YHWH*). However, Exod. 6:3 implies that early covenant people (the Patriarchs and their families) knew God only as *El-Shaddai*. The name YHWH is explained only one time in Exod. 3:13-16, especially v. 14. However, the writings of Moses often interpret words by popular word plays, not etymologies (cf. Gen. 17:5; 27:36; 29:13-35). There have been several theories as to the meaning of this name (taken from IDB, vol. 2, pp. 409-11).
 - a. from an Arabic root “to show fervent love”
 - b. from an Arabic root “to blow” (YHWH as storm God)
 - c. from a Ugartic (Canaanite) root “to speak”
 - d. following a Phoenician inscription, a CAUSATIVE PARTICIPLE meaning “the One who sustains,” or “the One who establishes”
 - e. from the Hebrew *Qal* form “the One who is,” or “the One who is present” (in future sense, “the One who will be”)
 - f. from the Hebrew *Hiphil* form “the One who causes to be”
 - g. from the Hebrew root “to live” (e.g., Gen. 3:20), meaning “the ever living, only living One”
 - h. from the context of Exod. 3:13-16, a play on the IMPERFECT form used in a PERFECT sense, “I shall continue to be what I used to be” or “I shall continue to be what I have always been” (cf. J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Old Testament*, p. 67)

The full name YHWH is often expressed in abbreviation or possibly an original form

 - (1) *Yah* (e.g., Hallelu - yah)
 - (2) *Yahu* (names, e.g., Isaiah)
 - (3) *Yo* (names, e.g., Joel)
3. In later Judaism this covenant name (the tetragrammaton) became so holy that Jews were afraid to say it lest they break the command of Exod. 20:7; Deut. 5:11; 6:13. So they substituted the Hebrew term for “owner,” “master,” “husband,” “lord”—*adon* or *adonai* (my lord). When they came to YHWH in their reading of OT texts they pronounced “lord.” This is why YHWH is written LORD in English translations.
4. As with *El*, YHWH is often combined with other terms to emphasize certain characteristics of the Covenant God of Israel. Here are some of the possible combination terms.
 - a. *YHWH - Yireh* (YHWH will provide), Gen. 22:14
 - b. *YHWH - Rophekha* (YHWH is your healer), Exod. 15:26
 - c. *YHWH - Nissi* (YHWH is my banner), Exod. 17:15
 - d. *YHWH - Meqaddishkem* (YHWH the One who sanctifies you), Exod. 31:13
 - e. *YHWH - Shalom* (YHWH is Peace), Jdgs. 6:24
 - f. *YHWH - Sabaoth* (YHWH of hosts), I Sam. 1:3,11; 4:4; 15:2; often in the Prophets)
 - g. *YHWH - Ro’I* (YHWH is my shepherd), Ps. 23:1
 - h. *YHWH - Sidqenu* (YHWH is our righteousness), Jer. 23:6
 - i. *YHWH - Shammah* (YHWH is there), Ezek. 48:35

▣ **“the LORD spoke to Joshua”** Originally he was to consult the High Priest for guidance (cf. Num. 27:18-23). YHWH is said to have spoken to Joshua like He had to Moses (cf. 1:1; 4:1,15; 5:9; 6:2). He was one of the two spies who brought a positive report and he lived through the Wilderness Wandering period (cf. Num. 26:25). He was Moses’ right-hand man from the time of the Exodus from Egypt to the crossing of the Jordan. This shows that although leaders come and go, God is the consistent power and strength of the people.

1:2 “Moses, my servant is dead” The question is often asked, “Why could Moses not enter the Promised Land after being such a faithful, effective leader?” The reason is seen in Num. 20:12; 27:14; Deut. 3:26. One major theological truth again and again in the history books of the OT is that when God reveals to someone what to do, but they slightly change it, the result is judgment. God is no respecter of persons. When Moses publically disobeyed God, he reaped the consequences.

▣ **“arise, cross”** Both of these VERBS are *Qal* IMPERATIVES:

1. arise - BDB 877, KB 1086, e.g., Deut. 2:13,24; 10:11
2. cross - BDB 716, KB 778, e.g., vv. 11,14; 2:23; 3:1

The time had come. It was time to act!

▣ **“Jordan”** The term “Jordan” is from a word which means “descending” (BDB 434). This river plunged almost 1,500 feet in just 80 miles. At this particular time of the year it was at flood stage (cf. 3:15). It was just as much an act of faith to cross this torrent as it was to have trust in God during the Exodus.

▣ **“to the land which I am giving to them”** This was a significant act because of God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 12, which was later repeated to Isaac and Jacob and then, through Moses, to all Israel. This was the promised land, given to them by God (cf. Gen. 15:12-21). In the OT and in Assyrian documents it is called “the land flowing with milk and honey” because of its fertility.

1:3 Notice the emphasis on God’s sovereignty and His complete revelation to Moses concerning these matters. This reflects YHWH’s promises to Abraham (cf. Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:18).

There are several places where the dimensions of the Promised Land are given:

1. Numbers 34:1-12
2. Deuteronomy 1:6-8; 3:12-20; 11:24
3. Joshua 1:3-4; 13:8-12
4. Judges 20:1

They are not all exactly the same. The only time Israel came close to these boundaries was during the kingdoms of David and Solomon.

1:4 “from the wilderness” The term “wilderness” (BDB 184) refers to “the Negev,” which is usually translated “the south” (BDB 616). It refers to the semi-arid pastureland which was uninhabited, because of lack of ground water, located between Beersheba and the desert of Sinai.

▣ **“Lebanon”** This is literally “white” (BDB 526), which refers to (1) the snow-capped heights of Mt. Hebron or (2) the color of its cliffs. It designates the northern reaches of the Promised Land (cf. Deut. 1:7-8; 11:24).

▣ **“as far as the great river, the river Euphrates”** This refers not to the mouth of the Euphrates (BDB 832), but to the headwaters, which are northeast of the Sea of Galilee.

▣ **“all the land of the Hittites”** The exact location of this area is uncertain. It may refer to northern Syria. In the Bible there are three different groups of Hittites. The largest and most famous one was in central Turkey (*Anatolia*). There was a group by this name that also lived within Palestine. This same basic description is found in Deut. 11:24. Hittite names of these were found in written documents during the reigns of David and Solomon.

▣ **“as far as the great sea”** This refers to the Mediterranean, often called “the upper sea” and, therefore, is a designation for the west.

1:5

NASB, NKJV **“No man will be able to stand before you”**

NRSV **“No one shall be able to stand against you”**

TEV **“No one will be able to defeat you”**

NJB **“No one will be able to resist you”**

Because of Deut. 7:24 and 11:25, this phrase has military overtones. Joshua passed this word of encouragement on to his army (cf. 10:8). The “you” is SINGULAR here and refers to Joshua. In v. 4 it was PLURAL and referred to all the people.

▣ **“just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you”** What a tremendous promise! This is the same type of phrase used when God called Moses (cf. Gen. 26:3; 31:3; Exod. 3:12; Deut. 31:6,8; Josh. 3:7; Jdgs. 6:16; I Kgs. 11:38). The promise was YHWH’s personal presence!

▣ **“I will not fail you nor forsake you”** The Hebrew word “fail” (DBD 951, KB 1276, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) implies “weakness” and the Hebrew word “forsake” (BDB 736, KB 806, *Qal* IMPERFECT) implies “non abandonment.” This reflects Deut. 31:6-7. These were covenant terms which imply that YHWH would be with Joshua (cf. v. 9), even though problems would arise. God’s presence and promises are His greatest gifts!

1:6 “Be strong and courageous” This was Moses’ message to Joshua (cf. Deut. 31:7,8,23). This is God’s command to Joshua (BDB 304, KB 302, *Qal* IMPERATIVE and BDB 54, KB 65, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, cf. 1:6,7,9,18). This is Joshua’s message to the people (cf. 10:25, same grammatical form). Notice the covenantal need for continuing human response.

▣ **“the land which I swore to their fathers to give to them”** The promise was given to Abraham in Gen. 12:7; to Isaac in Gen. 26:3; to Jacob in Gen. 28:13; and to all Israel in Exod. 6:8.

1:7 “be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you” The phrase “Be careful to do” is made up of two *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCTS (BDB 1036, KB 1581 and BDB 793, KB 889). This is a repeated theme throughout this period of Israel’s history. There is the covenant relationship between God and Israel which had stipulations on both sides (cf. Deut. 5:32-33; 6:1-4, 17, 24, 25).

God's covenant(s) are both conditional and unconditional. Some covenant promises are based solely on God, e.g., (1) Noah, cf. Gen. 8:20-21; 9:8-17; (2) Abraham, cf. Gen. 15:12-21. God will redeem mankind (cf. Gen. 3:15), but individuals are united to Him by personal faith and obedience (conditional covenant, cf. Gen. 12). The literary form of the conditional covenant is usually "if they. . .I will. . ." (cf. Deut. 28:1,2,9,13,15).

In my opinion the theological tension of the sovereignty of God versus the free will of humanity can best be explained in these covenantal categories.

▣ **“do not turn from it to the right or the left”** The VERB (BDB 693, KB 747, *Qal* IMPERFECT) is used in a JUSSIVE sense. This phrase (cf. Deut. 5:32; 17:11,20; 28:14; Josh. 23:6; II Kgs. 22:2; II Chr. 34:2; Pro. 4:27) reflects the Hebrew words for “sin,” which were always a deviation from the standard (i.e., God Himself). The Hebrew term “righteousness” is literally “a measuring reed.” All the terms for sin in Hebrew, and to some extent, followed by the terms for sin in Greek, mean “a deviation from the standard” or “crookedness” or “perverseness” or “falling short.” God Himself is the standard!

SPECIAL TOPIC: RIGHTEOUSNESS

“Righteousness” is such a crucial topic that a Bible student must make a personal, extensive study of the concept.

In the OT God's character is described as “just” or “righteous.” The Mesopotamian term itself comes from a river reed which was used as a construction tool to judge the horizontal straightness of walls and fences. God chose the term to be used metaphorically of His own nature. He is the straight edge (ruler) by which all things are evaluated. This concept asserts God's righteousness as well as His right to judge.

Man was created in the image of God (cf. Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1,3; 9:6). Mankind was created for fellowship with God. All of creation is a stage or backdrop for God and mankind's interaction. God wanted His highest creation, mankind, to know Him, love Him, serve Him, and be like Him! Mankind's loyalty was tested (cf. Gen. 3) and the original couple failed the test. This resulted in a disruption of the relationship between God and humanity (cf. Gen. 3; Rom. 5:12-21).

God promised to repair and restore the fellowship (cf. Gen. 3:15). He does this through His own will and His own Son. Humans were incapable of restoring the breach (cf. Rom. 1:18-3:20).

After the Fall, God's first step toward restoration was the concept of covenant based on His invitation and mankind's repentant, faithful, obedient response. Because of the Fall, humans were incapable of appropriate action (cf. Rom. 3:21-31; Galatians 3). God Himself had to take the initiative to restore covenant-breaking humans. He did this by

1. declaring mankind righteous through the work of Christ (i.e., forensic righteousness).
2. freely giving mankind righteousness through the work of Christ (i.e., imputed righteousness).
3. providing the indwelling Spirit who produces righteousness (i.e., Christlikeness, the restoration of the image of God) in mankind.

However, God requires a covenantal response. God decrees (i.e., freely gives) and provides, but humans must respond and continue to respond in

1. repentance
2. faith

3. lifestyle obedience
4. perseverance

Righteousness, therefore, is a covenantal, reciprocal action between God and His highest creation. It is based on the character of God, the work of Christ, and the enabling of the Spirit, to which each individual must personally and continually respond appropriately. The concept is called “justification by faith.” The concept is revealed in the Gospels, but not in these terms. It is primarily defined by Paul, who uses the Greek term “righteousness” in its various forms over 100 times.

Paul, being a trained rabbi, uses the term *dikaioσunē* in its Hebrew sense of the term *SDQ* used in the Septuagint, not from Greek literature. In Greek writings the term is connected to someone who conformed to the expectations of deity and society. In the Hebrew sense it is always structured in covenantal terms. YHWH is a just, ethical, moral God. He wants His people to reflect His character. Redeemed mankind becomes a new creature. This newness results in a new lifestyle of godliness (Roman Catholic focus of justification). Since Israel was a theocracy, there was not clear delineation between the secular (society’s norms) and the sacred (God’s will). This distinction is expressed in the Hebrew and Greek terms being translated into English as “justice” (relating to society) and “righteousness” (relating to religion).

The gospel (good news) of Jesus is that fallen mankind has been restored to fellowship with God. This has been accomplished through the Father’s love, mercy, and grace; the Son’s life, death, and resurrection; and the Spirit’s wooing and drawing to the gospel. Justification is a free act of God, but it must issue in godliness (Augustine’s position, which reflects both the Reformation emphasis on the freeness of the gospel and the Roman Catholic emphasis on a changed life of love and faithfulness). For Reformers the term “the righteousness of God” is an OBJECTIVE GENITIVE (i.e., the act of making sinful mankind acceptable to God [positional sanctification]), while for the Catholic it is a SUBJECTIVE GENITIVE, which is the process of becoming more like God (experiential progressive sanctification). In reality it is surely both!!

In my view all of the Bible, from Genesis 4 to Revelation 20, is a record of God’s restoring the fellowship of Eden. The Bible starts with God and mankind in fellowship in an earthly setting (cf. Genesis 1-2) and the Bible ends with the same setting (cf. Revelation 21-22). God’s image and purpose will be restored!

To document the above discussions, note the following selected NT passages illustrating the Greek word group:

1. God is righteous (often connected to God as Judge)
 - a. Romans 3:26
 - b. II Thessalonians 1:5-6
 - c. II Timothy 4:8
 - d. Revelation 16:5
2. Jesus is righteous
 - a. Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14 (title of Messiah)
 - b. Matthew 27:19
 - c. I John 2:1,29; 3:7
3. God’s will for His creation is righteousness
 - a. Leviticus 19:2
 - b. Matthew 5:48 (cf. 5:17-20)

4. God's means of providing and producing righteousness
 - a. Romans 3:21-31
 - b. Romans 4
 - c. Romans 5:6-11
 - d. Galatians 3:6-14
 - e. Given by God
 - 1) Romans 3:24; 6:23
 - 2) I Corinthians 1:30
 - 3) Ephesians 2:8-9
 - f. Received by faith
 - 1) Romans 1:17; 3:22,26; 4:3,5,13; 9:30; 10:4,6,10
 - 2) I Corinthians 5:21
 - g. Through acts of the Son
 - 1) Romans 5:21-31
 - 2) II Corinthians 5:21
 - 3) Philippians 2:6-11
5. God's will is that His followers be righteous
 - a. Matthew 5:3-48; 7:24-27
 - b. Romans 2:13; 5:1-5; 6:1-23
 - c. I Timothy 6:11
 - d. II Timothy 2:22; 3:16
 - e. I John 3:7
 - f. I Peter 2:24
6. God will judge the world by righteousness
 - a. Acts 17:31
 - b. II Timothy 4:8

Righteousness is a characteristic of God, freely given to sinful mankind through Christ. It is

1. a decree of God
2. a gift of God
3. an act of Christ

But it is also a process of becoming righteous that must be vigorously and steadfastly pursued, which will one day be consummated at the Second Coming. Fellowship with God is restored at salvation, but progresses throughout life to become a face-to-face encounter at death or the Parousia!

Here is a good quote to conclude this discussion. It is taken from *A Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* published by IVP:

“Calvin, more so than Luther, emphasizes the relational aspect of the righteousness of God. Luther's view of the righteousness of God seems to contain the aspect of acquittal. Calvin emphasizes the marvelous nature of the communication or imparting of God's righteousness to us” (p. 834).

For me the believer's relationship to God has three aspects.

1. the gospel is a person (emphasis of the Eastern Church and Calvin)
2. the gospel is truth (emphasis of Augustine and Luther)
3. the gospel is a changed life (emphasis of the Roman Catholic church)

They are all true and must be held together for a healthy, sound, biblical Christianity. If any one is overemphasized or depreciated, problems occur.

We must welcome Jesus!

We must believe the gospel!

We must pursue Christlikeness!

▣ **“so that you may have success wherever you go”** Physical prosperity was the covenantal promise (cf. v. 8; Deut. 27-28). God wanted to bless His people and thereby bring the world to Himself. See Special Topic below. God purposed blessing (cf. Deut. 29:9), but fallen mankind was incapable of obedience, reaping only judgment (cf. Deut. 28:29).

SPECIAL TOPIC: BOB'S EVANGELICAL BIASES

I must admit to you the reader that I am biased at this point. My systematic theology is not Calvinism or Dispensationalism, but it is Great Commission evangelism. I believe God had an eternal plan for the redemption of all mankind (e.g., Gen. 3:15; 12:3; Exod. 19:5-6; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 18; 36:22-39; Acts 2:23; 3:18; 4:28; 13:29; Rom. 3:9-18,19-20,21-32), all those created in His image and likeness (cf. Gen. 1:26-27). The covenants are united in Christ (cf. Gal. 3:28-29; Col. 3:11). Jesus is the mystery of God, hidden but now revealed (cf. Eph. 2:11-3:13)!

This pre-understanding colors all my interpretations of Scripture (i.e., Jonah). I read all texts through it! It is surely a bias (all interpreters have them!), but it is a Scripturally-informed presupposition.

1:8 “this book of the law shall not depart from your mouth” There are three emphases made in v. 8 about covenant responsibility:

1. talk about it continually (cf. Deut. 6:6-9)
2. meditate (BDB 211, KB 237, *Qal* PERFECT, cf. Ps. 1:2; 77:12; 143:5) on it always
3. perform it continually (the same phrase, “be careful to do,” from v. 7 is repeated, cf. Deut. 6:6-9; Ps. 1:2; 119:97)

▣ **“for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success”** The covenant blessings and cursings of Deuteronomy 27-29 make it plain that God wants to attract the world to Himself by blessing Israel! God's goal was prosperity, but the consequences of disobedience resulted in judgment. The world never saw the blessings of YHWH.

1:9 This includes both the positive aspect “to be strong and courageous” (cf. vv. 6,7,9,18) and the negative aspect “to not tremble or be dismayed” (both of these VERBS are negated *QAL* IMPERFECTS used in a JUSSIVE sense, [1] BDB 791, KB 888 and [2] BDB 369, KB 365, cf. Deut. 20:3; 31:6). The reason for this is that the LORD is going to go with them—the greatest promise is the presence of God (cf. Exod. 3:12).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:10-11

¹⁰“Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, ¹¹Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you are to cross this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you, to possess it.’”

1:10 “the officers of the people” These were official scribes or military officers (BDB 1009, cf. 23:2; 24:1). They are mentioned as helpers of the elders in Num. 11:16. They were Joshua’s way of communicating to the large number of Israelites.

1:11 This verse has three IMPERATIVES, two to the officers and one through them to the people:

1. the officers
 - a. “pass through the camp,” BDB 716, KB 778, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
 - b. “command the people,” BDB 845, KB 1010, *Piel* IMPERATIVE
2. the people: “prepare provisions,” BDB 465, KB 464, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE

▣ **“prepare provisions for yourselves”** This refers to food (cf. 9:11; Gen. 42:25; 45:21; Exod. 12:39; Jdgs. 7:8; 20:10; I Sam. 22:10).

▣ **“three days”** This seems to be the period required for ritual purification (cf. Exod. 19:10-11) as well as time for preparation of food and for travel. It referred to the remainder of the day on which it was spoken and all of the next day and part of the succeeding day (cf. 3:2).

▣ **“to go in to possess. . .to possess it”** There are three *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCTS:

1. go in, BDB 97, KB 112
2. possess, BDB 439, KB 441
3. possess, BDB 439, KB 441

The VERB “possess” is used of the Promised Land several times:

1. Leviticus, 3 times
2. Numbers, 14 times
3. Deuteronomy, 71 times
4. Joshua, 27 times
5. Judges, 25 times

The immediate focus of the Abrahamic covenant for Israel was the land of promise! Genesis 15:12-21 is about to become a reality!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT 1:12-15

¹²To the Reubenites and to the Gadites and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, ¹³Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God gives you rest and will give you this land.' ¹⁴Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle shall remain in the land which Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but you shall cross before your brothers in battle array, all your valiant warriors, and shall help them, ¹⁵until the LORD gives your brothers rest, as *He gives you*, and they also possess the land which the LORD your God is giving them. Then

you shall return to your own land, and possess that which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise.

1:12 “the Reubenites the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh” These three tribes wanted land on the eastern side of the Jordan because it was good pastureland (cf. Numbers 32). However, Moses commanded them to go to war with their brothers and claim the Promised Land (cf. Deut. 3:18-20) before going home to their land allocation. They even had to go first into battle.

▣ **“half-tribe of Manasseh”** This term may have two possible origins: (1) because Joseph’s two children, Manasseh and Ephraim, inherited land equally, it may refer to Joseph having the right of double inheritance as the firstborn did; or (2) more likely, Manasseh had land on both eastern and western sides of the Jordan and so he is called the half-tribe, while Ephraim is never called a half-tribe.

1:13 “the LORD your God gives you rest” This was referred to in Deut. 3:18-20. The term “rest” (BDB 628, KB 679) is used in the sense of

1. a resting place
 - a. Exod. 33:14
 - b. Deut. 3:20
 - c. Josh. 1:13,15; 22:4
 - d. I Chr. 23:25
 - e. Isa. 63:14
2. freedom from enemies
 - a. Deut. 12:10; 25:19
 - b. Josh. 23:1
 - c. II Sam. 7:1,11
 - d. I Chr. 22:9

1:14

NASB “in battle array”

NKJV “armed”

NRSV “the warnings”

TEV “armed for battle”

NJB “in battle formation”

This (BDB 332) seems to come from the Arabic root which means “in a group of five” and possibly refers to the marching order of the army (cf. 4:12; Exod. 13:18; Num. 32:17; Jdgs. 7:11). The order would be (1) the advanced guard; (2) the main body; (3 and 4) two flanks and (5) a rear guard. This is similar to the marching order of the Egyptians (Rameses II) which shows the historicity of these accounts. Moses was trained at Pharaoh’s court. The tribes whose families were safe and settled had to go into battle first (i.e., #1).

▣ **“valiant warriors”** This term is used several times in Joshua to describe the soldiers (cf. 6:2; 8:3; 10:7; Jdgs. 6:12; 11:1).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:16-18

¹⁶They answered Joshua, saying, “All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go.” ¹⁷Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you; only may the LORD your God be with you as He was with Moses. ¹⁸Anyone who rebels against your command and does not obey your words in all that you command him, shall be put to death; only be strong and courageous.

1:16 “they” This refers to the three tribes that settled on the eastern side of the Jordan, Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh (the half tribe).

▣ **“all that you have commanded us we will do”** This paragraph is a confirmation of the tribes’ understanding that YHWH was speaking through Joshua. It is like a covenant renewal.

1:17 This is an affirmation and prayer (cf. 1:5,9).

1:18 Obedience was the key to covenant fidelity and military victory. The consequences of disobedience were terminal!

▣ **“only be strong and courageous”** God reaffirms His charge to Joshua (cf. 1:5,7,9,18) through these three tribes’ affirmation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why could Moses not enter the Promised Land?
2. What is the significance of the term “servant”?
3. Why was the Promised Land so important to the Jewish people?
4. Did Israel ever fully possess the limits of the Promised Land?
5. Is the covenant conditional? What does this imply?

JOSHUA 2

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Spies Sent to Jericho 2:1-7	Rahab Hides the Spies 2:1-7	Joshua's Spies at Jericho 2:1-7	Joshua Sends Spies into Jericho 2:1-3 2:4-7	Joshua's Spies at Jericho 2:1-7
Received by Rahab 2:8-14	2:8-14	2:8-14	2:8-13 2:14	The Pact Between Rahab and the Spies 2:8-13 2:14-21
Promise to Rahab 2:15-21	2:15-21	2:15-21	2:15-16 2:17-21	The Spies Return
2:22-24	2:22-24	2:22-24	2:22-24	2:22-24

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. xvi). Compare your subject divisions with the five modern translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Rahab was a Canaanite harlot in Jericho, the rabbis say from age 10.
- B. She hid the spies (that Joshua sent) from the city authorities because she feared Israel's imminent invasion.
- C. She helped the spies escape over the walls.
- D. Some say that she later became the wife of Salmon and the mother of Boaz, who is in the lineage of the Messiah (Matt. 1:5). Other Jewish traditions say she married Joshua.
- E. She became very popular in Jewish writings (e.g., *Sifre Numbers* 78; *Zuta* 75) as
 1. one of the four most beautiful women in the world
 2. the ancestress of 8 prophets, including Jeremiah and Huldah
 3. a prime example of the power of repentance
- F. In the NT she is mentioned twice as an example of faith, Hebrews 11:30-31 and James 2:24-26.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT 2:1-7

¹Then Joshua the son of Nun sent two men as spies secretly from Shittim, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went and came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab, and lodged there. ²It was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men from the sons of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land." ³And the king of Jericho sent *word* to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land." ⁴But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them, and she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. ⁵It came about when *it was time* to shut the gate at dark, that the men went out; I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them." ⁶But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them in the stalks of flax which she had laid in order on the roof. ⁷So the men pursued them on the road to the Jordan to the fords; and as soon as those who were pursuing them had gone out, they shut the gate.

2:1 "Joshua. . .sent two men as spies" Joshua is following in Mosaic precedent, but he is doing so knowing how disastrous the first mission (the spies into Canaan, cf. Numbers 13) went. He had confidence that Israel was now ready to trust YHWH's word and presence to give them military victory.

▣ **"secretly"** This was done secretly (or "quietly" BDB 361 I) because of the nature of the mission or because of the Jews' previous experience in sending spies.

▣ **“Shittim”** “Shittim” means “stream of Acacias” (BDB 1008, cf. Num. 33:49). This site was also the locale of Israel’s idolatry with the Canaanite fertility cult (cf. Num. 25:1). It was located on the eastern side of the Jordan on the northern border of the land of Moab. It was part of “the Plains of Moab.”

Acacia wood is dark, hard wood used extensively in the tabernacle (cf. Exod. 25, 26; it is often translated “Shittim wood”).

▣ In verse 2 Joshua gave them two orders.

1. “go,” BDB 229, KB 246, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
2. “view,” BDB 906, KB 1157, *Qal* IMPERATIVE

▣ **“Jericho”** This is the oldest city in this part of the world (about 7000 B.C.). It was called the city of palms. The name means “fragrance” (BDB 437). Archaeologically little can be known about this tel because of (1) weather erosion and (2) multiple levels of human habitation.

▣ **“the house of a harlot”** Later Judaism tried to make her an “innkeeper” (Meg. 14b,15a; Josephus; Rashi), but this is typical of their attempts to remove embarrassing events from the OT (cf. Exodus 32). The term is definitely “harlot” (BDB 275). This would have been one place the spies could go as strangers and be welcome without question.

▣ **“Rahab”** The name means “to be wide” (BDB 932 I) and may be a euphemism for her prostitution (cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 1091 and vol. 4, pp. 1123-1126).

2:2 “king of Jericho” This was the common Canaanite governmental city-state title (like the Philistines). He was very nervous over such a large body of people camped so close to his city, especially in light of what they had done to the native kingdoms on the eastern side of the Jordan.

▣ **“men from the sons of Israel”** They were identified either by their dress or their speech.

2:3 “bring out the men” This VERB (BDB 422, KB 425) is a *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE. This king was afraid!

2:4 “but I did not know where they were from” Many commentators have been bothered by Rahab’s lying (cf. *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, pp. 181-182). Why, is she not still a Canaanite prostitute? At what point does she become an informed believer? This is not God lying!

2:5 “Pursue them quickly” This is another lie to cover her deception (BDB 922, KB 1191, *Qal* IMPERATIVE).

2:6 “stalks of flax” Flax (BDB 781 #2 f) was used to make linen. This indicates a possible date of March/April (flood stage for the Jordan), since this was when flax was sun dried.

▣ **“on the roof”** The flat roof was a place of social gathering as well as a work place in the summer.

2:7 “the fords” This referred to special shallow water crossing places in the Jordan river (BDB 721).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:8-14

⁸Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, ⁹and said to the men, "I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. ¹⁰For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. ¹¹When we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. ¹²Now therefore, please swear to me by the LORD, since I have dealt kindly with you, that you also will deal kindly with my father's household, and give me a pledge of truth, ¹³and spare my father and my mother and my brothers and my sisters, with all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death." ¹⁴So the men said to her, "Our life for yours if you do not tell this business of ours; and it shall come about when the LORD gives us the land that we will deal kindly and faithfully with you."

2:9 “the LORD has given you the land” How did a Canaanite prostitute know (1) God’s covenant name; (2) the covenant stipulations; and (3) their exodus experience? Apparently she heard by word of mouth from her customers.

▣ **“the terror of you has fallen on us”** The term “terror” (BDB 33) is often used of YHWH’s supernatural intervention in battle (e.g., Exod. 15:16; 23:27; Job 20:25).

▣ **“all the inhabitants of the land”** The root of this Hebrew word means “to sit, remain, dwell” (BDB 442, KB 444, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE). Some scholars assert that it should be translated “rulers” or “those who sit on the throne,” but no translation that I am aware of translates it like that. They assume it relates to the third meaning, “those who dwell in the land” (cf. Exod. 15:14).

▣ **“I have melted away before you”** This is parallel to “the terror of you has fallen on us.” This VERB (BDB 556, KB 555, *Niphal* PERFECT) is a metaphor of helpless disorganization or panic (cf. v. 11; 5:10; Exod. 15:15; I Sam. 14:16; Jer. 49:23). It is used to describe fear in Deut. 1:28 and also of the Israelites at their defeat at Ai in Josh. 7:5.

2:10 “Red Sea” This is literally “Sea of Reeds” or “Sea of Weeds.” This term is used of

1. salt sea (cf. Jonah 2:5; I Kgs. 9:26)
2. fresh water reeds in the Nile (cf. Exod. 2:3; Isa. 19:26)
3. the large body of mysterious water to “the south” (cf. Num. 33:8,10)

thereby referring to the modern bodies of water called the Red Sea, Indian Ocean or Persian Gulf.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE RED SEA

I. Name

A. Literally the name is *Yam Suph*.

1. “Sea of Weeds” or “Sea of Reeds” (Egyptian root)
2. “Sea at the end (of the earth)” (Semitic root)

- B. This can refer to
 1. salt water, I Kgs. 9:26 (Gulf of Aqaba); Jonah 2:5 (Mediterranean Ocean)
 2. fresh water, Exod. 2:3; Isa. 19:26
- C. The Septuagint is the first translation to call it “the Red Sea.” Possibly these translators were relating it to the sea of Edom (red). This designation was perpetuated by the Latin Vulgate and later the King James English translation.

II. Location

- A. There are several bodies of water referred to by this name.
 1. the narrow body of water between Egypt and the Sinai peninsula about 190 miles long (Gulf of Suez)
 2. the body of water between the Sinai peninsula and Arabia about 112 miles long (Gulf of Aqaba)
- B. It could relate to the shallow marsh area in the northeastern part of the Nile delta close to Tanis, Zoan, Avaris, Rameses, which is on the southern shore of Lake Menzaleh (the marshy region).
- C. It could be used metaphorically of the mysterious waters to the south, often used of the sea at the end (of the earth). This means it could refer to
 1. modern Red Sea (Gulf of Suez or the Gulf of Akaba, cf. I Kgs. 9:26)
 2. Indian Ocean (cf. Herodotus 1.180)
 3. Persian Gulf (cf. Josephus, *Antiq.* 1.7.3)

III. *Suph* in Numbers 33

- A. In Num. 33:8 the body of water that was miraculously divided is called *suph*.
- B. In Num. 33:10,11 the Israelites are said to camp by *yam suph*.
- C. There are two different bodies of water.
 1. the first is not the Red Sea (Gulf of Suez)
 2. the second is probably the Red Sea (Gulf of Suez)
- D. The term *suph* is used in the OT in three ways.
 1. body of water parted by YHWH to allow the Israelites to pass, but the Egyptian soldiers to drown
 2. the northwestern extension of the Red Sea (Gulf of Suez)
 3. the northeastern extension of the Red Sea (Gulf of Akaba)
- E. *Yam suph* possibly does not mean “reed sea” because
 1. there were/are no reeds (papyrus) in the Red Sea (salt water)
 2. the supposed Egyptian etymology refers to a land, not a lake
- F. *Suph* could come from the Semitic root “end” and refer to the mysterious unknown waters to the south (see Bernard F. Batts, “Red Sea or Reed Sea? What *Yam Suph* Really Means” in *Approaches to the Bible*, vol. 1, pp. 291-304).

▣ **“the two kings of the Amorites”** The account of Israel’s victory over Sihon and Og is recorded in Numbers 21 and Deuteronomy 2-3.

▣ **“utterly destroyed”** The VERB (BDB 355, KB 353, *Hiphil* PERFECT) *herem* meant “under the ban.” This was a holy war term for complete dedication to God. All that breathed became holy unto God and thereby had to be removed from human use. Examples are

- a. limited ban - Deut. 2:34-35; 3:6-7
- b. total ban - Josh 6:17,21

2:11 “He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath” This is a strong theological statement of God’s transcendence and imminence. This is the paradox of YHWH as “the Holy One of Israel” and on the other hand, the ever present God of creation. This is an affirmation of monotheism.

2:12 “swear to me by the LORD” The VERB (BDB 989, KB 1396, *Niphal* IMPERATIVE) is common in Deuteronomy and Joshua.

1. God swears, 1:6; 5:6 (twice); 21:43,44
2. His people swear, 2:12,17,20; 6:22,26; 9:15,18,19,20; 14:9
3. do not swear by their gods, 23:7

This was a common practice of involving God’s name in daily life (cf. 9:15). The fact that she wants an oath in YHWH’s name shows her faith in Him.

▣ **“dealt kindly”** *Hesed* (BDB 338) is the Hebrew word for God’s covenant loyalty and love for His people. Here, however, it is used of a general sense of hospitality.

SPECIAL TOPIC: LOVINGKINDNESS (*HESED*)

This term has a wide semantic field. The BDB characterizes it this way (338-339).

A. Used in connection to human beings

1. kindness to fellow men (e.g., I Sam. 20:14; II Chr. 24:22)
2. kindness toward the poor and needy (e.g., Micah 6:8)
3. affection (cf. Jer. 2:2; Hos. 6:4)
4. appearance (cf. Isa. 40:6)

B. Used in connection to God

1. covenant loyalty and love
 - a. “in redemption from enemies and troubles” (e.g., Jer. 31:3; Ezra 27:28; 9:9)
 - b. “in preservation of life from death” (e.g., Job 10:12; Ps. 86:13)
 - c. “in quickening of spiritual life” (e.g., Ps. 119:41,76,88,124,149,150)
 - d. “in redemption from sin” (cf. Ps. 25:7; 51:3)
 - e. “in keeping the covenants” (e.g., II Chr. 6:14; Neh. 1:5; 9:32)
2. a divine attribute (e.g., Exod. 34:6; Micah 7:20)
3. kindness of God
 - a. “abundant” (e.g., Neh. 9:17; Ps. 103:8)
 - b. “great in extent” (e.g., Exod. 20:6; Deut. 5:10; 7:9)
 - c. “everlasting” (e.g., I Chr. 16:34,41; II Chr. 5:13; 7:3,6; 20:21; Ezra 3:11)
4. deeds of kindness (e.g., II Chr. 6:42; Ps. 89:2; Isa. 55:3; 63:7; Lam. 3:22)



NASB “and give me a pledge of truth”
 NKJV “and give me a true token”
 NRSV “Give me a sign of good faith”
 TEV “and give me some sign that I can trust you”
 NJB “and give me a sure sign of this”

This sign (BDB 16) of truth (BDB 54) is described in v. 18 and was honored by Joshua. Rahab and all of her family with her were spared, v. 13.

2:14 This is an oath formula assuring Rahab that the two spies could speak with authority for the Israeli army.



NASB, NRSV,
 NJB “kindly and faithfully”
 NKJV “kindly and truly”
 NJB “treat you well”

These two terms are significant covenant terms:

1. “kindly,” BDB 338, cf. note at 2:12
2. “faithfully,” BDB 54 is the root for covenant faith, trust and steadfastness

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:15-21

¹⁵Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall, so that she was living on the wall. ¹⁶She said to them, "Go to the hill country, so that the pursuers will not happen upon you, and hide yourselves there for three days until the pursuers return. Then afterward you may go on your way." ¹⁷The men said to her, "We *shall be* free from this oath to you which you have made us swear, ¹⁸ unless, when we come into the land, you tie this cord of scarlet thread in the window through which you let us down, and gather to yourself into the house your father and your mother and your brothers and all your father's household. ¹⁹It shall come about that anyone who goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood *shall be* on his own head, and we shall be free; but anyone who is with you in the house, his blood *shall be* on our head if a hand is laid on him. ²⁰But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be free from the oath which you have made us swear. ²¹She said, "According to your words, so be it." So she sent them away, and they departed; and she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

2:15 The exact location of her place of business and home is uncertain. Jericho was a double walled city. There may have been walkways from the roofs of buildings built against the inner walls to the top of the outer wall. Robert Bratcher and Barclay Newman in *A Translators Handbook on the Book of Joshua* by the United Bible Societies, have an interesting comment,

“Archaeological excavations reveal that at one time Jericho had two city walls, an inner one and an outer one, separated by a space of some 3.5 to 4.5 meters. Houses were built on heavy timbers laid from one wall to the other: the window through which Rahab let the men down looked out from the outer wall” (p. 32).

2:16 “go” This VERB (BDB 229, KB 246) is a *Qal* IMPERATIVE. Her advice was crucial in their escape.

▣ **“the hill country”** This referred to the rugged hill country to the west and south of Jericho. In other words, she instructed them to go the opposite direction from the camp of Israel.

2:18 The term “rope” (BDB 286 II) in v. 15 is different from the term (BDB 876 CONSTRUCT 296) used in v. 17. The first implies a corded strong rope, the second a much smaller, weaker rope, or thick thread (cf. 21). By putting out this small rope/thread it did not draw undue attention to her home by the inhabitants of Jericho.

The color scarlet is often associated with the tabernacle color, but must have also been a common color for thread (cf. Gen. 38:28,30). These spies may have had it with them. The dye color came from a worm (BDB 1040).

▣ **“gather to yourself into the house your father and your mother and your brothers and all your father’s household”** In the OT salvation has to do with physical deliverance. Notice Rahab’s whole family is delivered by her act of faith. This corporate concept is not only common in the OT, but extends to the “household” conversions of the NT (cf. v. 2; John 4:44,53; Acts 11:14; 16:14-15,31-33; 18:8; I Cor. 1:16).

2:19-20 Notice the conditional covenant related to the faith of Rahab (cf. v. 20) and her family (v. 19). If they believe in YHWH they will abide by the three conditions of the spies (cf. vv. 18-20).

2:19 “his blood shall be on his own head” This is a Hebrew idiom of personal responsibility (cf. Ezek. 18:13; 33:5).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:22-24

²²They departed and came to the hill country, and remained there for three days until the pursuers returned. Now the pursuers had sought *them* all along the road, but had not found *them*.
²³Then the two men returned and came down from the hill country and crossed over and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and they related to him all that had happened to them. ²⁴They said to Joshua, "Surely the LORD has given all the land into our hands; moreover, all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before us."

2:24 The spies told Joshua of the fear of the Canaanites (cf. 2:9). This is a fulfilled prophecy from Exodus 23:27 and Deut. 2:25.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why did these spies go to a prostitute's house?
2. Why did Rahab help them?
3. Is lying alright if used for God?
4. What concept of God did Rahab have?
5. What significance does the scarlet thread have?

JOSHUA 3

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The People Stop at the Jordan	Israel Crosses the Jordan	The Crossing of the Jordan	The People of Israel Cross the Jordan	Before the Crossing
3:1-4	3:1-8	3:1-6	3:1-4	3:1-6
3:5-6			3:5-6	Final Instructions
3:7-13		3:7-13	3:7-8	3:7-13
	3:9-13		3:9-13	
The People Cross Jordan				Crossing the Jordan
3:14-17	3:14-17	3:14-17	3:14a	3:14-17
			3:14b-17	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. xvi). Compare your subject divisions with the five modern translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Chapters 3 and 4 describe the crossing of the Jordan. The accounts seem to be rather repetitive, but we must remember that it is characteristic of Hebrew literature that one general account is followed by a detailed account (cf. Genesis 1 and 2).

- B. A brief outline of these two chapters is
1. Chapter 3:1-6—preparation for entering the Promised Land
 2. Chapter 3:7-17—the crossing of the Jordan
 3. Chapter 4:1-14—extra details concerning the crossing of the Jordan
 4. Chapter 4: 15-24—the memorial stones
- C. There are several examples of memorial stone piles in Joshua. The purpose of the memorials was to instruct the next generation about YHWH’s faithful covenant acts and YHWH’s reaction to covenant disobedience (cf. 4:20-24; 8:35); some are positive and some negative.
1. the positives are
 - a. twelve stones from the Jordan arranged at Gilgal (cf. 4:1-8)
 - b. twelve stones from the Jordan arranged on the brink of the Jordan (cf. 4:9)
 - c. stone piles record the Law at Mt. Ebal (cf. 8:30-35)
 2. the negatives are
 - a. Achan and his family and cattle stoned to death for their disobedience (cf. 7:25)
 - b. Achan and his family buried by a great heap of stones (cf. 7:26)
 - c. King of Ai killed and buried by a great heap of stones (cf. 8:29)
 - d. large stones used to seal the cave where the five Canaanite kings were buried (cf. 10:27)
- D. There are two memorial stones mentioned
1. the stone of Bochan (cf. 15:6; 18:17)
 2. the covenant stone (cf. 24:26-27)

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:1-4

¹Then Joshua rose early in the morning; and he and all the sons of Israel set out from Shittim and came to the Jordan, and they lodged there before they crossed. ²At the end of three days the officers went through the midst of the camp; ³and they commanded the people, saying, "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God with the Levitical priests carrying it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it. ⁴However, there shall be between you and it a distance of about 2,000 cubits by measure. Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you shall go, for you have not passed this way before.

3:1 “Joshua rose early in the morning” This is a Hebrew idiom which is used often in the Old Testament to describe someone who is preparing for a journey (cf. Gen. 19:2; 20:8; 21:14; 22:3; 26:31; 28:18; 31:55; Exod. 8:30; 9:13; 24:4; 32:6; 34:4; etc.). Here it implies that Joshua immediately performed his task (cf. 6:12; 7:16; 8:10).

▣ **“Shittim”** This seems to mean “from the acacias.” Acacias are a rather hard, dark wood which was very common in the desert. This is basically the geographical area known as the Plains of Moab (cf. Num. 33:48,49,50).

3:2 “it came about at the end of three days” Some see this as being linked to the three-day ritual of Josh. 1:11, while other commentators assume that it is a different three-day period. Three days is the normal time necessary for ritual preparation (cf. Exod. 19:10-15).

▣ **“officers”** This means “scribes” and refers to the helpers of the elders who are mentioned in Josh. 1:10. These would be the administrative type officials who would help Joshua.

3:3 “the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God” A full description of this symbol of the presence of God is found in Exod. 25:10-22. The *Shekinah* Cloud of Glory had been the symbol of God’s presence with His people during the Wilderness Wandering period, but now it was replaced by the ark of the covenant which sat in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle. On its mercy seat (i.e., lid) were two winged cherubim. On the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies (twice) in order to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat (for his sin, then for the nation’s) which was a sign of forgiveness for the entire nation. The rabbis believed that God dwelt in heaven and that His footstool was the ark of the covenant, the place where heaven and earth met!

▣ **“Levitical priests carrying it”** The ark and the cloud led them throughout the wilderness wandering period. Usually the ark was carried by the sons of Kohath (cf. Num. 4:4,15). The fact that it was carried here by the Levitical priests shows the significance of this particular event (also the cloud apparently was not visible).

3:4 “However, there shall be between you and it a distance of about 2,000 cubits by measure” A cubit is the distance between a man’s longest finger and his elbow. It usually equaled about 18 inches. This meant that the distance referred to here was about 3,000 feet. Some see this as the source of the rabbis’ limit for a Sabbath day’s journey (cf. Acts 1:12). Apparently this was a symbol of reverence and a sign of who was leading the people into the promised land (i.e., God).

SPECIAL TOPIC: CUBIT

There are two cubits (BDB 52, KB 61) in the Bible. The regular cubit is the distance between an average man’s longest finger and his elbow, usually around 18 inches (e.g., Gen. 6:15; Exod. 25:10,17,23; 26:2,8,13,16; 27:1,9,12,13,14,16,18; Num. 35:4,5; Deut. 3:11). There is also a longer cubit (royal cubit) used in construction (i.e., Solomon’s temple), which was common in Egypt (i.e., 21 fingers), Palestine (i.e., 24 fingers), and sometimes Babylon (i.e., 30 fingers). It was 21 inches long (cf. Ezek. 40:5; 43:13).

The ancients used parts of the human body for measurement. The people of the ancient Near East used

1. length from elbow to middle finger (cubit)
2. width from outstretched thumb to little finger (span, cf. Exod. 28:16; 39:9; I Sam. 17:4)
3. length across all four fingers of a closed hand (handbreadth, cf. Exod. 25:25; 37:12; I Kgs. 7:26; II Chr. 4:5)
4. length of middle joint of finger (fingerbreadth, Jer. 52:21)

The cubit (BDB 52, KB 61) was not completely standardized, but there were two basic lengths.

- a. normal male’s elbow to middle finger (about 18 inches, cf. Deut. 3:11)
- b. royal cubit was a bit longer (about 20 inches, cf. II Chr. 3:3; Ezek. 40:5; 43:13)

▣ “do not come near it” The VERB (BDB 897, KB 1132, *Qal* IMPERFECT) is JUSSIVE in meaning. There was a holiness about the ark which required utmost care (cf. II Sam. 6:6-7).

▣ “for you have not passed this way before” This shows that God was leading His people in fulfillment of His promise to Abraham (cf. Gen. 12:1-3).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:5-6

⁵Then Joshua said to the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you." ⁶And Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, "Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over ahead of the people." So they took up the ark of the covenant and went ahead of the people.

3:5 “consecrate yourselves” This VERB (BDB 872, KB 1073, *Hithpael* IMPERATIVE, cf. 7:13) is used for specific acts of purification in Exod. 19:10,14,22. This is the Hebrew root which is used for holiness.

SPECIAL TOPIC: HOLY

I. Old Testament Usage

- A. The etymology of the term (*kadosh*) is uncertain, possibly Canaanite. It is possible that part of the root (i.e., *kd*) means “to divide.” This is the source of the popular definition “separated (from Canaanite culture, cf. Deut. 7:6; 14:2,21; 26:19) for God’s use.”
- B. It relates to cultic things, places, times, and persons. It is not used in Genesis, but becomes common in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers.
- C. In the Prophetic literature (esp. Isaiah and Hosea) the personal element previously present, but not emphasized, comes to the fore. It becomes a way of designating the essence of God (cf. Isa. 6:3). God is holy. His name representing His character is Holy. His people who are to reveal His character to a needy world are holy (if they obey the covenant in faith).
- D. God’s mercy and love are inseparable from the theological concepts of covenants, justice, and essential character. Herein is the tension in God toward an unholy, fallen, rebellious humanity. There is a very interesting article on the relationship between God as “merciful” and God as “holy” in Robert B. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, pp. 112-113.

II. The New Testament

- A. The writers of the NT are Hebrew thinkers (except Luke), but influenced by Koine Greek (i.e., the Septuagint). It is the Greek translation of the OT that controls their vocabulary, not Classical Greek literature, thought, or religion.
- B. Jesus is holy because He came from God and is like God and He is God (cf. Luke 1:35; 4:34; Acts 3:14; 4:27,30). He is the Holy and Righteous One (cf. Acts 3:14; 22:14). Jesus is holy because He is sinless (cf. John 8:46; II Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; I Pet. 1:19; 2:22; I John 3:5).
- C. Because God is holy, His children are to be holy (cf. Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7,26; Matt. 5:48; I Pet. 1:16). Because Jesus is holy His followers are to be holy (cf. Rom. 8:28-29; II Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19; Eph. 1:4; I Thess. 3:13; 4:3; I Pet. 1:15). Christians are saved to serve in Christlikeness.

▣ **“for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you”** At this point I am not sure that Joshua or the people understood what God would do regarding the splitting of the Jordan, but their faith and trust was required for entering the promised land, as it had been required in all other events in the history of Israel.

The term “wonders” (BDB 810, KB 927) is used of God’s miraculous intervention in events in Israel’s history. He delivers them in supernatural ways from enemies (esp. Egypt and Canaan), as well as natural problems, as here a flooding Jordan being a barrier to Israel’s obeying God. I Chronicles 16 is a psalm of thanksgiving which documents many of these events.

3:6,8 Joshua commands the people to consecrate themselves in v. 5. Now he commands the priests who will carry the ark:

1. “take up the ark,” BDB 669, KB 724, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, v. 6
2. “cross over ahead of the people,” BDB 716, KB 778, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, v. 6
3. “when you come to the edge of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan,” vv. 6-8

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:7-13

⁷Now the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you. ⁸You shall, moreover, command the priests who are carrying the ark of the covenant, saying, 'When you come to the edge of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.'" ⁹Then Joshua said to the sons of Israel, "Come here, and hear the words of the LORD your God." ¹⁰Joshua said, "By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will assuredly dispossess from before you the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Hivite, the Perizzite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, and the Jebusite. ¹¹Behold, the ark of the covenant of the LORD of all the earth is crossing over ahead of you into the Jordan. ¹²Now then, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man for each tribe. ¹³It shall come about when the soles of the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the LORD, the LORD of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan will be cut off, and the waters which are flowing down from above will stand in one heap."

3:7 “that they will know that just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you” The human leader had changed but God was the same! God is going to show His support for Joshua by doing several things for him that He had also done for Moses. As God split the Red Sea in the Exodus, He now splits the Jordan in the Conquest. Another example of this same type of duplicated events is 5:13-15, which is comparable with Moses’ burning bush experience in Exodus 3.

3:9 Joshua again commands the people.

1. “come here,” BDB 620, KB 670, *Qal* IMPERATIVE. This probably refers to the leaders who would pass on the information, but it could also refer to all the Israelites.
2. “hear the words of the LORD your God,” BDB 1033, KB 1570, *Qal* IMPERATIVE. This VERB means to hear so as to do! These are God’s words, not Joshua’s.

3:10 “the living God” This is the meaning of the name “YHWH” (cf. Exod. 3:14). It is from the Hebrew VERB “to be.” He is the ever living, only living God. See Special Topic at Josh. 1:1.

▣ **“the living God is among you”** What a tremendous promise this is. The transcendent Holy One is with them (immanence). YHWH’s miracle (splitting the Jordan) will convince them all that YHWH fulfills His promise (cf. Num. 16:28).

▣ **“that He will assuredly dispossess from before you”** This is an emphatic grammatical construction made up of the *Hiphil* INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and the *Hiphil* IMPERFECT of the VERB for possess/drive out (BDB 439, KB 441). This VERB is common in Deuteronomy, Joshua, and Judges.

▣ **“the Canaanite, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites”**

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE PRE-ISRAELITE INHABITANTS OF PALESTINE

A. There are several lists of peoples.

1. Genesis 15:19-21 (10)

- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| a. Kenite | d. Hittite | g. Amorite | j. Jebusite |
| b. Kenizzite | e. Perizzite | h. Canaanite | |
| c. Kadmonite | f. Rephaim | i. Girgashite | |

2. Exodus 3:17 (6)

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| a. Canaanite | c. Amorite | e. Hivite |
| b. Hittite | d. Perizzite | f. Jebusite |

3. Exodus 23:28 (3)

- a. Hivites
- b. Canaanites
- c. Hittites

4. Deuteronomy 7:1 (7)

- | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| a. Hittites | c. Amorites | e. Perizzites | g. Jebusites |
| b. Girgashites | d. Canaanites | f. Hivites | |

5. Joshua 24:11 (7)

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| a. Amorite | d. Hittite | g. Jebusite |
| b. Perizzite | e. Girgashite | |
| c. Canaanite | f. Hivite | |

B. The origin of the names is dubious because of lack of historical data. Genesis 10:15-19 includes several of them as related to Canaan, a son of Ham.

C. Brief descriptions from the longest list in Gen. 15:19-21

1. Kenite BDB 884

- non-Israelite
- names related to “forger” or “smith,” which could refer to metal working or music (cf. Gen. 4:19-22)
- connected to the area of Sinai north to Hebron
- name connected to Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law (cf. Jdgs. 1:16; 4:11)

2. Kenizzite BDB 889
 - relative of Jews
 - a clan of Edom (cf. Gen. 15:19; 30:15,42)
 - lived in Negev
 - possibly absorbed into Judah (cf. Num. 32:12; Josh. 14:6,14)
3. Kadmonite BDB 870 II
 - non-Israelite, possibly a descendant of Ishmael (cf. Gen. 25:15)
 - name relates to “easterner”
 - lived in Negev
 - possibly related to “the men of the east” (cf. Job 1:3)
4. Hittite BDB 366
 - non-Israelite
 - descendant of Heth
 - from kingdom of Anatolia (Asia Minor, Turkey)
 - were present very early in Canaan (cf. Genesis 23; Josh. 11:3)
5. Perizzite BDB 827
 - non-Israelite, possibly Hurrians
 - lived in forested area of Judah (cf. Gen. 34:30; Jdgs. 1:4; 16:10)
6. Rephaim BDB 952
 - non-Israelite, possibly giants (cf. Gen. 14:5; Num. 33:33; Deut. 2:10-11,20)
 - lived on eastern bank of Jordan
 - line of warriors/heroes
7. Amorite BDB 57
 - northwestern Semitic people-group from Ham (cf. Gen. 10:16)
 - became general designation for inhabitants of Canaan (cf. Gen. 15:16; Deut. 1:7; Josh. 10:5; 24:15; II Sam. 21:2)
 - the name may mean “the west”
 - the ISBE, vol. 1, p. 119, says the term denotes:
 - a. the inhabitants of Palestine generally
 - b. the population of the hill country as opposed to the coastal plain
 - c. a specific people group with their own king
8. Canaanite BDB 489
 - from Ham (cf. Gen. 10:15)
 - general designation of all the tribes in Canaan west of the Jordan
 - meaning of Canaan uncertain, possibly “merchant” or “red-purple dye”
 - as a people group they dwelt along the coastal plain (cf. Num. 13:29)

- | | | | |
|-----|------------|---------|--|
| 9. | Girgashite | BDB 173 | - from Ham (cf. Gen. 10:16) or at least “from a son of” [i.e., the country of] Canaan, ISBE, vol. 2, p. 1232) |
| 10. | Jebusite | BDB 101 | - from Ham (cf. Gen. 10:16)
- from city of Jebus/Salem/Jerusalem (cf. Josh. 15:63; Jdgs. 19:10)
- Ezek. 16:3,45 asserts they were a mixed race from Amorite and Hittite |
| 11. | Hivites | BDB 295 | - from Ham (cf. Gen. 10:17)
- translated by LXX as Horite (cf. Gen. 34:2; 36:20-30; Josh. 9:7)
- possibly from the Hebrew word “cave,” therefore cave dwellers
- they lived in the highlands of Lebanon (cf. Josh. 11:3; Jdgs. 3:3). In II Sam. 24:7 they are listed next to Tyre and Sidon |

3:11 “the ark of the covenant of the LORD of all the earth” This is the name *adon* (BDB 10), which means “owner,” “husband,” or “master.” Here again is that universal emphasis which is seen so often in the Pentateuch (cf. v. 13; 4:24; Gen. 3:15; 12:3; Exod. 9:29; 19:5). There is one and only one creator, sustainer, and redeemer, God (cf. Ps. 97:5; Micah 4:13). See Special Topic: Bob’s Evangelical Biases at Josh. 1:7.

3:12 “take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man for each tribe” Notice that this does not include the tribe of Levi. This emphasis on the inclusion of the tribes is a major theme throughout the book of Joshua. Their purpose is stated in chapter 4 (to gather stones as a memorial)

3:13 “when the soles of the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the LORD” These priests who were carrying the ark had to act in faith to enter the turbulent waters of the overflowing Jordan. All of them had to get their feet into the water before it would divide. This is another sign of the faith that God required of His people.

▣ **“LORD, the Lord”** See Special Topic: The Names for Deity at Josh. 1:1.

▣ **“the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off”** At a location north of the crossing (Jericho) the limestone cliffs caved in at the city of Adam and dammed up the Jordan (cf. 3:16). This was a natural event, but with supernatural timing (when it started and when it stopped) and locality. This was just like the plagues of Egypt, which they had heard about from their parents.

In Genesis 1 water is never said to be spoken into existence. It is present and covers the earth in Gen. 1:2. God’s control of water (i.e., forming the dry land, splitting the Red Sea and the Jordan) shows that He is the God of creation. Water is so important to life, but can be so destructive. Too much is a problem and too little is a problem. YHWH controls the oceans (salt water) and the rivers, dew, and rain (fresh water). Water brings and sustains life (as does God)!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:14-17

¹⁴So when the people set out from their tents to cross the Jordan with the priests carrying the ark of the covenant before the people, ¹⁵and when those who carried the ark came into the Jordan, and the feet of the priests carrying the ark were dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks all the days of harvest), ¹⁶the waters which were flowing down from above stood and rose up in one heap, a great distance away at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan; and those which were flowing down toward the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. So the people crossed opposite Jericho. ¹⁷And the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan while all Israel crossed on dry ground, until all the nation had finished crossing the Jordan.

3:14 “the people set out from their tents to cross the Jordan” This literally means “to pull tent pegs” (BDB 652, KB 704, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT).

3:15 There is a distinct literary feature used throughout Joshua. Joshua regularly uses the same VERB twice, mentioned once and then acted on (the VERB “to be,” BDB 224, KB 243, is used this way so often I will not list them):

1. 2:12 - “dealt kindly with you” (BDB 793, KB 889, *Qal* PERFECT, *Qal* PERFECT)
2. 3:6; 4:1 - “said. . .saying” (BDB 55, KB 65, *Qal* IMPERFECT, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT)
3. 3:15 - “carried the ark” (BDB 669, KB 724, 2 *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLES)
4. 4:11; 5:1 - “a crossing” (BDB 716, KB 778, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCTS, 2 *Qal* IMPERFECTS)
5. 4:14 - “revered” (BDB 431, KB 432, *Qal* IMPERFECT, *Qal* PERFECT)
6. 5:3,4 - “circumcise” (BDB 557, KB 555, *Qal* IMPERFECT, *Qal* PERFECT)
7. 6:3 - “march around” (BDB 685, KB 738, *Qal* PERFECT, *Hiphil* INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE)

There are many more. It becomes a literary characteristic of this book.

▣ **“for the Jordan overflows all its banks all the days of harvest”** This was the time of the flax and barley harvest, not the later wheat harvest. This would mean that the Jordan was rushing out of its banks because of the melting snows from Mt. Hermon. Crossing it would be very difficult, almost impossible, at this time of the year. God would show them that He was still with them and for them by this miraculous crossing!

3:16 “and the waters which were flowing down from above stood and rose up in one heap, a great distance away at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan” The method which God used was a cave-in of the limestone cliffs which were several miles upstream. The miraculous elements were (1) the supernatural timing of the landslide and (2) its releasing of the water. We know from history, both Arab (1267 B.C.) and modern history (A.D. 1297) that the Jordan River has been stopped by landslides in this area before. There is a difference in opinion concerning the location of the city of Adam. Some say that it is about sixteen miles north of Jericho, while others say it is as far north as thirty-six miles. This same city is mentioned in Hosea 6:7.

The word “heap” (BDB 622) is always used in connection with God’s control of water.

1. Red Sea, Exod. 15:8; Ps. 78:13
2. gathering of water at creation, Ps. 33:7

▣ **“beside”** Zarethan is several miles north of Adam. The Hebrew may imply that the water backed up to Zarethan, not that it was close to Adam (cf. W. F. Albright).

3:17 “the priests . . . stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan” The Hebrew term (BDB 892) in v. 15 means “on the edge or brink of the Jordan.” Yet, in v. 17, the priest seems to have moved to the middle (BDB 1063) of the Jordan. However, if the men gathered two sets of twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan as a memorial in chapter four: (1) one set was placed at the first camp site, Gilgal and (2) the second set (cf. 4:9) was placed “in the middle” of the Jordan. But in this location they would never be seen. This must mean on the edge or brink as in 3:15 so that they were visible all year except during the few weeks of the flood stage.

▣ **“until all the nation had finished crossing the Jordan”** We learn from 4:10 that the people hurried across. Apparently the priests were growing very weary of holding the heavy, gold-covered ark for the hours it must have taken for the large number of people to cross.

▣ **“all the nation”** See Special Topic below.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THOUSAND (*ELEPH*)

This is the Hebrew word for “thousand” (BDB 48). However, it is used in several senses.

1. a family unit, Josh. 22:14; Jdgs. 6:15; I Sam. 23:23; Zech. 9:7; 12:6
2. a military unit, Exod. 18:21,25; Deut. 1:15
3. a literal thousand, Gen. 20:16; Exod. 32:28
4. a symbolic number, Gen. 24:60; Exod. 20:6; 34:7; Deut. 7:9; Jer. 32:18

The Ugaritic cognate *alluph* means “chieftain,” Gen. 36:15

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why is the crossing of the Jordan such a major event?
2. How is the crossing of the Jordan related to the crossing of the Red Sea?
3. How is God’s presence symbolized after the people enter the promised land?

JOSHUA 4

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Memorial Stones from the Jordan	The Memorial Stones	A Monument Commemorating the Crossing	Memorial Stones are Set Up	The Twelve Memorial Stones
4:1-7	4:1-7	4:1-7	4:1-7	4:1-9
4:8-14	4:8-14	4:8-9 4:10-13 4:14	4:8-14	The Crossing Ends 4:10-18
4:15-18	4:15-18	4:15-18	4:15-18	Arrival at Gilgal
The Stones Set Up at Gilgal				
4:19-5:1	4:19-24	4:19-5:1	4:19-5:1	4:19-24

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. xvi). Compare your subject divisions with the five modern translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT 4:1-7

¹Now when all the nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying,
²"Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from each tribe, ³and command them,

saying, "Take up for yourselves twelve stones from here out of the middle of the Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet are standing firm, and carry them over with you and lay them down in the lodging place where you will lodge tonight." ⁴So Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the sons of Israel, one man from each tribe; ⁵and Joshua said to them, "Cross again to the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan, and each of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Israel. ⁶"Let this be a sign among you, so that when your children ask later, saying, 'What do these stones mean to you?' ⁷then you shall say to them, 'Because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off.' So these stones shall become a memorial to the sons of Israel forever."

4:1 "twelve" (cf. Exod. 24:40). See Special Topic below.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE NUMBER TWELVE

Twelve has always been a symbolic number of organization

1. outside the Bible
 - a. twelve signs of the Zodiac
 - b. twelve months of the year
2. in the OT
 - a. the sons of Jacob (the Jewish tribes)
 - b. reflected in
 - (1) twelve pillars of the altar in Exod. 24:4
 - (2) twelve jewels on the high priest's breastplate (which stand for the tribes) in Exod. 28:21
 - (3) twelve loaves of bread in the holy place of the tabernacle in Lev. 24:5
 - (4) twelve spies sent into Canaan in Num. 13 (one from each tribe)
 - (5) twelve rods (tribal standards) at Korah's rebellion in Num. 17:2
 - (6) twelve stones of Joshua in Josh. 4:3,9,20
 - (7) twelve administrative districts in Solomon's administration in I Kgs. 4:7
 - (8) twelve stones of Elijah's altar to YHWH in I Kgs. 18:31
3. in the NT
 - a. twelve apostles chosen
 - b. twelve baskets of bread (one for each Apostle) in Matt. 14:20
 - c. twelve thrones on which NT disciples sit (referring to the 12 tribes of Israel) in Matt. 19:28
 - d. twelve legions of angels to rescue Jesus in Matt. 26:53
 - e. the symbolism of Revelation
 - (1) 24 elders on 24 thrones in 4:4
 - (2) 144,000 (12x12) in 7:4; 14:1,3
 - (3) twelve stars on the woman's crown in 12:1

- (4) twelve gates, twelve angels reflecting the twelve tribes in 21:12
- (5) twelve foundation stones of the new Jerusalem and on them the names of the twelve Apostles in 21:14
- (6) twelve thousand stadia in 21:16 (size of new city, New Jerusalem)
- (7) wall is 144 cubits in 21:7
- (8) twelve gates of pearl in 21:21
- (9) trees in new Jerusalem with twelve kinds of fruit (one for each month) in 22:2

4:1-3 We understand now why twelve men were chosen from each tribe, as was described in 3:12. It was for the purpose of taking large stones out of the bed of the River Jordan, where the feet of the priests were standing, and then carrying the stones to Gilgal, the first campsite in the promised land (cf. v. 8, 19-20). The stones would become a memorial to the mighty work that God had done.

It is a bit confusing, but there are two memorial piles of stones mentioned. One group was taken to Gilgal (vv. 1-8), but another was placed on the brink of the Jordan (v. 9). This second set of memorial stones could only be seen when the Jordan was not at flood stage. They were meant to remind the coming generations of God’s promises and mighty acts of deliverance (cf. vv. 6-7, 21; Exod. 12:26; Deut. 4:9; 6:20-25; 11:19; 32:46).

This paragraph has several commands.

1. “take for yourselves twelve men,” BDB 542, KB 534, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, v. 2
2. “command them,” BDB 845, K 1010, *Piel* IMPERATIVE, v. 3
3. “carry them,” BDB 669, KB 724, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, v. 3
4. “cross again,” BDB 716, KB 778, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
5. “take up a stone,” BDB 926, KB 1202, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE

Joshua is giving direct, specific commands, just as Moses did. We learn from v. 8 that they were from YHWH. This event is a major fulfillment of YHWH’s promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These stones will be a perpetual monument to YHWH’s faithfulness to His promises.

4:2,4 “take for yourselves twelve men. . .the twelve men he had appointed” Notice the balance between the selection by the tribal leaders and the official appointing (BDB 465, KB 464, *Hiphil* PERFECT) by Joshua.

4:6 “let this be a sign among you, that when your children later ask” The religious training of the children by the parents is a repeated theme of the writings of Moses (cf. Exod. 12:26; 13:14; Deut. 4:9; 6:20-25; 11:19; 32:46). YHWH’s covenant and the historical acts which confirm it are meant to be passed from generation to generation.



NASB “later”
NKJV, NRSV “in time to come”
TEV, NJB “in the future”

This term (BDB 563) is used as an idiom for “some future, unspecified time” (cf. Exod. 13:14 [similar phrase in v. 8]; Deut. 6:20; Josh. 4:6, 21; 22:24, 27, 28).

4:7 “forever” This is the Hebrew word *'olam*. It can be translated “forever” or “for a long period of time.” The context determines which meaning is preferred. See Special Topic below.

SPECIAL TOPIC: 'OLAM

This is the very common (used over 400 times) term *'olam* (BDB 761, KB 798). It is used of duration of time in several senses, each of which must be linked to the nature of the thing to which it refers.

A. Time past (examples only)

1. “heroes of old,” Gen 6:4
2. “mountains and hills,” Gen. 49:21
3. “generations of old,” Deut. 32:7
4. “forefather,” Josh 24:2
5. “days of old,” Isa. 51:9

B. Continual for a lifetime (examples only)

1. “believe in you forever” (i.e., Moses), Exod. 19:9
2. “slave forever,” Deut. 15:17; I Sam. 27:12
3. “all your days,” Deut. 23:6
4. Samuel “stay there forever,” I Sam. 1:22
5. King “live forever,” I Kgs. 1:21; Neh. 2:3; Ps. 21:4
6. “bless the Lord forever,” Ps. 115:18; 145:1-2
7. “sing forever,” Ps. 89:1; 115:18; 145:1-2
8. “pregnant forever” (metaphor), Jer. 20:17
9. possibly Prov. 10:25

C. Continual existence (but with obvious limitations)

1. humans, Gen. 3:22
2. the earth, Ps. 78:69; 104:5; 148:6; Eccl. 1:4 (cf. II Pet. 3:10)
3. Aaronic priesthood, Exod. 29:9; 40:15 (cf. I Sam. 2:30)
4. the Sabbath, Exod. 31:16-17
5. the feast days, Exod. 12:14,17,24; Lev. 16:29,31,24; 23:14,21,41
6. circumcision, Gen. 17:13 (cf. Rom. 2:28-29)
7. the land of promise, Gen. 13:15; 17:18; 48:4; Exod. 32:13 (cf. Exiles)
8. ruined cities, Isa. 25:2; 32:14; 34:10

D. Conditional Covenants

1. Abraham, Gen. 17:7,8,13,19
2. Israel, Deut. 5:29; 12:28
3. David, II Sam. 7:13,16,25,29; Ps. 89:2,4

4. Israel, Jdgs. 2:1 (cf. Galatians 3)

E. Unconditional Covenants

1. Noah, Gen. 9:12,16
2. New Covenant, Isa. 55:3; Jer. 32:40; 50:5 (i.e., Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-30)

F. God Himself

1. His existence, Gen. 21:33; Deut. 32:40; Ps. 90:2; 93:2; Isa. 40:28; Dan. 12:7
2. His name, Exod. 3:15; Ps. 135:13
3. His reign, Exod. 15:18; Ps. 45:6; 66:7; Jer. 10:10; Micah 4:7
4. His word, Ps. 119:89,160; Isa. 40:8; 59:21
4. His lovingkindness, Ps. 25:6; 89:2; 103:17; 118:1-4,29; Jer. 33:1

G. His Messiah

1. His name, Ps. 72:17,19
2. Blessed forever, Ps. 45:2,17; 89:52
3. reign, Ps. 89:36,37; Isa. 9:7
4. priest, Ps. 110:4
5. pre-existence, Micah 5:2

H. New Age life

1. everlasting life, Dan. 12:2
2. everlasting contempt, Dan. 12:2
3. no more tears, Isa. 65:19 (Rev. 21:4)
4. no sun, Isa. 60:19-20 (Rev. 21:23)

Note how many different English words are used to translate this Hebrew word in the NIV

1. forever
2. old, of old
3. everlasting
4. eternal
5. lasting
6. always
7. for life
8. continue
9. regular
10. permanent
11. any time

12. ancient, ancient times
13. endless
14. forevermore
15. to the very end
16. a long time
17. long ago

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:8-13

⁸Thus the sons of Israel did as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, just as the LORD spoke to Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Israel; and they carried them over with them to the lodging place and put them down there. ⁹Then Joshua set up twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan at the place where the feet of the priests who carried the ark of the covenant were standing, and they are there to this day. ¹⁰For the priests who carried the ark were standing in the middle of the Jordan until everything was completed that the LORD had commanded Joshua to speak to the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua. And the people hurried and crossed; ¹¹and when all the people had finished crossing, the ark of the LORD and the priests crossed before the people. ¹²The sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh crossed over in battle array before the sons of Israel, just as Moses had spoken to them; ¹³about 40, 000 equipped for war, crossed for battle before the LORD to the desert plains of Jericho.

4:8 “the middle” This term (BDB 1063) must be translated “brink” (cf. 3:17; 4:3,5,8,9,10,18) because if the memorial was in the middle of the Jordan it would never be seen. The Levitical priests stood on the brink of the eastern side (cf. 3:8,13). If it was on the brink of the Jordan it would be visible for many months of the year when the water was down to its normal level. Many scholars assert that there are two different accounts of the same event here, but it seems obvious to me that there are two different piles of stones.

4:9 “and they are there to this day” This phrase “until this day” is used often in Joshua which implies a book edited at a later period. This may mean a relatively short time after the events (contemporary editor) or a longer, protracted time (cf. 4:9; 5:9; 7:26; 8:28-29; 9:27; 10:27; 13:13; 14:14; 15:63; 16:10). The scribes of Mesopotamia copied their texts without alteration, but the scribes of Egypt updated their texts. Israel’s scribes were trained in Egypt. The Scripture was God’s word, but it could be updated (as the difference between Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 clearly shows).

4:10 The priests who carried the heavy gold-covered Ark of the Covenant were growing tired, so the people crossed rapidly (see end of v. 10).

▣ **“according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua”** The Jewish Publication Society of America (JPSOA) thinks this refers to Deut. 31:7-8.

4:12 “the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh crossed over in battle array before the sons of Israel, just as Moses had spoken to them” It would be very helpful at this point to read Num. 32:20-22 and Deut. 3:18-20 to see that although these tribes had their allocation on the eastern side of the Jordan, they were required to help their brothers to secure the Promised Land.

4:13 One wonders whether this number applies to only the three tribes who settled on the eastern side of the Jordan or to the whole Israeli army. The other major empires of the regions during this period had armies of about 40,000.

The Hebrew term “thousand” can mean (1) a literal thousand (cf. Gen. 20:16; Exod. 32:28); (2) a family unit (cf. Josh. 22:14; Jdgs. 6:15; I Sam. 23:23; Zech. 9:7); or (3) a military unit (cf. Exod. 18:21,25; Deut. 1:15; compare II Sam. 10:18 with I Chron. 19:18). See Special Topic at Josh. 3:17.



NASB	“to the desert plains of Jericho”
NKJV, NRSV	“to the plains of Jericho”
TEV	“to the plain near Jericho”
NJB	“towards the plain of Jericho”
JPSOA	“the lowlands of Jericho.”

Jericho was located in the Rift Valley that runs through Palestine. Often in the OT it was lush with foliage, but later it was mostly treeless.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:14

¹⁴On that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; so that they revered him, just as they had revered Moses all the days of his life.

4:14 “the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel” This VERB (BDB 152, KB 178, *Piel* PERFECT) was used in 3:7 to denote this very act.



NASB	“revered”
NKJV	“feared”
NRSV	“awe”
TEV	“honored”
NJB	“respected”

This is one of the best verses in the Bible to see the meaning of the word “fear” (BDB 431, KB 432). It is used in the sense of “reverence” or “respect.” This helps us to understand what it means when we read that we are to “fear” God.

The phrase, “as they had revered Moses all the days of his life,” is a bit of an overstatement when one reviews the murmuring and rebellion of the people against Moses’ leadership in Exodus and Numbers.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:15-18

¹⁵Now the LORD said to Joshua, ¹⁶“Command the priests who carry the ark of the testimony that they come up from the Jordan.” ¹⁷So Joshua commanded the priests, saying, “Come up from the

Jordan." ¹⁸It came about when the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD had come up from the middle of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up to the dry ground, that the waters of the Jordan returned to their place, and went over all its banks as before.

4:15-18 YHWH speaks to Joshua; Joshua speaks to the people (cf. 4:2-5). Chapter 4 is a series of flashbacks on the events of chapter 3.

Notice the series of commands.

1. v. 16, YHWH commands, BDB 845, KB 1010, *Piel* IMPERATIVE
2. v. 17, Joshua commands, "Come up from the Jordan," BDB 748, KB 828, *Qal* IMPERATIVE used in a JUSSIVE sense
3. v. 17, the order repeated in a *Qal* IMPERATIVE

4:15 The Ark of the Covenant was housed in the Holy of Holies (the inner cubicle of the tabernacle). This tabernacle was portable. It was first constructed during the Exodus at Sinai and traveled with Israel throughout the wilderness wandering period. From the Plains of Moab (site of the writing of Deuteronomy) it moved to:

1. Gilgal, Josh. 4:15-5:12
2. Shiloh, Josh. 18:1; 19:51; I Sam. 2:22
3. Mispah (ark not specifically mentioned but implied), Jdgs. 20:1; 21:1,5,8; I Sam. 7:5-12; II Sam 10:17-24
4. Gibeon, I Chr. 16:39-40; II Chr. 1:3-6
5. Jerusalem, II Samuel 6; I Chr. 23:25-26

4:18 "and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up to the dry ground" This Hebrew VERB (BDB 683, KB 736, *Niphal* PERFECT) seems to have the connotation of "drawn out of the mud." The ark was very heavy and they had stood in the mud for a long time.

▣ "the waters of the Jordan returned to their place" God used a natural means of a cave-in of the banks of the limestone cliffs upriver, but the timing of when it began and when it ceased is certainly miraculous. God used natural events, but with supernatural timing, intensity, and location, just as He did in the Egyptian plagues!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:19-24

¹⁹Now the people came up from the Jordan on the tenth of the first month and camped at Gilgal on the eastern edge of Jericho. ²⁰Those twelve stones which they had taken from the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal. ²¹He said to the sons of Israel, "When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, 'What are these stones?' ²²then you shall inform your children, saying, 'Israel crossed this Jordan on dry ground.' ²³"For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed, just as the LORD your God had done to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed; ²⁴that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, so that you may fear the LORD your God forever."

4:19 “on the tenth of the first month” The first month would be Nisan. This refers to the early spring time. This was exactly the anniversary of the deliverance from Egypt (cf. Exod. 12:3). There is a purposeful parallel! See chart below.

ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN CALENDARS

Canaanite (I Kgs. 6:1,37-38; 8:2)	Sumerian-Babylonian (Nippur Calendar)	Hebrew (Geezer Calendar)	Modern Equivalents
Abib (“green heads” of barley)	Nisanu	Nisan	March-April
Zin (spring brilliance)	Ayaru	Iyyar	April-May
	Simanu	Sivan	May-June
	Du-uzu	Tammuz	June-July
	Abu	Ab	July-August
	Ululu	Elul	August-September
Ethanim (permanent water source)	Teshritu	Tishri	September-October
Bul (rains on produce)	Arah-samna	Marcheshvan	October-November
	Kislimu	Chislev	November-December
	Tebitu	Tebeth	December-January
	Shabatu	Shebat	January-February
	Adaru	Adar	February-March

▣ **“and camped at Gilgal”** The word “Gilgal” (BDB 166) means “circle” and seems to imply that the twelve stones that Joshua will set up may have been in a circle. It is very hard to locate Gilgal because there were no permanent buildings there, just a campsite. However, it became a very holy place to Israel. Josephus tells us that it is five miles from the river and about a mile and a quarter from Jericho.

4:21-22 See note at 4:3 and 6.

4:23 “just as the LORD your God had done to the Red Sea” As God had miraculously brought His people out of Egypt, now He miraculously brings the people into the promised land.

For a discussion of the Red Sea, see Special Topic at Josh. 2:10.

4:24 “that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty” Again the purpose of God choosing Israel was to choose the world (cf. Gen. 12:3; Exod. 19:5-6). This is one of the many universal implications and specific statements to show that God wants all of the world to know and respect Him (cf. I Sam. 17:46; I Kgs. 8:41-43,60; II Kgs. 19:19; Ps. 46:10; 105:1; 145:12; Isa. 12:4-5; 32:20; Ezek. 36:23). See Special Topic at Josh. 1:7.

The “hand of the LORD” is an anthropomorphic idiom of YHWH’s power and sovereignty (cf. Deut. 4:34; 5:15; 7:19; 11:2; 26:8). This may have been a way of referring to God’s power seen in the staff in Moses’ hand (e.g., Exod. 7:5,19; 8:5,6,16,17; 9:22,23; 10:12,13,21,22; 14:16,21,26,27). God uses human instrumentality to accomplish His will among men (e.g., Exod. 3:7-9 vs. 10-12).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. How many groups of memorial stones are there and why?
2. Why does the term “middle of the Jordan” need to be translated “brink of the Jordan”?
3. Why is chapter 4 so helpful in our discussion of training our children in the matters of faith?
4. How do these two chapters show us that God cares about all the world and not just Israel?

JOSHUA 5

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Israelites Circumcised	The Second Generation Circumcised 5:1	The First Passover in the Land	The Circumcision at Gilgal	Terror of the Peoples west of the Jordan 5:1 Circumcision of the Hebrews at Gilgal
5:2-12	5:2-12	5:2-7 5:8-9 5:10-12	5:2-7 5:8-9 5:10-12	5:2-3 5:4-9 Celebration of the Passover 5:10-12
5:13-15	The Commander of the Army of the Lord 5:13-15	A Theophany 5:13-15	Joshua and the Man with a Sword 5:13 5:14a 5:14b 5:15	Prelude: A Theophany 5:13-15

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. xvi). Compare your subject divisions with the five modern translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Chapter 5:1-12 really describes two covenant acts:
1. The circumcision of the people of God (1-9)
 2. The observance of the first Passover since they left Egypt (10-12)
- B. Chapter 5:13-15 is an appearance of the angel of the Lord (theophany) in a very similar way to Exodus 3. It seems to be intentionally parallel to show that God was with Joshua as He was with Moses.
- C. Circumcision was a command by God to Abraham (cf. Gen. 17:9-14). It was a physical symbol of the covenant between YHWH and Abraham and his descendants. It was performed on the eighth day after birth, even if that occurred on the Sabbath.
- Most ancient peoples of the ancient Near East were circumcised (except the Philistines who were from the Aegean Islands). However, for all but Israel it was a puberty rite, a passage into manhood.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:1

¹Now it came about when all the kings of the Amorites who *were* beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites who *were* by the sea, heard how the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan before the sons of Israel until they had crossed, that their hearts melted, and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the sons of Israel.

5:1 “kings of the Amorites” These people had city-states, like the Philistines and Greek peoples. These native inhabitants of Canaan lived in the hill country (cf. Num. 13:29; Deut. 1:7,20; Josh. 10:6). See Special Topic: the Pre-Israelite Inhabitants of Palestine at Josh. 3:10.

▣ **“Canaanites”** These people lived along the coastal plain (*shephelah*). Often Amorites and Canaanites are used as a collective term for all of the native tribes of the Promised Land.

▣ **“their hearts melted”** The VERB (BDB 587, KB 606, *Niphal* IMPERFECT) was used earlier in 2:11. What a powerful metaphor (cf. Isa. 13:7; 19:1; Nah. 2:10). It is used of the Israelites’ fear in 7:5 and Deut. 1:28; Ezek. 21:7. YHWH’s acts encouraged the Israelites and terrified the Canaanites.



NASB, NKJV,

NRSV

“there was no spirit in them any longer”

TEV

“lost their courage”

NJB

“lost all courage to resist”

This term (BDB 924) can mean “breath,” “wind,” or “spirit.” Here it is used for the human spirit (person) being discouraged and intimidated (cf. 2:11; Ps. 76:12; 77:3; 142:3; 143:4; Pro. 18:14; Isa. 19:3). It is parallel to “their hearts melted.”

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:2-7

²At that time the LORD said to Joshua, "Make for yourself flint knives and circumcise again the sons of Israel the second time." ³So Joshua made himself flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth. ⁴This is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, died in the wilderness along the way after they came out of Egypt. ⁵For all the people who came out were circumcised, but all the people who were born in the wilderness along the way as they came out of Egypt had not been circumcised. ⁶For the sons of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, *that is*, the men of war who came out of Egypt, perished because they did not listen to the voice of the LORD, to whom the LORD had sworn that He would not let them see the land which the LORD had sworn to their fathers to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. ⁷Their children whom He raised up in their place, Joshua circumcised; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them along the way.

5:2 There are three *Qal* IMPERATIVES in v. 2:

1. “make,” BDB 793, KB 889
2. “again” (literally “turn” or “return”), BDB 996, KB 1427
3. “circumcise,” BDB 557, KB 555

This was an act of covenant obedience and an act of faith because they were so close to Jericho and would be unable to defend themselves for several days. Circumcision for adults is a painful and debilitating experience (cf. Gen. 34:25).

▣ **“make for yourself flint knives”** These flint knives became a traditional instrument with which to perform circumcision because they are very sharp (cf. Exod. 4:25). It is unusual that the Septuagint of Josh. 24:30 tells us that these very flint knives were later buried with Joshua.

▣

NASB, NKJV	“the second time”
NRSV	“a second time”
TEV	-- omits --
NJB	“(a second time)”

It seems that for some reason the children of Israel did not circumcise during the wilderness wandering period. It is obvious from Exod. 12:48 that to partake of the Passover one must be circumcised. The term “the second time” (literally, “return,” BDB 996, KB 1427) is not found in the Septuagint and probably in Hebrew means “return again” (*shub*) which refers to the institute of circumcision (cf. Genesis 17), not that someone would be circumcised a second time.

5:3 “So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth” Joshua himself did not personally make all of the flint knives, nor did he circumcise all of the people. The priests or Levites may have circumcised the people. However, the men apparently separated themselves from the

rest of the camp and performed the circumcision at a precise geographical place which came to be known as “the hill of the foreskins.”

5:4 “and the reason why Joshua circumcised them; all the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, died in the wilderness along the way” Because of the unbelief of the spies, all of the men who were twenty years old and older were condemned to die in the wilderness wandering period (cf. Num. 14:29-35; 26:64-65; Deut. 2:14-15).

5:5 “for all the people who came out were circumcised, but all the people who were born in the wilderness along the way as they came out of Egypt had not been circumcised” The Egyptians and most other Semitic people which surround the Jewish nation also circumcised their male children. The only uncircumcized group in this area was the Philistines who invaded Palestine about 1250 B.C. They were from the Aegean Islands (i.e., Greek culture). However, most other Near Eastern cultures viewed circumcision as a rite of passage from childhood to manhood, but for Israel it was a religious symbol of the covenant which was performed on the eighth day after birth (cf. Genesis 17).

5:6 “forty years in the wilderness” The number “forty” is very common in the Bible. Sometimes it should be taken literally, but at other times it is symbolic for a long period of indefinite time. The Hebrews stayed at Sinai two years and the wilderness wandering period lasted thirty-eight years.

▣ **“they perished because they did not listen to the voice of the LORD”** This goes back to the unbelief of the twelve spies (cf. Numbers 13-14). Only two of them, Joshua and Caleb, had faith to enter the promised land (cf. Num. 14:38). Biblical faith is based on trusting in God and His word.

▣ **“the land which the LORD had sworn to their fathers to give us”** This refers to the patriarchal blessing of Abraham in Gen. 12:1-3. The same promise of a land is given to both Isaac and Jacob and later to the children of Israel. The initial promise to Abraham involved a land and a seed. The Old Testament majors on the land while the New Testament majors on the seed (Messiah).

▣ **“a land flowing with milk and honey”** The land of Palestine was known by this descriptive title in both Assyrian and Persian documents. It was a very fertile place!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:8-9

⁸Now when they had finished circumcising all the nation, they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed. ⁹Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." So the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day.

5:8 “they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed” The Hebrew term “healed” is literally “life” (BDB 310), but it is used in the sense of being revived (cf. II Kgs. 20:7) from the physical procedure of circumcision.

There seems to be somewhat of a difficulty when one understands the chronology based on 4:19 compared with 5:10. It seems that only four days intervened which would be much too short a period of time for the men to be healed unless there was a miraculous healing from God. When one looks at this

chapter one wonders about the military strategy of circumcising all of your men of war in the face of a hostile Canaanite population. Jericho was only a mile or so away. But, again, one must remember (1) the supernatural presence of God; (2) the paralyzing fear that the Canaanites had of the Israelites; and (3) the fact that not all of the men needed to be circumcised (those who were under twenty at the rebellion).

5:9 “today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you” The term “Gilgal,” meaning “wheel” or “circle,” may be a play on the word “rolled away” (BDB 164 II, KB 193, *Qal* PERFECT, cf. Ps. 119:22).

There has been some discussion about what is referred to here: (1) some see it as referring to the slavery of Egypt (cf. Gen. 15:12-21); and (2) others say that it refers to taunts by Israel’s enemies that YHWH delivered from Egypt only to destroy them in the desert (cf. Exod. 32:12; Num. 14:13-16; Deut. 9:28).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:10-12

¹⁰While the sons of Israel camped at Gilgal they observed the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month on the desert plains of Jericho. ¹¹On the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹²The manna ceased on the day after they had eaten some of the produce of the land, so that the sons of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate some of the yield of the land of Canaan during that year.

5:10 “they observed the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month on the desert plains of Jericho” Notice that they were in the promised land and this is apparently the first observance of the Passover since they left Egypt, Exodus 12. The Hebrew day began at evening, as in Genesis 1. This date becomes the time every year for Passover (cf. Exod. 12:18-19; Lev. 23:4-8; Num. 28:16-25).

5:11 “unleavened cakes” We learn from Exod. 12:15-20 that to the one day Feast of Passover was attached a seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread.

5:12 “the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten some of the produce of the land” This was predicted in Exod. 16:35. The manna (BDB 577) was a supernatural manifestation of God’s provision which was collected every morning except for the Sabbath (cf. Exod. 16:16-24). It began at a precise time and ended at a precise time (YHWH’s supernatural provision).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:13-15

¹³Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us or for our adversaries?" ¹⁴He said, "No; rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the LORD." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, "What has my lord to say to his servant?" ¹⁵The captain of the LORD's host said to Joshua, "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy."

5:13 “Joshua . . . behold a man was standing opposite him with his sword in his hand” We learn from this account that the man was an angel or a physical form of God (theophany, cf. *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, pp. 191-92). It is significant that the term for “man” is not the normal term “*adam*” (BDB 9), but the term

“*ish*” (BDB 35), which can refer to a spiritual being (cf. Exod. 15:3; Isa. 42:13). The same imagery of an angel with a drawn sword is also in Num. 22:31 and I Chr. 21:16. Apparently the drawn sword was to reassure Joshua that YHWH would fight for them (cf. Deut. 1:30).

▣ **“Joshua went to him”** Joshua moved towards this man; what a sign of bravery! He does not know if he is friend or foe. This old warrior was ready to fight any foe!

5:14 “No” This is understood in several ways: (1) “no” (NKJV, JPSOA); (2) “neither” (NRSV, TEV, NKB); or (3) “indeed” (grammatically it is possibly emphatic *lamed*).

▣ **“I indeed come now as the captain of the host of the LORD”** The term (BDB 978) “captain” can mean “prince” (cf. Isa. 9:5) This is the only place in the Old Testament where this full title is used. It is used of national angels in Dan. 10:13,20,21; 12:1. Jewish sources assert that this is Michael, the national angel (prince, e.g., Dan. 12:1) of Israel (Aggadat Bereshit 32.64).



NASB “the host”

NKJV, NRSV, TEV, NJB “the army”

The term “host” (BDB 838) refers to (1) the “army of heaven” or (2) the heavenly bodies (stars, sun, moon, in past ages about astral worship). Here, in a military passage it would refer to the captain of the armies of YHWH.

▣ **“Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, ‘What has my LORD to say to his servant’”** Because Joshua is told to remove his sandals in verse 15 this account is very similar to Moses’ meeting with God at the burning bush (cf. Exod. 3:5). The dialogue of this encounter is not really given until 6:2ff.

▣ **“Remove your sandals”** This was a command (BDB 675, KB 730, *Qal* IMPERATIVE). Removing the sandals was a sign of respect, openness, or worship. Joshua was well acquainted with this account!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why did the children of Israel not circumcise during the Wilderness Wandering period?
2. What does circumcision symbolize?
3. Why did they not observe the Passover in the wilderness?
4. Why did the manna cease?
5. Who is the person described in 5:13-15?

JOSHUA 6

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
March Around Jericho	The Destruction of Jericho	The Siege of Jericho	The Fall of Jericho	Capture of Jericho
6:1-5	6:1-5	6:1-7	6:1-5	6:1-5
6:6-11	6:6-7		6:6-7	6:6-9
	6:8-11	6:8-11	6:8-11	6:10
				6:11-13
6:12-14	6:12-14	6:12-14	6:12-14	6:14-16
Jericho Captured and Destroyed		The Fall of Jericho		
6:15-21	6:15-21	6:15-21	6:15-19	Jericho Placed Under the Curse of Destruction
				6:17-19
			6:20-21	6:20-21
Rahab Spared				Rahab's House Preserved
6:22-25	6:22-25	6:22-25	6:22-25	6:22-23
				6:24-25
				A Curse on Anyone Who Rebuilds Jericho
6:26-27	6:26-27	6:26	6:26	6:26
		6:27	6:27	6:27

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

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Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. xvi). Compare your subject divisions with the five modern translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph

2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Chapters 6-12 describe the major military campaigns of Joshua.
- B. The first half of the book of Joshua, chapters 1-12, describes the entering into (chapters 1-5) and conquest (chapters 6-12) of the Promised Land. There are three distinct geographical movements of Joshua's army.
 1. the central campaign, chapters 6-8
 - a. Jericho
 - b. Ai
 - c. covenant ceremony at Shechem
 2. the southern campaign, chapters 9-10
 - a. Gibeon ruse
 - b. the five kings
 3. the northern campaign, chapters 11:1-15
 - a. Hazor
 4. summary, 11:16-23; 12:1-24
- C. Notice the number of double VERBALS of the same root in this chapter. This is a characteristic of Joshua.
 1. "tightly shut," v. 1, BDB 688, KB 742, *Qal* PERFECT and *Pual* PARTICIPLE
 2. "take up," v. 6, BDB 669, KB 724, *Qal* IMPERATIVE and *Qal* IMPERFECT
 3. "blew," v. 8, BDB 1075, KB 1785, *Qal* PERFECT and *Qal* PARTICIPLE
 4. "walk," v. 9, BDB 229, KB 246, *Qal* PARTICIPLE and *Qal* INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE
 5. "shout," v. 10, BDB 929, KB 1206, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE and *Hiphil* PERFECT
 6. "took up," vv. 12-13, BDB 669, KB 724, *Qal* IMPERFECT and *Qal* PARTICIPLE
 7. "went," v. 13, BDB 229, KB 246, *Qal* PARTICIPLE and *Qal* INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE (twice)
 8. "brought out," v. 23, BDB 422, KB 425, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT and *Hiphil* PERFECT
 9. "was," v. 27, BDB 224, KB 242, *Qal* IMPERFECT and *Qal* IMPERFECT

This kind of repetition is common throughout the book. See note at 3:15.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:1-5

¹Now Jericho was tightly shut because of the sons of Israel; no one went out and no one came in.
²The LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king *and* the valiant warriors. ³"You shall march around the city, all the men of war circling the city once. You shall do

so for six days. ⁴Also seven priests shall carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark; then on the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. ⁵It shall be that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people will go up every man straight ahead."

6:1 "Jericho was tightly shut because of the sons of Israel" The people had heard the reports and were fearful (cf. 2:11; 5:1).

6:2 "and the LORD said to Joshua" This is the theophany angel's message mentioned in 5:14. This angel, like the one in Exodus 3, speaks for God (cf. Exod. 3:2,4) and may be a physical manifestation of God (i.e., the Angel of the Lord).

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

It is obvious that deity manifests Himself physically in human form in the OT. The question for Trinitarians becomes which person of the Trinity fulfills this role. Since God the Father (YHWH) and His Spirit are consistently non-corporeal, it seems possible to suggest that these human manifestations are the pre-incarnate Messiah.

To demonstrate the difficulties one faces in trying to identify a theophany from an angelic encounter the following list is illustrative:

1. the angel of the Lord as an angel
 - a. Gen. 24:7,40
 - b. Exod. 23:20-23; 32:34
 - c. Num. 22:22
 - d. Jdgs. 5:23
 - e. II Sam. 24:16
 - f. I Chr. 21:15-30
 - g. Zech. 1:12-13
2. the angel of the Lord as theophany
 - a. Gen. 16:7-13; 18:2,16,17-21,22-33; 22:11-15; 31:11,13; 48:15-16
 - b. Exod. 3:2,4; 14:19 (13:21)
 - c. Jdgs. 2:1-5; 6:22-24; 13:3-23
 - d. Hosea 12:3-4
 - e. Zech. 3:1-5

▣ **"See"** The VERB (BDB 906, KB 1157, *Qal* IMPERATIVE) is characteristic of YHWH's revelations:

1. to Moses, Deut. 1:8,21; 2:24; 4:5; 11:26; 30:15; 32:39
2. to Joshua, Josh. 6:2; 8:8

It is possibly another way of assuring Joshua that YHWH is with him as He was with Moses.

▣ **“I give Jericho into your hand, with its king and its valiant warriors”** YHWH is asserting the victory (“I have given,” BDB 678, KB 733, *Qal* PERFECT) even before Jericho falls because He is on their side. However, there will be a test of obedience as they are commanded in verses 3ff to march around the city and perform certain acts. The theological emphasis on covenant obedience is recurrent (cf. v. 5).

6:4 Notice the repetition of the number “seven” (14 times): seven priests, seven trumpets, seventh day, and seven times. Seven is the number of perfection or completion based on Gen. 1:1-2:4. The fall of Jericho is an act of YHWH, not Israel.

▣ **“trumpet of rams’ horns”** The rabbis stipulate that this must be the left horn of a male flat-tailed sheep. It was used to remind the synagogue of the lamb that God used to provide as a substitute for Isaac, Gen. 22:13. It was primarily not a musical instrument, but a loud blast for religious (cf. Exod. 19:13; Lev. 25:9), and at times, military purposes.

SPECIAL TOPIC: HORNS USED BY ISRAEL

There are four words in Hebrew for association with horns/trumpets:

1. “the ram’s horn” (BDB 901) - turned into an instrument of sound, cf. Josh. 6:5. This same word is used for the ram caught by his horns which Abraham will substitute for Isaac in Gen. 22:13.
2. “trumpet” (BDB 1051) - from the Assyrian term for wild sheep (ibex). This is the horn that was used in Exod 19:16,19 at Mt. Sinai/Horeb. #1 and #2 are parallel in Josh. 6:5. It was used to communicate times of worship and times to fight (i.e., Jericho was both, cf. 6:4).
3. “ram’s horn” (BDB 385) - from Phoenician word for Ram (cf. 6:4,6,8,13). It also stands for the Year of Jubilee (cf. Lev. 25:13,28,40,50,52,54; 27:17,18,23,24).

All of these first three seem interchangeable with no distinction intended. The Mishnah (RH 3.2) allowed several animal horns—sheep, goat, or antelope, but not from a cow.

4. “trumpets” (BDB 348) - possibly from the VERB “stretch out,” implying a straight bone (not curved as the animal horns). These were made of silver (after the shape and form of Egypt). These are used
 - a. with worship rites (cf. Num. 10:2,8,10; I Chr. 13:8; 15:24,28; Ezra 3:10; Neh. 12:35,41)
 - b. for military purposes (cf. Num. 10:9; 31:6; Hosea 5:8)
 - c. for royal purposes (cf. II Kgs. 11:14)

One of these metal horns is depicted on the Arch of Titus in Rome; Josephus also describes them in *Antiq.* 3.12.6.

6:5 “shout” The TERM (BDB 929, KB 1206, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) is used to describe a characteristic “war cry” (cf. 6:10,20; Num. 10:5,9; Jdgs. 7:20; I Sam. 17:52; II Chr. 13:14-15). YHWH used

1. the daily marching around the city
2. the trumpet sound
3. the war cry
4. an earthquake

to deliver Jericho into Israel's hands (cf. 6:2)! One good example of a military cry can be seen in Num. 10:35-36 in connection with the ark.

▣ **“the city wall will fall flat”** One can almost see the consternation on the part of the elders when Joshua explained this plan to them, for this was not normal military procedure! However, it was the word of God and throughout the Pentateuch we have seen that God has required His people to do that which seems illogical (cf. Numbers 2) as a test of obedience which shows their faith in His word and promises.

The mechanism for the destruction of the wall was probably an earthquake, but the timing, intensity, and locality are supernatural (cf., Egyptian plagues and crossing the Jordan).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:6-11

“So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, “Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD.”⁷ Then he said to the people, “Go forward, and march around the city, and let the armed men go on before the ark of the LORD.”⁸ And it was so, that when Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD went forward and blew the trumpets; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them.⁹ The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while they continued to blow the trumpets.¹⁰ But Joshua commanded the people, saying, “You shall not shout nor let your voice be heard nor let a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I tell you, ‘Shout!’ Then you shall shout!”¹¹ So he had the ark of the LORD taken around the city, circling it once; then they came into the camp and spent the night in the camp.

6:6-11 This paragraph contains several IMPERATIVES. As YHWH commands Joshua, he passes them on.

1. “take up the ark,” v. 6, BDB 669, KB 724, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
2. “go forward,” v. 7, BDB 716, KB 778, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
3. “march around,” v. 7, BDB 685, KB 738, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
4. “shout,” v. 10, BDB 929, KB 1206, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE

6:6 “the ark of the covenant” After the crossing of the Jordan, the Cloud which had represented YHWH's presence with the people was removed. Now the ark was the visible symbol of His presence.

6:7 “Then he said to the people” The Masoretic text has “they,” which may refer to the officers mentioned in 1:10 and 3:2.

6:9 “and the armed men went before the priests” Two Jewish commentators of the Middle Ages, Kimchi and Rashi, say that this refers to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh mentioned in 4:12-13. This would not have been the normal marching order of the camp.

The term “armed men” (BDB 323, KB 321, *Qal* PASSIVE PARTICIPLE) means “fully equipped for battle” (cf. vv. 7,9,13; 4:13; II Chr. 20:21; 28:14).

6:10 “you shall not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I tell you, ‘Shout!’” This same truth must be related to 4:8,13. Some people say that this shows

that there are two composite accounts, but really what we have are the priests who could blow the horn every day or at will, and the fighting men who could not speak until the seventh day!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:12-14

¹²Now Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. ¹³The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew the trumpets; and the armed men went before them and the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while they continued to blow the trumpets. ¹⁴Thus the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp; they did so for six days.

6:13 “ram’s horns” It (BDB 385) was the left horn of a male flat-tailed sheep.

▣ **“went”** Notice how many times this VERB (BDB 229, KB 246) is used in this verse—six times. This literary style seems repetitive to moderns.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:15-21

¹⁵Then on the seventh day they rose early at the dawning of the day and marched around the city in the same manner seven times; only on that day they marched around the city seven times. ¹⁶At the seventh time, when the priests blew the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city. ¹⁷The city shall be under the ban, it and all that is in it belongs to the LORD; only Rahab the harlot and all who are with her in the house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. ¹⁸But as for you, only keep yourselves from the things under the ban, so that you do not covet *them* and take some of the things under the ban, and make the camp of Israel accursed and bring trouble on it. ¹⁹But all the silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron are holy to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD." ²⁰So the people shouted, and *priests* blew the trumpets; and when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted with a great shout and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight ahead, and they took the city. ²¹They utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

6:17 “the city shall be under the ban” This is the word *herem* (BDB 356), which means “devoted to God for destruction.” It is the concept of holy war where everything in the city that breathed must die because it is given to God and, therefore, it becomes too holy for human use. The one exception is Rahab, the harlot, and her family, because of the help she gave to the spies and their oath in YHWH’s name to protect her.

6:18 “keep yourselves from the things under the ban” YHWH’s people must restrain (BDB 1036, KB 1581, *Qal* IMPERATIVE) themselves. Chapter 7 will describe the consequences of disobedience!

6:21 This is a description of holy war. It seems very cruel to us in our day, but one must remember that it was a common military practice in the day in which it was done (e.g., Moabite inscription from Mesha, KAI 181:17). It was also an act of divine judgment based on Gen. 15:16. That which was given to YHWH became holy and could not be used by humans (cf. Lev. 27:28-29).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:22-25

²² Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the harlot's house and bring the woman and all she has out of there, as you have sworn to her." ²³ So the young men who were spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and her mother and her brothers and all she had; they also brought out all her relatives and placed them outside the camp of Israel. ²⁴ They burned the city with fire, and all that was in it. Only the silver and gold, and articles of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. ²⁵ However, Rahab the harlot and her father's household and all she had, Joshua spared; and she has lived in the midst of Israel to this day, for she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

6:22 "Go. . .bring" These are two more IMPERATIVES. Joshua is present and directing the course of events.

1. "go into," BDB 97, KB 112, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
2. "bring out," BDB 422, KB 425, *Qal* IMPERATIVE

6:23 "the young men" This term (BDB 654) denotes a young person under the supervision of another. However, in 2:1,3; 6:22, they are called "men" (BDB 35). It is possible that the term does not refer to age in this context, but to these spies who must report back to Joshua.

▣ **"and place them outside the camp of Israel"** Because Rahab, at this point, was still a Canaanite, and, therefore, ceremonially unclean, she was removed from the holy people for a time (cf. Deut. 23:14). However, v. 25 shows that she was later fully included in the covenant community (people can change/be changed!).

6:24 Burning was a sign of the *herem* (ban, cf. Deut. 13:16). That which was physical was turned into the invisible and rose up in smoke to God. Several cities were burned by Joshua (Jericho, Ai, 8:28; Hazor, 11:6,9,11,13). However, not all cities were dedicated to YHWH. Israel inhabited many Canaanite cities.

▣ **"the house of the LORD"** This obviously refers to the tabernacle here (cf. Exod. 25-27), but in the OT it usually refers to the temple in Jerusalem.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:26-27

²⁶ Then Joshua made them take an oath at that time, saying, "Cursed before the LORD is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with *the loss of his firstborn* he shall lay its foundation, and with *the loss of his youngest son* he shall set up its gates." ²⁷ So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.

6:26 "and then Joshua made them take an oath at that time" This oath would involve calling YHWH's name into play on someone who acted in the way that was cursed. We learn from I Kgs. 16:34 that this curse was literally fulfilled in the life of Hiel, the Bethelite.

6:27 This refers to the fear of the Canaanite population ("their hearts melted").

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. What is significant about the unusual military procedure used to capture Jericho?
2. Why is Rahab such a wonderful example of God's grace?
3. Describe "holy war."

JOSHUA 7

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Israel Defeated at Ai	Defeat At Ai	Defeat At Ai	Achan's Sin	Violation of the Curse of Destruction
7:1	7:1	7:1	7:1	7:1
				The Sacrilege Punished by a Repulse at Ai
7:2-5	7:2-5	7:2-5	7:2-5	7:2-3
				7-4-5
		Achan's Sin		Joshua's Prayer
7:6-9	7:6-9	7:6-9	7:6-9	7:6-9
The Sin of Achan	The Sin of Achan			Yahweh's Answer
7:10-15	7:10-15	7:10-15	7:10-15	7:10-12
				7:13-15
				The Culprit Discovered and Punished
7:16-21	7:16-21	7:16-21	7:16-19	7:16-18
				7:19-21
			7:20-21	
7:22-26	7:22-26	7:22-26	7:22-26a	7:22-23
				7:24
				7:25
			7:26b	7:26

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. xvi). Compare your subject divisions with the five modern translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph

2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Historical narratives usually do not specifically state the theological purpose for their inclusion. See Introduction.
- B. There is an obvious contrast between Rahab and Achan. The actions of both affected their whole families (Hebrew corporality). YHWH is no respecter of persons. If a Canaanite prostitute repents and believes, she is included in Israel. If one, even from the royal tribe, is disobedient to the clearly expressed will of God, he and his family are eliminated.
- C. This chapter clearly shows the Hebrew concept of corporality (one affects many).
 1. Adam and Eve’s sin affects all humanity (Genesis 3).
 2. Sacrifice of innocent animals affects humans (Leviticus 1-7).
 3. Korah and Reuben’s sin affects their whole family (Numbers 16).
 4. Jesus, the innocent Lamb of God (cf. John 1:29; Mark 10:45), affects the redemption of fallen mankind (cf. II Cor. 5:21).

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:1

¹But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully in regard to the things under the ban, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, took some of the things under the ban, therefore the anger of the LORD burned against the sons of Israel.

7:1 “the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully” The VERB “acted unfaithfully” (BDB 591, KB 612, *Qal IMPERFECT*) means “to act under cover” or “trust-breaking.” Although this was only done by one soldier it was seen as an unfaithful act on behalf of all the people. This illustrates the Hebrew concept of corporality. As Adam sinned, all mankind sinned; as one animal dies, humans are forgiven; as Jesus gave Himself to die, all mankind is potentially saved (cf. Isaiah 53; Rom. 5:17-19). The one affects the whole, either negatively or positively!

In the Hebrew text the NOUN form of the VERB “acted unfaithfully” is repeated, which intensifies the scandal of the act of rebellion.

▣ **“under the ban”** This is the term *herem* (BDB 356). It meant “something dedicated to God” and, therefore, it became too holy for human use.

▣ **“the anger of the LORD burned against the sons of Israel”** The Bible that speaks of the tremendous love of God is the same Bible that speaks of the burning (BDB 354, KB 351, *Qal* IMPERFECT, e.g., Exod. 4:14; 22:24; 32:10; Num. 11:1,10; 12:9; 22:22; Deut. 6:15; 7:4; 11:17; 29:27; 31:17) anger of God. They are both anthropomorphic phrases (from Greek terms “man” and “form”). However, they both speak of the true nature of a personal, holy God.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:2-5

²Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-aven, east of Bethel, and said to them, "Go up and spy out the land." So the men went up and spied out Ai. ³They returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up; *only* about two or three thousand men need go up to Ai; do not make all the people toil up there, for they are few." ⁴So about three thousand men from the people went up there, but they fled from the men of Ai. ⁵The men of Ai struck down about thirty-six of their men, and pursued them from the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them down on the descent, so the hearts of the people melted and became as water.

7:2 “Ai” This seems to be a name to describe “a heap” or “ruin” (BDB 743). It always has the DEFINITE ARTICLE in Hebrew, which implies a previous destruction (possibly a former large fortress). Archeology is not sure whether Ai was settled during the time of Joshua’s conquest. However, (1) we are not sure of the date of the conquest and (2) archeology is a rather imprecise science and we cannot base interpretation solely on inconclusive evidence. Because of the use of the terms “Beth-aven” (BDB 110) and “Bethel” (BDB 110) in this verse, many have assumed that Ai is somehow connected with the city of Bethel for the following reasons:

1. the term “Beth-aven” is often used of Bethel in the Bible (cf. I Sam. 13:5; Hos. 4:15; 5:8;10:5; Amos 5:5)
2. the two sites are linked in this account (cf. 8:9,17)
3. although Bethel’s king is listed with the defeated kings in 12:16, the destruction and capture of Bethel is never mentioned
4. there seems to be some confusion in chapters 7-8 of Joshua sending two different groups of men for an ambush; one possible explanation for this is that they ambushed both Bethel and Ai at the same time.

The exact relationship between Bethel and Ai is uncertain. Some have said that it was a military camp or some type of outpost but we are simply not certain.

There are several commands given in vv. 2-3:

1. “go up,” v. 2, BDB 748, KB 828, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
2. “spy out,” v. 2, BDB 92, KB 1183, *Piel* IMPERATIVE
3. “go up,” v. 3, *Qal* JUSSIVE (negated)
4. “go up,” v. 3, *Qal* IMPERFECT, but in a JUSSIVE sense
5. “attack” (not in NASB), v. 3, BDB 645, KB 697, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense
6. “toil,” v. 3, BDB 388, KB 386, *Piel* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense

There are many “doublets” in OT narrative literature. The literary purpose of these is unknown to modern interpreters. We must be careful not to project current literary models onto ancient Near Eastern texts.

▣ **“Beth-aven, east of Bethel”** The term “Beth-aven” means “house of vanity” (cf. 18:12; I Sam. 13:5; 14:23). The term “vanity” was used in the sense of “nothingness” and was often used to describe idolatry. The term “Bethel” means “house of God” because it had holy and sacred associations with the life of Jacob in Genesis 28. Hosea seems to put the two names together (cf. 4:15; 5:8; 10:5).

7:3 “Do not let all the people go up. . .toil up there” The ADVERB “toil up” (BDB 1027) has very distinct topological associations. It is interesting in these two chapters how much eyewitness evidence from geography and topology is apparent in the account. From the place of encampment at Gilgal the land rose 3,400 feet in the space of sixteen miles to this small city of Ai.

▣ **“two or three thousand”** The Hebrew term “thousand” can mean (1) a literal thousand (cf. Gen. 20:16; Exod. 32:28); (2) a family unit (cf. Josh. 22:14; Jdgs. 6:15; I Sam. 23:23; Zech. 9:7); or (3) a military unit (cf. Exod. 18:21,25; Deut. 1:15; compare II Sam. 10:18 and I Chr. 19:18). See Special Topic at Josh. 3:17.

▣ **“they are few”** We learn from 8:25 that the total population of Ai was under 12,000. This makes Israel’s defeat all the more poignant.

7:5 “the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six of their men, and pursued them” At this point Joshua does not know that his first attempt to take even a small village after the victory at Jericho was met with defeat and failure.

Notice the VERBS used to describe Israel’s defeat.

1. “struck down,” BDB 645, KB 697, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT
2. “pursued,” BDB 922, KB 1191, *Qal* IMPERFECT
3. “struck down,” repeated
4. “the hearts of the people melted,” BDB 587, KB 606, *Niphal* IMPERFECT
5. “became as water,” BDB 224, KB 243, *Qal* IMPERFECT

The absence of YHWH’s blessing makes all the difference in effect and attitude!

▣ **“Shebarim”** This is a proper name in both the English and Latin translations. However, in Greek it means “to break,” while in Hebrew it seems to imply “a stone quarry” (BDB 991, cf. New Berkeley Version) or ravine. The exact location of it is uncertain, but this is another eyewitness account.

One wonders if the form of Achan’s death (stoning) is a play on Israel being chased to the stone quarry.

▣ **“so the hearts of the people melted”** This is the same metaphor used to describe the fear of the Canaanites (cf. 2:11; 5:1). Now, because of sin, it is experienced by God’s own people.

▣ **“and became as water”** It is possible that this is related to the idiom of Ezek. 7:17; 21:7, where it may refer to urinating on oneself in fear (NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 756).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:6-9

⁶Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until the evening, both he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. ⁷Joshua said, "Alas, O LORD God, why did You ever bring this people over the Jordan, only to deliver us into the hand of

the Amorites, to destroy us? If only we had been willing to dwell beyond the Jordan! ⁸O LORD, what can I say since Israel has turned their back before their enemies? ⁹For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it, and they will surround us and cut off our name from the earth. And what will You do for Your great name?"

7:6 “Then Joshua tore his clothes” In this text there are three typical signs of Hebrew mourning: (1) the tearing of the neckpiece of a person’s clothing (cf. Gen. 37:29,34; 44:13; Job 1:20; 2:12); (2) the putting on of dust on one’s head (cf. Job 2:12; Lam. 2:10; Ezek. 27:30); similar signs of mourning can be seen in the face of death in I Sam. 4:12; and II Sam. 1:2; and (3) prostration before God (cf. 7:10).

7:7-8 “and Joshua said” These verses reveal Joshua’s doubts. Some of these phrases imply (1) dramatic unbelief in the purpose and power of the covenant of God or (2) language he had heard Moses use in prayer during the wilderness wandering period.

▣	
NASB	“O LORD God”
NKJV, NRSV	“Lord God”
TEV	“Sovereign LORD”
NJB	“Lord Yahweh”

7:7 “O LORD God” This is *Adon* and YHWH. See Special Topic at Josh. 1:1.

▣ **“why did You ever bring”** There is an intensity in this phrase by the use of a *Hiphil* PERFECT and *Hiphil* INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE of the same VERB (BDB 716, KB 778).

7:9 “cut off our name from the earth” This is a Hebraic idiom of the death of all of a family line. No descendant remained alive!

▣ **“and what will Thou do for Thy great name”** This is the same approach that Moses took in praying to God. God’s character (as well as His plan for redemption) was involved in what happened to the people of Israel (cf. Josh. 5:9; Exod. 32:12; Deut. 9:28; Ezek. 36:22-38).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:10-15

¹⁰ So the LORD said to Joshua, "Rise up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face? ¹¹Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. And they have even taken some of the things under the ban and have both stolen and deceived. Moreover, they have also put *them* among their own things. ¹²Therefore the sons of Israel cannot stand before their enemies; they turn *their* backs before their enemies, for they have become accursed. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy the things under the ban from your midst. ¹³Rise up! Consecrate the people and say, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, for thus the LORD, the God of Israel, has said, There are things under the ban in your midst, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you have removed the things under the ban from your midst. ¹⁴In the morning then you shall come

near by your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the LORD takes *by lot* shall come near by families, and the family which the LORD takes shall come near by households, and the household which the LORD takes shall come near man by man. ¹⁵It shall be that the one who is taken with the things under the ban shall be burned with fire, he and all that belongs to him, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has committed a disgraceful thing in Israel.'"

7:10 “so the LORD said to Joshua, ‘Rise up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face’” This is very similar to God’s words to Moses (cf. Exod. 14:15-16) when he was confronted with the Egyptian army. There is a time to pray, but there is also a time to act (“rise up,” BDB 877, KB 1086, *Qal* IMPERATIVE). Joshua had been told what to do and now he should act on it. At this point it is uncertain whether Joshua knew that sin was the problem.

7:11 “Israel has sinned” God revealed to Joshua that both theft and deceit had caused the whole nation to suffer. This is a balance between the Old Testament emphasis on individual responsibility (cf. Ezek. 18:32; Deut. 24:16) and corporate responsibility (cf. Num. 25 and Deut. 5:9).

Notice all the VERBS used to describe Israel’s sin.

1. “sinned,” v. 11, BDB 306, KB 305, *Qal* PERFECT
2. “transgressed,” v. 11, BDB 716, KB 778, *Qal* PERFECT
3. “taken some of the things,” v. 11, BDB 542, KB 534, *Qal* PERFECT
4. “stolen,” v. 11, BDB 170, KB 198, *Qal* PERFECT
5. “deceived,” v. 11, BDB 471, KB 469, *Piel* PERFECT

The results of this intentional rebellion against the clearly stated will of YHWH.

1. “can not stand,” v. 12, BDB 877, KB 1086, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT (negated)
2. “turn *their* backs before their enemies,” v. 12, BDB 815, KB 937, intensified by the use of the *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE and a *QAL* IMPERFECT of the same VERB
3. “become accursed,” v. 12, BDB 224, KB 243, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT
4. “I will not be with you anymore,” v. 12, BDB 414, KB 418, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT and BDB 224, KB 243, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT

7:13 What must Israel do?

1. “rise up” (i.e., act), BDB 877, KB 1086, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
2. “consecrate the people,” BDB 872, KB 1073, *Piel* IMPERATIVE
3. “consecrate yourselves,” BDB 872, KB 1073, *Hithpael* IMPERATIVE, cf. Gen. 35:2; Exod. 19:10,14; I Sam. 16:5
4. “remove the things under the ban from your midst,” BDB 693, KB 747, *Hiphil* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT

Notice there was a procedure by which Israel could be restored. YHWH provided a way back!

7:14 “which the LORD takes *by lot*” The phrase “by lot” is not found in the Hebrew text, but it implies the use of the Urim and Thummin (cf. Num. 27:21). This method of knowing God’s will is also found in I Sam. 10:20 and will be the means by which the Promised Land will be divided among the tribes (cf. 18:6,11; 19:1).

7:15 “shall be burned with fire, and all that belongs to him” Notice that there are two methods of judgment in this account of Achan. First of all he will be stoned and then all that he has will be burned (cf. v. 25). Achan’s family and animals were destroyed with him. This is another example of Hebrew corporality.



NASB, NKJV “a disgraceful thing”
NRSV “an outrageous thing”
TEV “brought terrible shame”
NJB “an infamy”

This term (BDB 615) is used of several actions.

- A. related to sexual promiscuity
 1. Shechem’s violation of Jacob’s daughter, Dinah, Gen. 34:7
 2. extra-marital affairs, Deut. 22:21
 3. the rape of the Levite’s concubine, Jdgs. 19:23; 20:6
 4. Ammon’s rape of his half sister Tamar, II Sam. 13:12
 5. Israel’s adultery, Jer. 29:23
- B. related to people’s foolish actions and speech
 1. Nabal’s folly in rejecting David’s request for help, I Sam. 25:25
 2. those who speak foolishly, Isa. 9:17; 32:6
- C. Achan’s violation of YHWH’s words, Josh. 7:15

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:16-21

¹⁶So Joshua arose early in the morning and brought Israel near by tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken. ¹⁷He brought the family of Judah near, and he took the family of the Zerahites; and he brought the family of the Zerahites near man by man, and Zabdi was taken. ¹⁸He brought his household near man by man; and Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, was taken. ¹⁹Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I implore you, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me." ²⁰So Achan answered Joshua and said, "Truly, I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: ²¹when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I coveted them and took them; and behold, they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it."

7:19 “My son, I implore you, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him” It is interesting that Achan did not voluntarily confess his sin until it was obviously pointed out by God (lot) that he was the one in the wrong. This was a Hebrew idiom of telling the truth. The rabbis say that because of the phrase in v. 25, “the LORD will trouble you this day,” Achan did not lose his eternity with God, but was condemned to death for his acts.

Notice the commands in Joshua’s confrontation with Achan.

1. “I implore you, give glory to the LORD” (this idiom has only one IMPERATIVE), BDB 962, KB 1321, *Qal* IMPERATIVE (idiom for prayer)
2. “give praise to Him,” BDB 678, KB 733, *Qal* IMPERATIVE

3. “tell me now,” BDB 616, KB 665, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE
4. “do not hide it from me,” BDB 470, KB 469, *Piel* IMPERATIVE used as a JUSSIVE

7:21 Achan took several things out of Jericho (he was militarily involved in the attack) which had been totally dedicated to God: (1) a beautiful, multi-patterned or colored Babylonian garment (BDB 12); (2) 200 shekels of silver (BDB 494); and (3) a bar of gold (BDB 262).

In the ancient world wealth was accumulated by (1) expensive clothing; (2) weights of precious metal; and (3) food stuffs.

▣ “shekel” See Special Topic below.

SPECIAL TOPIC: ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN WEIGHTS AND VOLUMES (METROLOGY)

The weights and measurements used in commerce were crucial in ancient agricultural economy. The Bible urges the Jews to be fair in their dealings with one another (cf. Lev. 19:35-36; Deut. 25:13-16; Prov. 11:1; 16:11; 20:1). The real problem was not only honesty, but the non-standardized terms and systems used in Palestine. It seems that there were two sets of weights: a “light” and a “heavy” of each amount (see *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 4, p. 831). Also the decimal system (base of 10) of Egypt had been combined with the sexagesimal (base of 6) of Mesopotamia.

Many of the “sizes” and “amounts” used were based on human body parts, animal loads, and farmer’s containers, none of which were standardized. Therefore, the charts are only estimations and are tentative. The easiest way to show weights and measures is on a relational chart.

I. Volume terms used most often

A. Dry measures

1. Homer (BDB 330, possibly a “donkey-load,” BDB 331), Lev. 27:16; Hosea 3:2
2. Letekh (or letech, BDB 547), cf. Hosea 3:2
3. Ephah (BDB 35), Exod. 16:36; Lev. 19:36; Ezek. 45:10-11,13,24
4. Se’ah (BDB 684, Gen. 18:6; I Sam. 25:18; I Kgs. 18:32
5. Omer (BDB 771 II, possibly “a sheaf: [a row of fallen grain], BDB 771 I), Exod. 16:16,22,36; Lev. 23:10-15
6. ‘Issaron (BDB 798, “a tenth part”), Exod. 29:40; Lev. 14:21
7. Qav (or Kab, BDB 866), cf. II Kgs. 6:25

B. Liquid Measures

1. Kor (BDB 499), e.g., I Kgs. 5:2,25; Ezek. 45:14
2. Bath (BDB 330, equal to a homer), e.g., II Chr. 2:10; Ezek. 45:10-11,14
3. Hin (BDB 228), e.g., Exod. 29:40; Lev. 19:36; Ezek. 45:24
4. Log (BDB 528), cf. Lev. 14:10,12,15,21,24

C. Chart (taken from Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, vol. 1, p. 201 and *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 16, p. 379).

homer (dry) = kor (liquid)	1					
ephah (dry) = bath (liquid)	10	1				
se'ah (dry)	30	3	1			
hin (liquid)	60	6	2	1		
omer/issaron (dry)	100	10	-	-	1	
qav/kab (dry)	180	18	6	3	-	1
log (liquid)	720	72	24	12	-	41

II. Weight terms used most often

A. The three most common weights are the talent, the shekel, and the gerah.

1. The largest weight in the OT is the talent. From Exod. 38:25-26 we learn that one talent equals 3,000 shekels (i.e., "Round weight," BDB 503).
2. The term shekel (BDB 1053, "weight") is used so often that it is assumed, but not stated in the text. There are several values of shekel mentioned in the OT.
 - a. "commercial standard" (NASB of Gen. 23:16)
 - b. "the shekel of the sanctuary" (NASB of Exod. 30:13)
 - c. "by the king's weight" (NASB of II Sam. 14:26), also called "royal weight" in the Elephantine papyri.
3. The gerah (BDB 176 II) is valued at 20 per shekel (cf. Exod. 30:13). These ratios vary from Mesopotamia to Egypt. Israel followed the evaluation most common in Canaan (Ugarit)
4. The mina (BDB 584) is valued at either 50 or 60 shekels. This term is found mostly in later OT books (i.e., Ezek. 45:12; Ezra 2:69; Neh. 7:70-71). Ezekiel used the 60 to 1 ratio, while Canaan used the 50 to 1 ratio.
5. The beka (BDB 132, "half a shekel," cf. Gen. 24:22) is used only twice in the OT (cf. Gen. 24:22; Exod. 38:26) and is valued at one-half a shekel. Its name means "to divide."

B. Chart

1. Based on Exodus

talent	1		
mina	60	1	
shekel	3,000	50	1
beka	6,000*	100	1

*(gerah, also 6,000 from Exod. 30:13; Lev. 27:25; Num. 3:47; 18:16; Ezek. 45:12)

2. Based on Ezekiel

talent	1		
mina	60	1	
shekel	3,600	60	1

beka	7,200	120	2	1	
gerah	72,000	1,200	20	10	1

▣ “I . . .” Achan’s sin developed.

1. “saw,” BDB 906, KB 1157, *Qal* IMPERFECT
2. “coveted,” BDB 326, KB 325, *Qal* IMPERFECT
3. “took,” BDB 542, KB 534, *Qal* IMPERFECT
4. “concealed,” BDB 380, KB 377, *Qal* PASSIVE PARTICIPLE

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:22-26

²²So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and behold, it was concealed in his tent with the silver underneath it. ²³They took them from inside the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the sons of Israel, and they poured them out before the LORD. ²⁴Then Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the mantle, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent and all that belonged to him; and they brought them up to the valley of Achor. ²⁵Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day." And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. ²⁶They raised over him a great heap of stones that stands to this day, and the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the valley of Achor to this day.

7:22 “it was concealed in his tent” It is possible, because he hid it among his family’s possessions, that both his wife and children knew of his theft. They did not tell anyone. They will be killed also!

7:23

NASB “poured them out before the LORD”

NKJV, TEV,

NJB “laid them out before the LORD”

NRSV “spread them out before the LORD”

This is literally the term “poured,” but it can mean “cast” or “to set before” (BDB 427, KB 428, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT).

7:25 “and all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones . . . And they raised over him a great heap of stones that stands to this day” Basically there are two Hebrew words for “stone.” The first (BDB 920, KB 1187, *Qal* IMPERFECT) is used in the beginning of v. 25 and refers to the use of stones for capital punishment. The second term (BDB 6) is used at the end of v. 25 and means to raise a pile of stones over a dead person and his possessions as a memorial of the crime and its judgment. Obviously Achan was killed, and then he and his possessions were burned (because they were under the ban), and on top of them a great heap of stones was raised.

▣ **“burned them with fire”** The VERB (BDB 976, KB 1358, *Qal* IMPERFECT) was used of destroying the golden calf of Exod. 32:20 (cf. Deut. 9:21). It could be used

1. positively (ashes of the Red Heifer), Num. 19:5 and means of sacrifice, Lev. 23:25
2. negatively (*Asherim*), Deut. 7:5; 12:3

For “fire,” see Special Topic below.

SPECIAL TOPIC: FIRE

Fire has both positive and negative connotations in Scripture.

A. Positive

1. warmth (cf. Isa. 44:15; John 18:18)
2. light (cf. Isa. 50:11; Matt. 25:1-13)
3. cooking purification (cf. Exod. 12:8; Isa. 44:15-16; John 21:9)
4. purifies (cf. Num. 31:22-23; Prov. 17:3; Isa. 1:25; 6:6-8; Jer. 6:29; Mal. 3:2-3)
5. holiness (cf. Gen. 15:17; Exod. 3:2; 19:18; Ezek. 1:27; Heb. 12:29)
6. God’s leadership (cf. Exod. 12:21; Num. 14:14; I Kgs. 18:24)
7. God’s empowering (cf. Acts 2:3)

B. Negative

1. burning (cf. Josh. 6:24; 8:8; 11:11; Matt. 22:7)
2. destroying (cf. Gen. 19:24; Lev. 10:1-2)
3. anger (cf. Num. 21:28; Isa. 10:16; Zech. 12:6)
4. punishment (cf. Gen. 38:24; Lev. 20:14; 21:9; Josh. 7:15)
5. false eschatological sign (cf. Rev. 13:13)

God’s anger against sin is expressed in fire metaphors

- A. His anger burns (cf. Hos. 8:5; Zeph. 3:8)
- B. He pours out fire (cf. Nah. 1:6)
- C. There will be eternal fire (cf. Jer. 15:14; 17:4)
- D. There is eschatological judgment (cf. Matt. 3:10; 13:40; John 15:6; II Thess. 1:7; II Pet. 3:7-10; Rev. 8:7; 13:13; 16:8)

Like so many metaphors in the Bible (i.e., leaven, lion) fire can be a blessing or a curse, depending on the context.

▣ **“great heap of stones”** This is a burial site (BDB 164 CONSTRUCT 6, cf. 8:29; II Sam. 18:17).

7:26 “called the Valley of Achor” This means “the valley of trouble” (BDB 770 CONSTRUCT 747) and refers to the fact that one man’s sin brought failure, reproach, and condemnation to the entire nation. However, this same valley is mentioned in Isa. 65:10 and Hos. 2:15 as a source of hope.

▣ **“to this day”** This is the mark of an editor; the time-frame of the phrase is uncertain (cf. 6:25; 8:28,29; 9:27; 13:13; 14:14; 15:63; 16:10; 22:3,17; 23:8,9). See note at 15:63.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why did the sin of one man affect the whole nation?
2. How are Bethel and Ai related?
3. List the mourning rites of the Hebrew people.
4. How do verses 7 and 9 show that Joshua is simply a mere human being who also has doubts and sins?
5. What does “herem” or “under the ban” mean?
6. Was Achan stoned, burned, or what (cf. vv. 25-26)?
7. What exactly did Achan take from the city of Jericho?

JOSHUA 8

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Capture of Ai 8:1-2	The Fall of Ai 8:1-2	Victory at Ai 8:1-2	The Capture and Destruction of Ai 8:1-2	The Command Given To Joshua 8:1-2
8:3-9	8:3-8 8:9-13	8:3-9	8:3-9	Joshua's Stratagem 8:3-8 8:9-13
8:10-17	8:14-17	8:10-17	8:10-17	The Capture of Ai 8:14-17
8:18-23	8:18-23	8:18-23	8:18-23	8:18-19 8:20-25
Ai Destroyed 8:24-29	8:24-29	8:24-29	8:24-29	The Curse of Destruction; the Destruction of the Town 8:26-29
Joshua Builds an Altar 8:30-35	Joshua Renews the Covenant 8:30-35	The Altar on Mount Ebal 8:30-35	The Law is Read at Mount Ebal 8:30-35	The Altar of Undressed Stones 8:30-31 The Reading of the Law 8:32-35

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. xvi). Compare your subject divisions with the five modern translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph

2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:1-2

¹Now the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear or be dismayed. Take all the people of war with you and arise, go up to up to Ai; see, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land. ²You shall go to Ai and its king just as you did to Jericho and its king; you shall take only its spoil and its cattle as plunder for yourselves. Set an ambush for the city behind it."

8:1 YHWH gives Joshua a series of commands and promises based on the restored holiness of Israel:

1. "Do not fear," BDB 431, KB 432, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense.
2. "Do not be dismayed," BDB 369, KB 365, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense
3. "Take all the people," BDB 542, KB 534, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
4. "Arise," BDB 877, KB 1086, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
5. "Go up to Ai," BDB 748, KB 828, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
6. "See, I have given," BDB 906, KB 1157, *Qal* IMPERATIVE followed by BDB 678, KB 733, *Qal* PERFECT

YHWH renews His encouragement and assurances from 1:9.

▣ **"Take all the people of war with you"** The phrase "all the people of war" (cf. v. 3; 10:7; 11:7,18,19,20), can refer to less than the total number. Compare 1:14-15 with 3:12-13; for the same type of example, also see 8:16 as compared to 8:19.

8:2 "you shall take only its spoils and its cattle as plunder for yourselves" Jericho was totally dedicated to God (under the ban), but Ai was only partially under the ban (humans must die, but other things of value can go to the soldiers and their families, cf. v. 27).

▣ **"set an ambush for the city behind it"** YHWH gives the battle strategy (BDB 962, KB 1321, *Qal* IMPERATIVE). There seems to be some confusion as to how to relate the two ambushes mentioned in vv. 3 and 12. There has been much speculation, but no consensus. To me it seems that possibly both cities, Ai and Bethel, were defeated and burned at the same time (cf. v. 17).

▣ **"spoil. . .plunder"** These two terms relate to the same thing.

1. spoil (BDB 1021) can mean "prey," "spoil," "booty," or "plunder." It refers to things (sometimes people) taken in battle, then divided among the soldiers (cf. Gen. 49:27; Jdgs. 5:30) and other covenant partners (cf. Num. 31:26-54; I Sam. 30:24).
2. plunder (BDB 102, KB 117, *Qal* IMPERFECT). This term is basically synonymous with spoil. This was the wages of the soldiers (cf. Ezek. 29:19).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:3-9

³So Joshua rose with all the people of war to go up to Ai; and Joshua chose 30, 000 men, valiant warriors, and sent them out at night. ⁴He commanded them, saying, "See, you are going to ambush the city from behind it. Do not go very far from the city, but all of you be ready. ⁵Then I and all the people who are with me will approach the city. And when they come out to meet us as at the first, we will flee before them. ⁶They will come out after us until we have drawn them away from the city, for they will say, 'They are fleeing before us as at the first.' So we will flee before them. ⁷And you shall rise from *your* ambush and take possession of the city, for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand. ⁸Then it will be when you have seized the city, that you shall set the city on fire. You shall do *it* according to the word of the LORD. See, I have commanded you." ⁹So Joshua sent them away, and they went to the place of ambush and remained between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai; but Joshua spent that night among the people.

8:3 “30,000” This was only the part of the army that hid in ambush. For another group see 8:12. This number implies that the army was about 40,000 in total. Obviously Joshua approached the city with a small number of troops. The other option has to do with the meaning of “thousand.” See the Special Topic at 3:17.



NASB “valiant warriors”

NKJV “mighty men of valor”

NRSV “warriors”

TEV “best troops”

NJB “bravest”

This phrase is a construct relationship between “mighty” (BDB 150) and “strength” (BDB 298). It is often used of military persons (cf. 1:14; 6:2; 8:3; 10:7; Jdgs. 6:12; 11:1; I Sam. 9:1; 16:18; I Kgs. 11:28; II Kgs. 5:1; 15:20; 24:14,16). It can be used of an army (cf. Exod. 14:4,9,17,28; 15:4; I Sam. 17:20; II Sam. 8:9; II Kgs. 6:4,15; 25:1,5,10). This was an elite fighting force!

8:4 Joshua repeats the instructions he received from YHWH.

1. “See,” BDB 906, KB 1157, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, repeated in v. 8
2. “Do not go very far from the city,” BDB 934, KB 1221, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense

8:8 “you shall set the city on fire” The VERB (BDB 428, KB 429, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) is an aspect of holy war (cf. v. 19; Jdgs. 9:49), but usually another VERB (BDB 976, KB 1358) is used (cf. Num. 31:10; Josh. 6:24; 11:11; Jdgs. 18:27; I Sam. 30:1,3) or BDB 1018, KB 1511 (cf. Jdgs. 1:8; 20:48).

Fire is both a judgment and a way of cleansing. See Special Topic at Josh. 7:25.

▣ **“according to the word of the LORD”** This is the key theological phrase in the OT. Here it refers to Deut. 20:16-18. However, the concept is wider (cf. Isa. 45:23; 55:11). It is the human side of covenant!

8:9 “So Joshua spent the night among the people” This phrase is possibly to reassure the people of God’s presence and power for the upcoming battle. A very similar Hebrew phrase is repeated in v. 13 with the change of one additional Hebrew consonant. It is obvious that there is some confusion in this chapter about how Ai was defeated.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:10-17

¹⁰Now Joshua rose early in the morning and mustered the people, and he went up with the elders of Israel before the people to Ai. ¹¹Then all the people of war who *were* with him went up and drew near and arrived in front of the city, and camped on the north side of Ai. Now *there was* a valley between him and Ai. ¹²And he took about 5, 000 men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city. ¹³So they stationed the people, all the army that was on the north side of the city, and its rear guard on the west side of the city, and Joshua spent that night in the midst of the valley. ¹⁴It came about when the king of Ai saw *it*, that the men of the city hurried and rose up early and went out to meet Israel in battle, he and all his people at the appointed place before the desert plain. But he did not know that *there was* an ambush against him behind the city. ¹⁵Joshua and all Israel pretended to be beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness. ¹⁶And all the people who were in the city were called together to pursue them, and they pursued Joshua and were drawn away from the city. ¹⁷So not a man was left in Ai or Bethel who had not gone out after Israel, and they left the city unguarded and pursued Israel.

8:10-17 This paragraph gives the details of the battle for both Ai and Bethel.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:18-23

¹⁸Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Stretch out the javelin that is in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand." So Joshua stretched out the javelin that was in his hand toward the city. ¹⁹The *men in ambush* rose quickly from their place, and when he had stretched out his hand, they ran and entered the city and captured it, and they quickly set the city on fire. ²⁰When the men of Ai turned back and looked, behold, the smoke of the city ascended to the sky, and they had no place to flee this way or that, for the people who had been fleeing to the wilderness turned against the pursuers. ²¹When Joshua and all Israel saw that the *men in ambush* had captured the city and that the smoke of the city ascended, they turned back and slew the men of Ai. ²²The others came out from the city to encounter them, so that they were *trapped* in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side; and they slew them until no one was left of those who survived or escaped. ²³But they took alive the king of Ai and brought him to Joshua.

8:18 “Stretch out the javelin that is in your hand toward Ai” Here again we see the similarity between God’s dealing with Moses in the use of the shepherd’s staff and His dealing with Joshua in the use of the javelin. Both the staff (BDB 641, cf. Exod. 4:20; 17:9; Num. 20:8) and javelin (BDB 475) show the power is of God and not in human leaders.

The VERB (BDB 639, KB 692, *Qal* IMPERATIVE) is used several times of YHWH directing Moses (cf. Exod. 7:19; 8:5,6; 9:22; 10:12; 17:16,21; Isa. 10:26).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:24-29

²⁴Now when Israel had finished killing all the inhabitants of Ai in the field in the wilderness where they pursued them, and all of them were fallen by the edge of the sword until they were destroyed, then all Israel returned to Ai and struck it with the edge of the sword. ²⁵All who fell that day, both men and women, were 12,000--all the people of Ai. ²⁶For Joshua did not withdraw his hand with which he stretched out the javelin until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. ²⁷Israel took only the cattle and the spoil of that city as plunder for themselves, according to the word of the LORD which He had commanded Joshua. ²⁸So Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, a desolation until this day. ²⁹He hanged the king of Ai on a tree until evening; and at sunset Joshua gave command and they took his body down from the tree and threw it at the entrance of the city gate, and raised over it a great heap of stones *that stands to this day*.

8:24 Notice the variety of terms used to describe the defeat of the inhabitants of Ai.

1. "Israel had finished killing"
 - a. finish, BDB 477, KB 476, *Piel* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT
 - b. kill, BDB 246, KB 255, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT
2. "All of them were fallen by the edge of the sword"
 - a. fallen, BDB 656, KB 709, *Qal* IMPERFECT
 - b. edge of sword, BDB 804 CONSTRUCT 352 (twice)
3. "Until they were all destroyed"
 - a. PREPOSITION, BDB 723
 - b. finished, BDB 1070, KB 1752, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT
4. "Struck," BDB 645, KB 697, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT

The first three of these describe the slaughter of their men of war; number 4 describes the death of the rest of the inhabitants of Ai.

8:26 This reflects the curse of Deut. 21:23. The king was killed by impaling. As Israel raised a memorial heap of stones over Achan, so too, the king of Ai.

8:28 "forever" See Special Topic at Josh. 4:7.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:30-35

³⁰Then Joshua built an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, in Mount Ebal, ³¹just as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the sons of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of uncut stones on which no man had wielded an iron *tool*; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. ³²He wrote there on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written, in the presence of the sons of Israel. ³³All Israel with their elders and officers and their judges were standing on both sides of the ark before the Levitical priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, the stranger as well as the native. Half of them *stood* in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, just as Moses the servant of the LORD had given command at first to bless the people of Israel. ³⁴Then afterward he read all the words

of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law. ³⁵There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel with the women and the little ones and the strangers who were living among them.

8:30 “Mount Ebal” This was one of the two hills on each side of the city of Shechem. This was the site of the covenant renewal ceremony dictated by Moses. The Levitical singers climbed each hill and chanted the cursings and blessings antiphonally (cf. Deuteronomy 27-28). Mounts Ebal and Gerizim became known as the mountains of cursing and blessing.

One wonders how Joshua could move so fast through enemy territory. The events of 8:30-35 might fit better historically at chapter 24. These kinds of historical questions cannot be answered. These ancient Hebrew texts do not conform to modern historiography. Chronology is secondary to theology! I surely affirm the historicity and inspiration of the OT without fully comprehending how it is structured. See Introductory articles.

8:31 “as it is written in the book of the law of Moses” This refers to Exod. 20:20,24-26 and Deut. 27:5-7.

The revelation of YHWH to and through Moses goes by several descriptions.

1. “the law which Moses My servant commanded you,” 1:7; 22:5
2. “this book of the law,” 1:8
3. “the book of the law of Moses,” 8:31; 23:6
4. “the words of the law,” 8:34
5. “the book of the law of God,” 24:26

▣ **“an altar of uncut stones”** The Canaanite altars were made of cut stones, but YHWH’s altars were always made of uncut stones (cf. Exod. 20:25; Deut. 27:5,6), therefore, they were immediately identifiable.

▣ **“they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD and sacrificed peace offerings”** See Special Topic below.

SPECIAL TOPIC: SACRIFICES IN MESOPOTAMIA AND ISRAEL AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

I. Ritual laws in Mesopotamia

- A. Sacrifice was primarily a meal offered to a god. The altar was the table of the god where the meal was placed. Beside the altar was the incense brazier which was to attract the god’s attention. There was no ritual implication in the blood. The sword bearer cut the throat of the animal. The food was shared among the gods, the priest-king and the attendants. The offerer received nothing.
- B. There was no expiatory sacrifice.
- C. Sickness or pain was punishment from the gods. An animal was brought and destroyed; this acted as a substitute for the offerer.
- D. Israel’s ritual was different and distinct. It seems to have originated in a person giving back to God part of his labor for necessary food (cf. Gen. 4:1-4; 8:20-22).

- II. Ritual laws in Canaan (similar to Israel's)
 - A. Sources
 - 1. Biblical accounts
 - 2. Phoenician literature
 - 3. *Ras Shamra Tablets* from Ugarit concerning Canaanite deities and mythology from about 1400 B.C.
 - B. Israel's and Canaan's sacrifices are very much alike. However, there is no emphasis placed on the blood of the victim in Canaan's sacrifices.
- III. Ritual Laws in Egypt
 - A. Sacrifices were offered, but not emphasized
 - B. The sacrifice was not important, but the attitude of the sacrificer was
 - C. Sacrifices were made to stop the wrath of the gods
 - D. The offerer hoped for deliverance or forgiveness
- IV. Israel's Sacrificial System - Israel's sacrifices were closer to Canaan's although not necessarily related to them at all.
 - A. Descriptive Phrases
 - 1. Sacrifice was a spontaneous expression of mankind's need for God.
 - 2. The OT laws which regulate sacrifice cannot be said to initiate sacrifice (cf. Gen. 7:8; 8:20).
 - 3. Sacrifice was an offering (animal or grain).
 - 4. It must be an offering that was wholly or partially destroyed upon an altar in homage to God.
 - 5. The altar was the place of sacrifice and symbolized the Divine presence.
 - 6. Sacrifice was an act of external worship (a prayer which was acted out).
 - 7. The definition of sacrifice is "acted prayers" or "ritualized prayers." The significance of ritual and our cultural bias against it is revealed in Gordon J. Wenham's *Tyndale Commentary Series*, "Numbers," pp. 25-39. Leviticus and Numbers both contain large amounts of this type of material, which shows its importance to Moses and Israel.
 - B. Sacrifice involved
 - 1. Gifts to God
 - a. involve acknowledgment that all of the earth is the Lord's
 - b. all that a person has, he owes to God
 - c. therefore, it is right that people bring tribute to God
 - d. it was a special kind of tribute or gift. It was something that the man needed to sustain his own existence. It was more than just giving something; it was something he needed. It was giving a part of himself to God.
 - e. by destroying the gift it cannot be reclaimed
 - f. a burnt offering becomes invisible and goes up to God's realm
 - g. earlier altars were erected in places where God appeared. The altar came to be looked upon as a holy place, therefore, the offering was brought there.

2. Expressing consecration of one's entire life to God
 - a. The burnt offering was one of three voluntary sacrifices.
 - b. The entire animal was burnt to express to God deep-felt homage.
 - c. This was a very expressive gift to God.
3. Fellowship with God
 - a. There is a communion aspect of sacrifice.
 - b. An example would be the peace offering which symbolized God and man in fellowship.
 - c. A sacrifice was made to obtain or regain this fellowship.
4. Expiation of sin
 - a. When man sinned, he had to ask God to restore the relationship (covenant) which man had broken.
 - b. There was no communal meal with the sin offering because of the broken relationship.
 - c. The significance of blood
 - (1) placed on the altar for man
 - (2) placed on the veil for the priest
 - (3) placed on the mercy seat for the High Priest and the nation (Lev. 16)
 - d. There were two types of sin offerings. The second is called the guilt offering or trespass offering. In it the offender was to restore to his fellow Israelite that which was taken or damaged, along with the animal sacrifice.
 - e. There was no sacrifice for premeditated or intentional sin, 4:1, 22, 27; 5:15-18; 22:14

8:32 This probably refers to the Ten Commandments (cf. Exod. 20; Deut. 5). Stones were covered with plaster and written on (cf. Deut. 27:4).

8:33 Notice the list of leaders: elders, officers, judges, priests.

▣ **“the stranger”** This could refer to (1) believing Egyptians who left Egypt with the Jews in the exodus; (2) people who had earlier joined Israel, like Caleb or Rahab; or (3) others who joined during the wilderness wandering period. The book of Deuteronomy is very conscious of these believing aliens within Israel.

8:34 “all the words of the law” This could refer to the five books of Moses (v. 35) or the summary book of Deuteronomy.

8:35 Every one heard the words of the covenant renewal service, even the women and children who were usually not included with the men in worship settings.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why is chapter 8 so confusing, with two different ambushes (cf. v.3 and v.12)?
2. How are verses 30-35 related to the book of Deuteronomy and what is the significance of these verses?

JOSHUA 9

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Stratagem of Gibeon	The Treaty with the Gibeonites	The Stratagem of the Gibbonites	The Gibeonites Deceive Joshua	A Coalition Against Israel
9:1-2	9:1-2	9:1-2	9:1-2	9:1-2 The Ruse of the Gibeonites
9:3-15	9:3-15	9:3-15	9:3-6 9:7 9:8a 9:8b 9:9-13 9:14-15	9:3-5 9:6-13 9:14-15
9:16-21	9:16-21	9:16-21	9:16-21	9:16-18 The Gibeonites' Place in the Community 9:19-27
Peace Between Peoples				
9:22-27	9:22-27	9:22-27	9:22-23 9:24-27	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. xvi). Compare your subject divisions with the five modern translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:1-2

¹Now it came about when all the kings who were beyond the Jordan, in the hill country and in the lowland and on all the coast of the Great Sea toward Lebanon, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, heard of it, ²that they gathered themselves together with one accord to fight with Joshua and with Israel.

9:1 “Now it came about when all the kings” Verses 1 and 2 form a general introduction to this entire section of Joshua 9-12. The phrase “all the kings” seems to imply that the majority of the Canaanites were organized into city states, much like ancient Greece. However, the fact that Gibeon is identified with several other cities (cf. 9:17) implies that it was a confederation, not a single city state.

This united Canaanite army never came together to fight Israel.

▣ **“beyond the Jordan”** This phrase is used several times in the book of Joshua in two different senses: (1) sometimes it refers to the east bank of the Jordan (cf. 1:14; 2:10; 9:10; 14:3) and (2) sometimes it is used of the west bank (cf. 5:1; 9:1; 12:7; 22:7). It is possible that the seeming discrepancy is due to the author/editor/ compiler being with the group of Israelites who were on the plains of Moab but later moved into Canaan.

▣ **“in the hill country”** There seems to be three distinct geographical and topological sections of the Promised Land mentioned in verse 1: (1) the southern hill country (BDB 249); (2) the low, rolling hills which are often called the *shephelah* (BDB 1050); and (3) the coastal plains (BDB 342). Numbers 2 and 3 are often seen as one.

▣ **“the Hittite”** There are three groups of Hittites (BDB 366) mentioned in the Bible: (1) we find one group of them early in the book of Genesis, which seems to be in the area of Mesopotamia; (2) later on we find another group in the Promised Land; and (3) there was a large developed civilization of Hittites (*Anatolia*) in central Turkey. See Special Topic: Pre-Israelite Inhabitants of Palestine at Josh. 3:10.

▣ **“Amorite”** The term “Amorite” seems to have the implication of “highlander” (BDB 57). It is sometimes used as a collective term for all of the tribes of Canaan (cf. Gen. 15:16). See Special Topic at Josh. 3:10.

▣ **“the Canaanite”** The term seems to be used in the sense of “lowlander” (BDB 489). It is also used to denote the collective tribes of Canaan. The geographical name for the Promised Land was “Canaan,” derived from this collective use. See Special Topic at Josh. 3:10.

▣ **“Jebusite”** Jebusites (BDB 101) are the ancient inhabitants of the city of Jebus which was called Salem in Gen. 14:8, and later, Jerusalem (cf. Jdgs. 19:10). Sometimes these native tribal listings of Canaan have one, three, seven, or ten groups. We see another list of these tribes in 3:10, but there the Gergashites are omitted. See Special Topic at Josh. 3:10.

9:2 “that they gathered themselves together with one accord to fight with Joshua and with Israel”

There are two VERBS in this phrase.

1. “gathered together,” BDB 867, KB 1062, *Hithpael* IMPERFECT, cf. Jdgs. 9:47; I Sam. 7:7; 8:4; 22:2

2. “to fight,” BDB 535, KB 526, *Niphal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT, cf. Deut. 20:4; II Kgs. 13:12; 14:15; II Chr. 11:1; 17:10; 27:5; Dan. 10:20; 11:11

Because these city states had heard what Joshua had done to the Amorite kings of the eastern side of Jordan they decided to attempt a coalition, at least in the south, to thwart Israel’s invasion.

The phrase translated “with one accord” is literally, “with one mouth.” Mouth (BDB 804) is used idiomatically in several ways:

1. “ask his mouth,” meaning “to ask personally” (cf. Gen. 24:57)
2. “mouth of the sword,” meaning “the cutting edge of a sword” (cf. Gen. 34:26)
3. “mouth to mouth,” meaning “face to face” (cf. Num. 12:8; II Kgs. 10:21; 21:16; Jer. 32:4; 34:3)

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:3-15

³When the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, ⁴they also acted craftily and set out as envoys, and took worn-out sacks on their donkeys, and wineskins worn-out and torn and mended, ⁵and worn-out and patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry *and* had become crumbled. ⁶They went to Joshua to the camp at Gilgal and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us." ⁷The men of Israel said to the Hivites, "Perhaps you are living within our land; how then shall we make a covenant with you?" ⁸But they said to Joshua, "We are your servants." Then Joshua said to them, "Who are you and where do you come from?" ⁹They said to him, "Your servants have come from a very far country because of the fame of the LORD your God; for we have heard the report of Him and all that He did in Egypt, ¹⁰and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon and to Og king of Bashan who was at Ashtaroth. ¹¹So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, 'Take provisions in your hand for the journey, and go to meet them and say to them, "We are your servants; now then, make a covenant with us.'" ¹²This our bread *was* warm *when* we took it for our provisions out of our houses on the day that we left to come to you; but now behold, it is dry and has become crumbled. ¹³These wineskins which we filled were new, and behold, they are torn; and these our clothes and our sandals are worn out because of the very long journey." ¹⁴So the men *of Israel* took some of their provisions, and did not ask for the counsel of the LORD. ¹⁵Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live; and the leaders of the congregation swore *an oath* to them.

9:3 “when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai” Gibeon was a well fortified, raised site about six miles north of Jerusalem. We learn from verse 17 that it was apparently in a league of cities. It later became a Levitical city (cf. 21:17) and was located in the tribal allocation of Benjamin (cf. 18:25). It was very significant because it was on the major road between Joppa and the Mediterranean. It later became a temporary home for the Ark of the Covenant (cf. I Chr. 16:39).

9:4

- NASB** “they also acted craftily”
NKJV “they worked craftily”
NRSV “they on their part acted with cunning”
TEV “they decided to deceive him”
NJB “they had recourse to a ruse”

This ADJECTIVE (BDB 115) is used in vv. 4 and 5 four times. The VERB (BDB 115) is used of the miraculous garments that did not wear out during the wilderness wandering period in Deut. 8:4; 29:5; Neh. 9:21.



- NASB** “and set out as envoys”
NKJV “and went and pretended to be ambassadors”
NRSV “they went and prepared provisions”
TEV “They went out and got some food”
NJB “They provided themselves with supplies”

The phrase “set out as envoys” appears only here in the OT (Masoretic Text). However, the Septuagint, the Peshitta, and the Vulgate (cf. REV, NJ, NAB, NRSV) have “they prepared provisions” (BDB 845, KB 1020, *Hithpael* PERFECT in v. 12). This translation variation may be due to similar Hebrew roots.



“and took worn-out sacks on their donkeys” These sacks (BDB 974) were used to carry provisions. They were usually woven from animal hair.

The ADJECTIVE “worn out” (BDB 115) is used three times.

1. sacks (BDB 974)
2. wineskins (BDB 609)
3. sandals (BDB 653)



“wineskins worn-out and torn and mended” Wineskins were usually made from the skin of an animal, with the hair shaved off, turned inside out and the neck became the place from which the liquid was poured. We still say the “neck” of a bottle. When wineskins are new, they are relatively elastic and can accommodate the expansion of fermenting wine. When the skins are old, they cannot expand and they will break. These wineskins were made to look like they had been in use for a long time (possibly patched).

9:5 “worn-out and patched sandals on their feet” We learn from ancient literature and archaeology that sandals were made of leather and palm leaves, or papyrus reeds. “Patched” (BDB 378, KB 375, *Pual* PARTICIPLE) is found only here in the OT. Its verbal form meant “spotted” or “variegated.”



“and all the bread of their provision was dry and had become crumbled” Literally the word “crumbled” (BDB 666, cf. NASB, NJB) means “dotted over” in Hebrew which implies mildew (cf. NKJV, NRSV, TEV). In the ancient world people baked bread every day and it was edible for several days.

9:6 “they went to Joshua. . .and said to him and to the men of Israel” It seems to be that in vv. 6-8 and 15 we see the three main types of authority among the people of God: (1) the central God-called leader, Joshua (cf. vv. 6,8,15); (2) the elders of Israel (cf. vv. 15,21); and (3) the entire congregation (cf. vv. 18,19). This same threefold type of polity structure can be seen in the New Testament: episcopal, presbyterian, and congregational (cf. Acts 15).



“to the camp at Gilgal” This could refer to

1. the initial camp site between the Jordan and Jericho, 4:19-20; 5:9-10
2. a city farther north closer to Shechem, Deut. 11:30; II Kgs. 2:1
3. a city in the allotment of Judah, 15:7

The texts that are uncertain are 9:6; 10:7,9.



“make a covenant with us” This VERB (BDB 503, KB 500, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, cf. v.11) literally meant “to cut off” or “cut down.” Here it is used in the sense of “cut a covenant” (BDB 136), which originally involved a sacrifice (e.g., Gen. 15:10,17-18; Jer. 34:18). See Special Topic below.

SPECIAL TOPIC: COVENANT

The OT term *berith*, covenant, is not easy to define. There is no matching VERB in Hebrew. All attempts to derive an etymological definition have proved unconvincing. However, the obvious centrality of the concept has forced scholars to examine the word usage to attempt to determine its functional meaning.

Covenant is the means by which the one true God deals with His human creation. The concept of covenant, treaty, or agreement is crucial in understanding the biblical revelation. The tension between God's sovereignty and human free-will is clearly seen in the concept of covenant. Some covenants are based exclusively on God's character and actions

1. creation itself (cf. Genesis 1-2)
2. the call of Abraham (cf. Genesis 12)
3. the covenant with Abraham (cf. Genesis 15)
4. the preservation of and promise to Noah (cf. Genesis 6-9)

However, the very nature of covenant demands a response

1. by faith Adam must obey God and not eat of the tree in the midst of Eden
2. by faith Abraham must leave his family, follow God, and believe in future descendants
3. by faith Noah must build a huge boat, far from water, and gather the animals
4. by faith Moses brought the Israelites out of Egypt and received specific guidelines for religious and social life with promises of blessings and cursings (cf. Deuteronomy 27-29)

This same tension involving God's relationship to humanity is addressed in the "new covenant." The tension can be clearly seen in comparing Ezek. 18 with Ezek. 36:27-37. Is the covenant based on God's gracious actions or mandated human response? This is the burning issue of the Old Covenant and the New. The goals of both are the same: (1) the restoration of fellowship lost in Genesis 3 and (2) the establishment of a righteous people who reflect God's character.

The new covenant of Jer. 31:31-34 solves the tension by removing human performance as the means of attaining acceptance. God's law becomes an internal desire instead of an external performance. The goal of a godly, righteous people remains the same, but the methodology changes. Fallen mankind proved themselves inadequate to be God's reflected image. The problem was not the covenant, but human sinfulness and weakness (cf. Romans 7; Galatians 3).

The same tension between OT unconditional and conditional covenants remains in the NT. Salvation is absolutely free in the finished work of Jesus Christ, but it requires repentance and faith (both initially and continually). It is both a legal pronouncement and a call to Christlikeness, an indicative statement of acceptance and an imperative to holiness! Believers are not saved by their performance, but unto obedience (cf. Eph. 2:8-10). Godly living becomes the evidence of salvation, not the means of salvation. This tension is clearly seen in Hebrews.

9:7 "the Hivites" Hivites (BDB 295) seem to be identified with Horites (cf. Gen. 36:2,20-21 and the Septuagint). We are not sure of their exact relationship to the Hurrians, but it is obvious that they are a non-Semitic group living within the Promised Land. See Special Topic at Josh. 3:10.

▣ **"how then shall we make a covenant with you"** The reason for this question was the specific guidelines of Moses about not sparing the life of any of the peoples of the land (cf. Exod. 23:32; 34:12; Deut. 7:2).

9:9 The confession of the Gibeonite representatives (which reflected the discussions of all of the leadership) is similar to Rahab's confession (cf. 2:9-11). It involves

1. an affirmation of YHWH's greatness and power
2. knowledge of Israel's supernatural victories with YHWH's presence and help
3. an element of fear and self preservation

This is also true of Rahab and all conversions



NASB "the fame of the Lord your God"

NKJV, NRSV "the name of the Lord your God"

TEV "we have heard of the Lord your God"

NJB "the fame of Yahweh your God"

This term "fame" (BDB 1027, cf. 7:9) is literally "name" and is used in the sense of reputation (cf. Deut. 10:8; I Sam. 17:45; II Sam. 6:18; II Kgs. 2:24).

9:10 "Ashtaroth" This is a city in the eastern Jordan area which was in the tribal allotment of Manasseh. It was named after the female fertility goddess of the Canaanite pantheon called Ashterah or Astarte (BDB 800). It is interesting that in vv. 9 and 10 these Canaanites mention nothing of the victories of Joshua at Jericho and Ai. If they had, Joshua would have known that they lived closer than they claimed. See Special Topic: Fertility Worship at Jdgs. 1:33.

9:11 The Gibeonite's representatives spin an elaborate lie (three *Qal* IMPERATIVES) about the instructions given them by their elders and people.

1. "take provisions," BDB 542, KB 534, cf. vv. 12-13
2. "go to meet," BDB 229, KB 246 (plus *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT, BDB 55, KB 65)
3. "make a covenant," BDB 503, KB 500, cf. v. 6

9:14 "so the men of Israel took some of their provisions, and did not ask the counsel of the LORD" In the MT the phrase "of Israel" is missing. The implication is that we are not sure which men took these provisions. Some say it was the Gibeonites, who showed the Israelites their provisions to prove their point. Others say it was the men of Israel who took these provisions. Possibly, the reason that Israel took these provisions was (1) to eat the bread, which would have signified a covenant (e.g., Gen. 31:54) or (2) to sample them (NJB) to see if they were old. It is interesting that they based their decision on physical evidence without asking the Lord (usually by Urim and Thummim, cf. Num. 27:21; also note the VERB is a technical term for counseling with YHWH, cf. Isa. 30:2; 65:).

9:15 "swore an oath to them" For the Israelites to swear an oath in YHWH's name, even if under false pretenses, was a binding obligation (cf. vv. 19,20; Gen. 25:27-34; 27:30-40; Lev. 19:12; Num. 30:2; Deut. 23:21-23). Notice that Joshua's covenant had to be ratified by the leaders of the congregation.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:16-21

¹⁶It came about at the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they were neighbors and that they were living within their land. ¹⁷Then the sons of Israel set out and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon and Chephirah and Beeroth and Kiriath-jearim. ¹⁸The sons of Israel did not strike them because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD the God of Israel. And the whole congregation grumbled against the leaders. ¹⁹But all the leaders said to the whole congregation, "We have sworn

to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we cannot touch them. ²⁰This we will do to them, even let them live, so that wrath will not be upon us for the oath which we swore to them." ^{9:21} The leaders said to them, "Let them live." So they became hewers of wood and drawers of water for the whole congregation, just as the leaders had spoken to them.

9:16 “at the end of three days” This does not necessarily involve three full days (cf. v. 17) because Gibeon was only about nineteen miles from where the Hebrews were camped.

9:17 This verse lists the names of the Gibeonite confederation.

9:18 “and the whole congregation grumbled against the leaders” The basic attitude of the people of God toward her leaders had not changed from the wilderness wandering period (BDB 534, KB 524, *Niphal* IMPERFECT, cf. Exod. 15:24; 16:2; Num. 14:2; 16:11). Here, however, they are afraid of the consequences of breaking YHWH’s covenant (cf. v. 24; Deuteronomy 7, 27-28).

9:19 “we cannot touch them” This is a *Qal* IMPERFECT NEGATIVE (BDB 407, KB 410) and a *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT (BDB 619, KB 668) used in a metaphorical sense for harm (cf. Gen. 26:11; II Sam. 14:10; I Chr. 16:22; Ps. 105:15).

9:20 “lest wrath come upon us for the oath which we swore to them” Oath-taking was a very serious matter to the Jews (cf. Lev. 27 and II Sam. 1:1-14 for a very specific reference to this account) because it involved a promise in YHWH’s name (cf. v. 9).

▣ **“let them live”** This is repeated twice

1. in v. 20 the VERB (BDB 310, KB 309) is a *Hiphil* INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE
2. in v. 21 it is a *Qal* IMPERATIVE but in a JUSSIVE sense

9:21 They became servants (the phrase, “hewers of wood and drawers of water” can be metaphorical of menial service [i.e., Deut. 29:11] or literal because this is exactly the tasks the Gibeonites performed) of all the tribes and for the tabernacle (cf. v. 27).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:22-27

²²Then Joshua called for them and spoke to them, saying, "Why have you deceived us, saying, 'We are very far from you,' when you are living within our land? ²³Now therefore, you are cursed, and you shall never cease being slaves, both hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God." ²⁴So they answered Joshua and said, "Because it was certainly told your servants that the LORD your God had commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land before you; therefore we feared greatly for our lives because of you, and have done this thing. ²⁵Now behold, we are in your hands; do as it seems good and right in your sight to do to us." ²⁶Thus he did to them, and delivered them from the hands of the sons of Israel, and they did not kill them. ²⁷But Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, to this day, in the place which He would choose.

9:22 “deceived” This VERB’S (BDB 941 II, KB 1239, *Piel* PERFECT) basic meaning is “to deal treacherously with deceit.” It is used in

1. Gen. 29:25 - Laban and Jacob

2. Josh. 9:22 - Gibeonites and Joshua
3. I Sam. 28:12 - Saul and the witch of Endor
4. II Sam. 29:26 - Shimei and Mephibosheth
5. Prov. 26:19 - man and neighbor

9:23 “both hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God” From the immediate context it is uncertain whether these people would be servants of the whole congregation (cf. v. 21), or simply of the sanctuary (cf. v. 23). It does become obvious that they will become the lowest servants of the community. Some have related this account to Noah’s cursing of Canaan (cf. Gen. 9:25), but the Hivites have no relationship at all to Ham. It is also interesting that this same group may have become the “*Nethinim*” (Ezra 2:43; 7:7,24; 8:20); they have foreign names and are assigned the most menial tasks in the Temple. One way to try to minimize the influence of these Canaanites was to put them in the service of the tabernacle where they would be exposed to the worship of YHWH.

These tasks were usually assigned to women (e.g., II Sam. 3:29; Jer. 50:37), therefore, they may have functioned as a means of humiliation, as well as servitude (cf. Deut. 29:11).

9:24 “certainly told” This intensified form is a *Hophal* INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and a *Hophal* PERFECT of “told” (BDB 616, KB 665).

9:24-25 Notice the repetition of the VERB “do” or “make” (BDB 793, KB 889).

1. v. 24 - *Qal* IMPERFECT
2. v. 25 - *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT
3. v. 25 - *Qal* IMPERATIVE
4. v. 25 - *Qal* IMPERFECT

Also note two *Qal* PERFECTS in 10:1.

9:25 “good and right” These two NOUNS (BDB 373 II, and 449) are synonymous in this context. The Gibeonites are throwing themselves on

1. the covenant promises made in YHWH’s name
2. Joshua’s sense of appropriate mercy

9:27 “to this day” This is obviously a later addition by an editor or by the original author writing later than the events of the book (cf. 4:9; 5:9; 7:26; 8:29).

▣ **“in the place which He would choose”** This is a Deuteronomic phrase which refers to the place that God would designate for the location of His tabernacle and later the Temple (cf. Exod. 20:24; Deut. 12:5,11,14,18,21,26; 14:23; 26:2). This later came to be Jerusalem (cf. I Kgs. 8:16,44,48; 11:13,32,36).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Locate these geographical sites on a map and note the direction of Joshua’s campaign.
2. Why was a treaty, made with these Canaanites on false grounds, still honored by the Hebrew nation?

JOSHUA 10

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Five Kings Attack Gibeon	The Sun Stands Still	Campaigns South of Gibeon	The Amorites are Defeated	Five Kings Make War on Gibeon
10:1-5	10:1-5	10:1-5	10:1-5	10:1-5
				Joshua Comes to Rescue Gibeon
10:6-11	10:6-11	10:6-11	10:6	10:6-9
			10:7-11	Aid From On High
The Sun Stood Still				10:10-13a
10:12-15	10:12-15	10:12-14	10:12-14	10:13b-15
		10:15	10:15	
Five Kings Captured and Slain	The Amorite Kings Executed		Joshua Captures the Five Amorite Kings	The Five Kings in the Cave at Makkedah
10:16-21	10:16-21	10:16-21	10:16-21a	10:16-19
			10:21b	10:20-21
10:22-27	10:22-27	10:22-27	10:22-27	10:22-26
				10:27
Joshua's Conquest	Conquest of the Southland		Joshua Captures More Amorite Territory	The Conquest of the Southern Towns of Canaan
10:28	10:28	10:28	10:28	10:28
10:29-30	10:29-30	10:29-30	10:29-30	10:29-30
10:31-32	10:31-33	10:31-32	10:31-33	10:31-33
10:33		10:33		
10:34-35	10:34-35	10:34-35	10:34-35	10:34-35
10:36-37	10:36-37	10:36-37	10:36-37	10:36-37
10:38-39	10:38-39	10:38-39	10:38-39	10:38-39
				The Southern Conquest Recapitulated
10:40-43	10:40-43	10:40-43	10:40-43	10:40-43

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. xvi). Compare your subject divisions with the five modern translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:1-5

¹Now it came about when Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had captured Ai, and had utterly destroyed it (just as he had done to Jericho and its king, so he had done to Ai and its king), and that the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were within their land, ²that he feared greatly, because Gibeon *was* a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were mighty. ³Therefore Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem sent *word* to Hoham king of Hebron and to Piram king of Jarmuth and to Japhia king of Lachish and to Debir king of Eglan, saying, ⁴"Come up to me and help me, and let us attack Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and with the sons of Israel." ⁵So the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon, gathered together and went up, they with all their armies, and camped by Gibeon and fought against it.

10:1,3 "Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem" This name means "my Lord is just" or "righteous" (BDB 11) and is related etymologically to the title "Melchizedek" (king is/of righteous, BDB 575) who was the priest/king of the city of Salem.

This is the first use of the term "Jerusalem" in the Bible. The Septuagint has "*Adoni-bezek*" (a place name). The city was originally called "Salem" (cf. Gen. 14:18). Later, it is called Jebus (cf. Jdgs. 19:10,11; I Chr. 11:4). It was given to Benjamin but it is right on the border with Judah. The lower city was captured in Joshua's day but the upper city (fortress) was not captured until David's day (cf. II Sam. 5:6ff). We learn from the archaeological discovery of the Amarna tablets, around 1400 B.C., that they called the city "Urusalem."

▣ **"utterly destroy"** This refers to the Hebrew concept of "holy war" called the *herem* (BDB 355, KB 353, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT). This meant that a city (i.e., Ai) was dedicated to God; it became so holy that everything that breathed, including men and animals, must be killed. We see this same kind of situation at the battle of Jericho (Joshua 6).

▣ **"had made peace"** This VERB (BDB 1023, KB 1532, *Hiphil* PERFECT) means "to finish" or "to bring to completion" (e.g., II Sam. 10:19; II Kgs. 22:44), therefore, it denotes the results of their covenant with Joshua (cf. v. 4; 9:15).

10:2 "feared" This VERB (BDB 431, KB 432, *Qal* IMPERFECT) is used several times in Joshua

1. revere - 4:14, Moses
2. revere - 4:24; 22:25; 24:14, YHWH
3. fear - 8:1; 10:8; 11:6, YHWH tells Joshua to not fear
4. fear - 9:24; 10:2, the Gibeonites and Jerusalemites fear Israel
5. fear - 10:25, Joshua tells Israel to not fear

▣ **“Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities”** Although it was large and well fortified like one of the royal cities, it was not one because it apparently had no king and was in a league with several other cities (cf. 9:17).

▣ **“all its men were mighty”** This is a word play between (1) Gibeon (BDB 149); (2) “great” (BDB 152); and (3) “mighty” (*gibborim*, BDB 150).

10:3 “Hebron. . .Jarmuth. . .Lachish. . .Eglon” These sites are all located in the southern hill country of Judah and Benjamin. They were all of Amorite descent. We also learn from the Amarna tablets that all of them appear in this ancient document except for the city of Hebron which was also called “Kiriath-arba” (cf. 20:7). This, again, shows the historicity of this account.

10:4 Notice the verbal commands.

1. “Come up with me,” BDB 748, KB 828, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
2. “Help me,” BDB 740, KB 810, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
3. “Let us attack,” BDB 645, KB 679, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT used in a COHORTATIVE sense

10:5 “camped by” This refers to a siege.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:6-11

“Then the men of Gibeon sent word to Joshua to the camp at Gilgal, saying, “Do not abandon your servants; come up to us quickly and save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites that live in the hill country have assembled against us.” ⁷So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him and all the valiant warriors. ⁸The LORD said to Joshua, “Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands; not one of them shall stand before you.” ⁹So Joshua came upon them suddenly by marching all night from Gilgal. ¹⁰And the LORD confounded them before Israel, and He slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and pursued them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon and struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah. ¹¹As they fled from before Israel, while they were at the descent of Beth-horon, the LORD threw large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died; *there were more who died from the hailstones than those whom the sons of Israel killed with the sword.*

10:6 Israel’s covenant with Gibeon promised military protection.

Verse 6 contains several IMPERATIVES in the message the Gibeonites sent to Joshua.

1. “do not abandon your servants” (lit. “slacken your hands”), BDB 951, KB 1276, *Hiphil* JUSSIVE, cf. 1:5; Deut. 4:31; Ps. 138:8
2. “come up to us quickly,” BDB 748, KB 828, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, cf. v. 4
3. “save us,” BDB 446, KB 448, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE
4. “help us,” BDB 740, KB 810, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, cf. v. 4

Numbers 3 and 4 are used synonymously.

▣ **“Amorites”** See note at 3:10.

10:7

NASB “he and all the people of war with him and all the valiant warriors”

NKJV “he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor”

NRSV “he and all the fighting force with him, all the mighty warriors”

TEV “Joshua and his whole army, including the best troops”

NJB “he, all the fighting men and all the bravest of his army”

Are there two groups of fighting men or two designations of one large group? The second phrase is used several times in Joshua (cf. 1:14; 8:3; 10:7 and also Jdgs. 6:12; 11:1). From the usage in 8:3 it seems to refer to two groups (regular soldiers and an elite group of special soldiers).

10:8 “Do not fear them” The VERB (BDB 431, KB 432) is a *Qal* IMPERFECT, used in a JUSSIVE sense. It is a recurrent message of God to His people.

1. Abraham - Gen. 15:1
2. Hagar - Gen. 21:17
3. Isaac - Gen. 26:24
4. Israel (by Moses) - Exod. 14:13; 20:20; Deut. 1:21; 20:3; 31:6
5. Israel (by Joshua) - Josh. 8:1; 10:25

▣ **“for I have given them into your hands”** This is a recurrent Hebrew idiom of military defeat (cf. Deut. 7:24; Josh. 6:2; 8:1,18)

▣ **“not one of them shall stand before you”** This is another Hebrew idiom of military defeat (cf. Deut. 7:24; 11:25; Josh. 1:5; 23:9)

▣ It is interesting to me to see the relationship between the sovereign word of God recorded in v. 8 and the required human effort recorded in vv. 9 and 11. Although God assured them of the victory, they still had to prepare for the battle and form a strategy to defeat the Canaanites. It is this tension between God’s sovereignty and man’s free will that is found so often in the Bible.

▣ This chapter expresses well the concept of holy war as YHWH’s judgment against the Canaanites (cf. Gen. 15:16; Lev. 18:24-28).

1. YHWH’s own statements, v. 8
2. the narrator, vv. 10-11,14,30,42
3. Joshua’s words, vv. 19,25

10:9 “by marching all night” This was no small effort to save a Canaanite population. Israel felt bound to Gibeon by covenant oath.

▣ **“from Gilgal”** In Hebrew “Gilgal” means “circle” (BDB 166). It was the first campsite of the Jews as they crossed the Jordan River. See fuller note at 9:6. Apparently the five kings of these large city states in southern Canaan had attacked Gibeon because they had made peace with the Israelites.

10:10

NASB “the LORD confounded them”

NKJV “the LORD routed them”

NRSV “the LORD threw them into a panic”

TEV “the LORD made the Amorites panic”

NJB “Yahweh threw them into disorder”

This VERB (BDB 243, KB 251) is often used with YHWH as the SUBJECT (cf. Exod. 14:24; 23:27; Deut. 7:23; Josh. 10:10; Jdgs. 4:15; I Sam. 7:10; II Chr. 15:6) and is part of the technical terminology of “holy war” (*herem*).

All of the VERBS in v. 10 are SINGULAR, implying that they refer to YHWH (notice v. 11 and v. 12), but the suffixes are PLURAL, implying Israel. In reality YHWH is the power and Israel the instrument of His power.

1. “confounded/confused,” BDB 243, KB 251, *Qal* IMPERFECT
2. “slew,” BDB 645, KB 697, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT
3. “pursued,” BDB 922, KB 1191, *Qal* IMPERFECT
4. “struck,” BDB 645, KB 697, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT

▣ “the ascent of Beth-horon. . .Azekah and Makkedah” These geographical sites are uncertain. We are not sure whether the first is to the east or to the west of Gibeon. The last two are to the south.

10:11 “that the LORD threw large stones from heaven on them” Here is God using natural means with supernatural timing and intensity (exactly like the plagues of Egypt). In reality more of the enemy died from the hailstones (cf. Isa. 30:30) than from the Israelites’ sword. This shows the tension between vv. 8 and 9 in a different way.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:12-14

¹²Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, "O sun, stand still at Gibeon, And O moon in the valley of Aijalon." ¹³So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, Until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies. Is it not written in the book of Jashar? And the sun stopped in the middle of the sky and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. ¹⁴There was no day like that before it or after it, when the LORD listened to the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.

10:12 “O sun, stand still at Gibeon” Verses 12b-13 are a poem (from the book of Jashar) which shows God’s control of nature. As He controlled the hailstones, He can (1) slow down or stop the rotation of the earth (cf. Isa. 38:7-8); (2) stop the morning light (this is the meaning of the Hebrew “stand still,” literally, “be silent,” BDB 198, KB 226, *Qal* IMPERATIVE in v. 12 and *Qal* IMPERFECT in v. 13, e.g., I Sam. 18:9; Jer. 47:6); and thereby keep the sun from shining on the Israelis who were traveling by night to reach Gibeon or allowing them to move up undetected (cf. v. 10); or (3) send a storm that darkened the day (i.e., made it cooler for the tired Israeli troops). It is uncertain whether this is merely a poetic account (cf. Jdgs. 5:20) or if it is to be taken literally (cf. Isa. 38:7-8) as the sun actually stood still (i.e., [1] longer night; [2] longer day; or [3] darkness of a storm), or shined less brightly (i.e., cooler). For those who believe in a supernatural God exactly what happened is not as important as knowing that God is sovereign over time, history, and nature. Theologically this shows YHWH’s control over the heavenly bodies (Babylonian deities). These astral gods must now help the Israelites conquer the Canaanites.

10:13 “book of Jashar” Jashar means “upright” (BDB 449). This book was an ancient Israeli collection of war poems. It is also mentioned in II Sam. 1:17ff. This book has been lost except for the biblical quotes.

10:14 “there was no day like that before it or after it, when the LORD listened to the voice of a man” This is a strange phrase. It may be part of the poem from the book of Jashar. YHWH responded to Joshua’s

prayer request. All of the other military strategies were given by YHWH; this miracle was possibly Joshua's idea.

▣ **“for the LORD fought for Israel”** This VERB (BDB 535, KB 526, *Niphal* PARTICIPLE) is used several times for YHWH's acting on Israel's behalf (cf. 10:42; 23:3,10; Exod. 14:14; Deut. 1:30; 3:22; 20:4).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:15

¹⁵Then Joshua and all Israel with him returned to the camp to Gilgal.

10:15 “all Israel” This refers to the military troops who traveled all night to reach Gibeon, not all of those who came out of Egypt.

This verse seems out of place. Surely Joshua did not return to Gilgal until after the military events described in vv. 16-21. The NASB, 1970 edition, makes it part of the paragraph which includes poetry from the book of Jashar (i.e., part of vv. 12-13), possibly the quote extends through v. 15.

It is also possible that Gilgal refers to a city close to Shechem.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:16-21

¹⁶Now these five kings had fled and hidden themselves in the cave at Makkedah. ¹⁷It was told Joshua, saying, "The five kings have been found hidden in the cave at Makkedah." ¹⁸Joshua said, "Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and assign men by it to guard them, ¹⁹but do not stay *there* yourselves; pursue your enemies and attack them in the rear. Do not allow them to enter their cities, for the LORD your God has delivered them into your hand." ²⁰It came about when Joshua and the sons of Israel had finished slaying them with a very great slaughter, until they were destroyed, and the survivors *who* remained of them had entered the fortified cities, ²¹that all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace. No one uttered a word against any of the sons of Israel.

10:18-19 These verses contain several commands from Joshua.

1. “Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave,” BDB 164, KB 193, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
2. “Assign men to guard them,” BDB 823, KB 955, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE plus BDB 1036, KB 1581, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT
3. “Do not stay *there* yourselves,” BDB 763, KB 840, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense
4. “Pursue your enemies,” BDB 922, KB 1191, *Qal* IMPERATIVE

A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Joshua, from United Bible Societies, suggests that #2 may refer to local Gibeonites who showed Joshua the cave (p. 146).

10:19

NASB “attack them in the rear”

NKJV “attack their rear *ranks*”

NRSV, TEV “attack them from the rear”

NJB “cut off their line of retreat”

This refers to the rear guard (cf. Duet. 25:18). Israel was to aggressively attack and continue to attack until all were dead—no mercy, holy war!

10:21 “they returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah” Verses 21 and 43 state that the camp was at Gilgal. In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, vv. 21 and 43 are omitted. Possibly, the campsite mentioned in v. 21 was a temporary one and the main camp was still at the original site, Gilgal.



NASB	“no one uttered a word against any of the sons of Israel”
NKJV	“no one moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel”
NRSV	“no one dared to speak against any of the Israelites”
TEV	“no one dared even to speak against the Israelites”
NJB	“no one dared to attempt anything against the Israelites”

This was a Hebrew idiom of contempt (literally, “to cut” or “to sharpen,” BDB 358, KB 356, *Qal* PERFECT, cf. Exod. 11:7), which refers to other Canaanite tribes. As YHWH did in His victory over Egypt, so now He does a similar thing (silence the Canaanites, i.e. Exod. 11:7).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:22-27

²²Then Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave and bring these five kings out to me from the cave." ²³They did so, and brought these five kings out to him from the cave: the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon. ²⁴When they brought these kings out to Joshua, Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the chiefs of the men of war who had gone with him, "Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings." So they came near and put their feet on their necks. ²⁵Joshua then said to them, "Do not fear or be dismayed! Be strong and courageous, for thus the LORD will do to all your enemies with whom you fight." ²⁶So afterward Joshua struck them and put them to death, and he hanged them on five trees; and they hung on the trees until evening. ²⁷It came about at sunset that Joshua gave a command, and they took them down from the trees and threw them into the cave where they had hidden themselves, and put large stones over the mouth of the cave, to this very day.

10:22 Here are two more commands from Joshua.

1. “open,” BDB 834, KB 986, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
2. “bring out,” BDB 422, KB 425, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE

10:24 Here again are two more commands from Joshua.

1. “come near,” BDB 897, KB 1132, *Qal* imperative
2. “put,” BDB 962, KB 1321, *Qal* imperative

Notice the repetitive form of Hebrew narrative (two *Qal* IMPERATIVES; two *Qal* IMPERFECTS).

□ “put your feet on the necks of these kings” The term “neck” (BDB 848) was a symbol of strength. This is an idiom of the complete defeat and subservience (cf. Deut. 33:29; I Kgs. 5:3; Ps. 110:1) of these Canaanite kings.

□ 10:24 The surviving warriors and leaders were subjected to humiliating treatment in the ancient Near East. There are several verbal metaphors used which may be derived from actual events.

1. putting your foot on the neck of the defeated foe
 - a. Gen. 49:8
 - b. Josh. 10:24
2. treading on the enemy
 - a. II Sam. 22:39
 - b. Ps. 44:5
 - c. Ps. 60:12
 - d. Ps. 108:13
 - e. Isa. 63:3 (of YHWH)

(this may relate to Gen. 3:15)

3. vanquished as footstool
 - a. I Kgs. 5:3
 - b. Ps. 18:38
 - c. Ps. 47:3
 - d. Ps. 110:1
- (a-c may relate to metaphor #2)

10:25 “Do not fear or be dismayed! Be strong and courageous” Again this verse contains several commands from Joshua. YHWH is symbolically speaking through him.

1. “do not fear,” BDB 431, KB 432, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense
2. “do not be dismayed,” BDB 369, KB 365, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense
3. “be strong,” BDB 304, KB 307, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
4. “be courageous,” BDB 54, KB 65, *Qal* IMPERATIVE

This is the exact same message that God gave to Joshua. Faith is crucial (cf. Deut. 20:8; Jdgs. 7:3).

10:26-27 “he hung them on five trees; and they hung on the trees until evening” The five kings were first killed with swords (i.e., struck) and then impaled on a stake. From Deut. 21:22,23 we learn what a humiliating act this was in the eyes of the Jews. To be unburied was worse than being dead. We can see how Joshua used this as a sign to ridicule this united Canaanite opposition to the Israeli advance.

10:27 “to this very day” This is the textual mark of a later editor.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:28

²⁸Now Joshua captured Makkedah on that day, and struck it and its king with the edge of the sword; he utterly destroyed it and every person who was in it. He left no survivor. Thus he did to the king of Makkedah just as he had done to the king of Jericho.

10:28 Makkedah was also under the *herem* (BDB 355, KB 353, *Hiphil* PERFECT) as Jericho and Ai (good article in NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 368-369) had been. Libnah would be also (cf. vv. 29-39), as well as Lachish (good article in NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 862-864), Gezer, Eglon, Hebron (good article in NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 698-700), and Debir.

▣ **“he utterly destroyed it and every person who was in it. He left no survivor”** The holy war (*herem*, cf. 8:8) judgment is repeated several times (*Hiphil*, cf. 8:22; 10:28,30,33,39,40; 11:8,14; Num. 21:35; Deut. 2:34; 3:3).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:29-30

²⁹Then Joshua and all Israel with him passed on from Makkedah to Libnah, and fought against Libnah. ³⁰The LORD gave it also with its king into the hands of Israel, and he struck it and every person who was in it with the edge of the sword. He left no survivor in it. Thus he did to its king just as he had done to the king of Jericho.

10:30 Just as in 10:10, the VERBS are SINGULAR:

1. YHWH gave - BDB 678, KB 733, *Qal* IMPERFECT
2. he struck it - BDB 645, KB 697, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT

3. he left no survivor - BDB 983, KB 1375, *Hiphil* PERFECT
4. he did to its king just as he had done to the king of Jericho - BDB 793, KB 889, *Qal* IMPERFECT and *Qal* PERFECT

This could refer to Joshua as YHWH's instrument of judgment through conquest or theologically, like v. 10, of the power and victory belonging to YHWH.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:31-32

³¹And Joshua and all Israel with him passed on from Libnah to Lachish, and they camped by it and fought against it. ³²The LORD gave Lachish into the hands of Israel; and he captured it on the second day, and struck it and every person who *was* in it with the edge of the sword, according to all that he had done to Libnah.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:34-35

³⁴And Joshua and all Israel with him passed on from Lachish to Eglon, and they camped by it and fought against it. ³⁵They captured it on that day and struck it with the edge of the sword; and he utterly destroyed that day every person who *was* in it, according to all that he had done to Lachish.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:36-37

³⁶Then Joshua and all Israel with him went up from Eglon to Hebron, and they fought against it. ³⁷They captured it and struck it and its king and all its cities and all the persons who were in it with the edge of the sword. He left no survivor, according to all that he had done to Eglon. And he utterly destroyed it and every person who *was* in it.

10:36-37 The capture of Hebron is a good example of conflicting data or partial data recorded in the OT. There are several different traditions about its capture.

1. Josh. 10:36-37 - Joshua completely destroyed it, its leadership and its surrounding villages
2. Josh. 14:6-14; Judg. 1:20 - Caleb captured the city, hills and the Anakim (giants)
3. Judg. 1:10 - Judah captured the city, hills and the descendants of Anak (the giants)

This is one of many examples of the confusion which modern interpreters face in trying to sort out the historical aspects of this period. It is helpful to remember that the OT is a combination of history and theology. It is not modern, western, chronological, cause and effect, recording of events! We may not know the exact details of the military encounters but the covenant theology is consistent!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:38-39

³⁸Then Joshua and all Israel with him returned to Debir, and they fought against it. ³⁹He captured it and its king and all its cities, and they struck them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed every person *who was* in it. He left no survivor. Just as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir and its king, as he had also done to Libnah and its king.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:40-43

⁴⁰Thus Joshua struck all the land, the hill country and the Negev and the lowland and the slopes and all their kings. He left no survivor, but he utterly destroyed all who breathed, just as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded. ⁴¹Joshua struck them from Kadesh-barnea even as far as Gaza,

and all the country of Goshen even as far as Gibeon. ⁴²Joshua captured all these kings and their lands at one time, because the LORD, the God of Israel, fought for Israel.

10:40-43 These verses are a geographical summary of the military campaign up to this point (i.e., southern Canaan). Notice the continued use of the term “utterly destroy all who breathe.” Again, this refers to humans and animals because they became dedicated to God (i.e., *herem*, BDB 355).

10:40 In v. 40 several topological and geographical areas are mentioned.

1. “the hill country,” BDB 249, refers to the highlands of Judah, cf. 11:3,21; 15:48; 18:12; 20:7; 21:11 (not 11:2)
2. “the Negev,” BDB 616, means the semi-arid pasture lands of southern Judah, cf. 15:19,21-23
3. “the lowlands,” BDB 1050, strip of land west of the Judean hill country, cf. 15:33 (not 11:2)
4. “the slopes,” BDB 78, the hillsides to the east of the Judean hills, sloping toward the Dead Sea, cf. 12:8 (on eastern side of Jordan, cf. 12:3; 13:20; Deut. 3:17; 4:49)

10:41 “Gaza” See a good article in NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 652-653.

▣ **“Goshen”** The land of Goshen mentioned here is not the one in Egypt, but the one in Canaan (cf. 15:51).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why did these Canaanite kings attack one of their own cities?
2. How is 10:12-13 related to the concept of natural law?
3. Why did Joshua hang the dead kings on trees until dark?
4. What does the term “holy war” imply and why?

JOSHUA 11

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Hazor Captured and Burned	The Northern Conquest	Israel's Victories in the North	Joshua Defeats Jabin and His Allies	The Conquest of the North
11:1-5	11:1-5	11:1-5	11:1-5	11:1-4 The Victory at Merom 11:5-9
11:6-9	11:6-9	11:6-9	11:6-9	The Capture of the Other Northern Towns
11:10-15	11:10-15	11:10-15	11:10-11 11:12-15	11:10-11 11:12 11:13-14 The Orders of Moses Carried Out by Joshua
Joshua's Exploits	Summary of Joshua's Conquests		The Territory Taken by Joshua	11:15-16
11:16-20	11:16-20	11:16-20	11:16-20	11:17-20 Extermination of the Anakim
11:21-23	11:21-23	11:21-23	11:21-22 11:23a 11:23b	11:21-23a 11:23b

**READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL**

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. xvi). Compare your subject divisions with the five modern translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:1-5

¹Then it came about, when Jabin king of Hazor heard *of it*, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon and to the king of Shimron and to the king of Achshaph, ²and to the kings who were of the north in the hill country, and in the Arabah—south of Chinneroth and in the lowland and on the heights of Dor on the west—³to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Jebusite in the hill country, and the Hivite at the foot of Hermon in the land of Mizpeh. ⁴They came out, they and all their armies with them, *as many people as the sand that is on the seashore, with very many horses and chariots.* ⁵So all of these kings having agreed to meet, came and encamped together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel.

11:1-15 This is the description of Joshua's northern campaign.

11:1 "Jabin" This name means "one who is intelligent" (BDB 108). It may have been the royal title of the kings of Hazor, because another king by the same name is in control of Hazor in Jdgs. 4:2 (like Abimelech of Palestine, Hadad of Syria).

▣ **"Hazor"** This was the largest walled city of Canaan. It covered over 200 acres. Apparently the Israelis did not occupy this site because in Judges 4 it is a powerful Canaanite stronghold again. See the good article in NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 696-698.

▣ **"Achshaph"** This term (BDB 38) means "a place of sorcery" (cf. 12:20). The VERB root (BDB 506) means "to cut," possibly the cutting of herbs for spells or trances.

The exact location of Achshaph, and for that matter Shimron, are uncertain.

11:2 "Arabah" This refers to the Jordan Rift Valley from south of the Sea of Galilee (here called Chinneroth) through the Dead Sea and down to the Gulf of Aqabah (BDB 787 I). It is referred to in the Septuagint as "wasteland." See the good article in NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 406-408.

▣ **"Chinneroth"** This OT term could refer to (1) the Sea of Galilee, (2) the area around it, or (3) a city in that area (cf. 19:35). It is also spelled Chinnereth (cf. Deut. 3:17; Josh. 13:27; 19:35). The NT term Gennesaret (cf. Matt. 14:34; Mark 6:53; Luke 5:1) is taken from the Hebrew name. The name means "harp" (BDB 409), which refers to (1) the shape of the lake or (2) the presence of many shepherds who played the harp.

▣ **"the lowlands"** This term (BDB 1050) refers to the low, rolling hills (*Shephelah*) along the Palestinian coast. In this text it refers to the northern region of this topography (i.e., north of Mt. Carmel).

▣

NASB, NKJV	"the heights of Dor"
NRSV	"in Naphoth-dor"
TEV	"the coast near Dor"
NJB	"on the slopes of Dor"
JPSOA	"in the district of Dor"

This refers to the coastal mountain ridge of which Mt. Carmel is the last rise before the Great or Upper Sea (Mediterranean). The MT has “Naphoth-dor” (CONSTRUCT of BDB 632 and 190). The first term is uncertain.

11:3 Several Canaanite tribes are listed.

1. Canaanite
2. Amorite
3. Hittite
4. Perizzite
5. Hivite

See Special Topic: Pre-Israelite Inhabitants of Palestine at Josh. 3:10.

▣ **“Mizpeh”** This place name means “watch tower” (BDB 859). This was a very common name and its location is uncertain, possibly related to v. 8.

11:4 “as the sand that is on the sea shore” This is a Semitic idiom for a large military force (cf. Jdgs. 7:12; I Sam. 13:5; II Sam. 17:11). It was used in Genesis (cf. 22:17; 32:12) to describe God’s promises of many descendants to the Patriarchs.

▣ **“with very many horses and chariots”** This was the author’s way of describing the superior military forces of Canaan’s coastal region. See Special Topic below.

SPECIAL TOPIC: CHARIOTS

The *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* notes that chariots were used in three distinct ways (p. 138).

1. Royal transportation
 - a. Egypt - Gen. 41:43; 50:9
 - b. Israel - II Sam. 15:1; I Kgs. 1:5; Song of Songs 3:9
2. Divine transportation - II Kgs. 2:11; 6:17; Ps. 68:17; 104:3; Isa. 66:15; Jer. 17:25; Hab. 3:8
3. Military weapon (selected examples)
 - a. Egypt - Exod. 14:6,7,9,17,18,23,26,28; 15:4,9; Deut. 11:4; Josh. 24:6
 - b. Canaanite - Deut. 20:1; Josh. 11:4; 17:16,18; Judg. 1:19; 4-5
 - c. Philistine - Judg. 1:19; I Sam. 13:5; II Sam. 1:6; 8:4
 - d. Israelite - I Sam. 8:11-12; II Sam. 15:1; I Kgs. 10:26-29; Ps. 20:7; Isa. 31:1

The iron may have been around the chariot wheels or simply ornamental. It represented a superior technology!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:6-9

“Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid because of them, for tomorrow at this time I will deliver all of them slain before Israel; you shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire.” ⁷So Joshua and all the people of war with him came upon them suddenly by the waters of Merom, and attacked them. ⁸The LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, so that they defeated them, and pursued them as far as Great Sidon and Misrephoth-maim and the valley of Mizpeh to the east; and they struck them until no survivor was left to them. ⁹Joshua did to them as the LORD had told him; he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire.

11:6 Again YHWH (emphatic personal PRONOUN) encourages Joshua (cf. 1:5,9; 10:8) in the face of the overwhelming military superiority of the Canaanite chariot force. This is YHWH's battle and victory, not Israel's (cf. Jdgs. 7:2; I Sam. 17:45,47; II Chr. 32:8; Ps. 20:7; 33:16-17; 44:2-3,5-7; Zech. 4:6).

▣ **“hamstring”** This (BDB 785, KB 874, *Piel* IMPERFECT, cf. v. 9; II Sam. 8:4; I Chr. 18:4) involved cutting the tendons of the back legs so that the horses could not pull chariots. Joshua was not to rely on their captured weaponry (“burn the chariots with fire,” BDB 976, KB 1358, *Qal* IMPERFECT, cf. v. 9), but on YHWH (cf. v. 8).

▣ Chariots were the ultimate military weapon of this period and area. Their origin and exact design are uncertain (Hyksos or Hittites). The different chariots could hold

1. the driver and a soldier
2. the driver and two soldiers

They were usually pulled by two horses. The term “iron” could refer to:

1. the sides being reinforced
2. the wheels, rims, or axles

They were effective only on relatively flat ground.

11:8 “as far as Great Sidon” This shows the ancientness of this account. Sidon was the contemporary capital of Phoenicia, but later it was Tyre.

▣

NASB, NRSV	“Misrephoth-maim”
NKJV	“to the Brook Misrephoth”
TEV	“Misrephoth Maim”
NJB	“Misrephoth to the west”

The Jewish Publication Society of America's (JPSOA) translation supports the NJB's translation in a footnote. See note at 13:6.

11:9 Why did Israel destroy these captured weapons of war? Chariots were the ultimate military weapon of that day. The theories are: (1) they were to trust in YHWH, not weaponry or (2) the chariots were only usable on the coastal plains (or other flat areas). Number 1 fits the context of Joshua best.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:10-15

¹⁰Then Joshua turned back at that time, and captured Hazor and struck its king with the sword; for Hazor formerly was the head of all these kingdoms. ¹¹They struck every person who was in it with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying *them*; there was no one left who breathed. And he burned Hazor with fire. ¹²Joshua captured all the cities of these kings, and all their kings, and he struck them with the edge of the sword, *and* utterly destroyed them; just as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded. ¹³However, Israel did not burn any cities that stood on their mounds, except Hazor alone, *which* Joshua burned. ¹⁴All the spoil of these cities and the cattle, the sons of Israel took as their plunder; but they struck every man with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them. They left no one who breathed. ¹⁵Just as the LORD had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses.

11:11 Notice the intensity of the holy war judgment on Hazor:

1. “they struck every person,” BDB 645, KB 697, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT
2. “utterly destroying *them*,” BDB 355, KB 353, *Hiphil* INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE
3. “there was no one left who breathed,” BDB 451, KB 451 *Niphal* PERFECT
4. “he burned Hazor with fire,” BDB 976, KB 1358, *Qal* PERFECT

See Deut. 20:16 and Exod. 23:23b.

11:12 “Moses the servant of the LORD” This honorific title for Moses is found often in Joshua (cf. 1:7,13,15; 8:31,33; 9:24; 11:12,15; 12:6; 13:8; 18:7; 22:2,4,5). Moses is first called by this title in Exod. 14:31 and Num. 12:7. It is reaffirmed in Deut. 34:5 just before his death, so too, Joshua received this title close to his death in 24:17 (also in Jdgs. 2:8).

Joshua, like Moses, represents YHWH before the people of Israel. They act on instructions from Him (cf. v. 20).

11:13-14 Some of the cities became property of the different Israeli tribes (v. 13), while the booty or spoils (v. 14) from those cities became the property of the Israeli soldiers involved in the battle. Verse 13 is an eyewitness, historical detail.

▣ **mounds**” This is the Hebrew term “tel” or ruin (BDB 1068). Each successive rebuilding used the same site; thus, a mound was formed or at least heightened.

11:15 This refers to the destruction of the Canaanite population and livestock which were under the *herem* (BDB 355, cf. v. 20). Notice the threefold use of “command” (BDB 845, KB 1010, *Piel* PERFECT) in v. 15. Joshua was under strict orders from YHWH through Moses (cf. v. 20).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:16-20

¹⁶Thus Joshua took all that land: the hill country and all the Negev, all that land of Goshen, the lowland, the Arabah, the hill country of Israel and its lowland ¹⁷from Mount Halak, that rises toward Seir, even as far as Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon at the foot of Mount Hermon. And he captured all their kings and struck them down and put them to death. ¹⁸Joshua waged war a long time with all these kings. ¹⁹There was not a city which made peace with the sons of Israel except the Hivites living in Gibeon; they took them all in battle. ²⁰For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, to meet Israel in battle in order that he might utterly destroy them, that they might receive no mercy, but that he might destroy them, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

11:16 This is a summary of the different topological divisions of Canaan from the south to the north. In reality all of chapter 12 is also a summary of Joshua’s victories.

▣ **“Negev”** This is the dry semi-desert region in southern Canaan. It was uninhabited except for shepherds and flocks.

▣ **“land of Goshen”** This refers to an area in the hill country of Judah (cf. 10:41; 11:16; 15:51).

11:17 “Mount Halah” This (BDB 325) is a mountain or mountain range in the central Negev. It seems to be between the wilderness of Zin and Seir. It was part of the boundary between Judah’s allotment and the nation of Edom (cf. 15:1).

▣ **“Baal-gad”** Baal was the male fertility god of Canaan. Every town had its own worship altar. Many of the towns of Canaan had the male god Ba’al or the female Asherah or Ashtarte in their names (cf. 12:4).

The term “gad” (BDB 151) apparently meant “good fortune” (cf. Gen. 30:11, BDB 151 II) and was used of a Canaanite deity (cf. Isa. 65:11).

11:18 This shows how the account given in the Bible is telescoped! Verse 17 reveals the northern limits of Joshua’s conquest. More was given by YHWH, but not taken by Israel.

11:20 “for it was of the LORD to harden their hearts” This is a biblical metaphor of God’s control over human events to accomplish His purpose. This has nothing to do with the issue of “free will.” The thrust of this context is YHWH’s control of history and events (particularly redemptive events, cf. Acts 2:23; 3:18; 4:28). This is similar to God’s actions with Pharaoh (cf. Exod. 4:21; 7:3,13; 8:15,32; 9:12,34; 10:20,27; 14:4,17).

Verse 20 has a series of INFINITIVE CONSTRUCTS showing YHWH’s purposeful actions.

1. “to harden their hearts,” BDB 304, KB 302, *Piel* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT
2. “to meet Israel in battle,” BDB 896, KB 1131, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT
3. “in order that he might utterly destroy them,” BDB 355, KB 353, *Hiphil* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT (the pronoun could refer to YHWH or to Israel/Joshua, but because of the end of v. 20, probably Joshua)
4. “they might receive no mercy,” BDB 224, KB 243, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT
5. “that he might destroy them,” BDB 1029, KB 1552, *Hiphil* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT

All of these are related to YHWH’s prophecy to Abraham in Gen. 15:12-21.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:21-23

²¹Then Joshua came at that time and cut off the Anakim from the hill country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab and from all the hill country of Judah and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. ²²There were no Anakim left in the land of the sons of Israel; only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod some remained. ²³So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses, and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Thus the land had rest from war.

11:21 “the Anakim” This was a very tall tribe which inhabited Hebron (Arba, cf. 15:13 or Kiriath-arba). There seem to be three names used in the OT to describe these very tall people: (1) *Nephilim* (BDB 658, cf. Gen. 6:4); (2) *Rephaim* (BDB 952, cf. Gen. 14:5; 15:20; Josh. 12:4; 13:12); and (3) *Anakim* (BDB 778, cf. Num. 13:22,28; Deut. 1:28; 9:2; Jdgs. 1:20). *Anak* means “long necked” (BDB 778).

Goliath and his brothers were probably related (cf. v. 22).

11:23 “So Joshua took the whole land” The book of Judges seems to tell a different story. There were two parts to an effective conquest of Canaan.

1. Joshua defeated the main military forces of the Canaanites and captured or destroyed the major walled cities.
2. Each individual tribe had to possess its allotted land by faith.

The later problems developed because (1) Israel did not kill all of the Canaanites and they reasserted themselves and recaptured some of their old fortresses or (2) the individual tribes never fully finished the task of conquest. There are hints of this failure in Joshua 13 and Judges 1.

▣ **“the land had rest from war”** This VERB (BDB 1052, KB 1641, *Qal* PERFECT) describes the results of Joshua’s conquest here and in 14:15. It also describes the temporary peace brought by the different judges (cf. Jdgs. 3:11,30; 5:31; 8:28). It is not used in Deuteronomy. YHWH desired His covenant people (after the conquest and occupation of Canaan) to be in a restful, happy, fulfilled, covenant state of obedience and abundant peace (cf. Deuteronomy 27-28; I Chr. 22:9-10; Isa. 32:17).

11:23 The tribes were initially about the same size. Notice the warriors (aged 20-50) from each tribe (the term “1,000” could mean military unit; see Special Topic at 3:17) listed in Numbers 1.

1. Reuben - 46,500, v. 21
2. Simeon - 59,300, v. 23
3. Gad - 45,650, v. 25
4. Judah - 74,600, v. 27
5. Issachar - 54,400, v. 29
6. Zebulun - 57,400, v. 31
7. Ephraim - 40,500, v. 33
8. Manasseh - 32,200, v. 35
9. Benjamin - 35,400, v. 37
10. Dan - 62,700, v. 39

The divisions of the land (amount given) do not reflect these numbers. Judah and Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) are given the largest allotments. Apparently by Joshua’s time these numbers had changed or this is another rationale to the allotment procedures.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. List the topological divisions of the Promised Land.
2. Why did the Israelis destroy the Canaanite weaponry (i.e., chariots)?
3. Why was Hazor so important?
4. Explain verse 20 as it relates to human responsibility.
5. Who are the Anakim?

JOSHUA 12

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Kings Joshua Defeated	The Kings Conquered by Moses	A List of Israel's Victories	The Kings Defeated by Moses	The Kings Conquered East of the Jordan
12:1-6	12:1-6	12:1-6	12:1-6	12:1-6
	The Kings Conquered by Joshua		The Kings Defeated by Joshua	The Kings Conquered West of the Jordan
12:7-24	12:7-24	12:7-24	12:7-24	12:7-24

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

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2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. There are several accounts of the same events of conquest in Joshua. A list of the cities and their kings helps to put them all together.

CITY	KING	CHAPTER 12
1. Jericho, 6:1-27	6:2	12:9
2. Ai/Bethel, 7:1-8:29	8:29	12:9,16
3. Gibeon, 9:3-27	---	---
4. Jerusalem, 10:1	10:3,23	12:10
5. Hebron, 10:3-27,36-37	10:3,23,37	12:10
6. Jarmuth, 10:3-27	10:3,23	12:11
7. Lachish, 10:3-27	10:3,23	12:11
8. Eglon, 10:3-27,34-35	10:3,23	12:12
9. Makkedan, 10:28	10:28	12:16

10.	Libnah, 10:29-30	10:30	12:15
11.	Lachish, 10:31-32	----	
12.	Debir, 10:38-39	10:39	12:13
13.	Hazor, 11:1-5	11:1	12:19
14.	Madon, 11:1-5	11:1	12:19
15.	Shimron, 11:1-5	11:1	12:20
16.	Achshaph, 11:1-5	11:1	12:20

Summary statements

9:1-2

10:3-5,40-43

11:10-15

11:21-23 (Anakim)

B. The kings and cities mentioned in chapter 12 are not mentioned earlier.

1. Gezer, 12:12
2. Geder, 12:13
3. Hormah, 12:14
4. Arad, 12:14
5. Adullam, 12:15
6. Tappuah, 12:17
7. Hopher, 12:17
8. Aphek, 12:18
9. Lasharon, 12:18
10. Taanach, 12:21
11. Megiddo, 12:21
12. Kedesh, 12:22
13. Jokneam, 12:23
14. Dor, 12:23
15. Guim, 12:23
16. Tirzah, 12:24

Verse 24 has, “thirty-one kings.” Apparently all were Greek type city-states, like the five Philistine cities.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 12:1-6

¹Now these are the kings of the land whom the sons of Israel defeated, and whose land they possessed beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise, from the valley of the Arnon as far as Mount Hermon, and all the Arabah to the east: ²Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, *and* ruled from Aroer, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, both the middle of the valley and half of Gilead, even as far as the brook Jabbok, the border of the sons of Ammon; ³and the Arabah as far as the Sea of Chinneroth toward the east, and as far as the sea of the Arabah, *even* the Salt Sea, eastward toward Beth-jeshimoth, and on the south, at the foot of the slopes of Pisgah; ⁴and the territory of Og king of Bashan, one of the remnant of Rephaim, who lived at Ashtaroth and at Edrei, ⁵and ruled over Mount Hermon and Salecah and all Bashan, *as far as* the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and half of Gilead, as far as the border of Sihon king of Heshbon. ⁶Moses the servant of the LORD and the sons of Israel defeated them; and Moses the servant of the LORD gave it to the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh as a possession.

12:1 “Arnon” This means “rushing stream” (BDB 75). It runs into the Dead Sea, approximately in the middle. It was the border between Moab and the Amorites and later the southern boundary of Reuben (cf. Deut. 3:12).

▣ **“Arabah”** See note at 11:2.

12:2

NASB “which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, both the middle of the valley and half of Gilead”

NKJV “and ruled half of Gilead, from Aroer, which is on the bank of the river Arnon, from the middle of that river”

NRSV “which is on the edge of the Wadi Arnon, and from the middle of the valley as far as the river Jabbok, the boundary of the Ammonites, that is, half of Gilead”

TEV “His kingdom included half of Gilead: from Aroer (on the edge of the Arnon valley) and from the city in the middle of the valley”

NJB “ruled from Aroer which is on the edge of the Arnon valley, including the bottom of the valley, half Gilead”

The Hebrew text is uncertain at this point (i.e., vv. 2-3, cf. Jewish Study Bible, p. 485).

▣ **“the brook Jabbok”** This trans-Jordan river flows into the Jordan, just north of the city of Adam. It was the site of Jacob’s encounter with the angel (cf. Gen. 32:22). It was the boundary between the allotments of Manasseh and Gad (cf. Deut. 3:12,16).

12:3 “Pisgah” This mountain (BDB 820) is in the trans-Jordan area east of the mouth of the Jordan. It is also known as “Nebo” (BDB 612 I). They might be two peaks close together, or Pisgah may refer to the entire mountain range and Nebo the highest peak. This is the mountain where Moses was allowed to see the Promised Land. He is buried somewhere on its heights (cf. Deuteronomy 34).

12:4 “Rephaim” The Septuagint identifies them as “giants.” See note at 11:21.

▣ **“Ashtaroath”** This was a city named after the female fertility goddess of Canaan, worshiped in a wooden symbol of the tree of life (carved stake or live tree). See note at 9:10.

12:6 The three Israeli tribes that settled on the eastern side of the Jordan were Reuben, Gad, and half-tribe of Manasseh.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 12:7-24

⁷Now these are the kings of the land whom Joshua and the sons of Israel defeated beyond the Jordan toward the west, from Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon even as far as Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir; and Joshua gave it to the tribes of Israel as a possession according to their divisions, ⁸in the hill country, in the lowland, in the Arabah, on the slopes, and in the wilderness, and in the Negev; the Hittite, the Amorite and the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite: ⁹the king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Bethel, one; ¹⁰the king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; ¹¹the king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; ¹²the king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one; ¹³the king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; ¹⁴the king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; ¹⁵the king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; ¹⁶the king of Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one; ¹⁷the king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hopher, one; ¹⁸the king of Aphek, one; the king

of Lasharon, one; ¹⁹the king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one; ²⁰the king of Shimron-meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; ²¹the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; ²²the king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam in Carmel, one; ²³the king of Dor in the heights of Dor, one; the king of Goiim in Gilgal, one; ²⁴the king of Tirzah, one: in all, thirty-one kings.

12:7-24 This is a repetitive summary of Joshua's conquest recorded earlier.

12:7 "Baal-gad" See note at 13:5.

12:8 "the slopes" This term (BDB 78) is used of a different area in 10:40.

12:10-33 "the king of" The Canaanites had a city-state, as did the Philistines and the Greek peoples.

12:23

NASB, JPSOA	"the king of Goiim in Gilgal"
NKJV	"the king of the people of Gilgal"
NRSV	"the king of Goiim in Galilee"
TEV	"Goiim (in Galilee)"
NJB	"the king of the nations in Galilee"

The Septuagint has "in Galilee." The MT has "the king of the nations in Gilgal" or "the foreign king at Gilgal," which does not make sense.

JOSHUA 13

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Dividing Canaan Among the Tribes 13:1-7	Remaining Land to be Conquered 13:1-7	The Distribution of the Land Begins 13:1-7	The Land Still to be Taken 13:1-7	Lands Remain Unconquered 13:1-2a 13:2b-5 13:6-7
13:8-14	The Land Divided East of the Jordan 13:8-14	13:8-13 13:14	The Division of the Territory East of Jordan 13:8-13 13:14	A General Survey of Trans-Jordan 13:8-13 13:14
13:15-23	The Land of Reuben 13:15-23	13:15-23	The Territory Assigned to Reuben 13:15-23	The Tribe of Reuben 13:15-21 13:22 13:23a 13:23b
13:24-28	The Land of Gad 13:24-28	13:24-28	The Territory Assigned to Gad 13:24-28	The Tribe of Gad 13:24-27 13:28
13:29-31 13:32-33	Half the Tribe of Manasseh (East) 13:29-33	13:29-31 13:32-33	The Territory Assigned to East Manasseh 13:29-31 13:32-33	The Half-Tribe of Manasseh 13:29-31 13:32-33

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1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph

3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

I. BACKGROUND STUDY

- A. This begins the second half of the book of Joshua. Chapters 1-12 are basically the conquest of the Promised Land and chapters 13-19 are the division of Canaan among the tribes of Israel.
- B. The best way to study this section is to have a map close at hand. Archaeology is somewhat uncertain as to the exact locations of many of the cities and other sites mentioned in the Bible. The exact boundaries are uncertain, but the general area is relatively accurate.
- C. In this type of passage books on geography become extremely significant.
 1. *Wycliffe Historical Geography of the Bible Lands* by Vos, published by Moody Press
 2. *Biblical Backgrounds* by Callaway, published by Broadman Press
- D. The meanings of the Semitic names mentioned in these chapters are only possibilities. The exact etymology is often uncertain.
- E. The type of geographical boundaries (i.e., natural land features and cities) has also been found in contemporary literature (i.e., Hittite and Ugarit), which helps confirm the historicity of Joshua.

Shisbah of Egypt invaded Palestine about 925 B.C. and lists his victories in a campaign list found at Karnack, but the names do not coincide with Joshua's list. Shisbah's list has many Hebrew family names, which implies that the list of Joshua (in the Negev) is older (see *The New Bible Commentary: Revised*, p. 246).
- F. In chapter 13
 1. Verses 2-3 refer to the unconquered area in the south.
 2. Verses 4-6 refer to the unconquered area in the north.
 3. Verses 8-14 refer to the unconquered area in the trans-Jordan area (eastern bank).

G. Chart of the tribes of Israel/Jacob

	<u>By mother</u>	<u>By Jacob's blessing</u>	<u>By Moses' blessing</u>	<u>By Joshua Casting Lots</u>
1.	Reuben by Leah Gen. 29:32	Gen. 49:3-4	Deut. 33:6	Josh. 13:15-23
2.	Simeon by Leah Gen. 29:33	Gen. 49:5-7	-----	Josh. 19:1-9
3.	Levi by Leah Gen. 29:34	Gen. 49:5-7	Deut. 33:8-11	-----
4.	Judah by Leah Gen. 29:35	Gen. 49:8-12	Deut. 33:8-11	Josh. 14:6-15:63
5.	Dan by Bilhah Gen. 30:6	Gen. 49:16-18	Deut. 33:22	Josh. 19:40-48
6.	Naphtali by Bilhah Gen. 30:8	Gen. 49:21	Deut. 33:23	Josh. 19:37-39

7.	Gad by Zilpah Gen. 30:11	Gen. 49:19	Deut. 33:20-21	Josh. 13:24-28
8.	Asher by Zilpah	Gen. 49:20	Deut. 33:24-25	Josh. 19:24-31
9.	Issachar by Leah Gen. 30:18	Gen. 49:14-15	Deut. 33:18-19	Josh. 19:17-23
10.	Zebulun by Leah Gen. 30:20	Gen. 49:13	Deut. 33:18-19	Josh.19:10-16
11.	Joseph by Rachel Gen. 30:24	Gen. 49:22-26	Deut. 33:13-17	Manesseh - Josh. 13: 29-31; 17:1-13 Ephraim - Josh. 16:4-10
12.	Benjamin by Rachel Gen. 35:18	Gen. 49:27	Deut. 33:12	Josh. 18:11-28

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:1-7

¹Now Joshua was old *and* advanced in years when the LORD said to him, "You are old and advanced in years, and very much of the land remains to be possessed. ²This is the land that remains: all the regions of the Philistines and all *those of* the Geshurites; ³from the Shihor which is east of Egypt, even as far as the border of Ekron to the north (it is counted as Canaanite); the five lords of the Philistines: the Gazite, the Ashdodite, the Ashkelonite, the Gittite, the Ekronite; and the Avvite ⁴to the south, all the land of the Canaanite, and Mearah that belongs to the Sidonians, as far as Aphek, to the border of the Amorite; ⁵and the land of the Gebalite, and all of Lebanon, toward the east, from Baal-gad below Mount Hermon as far as Lebo-hamath. ⁶All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon as far as Misrephoth-maim, all the Sidonians, I will drive them out from before the sons of Israel; only allot it to Israel for an inheritance as I have commanded you. ⁷Now therefore, apportion this land for an inheritance to the nine tribes and the half-tribe of Manasseh."

13:1 "Now Joshua was old and advanced in years" We learn from 14:10 that Caleb was eighty-five years of age. We assume that Joshua was about the same age.

▣ **"and very much of the land remains to be possessed"** It seems from the first twelve chapters of Joshua that he had completely defeated the Canaanites but because of (1) 11:18; (2) this verse; (3) the historical summary in Judges 1; and (4) archaeological evidence, it seems obvious that Joshua only broke the back of the main resistance of the Canaanite forces (i.e., the strong walled cities), but left it up to the individual tribes to fully possess (cf. Exod. 23:28-30) their own land allotments. Many of them never fully did this, as is obvious from v. 2ff.

13:2 "all the regions of the Philistines" The term "regions" (BDB 165) originally may have referred to a circle (or heap) of stones (e.g., 7:26; 8:29; Gen. 31:46), but it became a way of referring to a region (cf. 18:17). The same root forms the name Gilgal (cf. 4:19).

The Philistines were apparently Greeks from the Aegean Islands. They were the only group of people in this part of the world who were uncircumcized. They were apparently a mercenary force who tried to attack Egypt in the twelfth century B.C. but were defeated. They then settled on the southern coast of Palestine. They had five major cities which are delineated in v. 3: Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gad, and Ekron. They were a major military problem throughout the period of the judges and even throughout the reign of Saul and David. The name "Palestine" comes from the word "Philistine."

▣ **“the Geshurites”** The Geshurites are mentioned in 12:5 but this is a different group with the same name. This same group appears in 13:11,13, but it is also related to the one mentioned in 12:5. We learn from I Sam. 27:8 that Geshur is a tribe somewhere between Arabia and Philistia.

13:3 “the Shihor” This is from a root which means “to be black” (BDB 1009). This term is used of the Nile River in Isa. 23:3, but here it seems to refer to the border of the Promised Land. Most commentators say that this refers to a wadi called the River of Egypt. It is known today as the wadi El Arish. It is to the south of the city of Gaza.

▣ **“Gazite”** This means “strong” (BDB 738).

▣ **“Ashdodite”** This means “stronghold” (BDB 78).

▣ **“Ashkelonite”** This seems to come from an Assyrian root which means “migration,” but there is a possibility that it comes from the Hebrew root for “weight” from which we get the word “shekel” (BDB 80).

▣ **“Gittite”** This means “winepress” and is very similar to the New Testament term “Gethsemane,” which means “olive press.” The KJV translates this location as “Gath” (BDB 388) and this may be accurate.

▣ **“Avvite”** This is a relatively unknown group which seems to be located in the area of Gaza (BDB 732, cf. Deut. 2:23). Some commentators believe they were the original inhabitants of this entire southern coastal area until the invasion of the Philistines.

13:4 “Mearah” This is a word which seems to come from the root for “cave” (BDB 792). It is located just to the north of the city of Sidon, which is in the land of the Phoenicians.

13:5 “and the land of the Gebalite” This is the city of Gebal, which later became Byblos, which later became famous for its writing materials (i.e., parchment, cf. I Kgs. 5:18; Ezek. 27:9). We get the English terms “book” and “bible” from this city.

▣ **“Baal-gad”** It is obvious from the listing of these towns that fertility worship was the main religion of the Canaanites. The term “*Ba’al*” is a Hebrew word which means “master,” “owner,” “lord,” or “husband.” The female goddess is called *Ashtaroth* (cf. v. 12). See note at 11:17. For an excellent discussion of the Canaanite religion, see *Archaeology and Religion of Israel* by William F. Albright, published by Anchor Books.

▣

NASB	“as far as Lebo-hamath”
NRSV, JPSOA	“to Lebo-hamath”
NKJV, RSV	“to the entrance to Hamath”
TEV	“to Hamath Pass”
NJB	“to the Pass of Hamath”

This phrase is made up of the PREPOSITION (BDB 723), a *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT of BDB 97, KB 112, and a proper name (BDB 333, i.e., fortress”). Hamath was a kingdom (cf. II Sam. 8:9) and represented the northern limit of the Promised Land (cf. I Kgs. 8:65; I Chr. 8:4).

13:6 “as far as Misrephoth-maim, all the Sidonians” This place name seems to refer to “burning water” or “hot springs” (BDB 977). From the same root come the angels called *seraphim* (i.e., “burning ones”).

The fact that only Sidon is mentioned and not Tyre (cf. 19:29) points to the early date for this account (cf. R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 672).

▣ **“I will drive them out before the sons of Israel”** YHWH takes full responsibility for the conquest of Canaan (cf. Exod. 34:24; Lev. 20:24; Num. 32:21; 33:53; Deut. 1:39; 4:38; 5:31; 9:4,5,6; 11:23,31; 12:1; 15:4; 16:20; 18:12; Josh. 3:10; 13:6). The VERB (BDB 439, KB 441, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) basically means “take possession of” or “dispossess.”

13:6-7 There are two IMPERATIVES spoken by YHWH to Joshua.

1. “allot,” v. 6, BDB 656, KB 709, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE (cf. 23:4)
2. “apportion,” v. 7, BDB 323, KB 327, *Piel* IMPERATIVE, cf. 14:5; 18:2,5,10; 19:51; Num. 26:53,55,56

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:8-14

⁸With the other half-tribe, the Reubenites and the Gadites received their inheritance which Moses gave them beyond the Jordan to the east, just as Moses the servant of the LORD gave to them; ⁹from Aroer, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, with the city which is in the middle of the valley, and all the plain of Medeba, as far as Dibon; ¹⁰and all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, as far as the border of the sons of Ammon; ¹¹and Gilead, and the territory of the Geshurites and Maacathites, and all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan as far as Salecah; ¹²all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei (he alone was left of the remnant of the Rephaim); for Moses struck them and dispossessed them. ¹³But the sons of Israel did not dispossess the Geshurites or the Maacathites; for Geshur and Maacath live among Israel until this day. ¹⁴Only to the tribe of Levi he did not give an inheritance; the offerings by fire to the LORD, the God of Israel, are their inheritance, as He spoke to him.

13:8 “with the other half-tribe” This refers to the tribe of Manasseh who inherited land in the eastern side of Jordan.

▣ **“Reubenites”** The word “Reuben” means “behold a son” (BDB 910). One can almost see the excitement when this firstborn son was presented to his father, Jacob, by Leah.

13:9 “Aroer” This is a city (BDB 792 I) very close to the southern border of Reuben, near to the Arnon River, which separated Moab from the Amorites.

13:12 “Og” The capture of this area is related to Num. 21:33-35.

▣ **“Ashtaroth”** This is the name of the female fertility goddess of the Canaanite pantheon (BDB 800 III). We are not exactly sure of the relationship between *Ba’al* and *Ashtaroth* because in Canaanite documents they are brother and sister, not lovers. See note at 9:10.

▣ **“Rephaim”** This word is used three different ways in the Bible: (1) it may refer to the dead (cf. Job 26:5); (2) it may refer to a tribal group; or (3) it may refer to the giants (cf. 14:12-15). The terms “Anakim” and “Rephaim” both seem to refer to the giants. See note at 11:21.

13:14 “only to the tribe of Levi he did not give an inheritance” The Levites were to receive their allotment from the altar by serving God (cf. Deut. 18). They take the place of the firstborn (cf. Exodus 13).

The Levites did receive forty-eight cities spread throughout the Promised Land (eastern and western, cf. Joshua 20-21). They were also allowed a plot of farm land just outside the walls of these cities to grow food for their families.

▣ **“the God of Israel”** It is somewhat surprising that the etymology of the term “Israel” is uncertain. From Gen. 32:28 it seems to mean “may God preserve,” but some see it as “right with God.” As with many of these words, we simply do not know the exact etymology.

SPECIAL TOPIC: ISRAEL (the name)

- I. The meaning of the name is uncertain (BDB 975).
 - A. *El* Persisteth
 - B. Let *El* Persist (JUSSIVE)
 - C. *El* Persevereth
 - D. Let *El* Contend
 - E. *El* Strives
 - F. He who strives with God (Gen. 32:28).
- II. Usages in the OT
 - A. Jacob’s name (supplanter, heel grabber, BDB 784, cf. Gen. 25:26) is changed after wrestling with the spiritual personage at the river Jabbok (cf. Gen. 32:22-32; Exod. 32:13). Often the meanings of Hebrew names are sound plays, not etymologies (cf. 32:28). Israel becomes his name (e.g., Gen. 35:10; 32:13).
 - B. It came to be used as a collective name for all of his twelve sons (e.g., Gen. 32:32; 49:16; Exod. 1:7; 4:22; 28:11; Deut. 3:18; 10:6).
 - C. It came to designate the nation formed by the twelve tribes before the exodus (cf. Gen. 47:27; Exod. 4:22; 5:2) and after (cf. Deut. 1:1; 18:6; 33:10).
 - D. After the united monarchy of Saul, David, and Solomon, the tribes split under Rehoboam (cf. I Kings 12).
 1. the distinction starts even before the official split (II Sam. 3:10; 5:5; 20:1; 24:9; I Kgs. 1:35; 4:20)
 2. designates the northern tribes until the fall of Samaria to Assyria in 7:22 B.C. (cf. II Kings 17).
 - E. Used of Judah in a few places (e.g., Isaiah 1; Micah 1:15-16).
 - F. After the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles, it became the collective name for all of Jacob’s descendants again (e.g., Isa. 17:7,9; Jer. 2:4; 50:17,19).
 - G. Used of laity in contradistinction from priests (cf. I Chr. 9:2; Ezra 10:25; Neh. 11:3).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:15-23

¹⁵So Moses gave *an inheritance* to the tribe of the sons of Reuben according to their families. ¹⁶Their territory was from Aroer, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, with the city which is in the middle of the valley and all the plain by Medeba; ¹⁷Heshbon, and all its cities which are on the plain: Dibon and Bamoth-baal and Beth-baal-meon, ¹⁸and Jahaz and Kedemoth and Mephaath, ¹⁹and Kiriathaim and Sibmah and Zereth-shahar on the hill of the valley, ²⁰and Beth-peor and the slopes of Pishgah and Beth-jeshimoth, ²¹even all the cities of the plain and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites who reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses struck with the chiefs of Midian, Evi and Rekem and

Zur and Hur and Reba, the princes of Sihon, who lived in the land. ²²The sons of Israel also killed Balaam the son of Beor, the diviner, with the sword among *the rest of their slain*. ²³The border of the sons of Reuben was the Jordan. This was the inheritance of the sons of Reuben according to their families, the cities and their villages.

13:15-23 This is the tribal allocation of Reuben. It is best seen by looking at a map which delineates the tribal allocations.

13:17 “Bamoth-baal and Beth-baal-meon” There was a *Ba'al* for every town. These two towns were named for the “high places of baal” (BDB 119 and 127, cf. Num. 22:41) and the “houses of baal” (BDB 111, cf. Num. 32:38; I Chr. 5:8; Jer. 48:23; Ezek. 25:9).

13:19

NASB, NRSV,

JPSOA “on the hill of the valley”

NKJV “on the mountain of the valley”

TEV “on the hill in the valley”

NJB “in the highlands of the Arabah”

This phrase is uncertain in Hebrew.

13:20 “the slopes of Pisgah” In Deut. 34:1 this is another reference to Mt. Nebo.

13:21 “even all the cities of the plain” The cities included

1. Dibon, 13:9
2. Beth-Jeshimoth, 12:3
3. Jahaz, 13:18
4. Kedemoth, 13:18
5. Mephaath, 13:18

The ones in v. 18 are mentioned again at 21:26-27.

13:22 “Balaam the son of Beor” The account of this prophet who caused Israel real problems is found in Numbers 22-25.

▣ **“diviner”** This PARTICIPLE (BDB 890, KB 1116, *Qal* PARTICIPLE) means “trying to know and control the future.” Several different methods were used

1. casting lots
2. consulting idols
3. examining sheep livers
4. necromancy
5. cloud reading
6. flight and perching of birds

Some typical texts are Num. 22:7; 23:23; Deut. 18:10,14; Josh. 13:22; ISam. 6:5; 15:23; 28:8; II Kgs. 17:17; Isa. 2:6; 3:2; 44:25; Jer. 14:14; 27:9; 29:8; Ezek. 12:24; 13:6,7,9,23; 21:21,22,23,29; 22:28.

It is based on the pagan world-view that there is information about the future hidden in natural events and that gifted humans (i.e., false prophets, e.g., Jer. 27:9; 29:8; Ezek. 13:9; 22:28) can know and influence this future.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:24-28

²⁴Moses also gave *an inheritance* to the tribe of Gad, to the sons of Gad, according to their families. ²⁵Their territory was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the sons of Ammon, as far as Aroer which is before Rabbah; ²⁶and from Heshbon as far as Ramath-mizpeh and Betonim, and from Mahanaim as far as the border of Debir; ²⁷and in the valley, Beth-haram and Beth-nimrah and Succoth and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, with the Jordan as a border, as far as the *lower* end of the Sea of Chinnereth beyond the Jordan to the east. ²⁸This is the inheritance of the sons of Gad according to their families, the cities and their villages.

13:24-28 This is the tribal allocation of Gad.

13:25 “as far as Aroer which is before Rabbah” There are two different towns by this name, “Aroer” (BDB 792 II).

A. Aroer

1. 13:25 and Jdgs. 11:33 (in allotment of Gad)
2. 13:16 (in allotment of Reuben)

B. Rabbah (BDB 913, “great” or “populous”) is also two different towns.

1. Rabbah - Ammon, Deut. 3:11; II Sam. 11:1; 12:26-27; Amos 1:14 (capital of Ammon)
2. Rabbah - in Judah, Josh. 15:60

13:26

NASB, NKJV “as far as the border of Debir”

NRSV “the territory of Debir”

TEV “to the border of Lodebar”

NJB “as far as the territory of Lo-Debar”

The revocalization of the MT (*lodebar*) in the dynamic equivalent translations (TEV, NJB) is an attempt to relate this text to the place in II Sam. 9:4,5; 17:27; Amos 6:13.

13:27 “the sea of Chinnereth” This body of water has several different names in the Bible: (1) the Sea of Genesseret; (2) the Sea of Tiberias; and (3) the Sea of Galilee.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:29-31

²⁹Moses also gave *an inheritance* to the half-tribe of Manasseh; and it was for the half-tribe of the sons of Manasseh according to their families. ³⁰Their territory was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair, which are in Bashan, sixty cities; ³¹also half of Gilead, with Ashtaroth and Edrei, the cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, were for the sons of Machir the son of Manasseh, for half of the sons of Machir according to their families.

13:29-31 This is the allocation of part of the tribe of Manasseh, one of Joseph’s two sons, who became a tribe within Israel along with his brother, Ephraim. Manasseh is the only tribe which inherited land on both sides of the Jordan River.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:32-33

³²These are *the territories* which Moses apportioned for an inheritance in the plains of Moab, beyond the Jordan at Jericho to the east. ³³But to the tribe of Levi, Moses did not give an inheritance; the LORD, the God of Israel, is their inheritance, as He had promised to them.

13:32-33 This is a summary statement.

13:33 See Deuteronomy 18:1-5 and Joshua 20-21.

JOSHUA 14

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
No Portion for Levi	The Land Divided West of the Jordan	Distribution of the Land West of the Jordan	The Division of the Territory West of the Jordan	Introduction
14:1-5	14:1-5	14:1-5	14:1-5	14:1-5
Caleb Reminisces	Caleb Inherits Hebron	Hebron, the Inheritance of Caleb	Hebron is Given to Caleb	Caleb's Share
14:6-12	14:6-15	14:6-12	14:6-12	14:6-12
Hebron Given to Caleb				
14:13-15		14:13-15	14:13-15a 14:15b	14:13-15a 14:15b

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section) FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. xvi). Compare your subject divisions with the five modern translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:1-5

¹Now these are *the territories* which the sons of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the households of the tribes of the sons of Israel apportioned to them for an inheritance, ²by the lot of their inheritance, as the LORD commanded through Moses, for the nine tribes and the half-tribe. ³For Moses had given the inheritance of the two tribes and the half-tribe beyond the Jordan; but he did not give an inheritance to the Levites among them. ⁴For the sons of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim, and they did not give a portion to the Levites in the land, except cities to live in, with their pasture lands for

their livestock and for their property. ⁵Thus the sons of Israel did just as the LORD had commanded Moses, and they divided the land.

14:1 “Eleazar the priest” This was the son of Aaron, who was the High Priest at this time and who served Moses (cf. Num. 20:24-29; 26:1-4,63) and Joshua during this very difficult period (e.g., chapter 22). Moses assigned the task of apportionment to Joshua and Eleazar in Num. 34:17.

14:2 “by lot” We are not exactly certain as to how this apportionment was done (BDB 174, cf. Num. 26:53-56; 33:54; 34:13). The rabbis say that there were two jars: one which contained the land allotments and the other which contained the tribes, but this is only speculation. It was the casting of dice or choosing a black or white rock out of a pouch or something like this, but we are just uncertain. Some try to relate it to the Urim and Thummin (cf. Exod. 28:30), which was kept in the breastplate of the High Priest; this is a real possibility. Whatever the means, it was seen as God’s giving of the land to the tribes. The land could not be sold permanently (i.e., the year of Jubilee, cf. Lev. 25:8-17).

▣ **“nine tribes”** There are thirteen tribes. Joseph is given the double inheritance of the firstborn, thereby his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh each inherit. Levi, though a full tribe, does not inherit land. Therefore, only twelve tribes inherit portions of the Promised Land.

▣ **“the half-tribe”** This refers to the fact that of all the tribes only Manasseh inherited land on both sides of the Jordan.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:6-12

⁶Then the sons of Judah drew near to Joshua in Gilgal, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know the word which the LORD spoke to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh-barnea. ⁷I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and I brought word back to him as *it was* in my heart. ⁸Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt with fear; but I followed the LORD my God fully. ⁹So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land on which your foot has trodden will be an inheritance to you and to your children forever, because you have followed the LORD my God fully.' ¹⁰Now behold, the LORD has let me live, just as He spoke, these forty-five years, from the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; and now behold, I am eighty-five years old today. ¹¹I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me; as my strength was then, so my strength is now, for war and for going out and coming in. ¹²Now then, give me this hill country about which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day that Anakim *were* there, with great fortified cities; perhaps the LORD will be with me, and I will drive them out as the LORD has spoken."

14:6 “Gilgal” This refers to the original campsite close to Jericho. This is a flashback to an earlier time.

▣ **“Caleb”** The name “Caleb” means “dog” (BDB 477). This passage is paralleled in Jdgs. 1:8-15. However, Caleb is described here as a Kenizzite (cf. I Chr. 4:13-16), which means that he was not originally of the tribe of Judah, but of a clan of Esau (cf. Gen. 15:19; 36:11). However, within the Pentateuch he is said to be within Judah (cf. Num. 13:6; 14:24; 34:19; I Chr. 6:55-56). His exact relationship to Judah is uncertain, but he was a faithful, godly man and one of the two faithful spies (cf. Numbers 13, esp. vv. 30-33).

▣ **“the word”** See Numbers 14:24,30.

▣ **“Moses the man of God”** The phrase, “man of God,” is used of several people:

1. Moses (cf. Deut. 33:1; I Chr. 23:14; II Chr. 30:16; Ezra 3:2; Ps. 90:1)
2. Elijah
3. Elisha
4. Samuel
5. David
6. Shemiah
7. Hanan
8. anonymous person in I Sam. 2:27 and I Kgs. 13:1-3

The phrase is never

1. man of YHWH
2. woman of God

For *Elohim* (God) see Special Topic at Josh. 1:1.

▣ **“Kadesh-barnea”** This (BDB 873 II) was a large desert oasis which became the central point of the wilderness wandering period. It is south of the Dead Sea and midway between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Ocean. The word “Kadesh” comes from the Hebrew term “holy,” while the term “barnea” is unknown.

14:7 “Moses the servant of the LORD” This is the more common title for Moses. See note at 1:1. It is an honorific title which was used for Joshua after his death. It may be the source of Paul’s favorite phrase “the slave of Christ.”

14:8 This refers to the majority report of the twelve spies recorded in Num. 13:25-29; 14:1-10.

▣ **“made the heart of the people melt with fear”** The VERB “melt” (BDB 587, KB 604, *Hiphil* PERFECT) is an idiom for fear and timidity (cf. Deut. 1:28; Josh. 5:1).

▣

NASB “but I followed the LORD my God fully”

NKJV “but I wholly followed the LORD my God”

NRSV “yet I wholeheartedly followed the LORD my God”

TEV “But I faithfully obeyed the LORD my God”

NJB “whereas I myself scrupulously obeyed Yahweh my God”

JPSOA “I was loyal to the LORD my God”

The VERB (BDB 509, KB 583, *Piel* PERFECT, cf. vv. 9,14; Num. 14:24; 32:11,12; Deut. 1:36; I Kgs. 11:6) is a testimony of Caleb’s faithfulness (i.e., wholly follow), even throughout the period where the other spies gave an evil report.

14:9 “So Moses swore on that day” (cf. Num. 34:24; Deut. 1:36).

▣ **“forever”** See Special Topic: Forever (*’Olam*) at 4:7.

14:10 “I am eighty-five years old today” He may have been been forty years old at the time he was the representative of Judah to spy out the land. Israel wandered thirty-eight years in the desert (cf. Deut. 2:14); apparently the conquest had taken seven more years.

14:11 “I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me” This is the same kind of testimony that Moses gives of himself at the age of one hundred and twenty (cf. Deut. 34:7).

▣ **“for going out and coming in”** This is an idiom (BDB 422 and 97, both *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCTS) for the strength and vitality needed for everyday life.

14:12 “give me this hill country” The VERB (BDB 678, 733, *Qal* IMPERATIVE) is a polite request to fulfill a previous promise of YHWH through Moses.

▣ **“Anakim”** This is another reference to the giants. The etymology may be “the long necks” (BDB 778, cf. 13:33). See note at 11:21. Caleb wanted the hard assignment! He fully believed and acted on God’s promises!

▣ **“perhaps the LORD will be with me”** This is a Hebrew idiom which does not refer to lack of faith, but is rather an expression of confidence that God will act appropriately.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:13-15

¹³So Joshua blessed him and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance. ¹⁴Therefore, Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite until this day, because he followed the LORD God of Israel fully. ¹⁵Now the name of Hebron was formerly Kiriath-arba; for Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim. Now the land had rest from war.

14:13 “Hebron” We learn from 21:11 that this is also a Levitical city which means that the Levitical cities were not totally inhabited by Levites. Hebron was the location of the giants who terrified the Israeli spies. Caleb, at eighty-five years of age, wanted this challenge and he believed God would help him.

14:14 “unto this day” This is another example of an editor. It is uncertain whether this editorial addition is a contemporary or later editor.

14:15 “Kiriath-arba” This city is also known as the site of the oaks of Mamre (cf. Gen. 13:18; 35:27). “Kiriath” means “a city of four” (BDB 900). Some have associated this with a confederation of four different cities or groups, while others relate it to the four different stages of the moon. “Arba” is the father of Anak, one of the giants (cf. Josh. 15:13, 21:11).

JOSHUA 15

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Territory of Judah	The Land of Judah	The Territory Assigned to Judah	The Territory Assigned to Judah	The Tribe of Judah
15:1-12	15:1-12	15:1-12	15:1-4 15:5a 15:5b-12a 15:12b	15:1-4 15:5 15:6-11 15:12
	Caleb Occupies Hebron and Debir		Calem Conquers Hebron and Debir	The Calebites Occupy the Territory of Hebron
15:13-19	15:13-19	15:13-19	15:13-19	15:13-19
Cities of Judah	The Cities of Judah		The Cities of Judah	
15:20	15:20-32	15:20-32	15:20-32	15:20 Names of Places Owned by Judah
15:21-32				15:21a 15:21b-32
15:33-36	15:33-47	15:33-36	15:33-36	15:33-36
15:37-41		15:37-41	15:37-41	15:37-41
15:42-44		15:42-44	15:42-44	15:42-44
15:45-46		15:45-46	15:45-46	15:45-47
15:47		15:47	15:47	
15:48-51	15:48-60	15:48-51	15:48-51	15:48-51
15:52-54		15:52-54	15:52-54	15:52-54
15:55-57		15:55-57	15:55-57	15:55-56
15:58-59		15:58-59	15:58-59	15:58-59a 15:59b
15:60		15:60	15:60	15:60
15:61-62	15:61-63	15:61-62	15:61-62	15:61-62
15:63		15:63	15:63	15:63

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1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

Several items in Joshua point toward a contemporary date (in the day that Joshua lived).

- A. The ancient Canaanite names of cities are preserved.
 1. Baalah (Kiriath-jearim) - 15:9
 2. Kiriath-sannah (Debir) - 15:49
 3. Kiriath-arba (Hebron) - 15:54
- B. Canaanites were still in control of
 1. Gezer - 16:10
 2. Jebus - 18:28
- C. Sidon, not Tyre, is listed as the main city of Phoenicia (cf. 13:4,6)

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:1-12

¹Now the lot for the tribe of the sons of Judah according to their families reached the border of Edom, southward to the wilderness of Zin at the extreme south. ²Their south border was from the lower end of the Salt Sea, from the bay that turns to the south. ³Then it proceeded southward to the ascent of Akrabbim and continued to Zin, then went up by the south of Kadesh-barnea and continued to Hezron, and went up to Addar and turned about to Karka. ⁴It continued to Azmon and proceeded to the brook of Egypt, and the border ended at the sea. This shall be your south border. ⁵The east border *was* the Salt Sea, as far as the mouth of the Jordan. And the border of the north side was from the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan. ⁶Then the border went up to Beth-hoglah, and continued on the north of Beth-arabah, and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben. ⁷The

border went up to Debir from the valley of Achor, and turned northward toward Gilgal which is opposite the ascent of Adummim, which is on the south of the valley; and the border continued to the waters of En-shemesh and it ended at En-rogel. ⁸Then the border went up the valley of Ben-hinnom to the slope of the Jebusite on the south (that is, Jerusalem); and the border went up to the top of the mountain which is before the valley of Hinnom to the west, which is at the end of the valley of Rephaim toward the north. ⁹From the top of the mountain the border curved to the spring of the waters of Nephtoah and proceeded to the cities of Mount Ephron, then the border curved to Baalah (that is, Kiriath-jearim). ¹⁰The border turned about from Baalah westward to Mount Seir, and continued to the slope of Mount Jearim on the north (that is, Chesalon), and went down to Beth-shemesh and continued through Timnah. ¹¹The border proceeded to the side of Ekron northward. Then the border curved to Shikkeron and continued to Mount Baalah and proceeded to Jabneel, and the border ended at the sea. ¹²The west border *was* at the Great Sea, even *its* coastline. This is the border around the sons of Judah according to their families.

15:1 “Now the lot for the tribe of the sons of Judah according to their families” The tribe of Simeon was incorporated very early into the tribe of Judah and lost all of its identity (cf. 19:1-9).

▣ **“Edom”** This refers to the nation east of the Jordan which came from the descendants of Esau. The basic meaning is “red” (BDB 10).

The term “south” (BDB 616) is Teman, which is the same term as the name of one of Edom’s major cities.

▣ **“Wilderness of Zin”** This should not be confused with the Wilderness of Sin, which is located in the southern part of the Sinai peninsula. This wilderness is in the northern part of the Sinai peninsula in which Kadesh-barnea is located (cf. Num. 34:2-5).

15:3 “Akrabbim” This is the name for “scorpions” (BDB 785). The boundaries of the Promised Land are given in Numbers 34 (cf. Num. 34:4). This pass was part of the unconquered Amorite territory in Jdgs. 1:36.

15:4 “the brook of Egypt” The term “brook” (BDB 636) is “wadi,” which denotes a river bed or channel which is dry part of the year.

Water (i.e., rivers, wadis, lakes, streams, oceans) were often used as boundaries. This one is the most southern boundary of the Promised Land and Egypt (here the southern boundary of Judah, cf. Num. 34:5).

Other natural barriers or topological distinctives, like valleys, mountain ranges, plains, were also used as boundary markers.

15:6 “the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben” We know nothing about this young man or why a memorial stone was raised for him. It is surely possible that this was a boundary marker and not a memorial (cf. 18:17).

15:7 “Gilgal” This does not refer to the first Israeli campsite (cf. 4:19). It is possible that it should be translated “Geliath” (cf. 18:17), because this location is also related to En-shemesh.

▣ **“En-shemesh and En-rogel”** These were two springs (BDB 745) which seem to be located on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem.

15:8 “the valley of Ben-hinnom . . . the valley of Hinnom” This is the place where the fertility fire god, Molech, was worshiped. It was just outside the city of Jerusalem (Jebus, cf. v. 63) to the south. This is the place which later the Jews turned into a garbage dump and which Jesus used as His metaphor to describe Hell (Gehenna).

SPECIAL TOPIC: WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

I. Old Testament

- A. All humans go to *She'ol* (etymology uncertain, BDB 1066), which is a way of referring to death or the grave, mostly in Wisdom Literature and Isaiah. In the OT it was a shadowy, conscious, but joyless, existence (cf. Job 10:21-22; 38:17; Ps. 107:10,14).
- B. *She'ol* characterized
 - 1. associated with God's judgment (fire), Deut. 32:22
 - 2. associated with punishment even before Judgment Day, Ps. 18:4-5
 - 3. associated with *Abaddon* (destruction), also open to God, Job 26:6; Ps. 139:8; Amos 9:2
 - 4. associated with “the Pit” (grave), Ps.16:10; Isa. 14:15; Ezek. 31:15-17
 - 5. wicked descend alive into *She'ol*, Num. 16:30,33; Ps. 55:15
 - 6. often personified as an animal with a large mouth, Num. 16:30; Isa. 5:14; 14:9; Hab. 2:5
 - 7. people there are called *Repha'im*, Isa. 14:9-11

II. New Testament

- A. The Hebrew *She'ol* is translated by the Greek *Hades* (the unseen world)
- B. *Hades* characterized
 - 1. refers to death, Matt. 16:18
 - 2. linked to death, Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13-14
 - 3. often analogous to the place of permanent punishment (*Gehenna*), Matt. 11:23 (OT quote); Luke 10:15; 16:23-24
 - 4. often analogous to the grave, Luke 16:23
- C. Possibly divided (rabbis)
 - 1. righteous part called paradise (really another name for heaven, cf. II Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7), Luke 23:43
 - 2. wicked part called *Tartarus*, II Pet. 2:4, a holding place for evil angels (cf. Gen. 6; I Enoch)
- D. *Gehenna*
 - 1. Reflects the OT phrase, “the valley of the sons of Hinnom” (south of Jerusalem). It was the place where the Phoenician fire god *Molech* (BDB 574) was worshiped by child sacrifice (cf. II Kgs. 16:3; 21:6; II Chr. 28:3; 33:6), which was forbidden in Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5
 - 2. Jeremiah changed it from a place of pagan worship into a site of YHWH's judgment (cf. Jer. 7:32; 19:6-7). It became the place of fiery, eternal judgment in I Enoch 90:26-27 and Sib. 1:103.
 - 3. The Jews of Jesus' day were so appalled by their ancestors' participation in pagan worship by child sacrifice, that they turned this area into the garbage dump for Jerusalem. Many of Jesus' metaphors for eternal judgment came from this landfill (fire, smoke, worms, stench, cf. Mark 9:44,46). The term *Gehenna* is used only by Jesus (except in James 3:6).
 - 4. Jesus' usage of *Gehenna*
 - a. fire, Matt. 5:22; 18:9; Mark 9:43

- b. permanent, Mark 9:48 (Matt. 25:46)
 - c. place of destruction (both soul and body), Matt. 10:28
 - d. paralleled to *She'ol*, Matt. 5:29-30; 18:9
 - b. characterizes the wicked as “sons of hell,” Matt. 23:15
 - c. result of judicial sentence, Matt. 23:33; Luke 12:5
 - d. parallel to the second death (cf. Rev. 2:11; 20:6,14) or the lake of fire (cf. Matt. 13:42,50; Rev. 19:20; 20:10,14-15; 21:8). It is possible the lake of fire becomes the permanent dwelling place of humans (from *She'ol*) and evil angels (from *Tartarus*, II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6, or the abyss, cf. Luke 8:31; Rev. 9:1-10; 20:1,3).
 - e. designed not for humans, but for Satan and his angels, Matt. 25:41
- E. It is possible, because of the overlap of *She'ol*, *Hades*, and *Gehenna* that
- 1. originally all humans went to *She'ol/Hades*
 - 2. their experience there (good/ bad) is exacerbated after Judgment Day, but the place of the wicked remains the same (this is why the KJV translated *Hades* [grave] as *Gehenna* [hell]).
 - 3. only NT text to mention torment before Judgment is the parable of Luke 16:19-31 (Lazarus and the Rich Man). *She'ol* is also described as a place of punishment now (cf. Deut. 32:22; Ps. 18:1-5). However, one cannot establish a doctrine on a parable.

III. Intermediate state between death and resurrection

- A. The NT does not teach the “immortality of the soul,” which is one of several ancient views of the afterlife.
- 1. human souls exist before their physical life
 - 2. human souls are eternal before and after physical death
 - 3. the physical body is often seen as a prison, and at death as a release back to pre-existent state
- B. The NT hints at a disembodied state between death and resurrection
- 1. Jesus speaks of a division between body and soul, Matt. 10:28
 - 2. Abraham may have a body now, Mark 12:26-27; Luke 16:23
 - 3. Moses and Elijah have physical bodies at the transfiguration, Matthew 17
 - 4. Paul asserts that at the Second Coming the souls with Christ will get their new bodies first, II Thess. 4:13-18
 - 5. Paul asserts that believers get their new spiritual bodies on Resurrection Day, I Cor. 15:23,52
 - 6. Paul asserts that believers do not go to *Hades*, but at death are with Jesus, II Cor. 5:6,8; Phil. 1:23. Jesus overcame death and took the righteous to heaven with Him, I Pet. 3:18-22.

IV. Heaven

- A. This term is used in three senses in the Bible.
- 1. the atmosphere above the earth, Gen. 1:1,8; Isa. 42:5; 45:18
 - 2. the starry heavens, Gen. 1:14; Deut. 10:14; Ps. 148:4; Heb. 4:14; 7:26
 - 3. the place of God’s throne, Deut. 10:14; I Kgs. 8:27; Ps. 148:4; Eph. 4:10; Heb. 9:24 (third heaven, II Cor. 12:2)
- B. The Bible does not reveal much about the afterlife, probably because fallen humans have no way or capacity to understand (cf. I Cor. 2:9).

C. Heaven is both a place (cf. John 14:2-3) and a person (cf. II Cor. 5:6,8). Heaven may be a restored Garden of Eden (Gen. 1-2; Rev. 21-22). The earth will be cleansed and restored (cf. Acts 3:21; Rom. 8:21; II Pet. 3:10). The image of God (Gen. 1:26-27) is restored in Christ. Now the intimate fellowship of the Garden of Eden is possible again.

However, this may be metaphorical (heaven as a huge, cubed city of Rev. 21:9-27) and not literal. I Corinthians 15 describes the difference between the physical body and the spiritual body as the seed to the mature plant. Again, I Cor. 2:9 (a quote from Isa. 64:6 and 65:17) is a great promise and hope! I know that when we see Him we will be like Him (cf. I John 3:2).

V. Helpful resources

A. William Hendriksen, *The Bible On the Life Hereafter*

B. Maurice Rawlings, *Beyond Death's Door*

▣ **“Rephaim”** See notes at 11:21.

15:9 “Baalah” This seems to be the feminine form for the term *baal*, and it may mean “mistress.” It was the older name of Kiriath-jearim.

15:10 “Mount Seir” This means “rough,” “hairy,” or “shaggy” (BDB 973). There are several different sites by this name. This does not refer to Mt. Seir in Edom, but a hill close to Jerusalem.

▣ **“Beth-shemesh”** This means “house of the sun” (BDB 112, cf. I Sam. 6:9,12,13,15,19,20; I Kgs. 4:9; II Kgs. 14:13). Many believe that this refers to sun worship. There are several cities by this name.

▣ **“Timnah”** This was a town which was later associated with the exploits of Samson.

15:11 “Ekron” This was one of the five main Philistine walled cities (cf. 15:45-47). Apparently Judah never fully captured it or any of the main cities on the plain where chariot forces were used. See NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 568-569.

15:12 “the Great Sea” This refers to the Mediterranean Ocean.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:13-19

¹³ Now he gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh a portion among the sons of Judah, according to the command of the LORD to Joshua, *namely, Kiriath-arba, Arba being the father of Anak (that is, Hebron).* ¹⁴ Caleb drove out from there the three sons of Anak: Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmi, the children of Anak. ¹⁵ Then he went up from there against the inhabitants of Debir; now the name of Debir formerly was Kiriath-sepher. ¹⁶ And Caleb said, "The one who attacks Kiriath-sepher and captures it, I will give him Achsah my daughter as a wife." ¹⁷ Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, captured it; so he gave him Achsah his daughter as a wife. ¹⁸ It came about that when she came to him, she persuaded him to ask her father for a field. So she alighted from the donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What do you want?" ¹⁹ Then she said, "Give me a blessing; since you have given me the land of the Negev, give me also springs of water." So he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

15:13-19 This describes the fall of Hebron to Caleb (cf. 11:21-22; 14:13-15; 15:13-19; Jdgs. 1:16-21).

15:14 “Anak” See notes at 11:21.

15:15 “Kiriath-sepher” This meant “city of scribes” (BDB 900, cf. Jdgs. 1:11,12). Apparently it was the location of a school which trained scribes in writing and recording within the Canaanite culture.

15:17 “Othniel” He was Caleb’s younger brother. He later became a judge (cf. Jdgs. 1:13; 3:9).

▣ **“son of Kenza”** (cf. 14:6,14).

15:18

NASB, NJB “so she alighted from the donkey”

NKJV, NRSV,

REV “so she dismounted from *her* donkey”

TEV “she got down from her donkey”

NJB “as she sat on the ass, she broke wind”

The VERB’S (BDB 856, KB 1038, cf. Jdgs. 1:14) meaning is disputed. In Jdgs. 4:21 it is used of Jael driving the tent peg through Sisera’s head into the ground.

Whatever it meant, it was an idiom for getting someone’s attention (i.e., a noise, a gesture). The KB 1038 has “clap one’s hands.”

15:19 This verse describes the bridal gift of Caleb to his daughter (Achsah) and brother (Othniel). Notice the number of times the VERB “give” (BDB 678, KB 733) is used.

1. *Qal* IMPERATIVE
2. *Qal* PERFECT
3. *Qal* PERFECT
4. *Qal* IMPERFECT

▣ The Negev (i.e., “south country,” BDB 616) is very dry. The daughter knew what she was doing! This account is retold at the beginning of Judges (cf. 1:11-15).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:21-32

²¹Now the cities at the extremity of the tribe of the sons of Judah toward the border of Edom in the south were Kabzeel and Eder and Jagur,

²²and Kinah and Dimonah and Adadah,

²³and Kedesh and Hazor and Ithnan,

²⁴Ziph and Telem and Bealoth,

²⁵and Hazor-hadattah and Kerioth-hezron (that is, Hazor),

²⁶Amam and Shema and Moladah,

²⁷and Hazar-gaddah and Heshmon and Beth-pelet,

²⁸and Hazar-shual and Beersheba and Biziothiah,

²⁹Baalath and Iim and Ezem,

³⁰and Eltolad and Chesil and Hormah,

³¹and Ziklag and Madmannah and Sansannah,

³²and Lebaath and Shilhim and Ain and Rimmon; in all, twenty-nine cities with their villages.

15:21-32 This names the cities located in the far south (Negev).

15:25 “Kerioth-hezron” This village is often associated with Judas Iscariot (“man of Kerioth”), but this is only one of several other possible meanings of “Iscariot.”

Although NASB and RSV (NRSV) translate this as the name of one village, the MT has an accent mark between them, which denotes two cities. This would have reflected the tradition received by the Masoretic scholars.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:33-36

³³In the lowland: Eshtaol and Zorah and Ashnah,
³⁴and Zanoah and En-gannim, Tappuah and Enam,
³⁵Jarmuth and Adullam, Socoh and Azekah,
³⁶and Shaaraim and Adithaim and Gederah and Gederothaim; fourteen cities with their villages.

15:33-47 This names the cities located in the lowlands. Verses 33-36 were in the northeastern coastal plain, 37-41 in the middle, 42-44 in the southern, and 45-47 in the Philistine coastal area. This section may have a separate source because its form is different from the rest of the lists of cities. These lists seem to reflect a government registry.

15:34 “Tappuah” This term means “apple tree” (BDB 656, cf. 12:17; 16:8; 17:8).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:37-41

³⁷Zenan and Hadashah and Migdal-gad,
³⁸and Dilean and Mizpeh and Joktheel,
³⁹Lachish and Bozkath and Eglon,
⁴⁰and Cabbon and Lahmas and Chitlish,
⁴¹and Gederoth, Beth-dagon and Naamah and Makkedah; sixteen cities with their villages.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:42-44

⁴²Libnah and Ether and Ashan,
⁴³and Iphtah and Ashnah and Nezib,
⁴⁴and Keilah and Achzib and Mareshah; nine cities with their villages.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:45-46

⁴⁵Ekron, with its towns and its villages;
⁴⁶from Ekron even to the sea, all that were by the side of Ashdod, with their villages.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:47

⁴⁷Ashdod, its towns and its villages; Gaza, its towns and its villages; as far as the brook of Egypt and the Great Sea, even its coastline.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:48-51

⁴⁸ In the hill country: Shamir and Jattir and Socoh,
⁴⁹ and Dannah and Kiriath-sannah (that is, Debir),
⁵⁰ and Anab and Esstemoh and Anim,
⁵¹ and Goshen and Holon and Giloh; eleven cities with their villages.

15:48-60 This names the cities located in the hill country.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:52-54

⁵² Arab and Dumah and Eshan,
⁵³ and Janum and Beth-tappuah and Aphekah,
⁵⁴ and Humtah and Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), and Zior; nine cities with their villages.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:55-57

⁵⁵ Maon, Carmel and Ziph and Juttah,
⁵⁶ and Jezreel and Jokdeam and Zanoah,
⁵⁷ Kain, Gibeah and Timnah; ten cities with their villages.

15:56 “Jezreel” This place name means “God sows” (BDB 283). It is used of two villages.

1. tribal allocation of Judah, Josh. 15:56
2. tribal allocation of Issachar, Josh. 19:18

15:57 “Gibeah” There seem to be several cities by this name (“hill,” BDB 149 II).

1. in the tribal allocation of Judah in the hill country, Josh. 15:57
2. in the tribal allocation of Benjamin, Josh. 18:28
3. in the tribal allocation of Ephraim, where Eleazar (Aaron’s son) was buried on a hill, Josh. 24:33

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:58-59

⁵⁸ Halhul, Beth-zur and Gedor,
⁵⁹ and Maarath and Beth-anoth and Eltekon; six cities with their villages.

15:59 The Septuagint has an additional list of eleven cities not found in the MT. It is uncertain whether this reflects a manuscript error in the MT or extraneous material added by the translators of the LXX.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:60

⁶⁰ Kiriath-baal (that is, Kiriath-jearim), and Rabbah; two cities with their villages.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:61-62

⁶¹ In the wilderness: Beth-arabah, Middin and Secacah,
⁶² and Nibshan and the City of Salt and Engedi; six cities with their villages.

15:61-62 This names the cities located in the wilderness.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:63

⁶³Now as for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the sons of Judah could not drive them out; so the Jebusites live with the sons of Judah at Jerusalem until this day.

15:63 “the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the sons of Judah could not drive them out” The Jebusites (BDB 101) seem to have held on to the fortress of the city of Jebus (cf. Jdgs. 1:8) until the time of David. The VERBAL (BDB 439, KB 441) is a *Hiphil* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT, cf. Jdgs. 1:21,29,30,31,32,33.

▣ **“until this day”** This use of the phrase shows that the scribe lived and wrote before David’s day. Because Moses grew up and was trained in Egypt, which explains why Jewish scribes felt free to upgrade the literary works of Israel. From archaeology it is obvious that Mesopotamian scribes never changed their national texts whereas Egyptian scribes felt free to upgrade their national/religious texts. See notes at 7:26.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why is the division of the land so important to the Jewish people?
2. Did the Israelites fully occupy their tribal allocations?
3. Who are the Nephilim and Anakim?
4. What was the lot and how did it work?
5. Describe the Canaanite fertility religion.

JOSHUA 16

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NKB
Territory of Ephraim	Ephraim and West Manasseh	The Territory of the Joseph Tribes (16:1-17:18)	Territory Assigned to Ephraim and West Manasseh	The Tribe of Ephraim
16:1-3	16:1-4	16:1-3	16:1-3	16:1-3
16:4-10	The Land of Ephraim	16:4	16:4	16:4
	16:5-10	16:5-10	16:5-10	16:5-8a 16:5b-10

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR’S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

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Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. xvi). Compare your subject divisions with the five modern translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author’s intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:1-3

¹Then the lot for the sons of Joseph went from the Jordan at Jericho to the waters of Jericho on the east into the wilderness, going up from Jericho through the hill country to Bethel. ²It went from Bethel to Luz, and continued to the border of the Archites at Ataroth. ³It went down westward to the territory of the Japhletites, as far as the territory of lower Beth-horon even to Gezer, and it ended at the sea.

16:1 “the lot” See note at 14:2.

16:2 “Bethel to Luz” This text implies that Bethel and Luz are two different cities, but other texts state they are different names for the same city (cf. 18:13; Gen. 28:19; 35:6; Jdgs. 1:23).

▣ **“the Archites”** One of David’s counselors was from this family group (cf. II Sam. 15:32; 16:16), but this is all moderns know of this non-Israelite clan (BDB 74). The same is true for the Japhletites (BDB 812).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:4-10

⁴The sons of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, received their inheritance. ⁵Now *this* was the territory of the sons of Ephraim according to their families: the border of their inheritance eastward was Ataroth-addar, as far as upper Beth-horon. ⁶Then the border went westward at Michmethath on the north, and the border turned about eastward to Taanath-shiloh and continued *beyond* it to the east of Janoah. ⁷It went down from Janoah to Ataroth and to Naarah, then reached Jericho and came out at the Jordan. ⁸From Tappuah the border continued westward to the brook of Kanah, and it ended at the sea. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Ephraim according to their families, ⁹*together* with the cities which were set apart for the sons of Ephraim in the midst of the inheritance of the sons of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages. ¹⁰But they did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, so the Canaanites live in the midst of Ephraim to this day, and they became forced laborers.

16:4 “the sons of Joseph” Joseph had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, by his Egyptian wife. Jacob adopted these boys as his own and gave Joseph the double inheritance of the firstborn son.

16:6 “Taanath-shiloh” This (BDB 1061) is not the site of the tabernacle in Samuel’s day, but another city (so say Eusebius and Jerome).

16:10 This verse is meant to express the disobedience of these large tribes (cf. Num. 35:55; Jdgs. 1:27,29,30,31,33,34). This was the common experience of all the tribes (cf. 17:13).

R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, makes a good point about this verse.

“If scholars had differentiated a little more closely in the past between occupation and subjugation, the picture of conquest as represented in Joshua would have emerged in far clearer focus than it did, and as a result there would have been no need to regard the initial narratives of Judges as historical at the expense of their counterparts in Joshua” (p. 677).

This quote is footnoted to another source, G. F. Moore, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges*, pp. 7-8.

▣ **“to this day”** This shows a later editor.

JOSHUA 17

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Territory of Manasseh	The Other Half-Tribe of Manasseh (West)	The Territory of the Joseph Tribes (16:1-17:18)	West Manasseh	The Tribes of Manasseh
17:1-6	17:1-2 17:3-13	17:1-2 17:3-6	17:1-6	17:1-6
17:7-13	More Land for Ephraim and Manasseh	17:7-13	17:7-13	17:7-13
17:14-18	17:14-18	17:14-18	Ephraim and West Manasseh Request More Land 17:14-18	Land Reclamation by the Sons of Joseph 17:14-18

**READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL**

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2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 17:1-6

¹Now *this* was the lot for the tribe of Manasseh, for he was the firstborn of Joseph. To Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead, were allotted Gilead and Bashan, because he was a man of war. ²So *the lot was made* for the rest of the sons of Manasseh according to their families: for the sons of Abiezer and for the sons of Helek and for the sons of Asriel and for the sons of Shechem and for the sons of Hephher and for the sons of Shemida; these *were* the male descendants of Manasseh the son of Joseph according to their families. ³However, Zelophehad, the son of Hephher, the son of Gilead,

the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, only daughters; and these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah. ⁴They came near before Eleazar the priest and before Joshua the son of Nun and before the leaders, saying, "The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brothers." So according to the command of the LORD he gave them an inheritance among their father's brothers. ⁵Thus there fell ten portions to Manasseh, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which is beyond the Jordan, ⁶because the daughters of Manasseh received an inheritance among his sons. And the land of Gilead belonged to the rest of the sons of Manasseh.

17:1 This refers to land on the eastern side of the Jordan, north of the plains of Moab.

▣ **“because he was a man of war”** Military heroes were honored and rewarded for their service.

▣ **“the father of Gilead”** The name (BDB 166) has several different references.

1. an area of land on the eastern side of Jordan between the Arnon and Yarmuck rivers, Gen. 31:21, 23,25; 37:25; Num. 32:1,26,29,39; Josh. 22:9
2. an Israelite of the tribe of Manasseh (apparently named after the land Moses gave his father, cf. Num. 32:40; Deut. 3:15), Num. 26:29,30
3. a clan from Gilead, son of Machir, Num. 26:29; 27:1; 36:1; Josh. 17:1-3

17:2 “Shechem” This term (BDB 1014), similar to Gilead, refers to a city and a person.

1. a city - Gen. 12:6; 33:18; Josh. 21:21
2. a person
 - a. Gen. 33:19; 34:2,4,6,8,11,13,18,20,24,26; Josh. 24:32
 - b. Num. 26:31; Josh. 17:2; I Chr. 7:19

See “Shechem” in NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 1213-1216; or ABD, vol. 5, pp. 1174-1186

17:3-4 See Numbers 26:33; 27:1-11; 36:2-4.

17:5-6 This explains why the tribe of Manasseh has land on both sides of the Jordan. It was the daughters who had no brothers who settled in Canaan.

Next to Judah, the largest land allotment went to Manasseh.

17:5

NASB, NKJV,

NRSV, NJB “portions”

TEV, REB,

NET “shares”

JPSOA

“districts”

This term (BDB 286) originally meant “a rope or cord which was used to measure.” Here it takes on a metaphorical extension for the land allotted to the tribes.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 17:7-13

⁷The border of Manasseh ran from Asher to Michmethath which was east of Shechem; then the border went southward to the inhabitants of En-tappuah. ⁸The land of Tappuah belonged to Manasseh, but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh *belonged* to the sons of Ephraim. ⁹The border went down to the brook of Kanah, southward of the brook (these cities *belonged* to Ephraim among the cities of Manasseh), and the border of Manasseh *was* on the north side of the brook and it ended

at the sea. ¹⁰The south side *belonged* to Ephraim and the north side to Manasseh, and the sea was their border; and they reached to Asher on the north and to Issachar on the east. ¹¹In Issachar and in Asher, Manasseh had Beth-shean and its towns and Ibleam and its towns, and the inhabitants of Dor and its towns, and the inhabitants of En-dor and its towns, and the inhabitants of Taanach and its towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and its towns, the third is Napheth. ¹²But the sons of Manasseh could not take possession of these cities, because the Canaanites persisted in living in that land. ¹³It came about when the sons of Israel became strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but they did not drive them out completely.

17:7 “southward” This is the term “Teman” (BDB 411 I), which denotes a compass direction. Israel marked her directions based on a person facing east (the tabernacle faced east), therefore, the south was on the left hand and the north on the right hand. Not all nations give directions in the same way. Egypt based its compass directions on a person facing south (i.e., to the head waters of the Nile, the source of all life in Egypt).

The boundaries of Ephraim are found in both Josh. 16:5-10 and 17:7-12.

17:9 The boundaries between the tribes were somewhat fluid!

17:11

NASB “the third is Napheth”
NKJV “three hill regions”
NRSV “(the third is Naphath)”
TEV “and their surrounding towns”
NJB “the Three of the Slopes”

This phrase is uncertain in Hebrew. The NKJV and NJB assume the word is a *hapax legomenon* of “hill” or “height” (BDB 632, cf. 12:23). The Jewish Publication Society of America translation has “these comprised three regions.” The REB has “(The third is a district of Dor).”

17:12-13 This is parallel to 16:10 and Jdgs. 1:28. Moses’ commands in Deut. 20:10-18, to allow defeated people to become servants, only applied to cities outside of Canaan. These verses reveal the disobedience of the larger tribes (cf. Num. 33:55). Even though the Canaanites were made servants, their fertility worship polluted and weakened the worship of YHWH. This would ultimately result in the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles.

17:13 “they did not drive them out completely” This phrase is a combination of a *Hiphil* INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and a *Hiphil* PERFECT (BDB 439, KB 441), which denotes completion. Here is negated (an emphatic negation).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 17:14-18

¹⁴Then the sons of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, “Why have you given me only one lot and one portion for an inheritance, since I am a numerous people whom the LORD has thus far blessed?”
¹⁵Joshua said to them, “If you are a numerous people, go up to the forest and clear a place for yourself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the Rephaim, since the hill country of Ephraim is too narrow for you.”
¹⁶The sons of Joseph said, “The hill country is not enough for us, and all the Canaanites who live in the valley land have chariots of iron, both those who are in Beth-shean and its towns and those who are in the valley of Jezreel.”
¹⁷Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph, to Ephraim and Manasseh, saying, “You are a numerous people and have great power; you shall not have one lot *only*, ¹⁸but the

hill country shall be yours. For though it is a forest, you shall clear it, and to its farthest borders it shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, even though they have chariots of iron and though they are strong."

17:14-15 This may reflect their hope of receiving more land because Joshua was from their tribe. This land was not part of the allotment, but was available for the taking. This also shows how the tribes could get more land. This may explain part of the tribe of Dan's relocation to the north.

17:15 "Rephraim" See note at 11:21. The size of this people group is often emphasized (compare Gen. 15:20 with Deut. 1:10-11 and also Deut. 3:11).

17:16-17 These tribes (Ephraim and Manasseh) describe the enemies' strength in hopes of getting an extra allotment, but Joshua reminds them that they had claimed to be strong in numbers (part of the promised blessing of Deuteronomy 27-28). See Special Topic at 11:4 for comments on "chariots of iron."

17:16 "Jezreel" The name means "God sows" (BDB 283). Like several names in this list it can refer to a place and a person.

1. a place
 - a. city - Josh. 15:56; I Sam. 25:43
 - (1) in Judah, Josh. 19:18
 - (2) in Issachar,
 - b. valley - Josh. 17:16; Jdgs. 6:33
 - c. district - I Kgs. 21:23; II Kgs. 9:10,36,37
2. a person
 - a. I Chr. 4:3
 - b. Hosea 1:4

JOSHUA 18

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Rest of the Land Divided	The Remainder of the Land Divided	The Territory of Other Tribes	The Division of the Rest of the Land	The Land Survey for These Seven Tribes
18:1-7	18:1-7	18:1 18:2-7	18:1-7	18:1-7
18:8-10	18:8-10	18:8-10	18:8-10	18:8-9 18:10
	The Land of Benjamin		The Territory Assigned to Benjamin	The Tribe of Benjamin
18:11-20	18:11-20	18:11-20	18:11-20	18:11-14 18:15-20a 18:20b
Their Cities				The Towns of Benjamin
18:21-28	18:21-28	18:21-28	18:21-28	18:21 18:22-24 18:25-28a 18:28b

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1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 18:1-7

¹Then the whole congregation of the sons of Israel assembled themselves at Shiloh, and set up the tent of meeting there; and the land was subdued before them. ²There remained among the sons of Israel seven tribes who had not divided their inheritance. ³So Joshua said to the sons of Israel, "How long will you put off entering to take possession of the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you? ⁴Provide for yourselves three men from each tribe that I may send them, and that they may arise and walk through the land and write a description of it according to their inheritance; then they shall return to me. ⁵They shall divide it into seven portions; Judah shall stay in its territory on the south, and the house of Joseph shall stay in their territory on the north. ⁶You shall describe the land in seven divisions, and bring *the description* here to me. I will cast lots for you here before the LORD our God. ⁷For the Levites have no portion among you, because the priesthood of the LORD is their inheritance. Gad and Reuben and the half-tribe of Manasseh also have received their inheritance eastward beyond the Jordan, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them."

18:1 “Shiloh” This city is in the tribal allocation of Ephraim, north of Bethel. The tabernacle resided here from Joshua’s time to Samuel’s time (cf. Jdgs. 18:31) because this city was centrally located.

▣ **“the tent of meeting”** This is the first time this tent is mentioned specifically in Joshua, although its presence is assumed in 3:3 and 8:33. This refers to the special sacrificial place set up by YHWH (cf. Exodus 25-40), where He and His covenant people could ritually meet. In design it was not radically different from other portable Near Eastern worship centers (which is also true of Solomon’s temple, which is similar to Phoenician temples).

This was the home for the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies, where YHWH symbolically dwelt between the wings of the *cherubim* (the place where heaven and earth met).

▣ **“the land was subdued before them”** The VERB (BDB 461, KB 460, *Niphal* PERFECT) does not seem to truly describe the situation. See note at 16:10.

18:2-3 Apparently several tribes were not willing to take on the responsibility of capturing their own tribal allocations. The PARTICIPLE “put off” (BDB 951, KB 1276, *Hithpael* PARTICIPLE) means “to show oneself lazy” (lit. to relax or loosen, which means metaphorically to be slack, idle, or disheartened, cf. Prov. 18:9; 24:10).

18:3 “which the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you” For the Hebrew significance of “LORD” (YHWH) and “God” (*Elohim*) see Special Topic: Names for Deity at Josh. 1:1.

YHWH had clearly stated His intentions to Abraham (cf. Gen. 15:7,16; 13:15,17; 17:8) and reaffirmed them to Isaac (cf. Gen. 26:4) and Jacob (cf. Gen. 28:13-14). Moses had clearly stated YHWH’s intentions toward Israel (cf. Exod. 13:5,11; 32:13; 33:1; Deut. 1:7-8; 4:38,40; 5:31; 7:13; 8:1; 9:6; 11:9,17; 26:1,9; 32:52; 34:4; Josh. 1:2,3,6,11,13,15; 2:9,24; 18:3; 21:43; 23:13; 24:13). Many of these promises are linked to covenant obedience.

18:4 This verse has several commands from Joshua to the seven tribes who had not yet been allotted land.

1. “provide for yourselves three men from each tribe,” BDB 396, KB 393, *Qal* IMPERATIVE

2. “that I may send,” BDB 1018, KB 1511, *Qal* IMPERFECT, but in a COHORTATIVE sense (OTPG, p. 181)
3. “that they may arise,” BDB 877, KB 1086, *Qal* IMPERFECT, but in a JUSSIVE sense (OTPG, p. 181)
4. “walk through the land,” BDB 229, KB 246, *Hithpael* IMPERFECT, but in a JUSSIVE sense (OTPG, p. 181)
5. “write a description of it,” BDB 507, KB 503, *Qal* IMPERFECT, but in a JUSSIVE sense (OTPG, p. 181)
6. “then they shall return to me,” BDB 97, KB 112, *Qal* IMPERFECT, but in a JUSSIVE sense (OTPG, p. 181)

The command sense of these VERBS is confirmed by the series of IMPERATIVES, which reflect this verse in v. 8.

18:6 “I will cast lots for you before the LORD our God” The VERB (BDB 434, KB 436, *Qal* PERFECT) is related to “teach” (*Hiphil*). These lots were cast by Joshua, not the High Priest, so perhaps they were not the Urim and Thummim. Whatever they were and however they worked, they represented the expressed will of Israel’s God. This was a covenant act, both in method (lots) and result (land inheritance).

8:7 The Levites as a tribe took the place of the firstborn (cf. Exodus 13) in serving YHWH (cf. 13:14; Num. 18:1-32 and note at Josh. 13:33).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 18:8-10

⁸ Then the men arose and went, and Joshua commanded those who went to describe the land, saying, "Go and walk through the land and describe it, and return to me; then I will cast lots for you here before the LORD in Shiloh." ⁹So the men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities in seven divisions in a book; and they came to Joshua to the camp at Shiloh. ¹⁰And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD, and there Joshua divided the land to the sons of Israel according to their divisions.

18:8 These four IMPERATIVES relate to v. 4.

1. “go,” BDB 229, KB 246, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
2. “walk,” BDB 229, KB 246, *Hithpael* IMPERATIVE
3. “describe it,” BDB 507, KB 503, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
4. “return to me,” BDB 996, KB 1427, *Qal* IMPERATIVE

Joshua wants these remaining tribes to act on YHWH’s promises and possess their inheritance! The very act of these tribal representatives walking on the land was a symbol of possession (cf. Gen. 13:17; Num. 13:17-24).

18:9 It is obvious that the Israelites were literate. They must have had some schooling in Egypt or at least by their parents during the wilderness wandering period.

18:10 “Joshua cast lots for them” See Num. 34:16-29. For “lots” see note at 14:2.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 18:11-20

¹¹Now the lot of the tribe of the sons of Benjamin came up according to their families, and the territory of their lot lay between the sons of Judah and the sons of Joseph. ¹²Their border on the north side was from the Jordan, then the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north, and went up through the hill country westward, and it ended at the wilderness of Beth-aven. ¹³From there the

border continued to Luz, to the side of Luz (that is, Bethel) southward; and the border went down to Ataroth-addar, near the hill which *lies* on the south of lower Beth-horon. ¹⁴The border extended *from there* and turned round on the west side southward, from the hill which lies before Beth-horon southward; and it ended at Kiriath-baal (that is, Kiriath-jearim), a city of the sons of Judah. This was the west side. ¹⁵Then the south side *was* from the edge of Kiriath-jearim, and the border went westward and went to the fountain of the waters of Nephtoa. ¹⁶The border went down to the edge of the hill which is in the valley of Ben-hinnom, which is in the valley of Rephaim northward; and it went down to the valley of Hinnom, to the slope of the Jebusite southward, and went down to En-rogel. ¹⁷It extended northward and went to En-shemesh and went to Geliloth, which is opposite the ascent of Adummim, and it went down to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben. ¹⁸It continued to the side in front of the Arabah northward and went down to the Arabah. ¹⁹The border continued to the side of Beth-hoglah northward; and the border ended at the north bay of the Salt Sea, at the south end of the Jordan. This *was* the south border. ²⁰Moreover, the Jordan was its border on the east side. This was the inheritance of the sons of Benjamin, according to their families *and* according to its borders all around.

18:11 “Benjamin” This means “son of the right hand” (BDB 122). This is the tribe (the smallest tribe) of the first king, Saul, and the Apostle Paul (cf. Rom. 11:1; Phil. 3:5). Its land was between the powerful tribes of Judah to the south and Ephraim to the north.

18:12 “Beth-aven” This is a wordplay on a place name (“house of wealth,” BDB 20; “house of sorrow,” BDB 19; or “house of iniquity,” BDB 110), which came to be used of Bethel by Hosea (cf. 4:15; 5:8; 10:5). The place name occurs seven times in Joshua and refers to a place near the city of Bethel.

18:15

NASB “the border went westward and went to the fountain of”
NKJV “the border extended on the west and went out to the spring”
NRSV “the boundary goes from there to Ephron, to the springs of”
TEV “and went to the Springs of”
NJB “the boundaries went to Gasin and came out near the spring of”

This same boundary is described in 15:9. The Hebrew text has “and went westward” (cf. JPSOA).

18:17 “Geliloth” The Semitic root *gl* (i.e., Gilgal or Galilee) seems to refer to a cultic or sacred site formed by a circle of stones or a circular pile of stones (cf. Gen. 31:46; Josh. 7:26; 8:29; 18:17; II Sam. 18:17). The VERB *gll* (BDB 165,166) means “to roll” (Josh. 10:18).

This specific term (BDB 165), found only here in the OT, can mean

1. a region - Josh. 13:2; Ezek. 47:8; Joel 3:4
2. a city - Josh. 18:17; 22:10-11

▣ “the stone of Bohan” See note at 15:6.

18:19 “Beth-hoglah” This city is first mentioned in 15:6. The name means “place of the partridge” (BDB 111).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 18:21-28

²¹Now the cities of the tribe of the sons of Benjamin according to their families were Jericho and Beth-hoglah and Emek-keziz, ²²and Beth-arabah and Zemaraim and Bethel, ²³and Avvim and Parah

and Ophrah,²⁴ and Chephar-ammoni and Ophni and Geba; twelve cities with their villages.²⁵ Gibeon and Ramah and Beeroth,²⁶ and Mizpeh and Chephirah and Mozah,²⁷ and Rekem and Irpeel and Taralah,²⁸ and Zelah, Haeleph and the Jebusite (that is, Jerusalem), Gibeah, Kiriath; fourteen cities with their villages. This is the inheritance of the sons of Benjamin according to their families.

18:23 “Avvim” This plural term (BDB 732) may refer to the people of the southwestern coastal region (cf. 13:3; Deut. 2:23).

18:24 “Chephar-ammoni” This place name means “village of the Ammonites” (BDB 499 and 770).

18:27 “Irpeel” This place name means “God heals” (BDB 951), but its location is unknown. It is in the tribal allocation of Benjamin.

JOSHUA 19

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSB	TEV	NJB
Territory of Simeon	Simeon's Inheritance with Judah	Territory of Other Tribes (18:1-19:51)	The Territory Assigned to Simeon	The Tribe of Simeon
19:1-9	19:1-9	19:1-9	19:1-6 19:7-9	19:1-2 19:3-6 19:7-8a 19:8b-9
Territory of Zebulun	The Land of Zebulun		The Territory Assigned to Zebulun	The Tribe of Zebulun
19:10-16	19:10-16	19:10-16	19:10-16	19:10-15 19:16
Territory of Issachar	The Land of Issachar		The Territory Assigned to Issachar	The Tribe of Asher
19:17-23	19:17-23	19:17-23	19:17-23	19:17-22 19:23
Territory of Asher	The Land of Asher		The Territory Assigned to Asher	
19:24-31	19:24-31	19:24-31	19:24-31	19:24-31
Territory of Naphtali	The Land of Naphtali		The Territory Assigned to Naphtali	The Tribe of Nahptali
19:32-39	19:32-39	19:32-39	19:32-39	19:32-38 19:39
Territory of Dan	The Land of Dan		The Territory Assigned to Dan	The Tribe of Dan
19:40-48	19:40-48	19:40-48	19:40-48	19:40-46 19:47 19:48
	Joshua's Inheritance		The Final Appointment of the Land	
19:49-50	19:49-51	19:49-50	19:49-50	19:49-50
19:51		19:51	19:51	19:51

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. xvi). Compare your subject divisions with the five modern translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:1-9

¹Then the second lot fell to Simeon, to the tribe of the sons of Simeon according to their families, and their inheritance was in the midst of the inheritance of the sons of Judah. ²So they had as their inheritance Beersheba or Sheba and Moladah, ³and Hazar-shual and Balah and Ezem, ⁴and Eltolad and Bethul and Hormah, ⁵and Ziklag and Beth-marcaboth and Hazar-susah, ⁶and Beth-lebaoth and Sharuhem; thirteen cities with their villages; ⁷Ain, Rimmon and Ether and Ashan; four cities with their villages; ⁸and all the villages which were around these cities as far as Baalath-beer, Ramah of the Negev. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Simeon according to their families. ⁹The inheritance of the sons of Simeon *was taken* from the portion of the sons of Judah, for the share of the sons of Judah was too large for them; so the sons of Simeon received *an* inheritance in the midst of Judah's inheritance.

19:1 Part of Judah's land was given to Simeon. Simeon was incorporated early into Judah and lost its identity. It is not even listed in Moses' blessings to the tribes in Deuteronomy 33.

19:2 "Beersheba" This means "well of oath" (BDB 92). It is one of the most southern cities. It was part of the idiomatic phrase, "from Dan to Beersheba" which described the Promised Land.

▣ **"Sheba"** In 15:26, it is called "Shema" which is the Hebrew word "to hear so as to do" (BDB 1035). It is the name of the famous creedal statement of Deut. 6:4-5 (BDB 1033). The NKJV and the JPSOA translations think it was another way of referring to Beersheba or possibly a scribal error in writing the last of the previous city's name twice. In v. 6 it says 13 cities, but there are 14 names.

19:4 "Bethul" This city ("man of God," BDB 143) is also in the allocation of Judah (cf. I Sam. 30:27; I Chr. 4:30, spelled "Bethuel").

19:9 This verse explains why Simeon received part of Judah's land inheritance and also that Judah was having trouble possessing its land.

Simeon's allotted area was totally surrounded by Judah's allotment. In time Simeon disappears as an individual tribe. They are not even listed in Moses' blessings of Deuteronomy 33. In I Kgs. 19:3 Beersheba (cf. v. 2) is said to belong to Judah.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:10-16

¹⁰Now the third lot came up for the sons of Zebulun according to their families. And the territory of their inheritance was as far as Sarid. ¹¹Then their border went up to the west and to Maralah, it then touched Dabbesheth and reached to the brook that is before Jokneam. ¹²Then it turned from Sarid to the east toward the sunrise as far as the border of Chisloth-tabor, and it proceeded to Daberath and up to Japhia. ¹³From there it continued eastward toward the sunrise to Gath-hepher, to Eth-kazin, and it proceeded to Rimmon which stretches to Neah. ¹⁴The border circled around it on the north to Hannathon, and it ended at the valley of Iphtahel. ¹⁵*Included also were Kattah and Nahalal and Shimron and Idalah and Bethlehem; twelve cities with their villages.* ¹⁶*This was the inheritance of the sons of Zebulun according to their families, these cities with their villages.*

19:13 “Gath-hepher” This is the birthplace of the prophet Jonah (cf. II Kgs. 14:25), about three miles northeast of Nazareth.

19:15 “Bethlehem” This means “house of bread” (BDB 111, cf. Jdgs. 12:8,10); it was about ten miles west of Nazareth. It was a common name. This is not the one in Judah (i.e., Gen. 35:19; 48:7; Ruth 1:1-2,19; Micah 5:2).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:17-23

¹⁷The fourth lot fell to Issachar, to the sons of Issachar according to their families. ¹⁸Their territory was to Jezreel and *included* Chesulloth and Shunem, ¹⁹and Hapharaim and Shion and Anaharath, ²⁰and Rabbith and Kishion and Ebez, ²¹and Remeth and En-gannim and En-haddah and Beth-pazzez. ²²The border reached to Tabor and Shahazumah and Beth-shemesh, and their border ended at the Jordan; sixteen cities with their villages. ²³*This was the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Issachar according to their families, the cities with their villages.*

19:22 “Beth-shemesh” This name means “sun-temple” (BDB 112). This is not the same as the city by the same name in the tribal allocation of Judah (cf. 15:10) or in Naphtali (v. 38).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:24-31

²⁴Now the fifth lot fell to the tribe of the sons of Asher according to their families. ²⁵Their territory was Helkath and Hali and Beten and Achshaph, ²⁶and Allammelech and Amad and Mishal; and it reached to Carmel on the west and to Shihor-libnath. ²⁷It turned toward the east to Beth-dagon and reached to Zebulun, and to the valley of Iphtahel northward to Beth-emek and Neiel; then it proceeded on north to Cabul, ²⁸and Ebron and Rehob and Hammon and Kanah, as far as Great Sidon. ²⁹The border turned to Ramah and to the fortified city of Tyre; then the border turned to Hosah, and it ended at the sea by the region of Achzib. ³⁰*Included also were Ummah, and Aphek and Rehob; twenty-two cities with their villages.* ³¹*This was the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Asher according to their families, these cities with their villages.*

19:27 “east. . .south” The ancient Hebrews denoted compass directions by facing “east” (the rising sun). The tabernacle faced east. It became a symbol of help and hope. The Messiah will come from the east.

As a person faces east, the right hand points south and the left hand points north. North came to be a symbol of invasion and bad news because the Mesopotamian powers always invaded from the coastal plain through Phoenicia (because of the desert to the east of Palestine).

▣ **“Beth-dagon”** This means “house of Dagon” (BDB 111), who was the Philistine fertility god (i.e., grain god).

19:28 “the Great Sidon” This shows the antiquity of the text because in the future Sidon is replaced by Tyre as Phoenicia’s capital (cf. v. 29).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:32-39

³²The sixth lot fell to the sons of Naphtali; to the sons of Naphtali according to their families. ³³Their border was from Heleph, from the oak in Zaanannim and Adami-nekeb and Jabneel, as far as Lakkum, and it ended at the Jordan. ³⁴Then the border turned westward to Aznoth-tabor and proceeded from there to Hukkok; and it reached to Zebulun on the south and touched Asher on the west, and to Judah at the Jordan toward the east. ³⁵The fortified cities were Ziddim, Zer and Hammath, Rakkath and Chinnereth, ³⁶and Adamah and Ramah and Hazor, ³⁷and Kedesh and Edrei and En-hazor, ³⁸and Yiron and Migdal-el, Horem and Beth-anath and Beth-shemesh; nineteen cities with their villages. ³⁹This was the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Naphtali according to their families, the cities with their villages.

19:33 “from the oak” Trees often were associated with holy sites (cf. Gen. 13:18; 14:13; 18:1; 21:33; 35:4; Jdgs. 4:5,11; 6:11,19; 9:6,37; ISam. 10:3), possibly because of the presence of underground water which was so valuable to desert and semi-desert peoples.

19:38 “Beth-anath” This name means “temple of Anath” (BDB 112, cf. Jdgs. 1:32). Anath was a fertility goddess.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:40-48

⁴⁰The seventh lot fell to the tribe of the sons of Dan according to their families. ⁴¹The territory of their inheritance was Zorah and Eshtaol and Ir-shemesh, ⁴²and Shaalabbin and Aijalon and Ithlah, ⁴³and Elon and Timnah and Ekron, ⁴⁴and Eltekeh and Gibbethon and Baalath, ⁴⁵and Jehud and Bene-berak and Gath-rimmon, ⁴⁶and Me-jarkon and Rakkon, with the territory over against Joppa. ⁴⁷The territory of the sons of Dan proceeded beyond them; for the sons of Dan went up and fought with Leshem and captured it. Then they struck it with the edge of the sword and possessed it and settled in it; and they called Leshem Dan after the name of Dan their father. ⁴⁸This was the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages.

19:47 This refers to the movement of Dan to the north (cf. Judges 17-18). Joshua told Ephraim earlier that if they wanted more land they should conquer what was already allocated to them. Some commentators see this as explaining Dan’s relocation, but to me it was an act of unbelief. This is why it is listed in the conclusion of Judges (cf. chapters 17-21) which documents the Israelites acts of faithlessness. Dan’s original allocation was in the Philistine area. They chose to move instead of trusting YHWH to help them take their land.

▣ **“Leshem”** This city (BDB 546) is also called Laish (“lion,” BDB 539, cf. Jdgs. 18:7,14,27,29).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:49-50

⁴⁹ When they finished apportioning the land for inheritance by its borders, the sons of Israel gave an inheritance in their midst to Joshua the son of Nun. ⁵⁰In accordance with the command of the LORD

they gave him the city for which he asked, Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim. So he built the city and settled in it.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:51

⁵¹These are the inheritances which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the households of the tribes of the sons of Israel distributed by lot in Shiloh before the LORD at the doorway of the tent of meeting. So they finished dividing the land.

19:51 “the tent of meeting” The tent of meeting is the same as the tabernacle. It is described in Exodus 25-40. Its procedures are given in Leviticus. The *Shekinah* cloud of glory, which led the Israelites during the exodus and wilderness wandering period, disappeared as soon as Israel crossed Jordan. YHWH’s presence was now enshrined at the tabernacle. It was first set up at Gilgal (4:10), then moved to Shiloh (18:1; 19:51; I Sam. 2:22). Later the tabernacle, without the ark (Jdgs. 20:18,27), was at Gibeon (cf. I Chr. 16:39-40; II Chr. 1:3-6).

JOSHUA 20

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Cities of Refuge	The Cities of Refuge	Joshua Named Cities of Refuge	The Cities of Refuge	The Cities of Refuge
20:1-6	20:1-9	20:1-6	20:1-6	20:1-6
20:7-9		20:7-9	20:7-9	20:7-9

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section) FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

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1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Chapters 20 and 21 are a discussion of the Levitical cities and the cities of refuge. There are forty-eight Levitical cities, six of which are cities of refuge; three in the trans-Jordan area and three in the Promised Land.
- B. The cities of refuge were an attempt to bring fairness to the "eye for an eye," limited revenge concept which was initiated within Israel. A city of refuge was a place where one could flee for safety if one had accidentally killed another person and where one could be protected from the aggressive actions of a near kinsmen (*Go'el*, BDB 145) of the person killed. There is another list of the Levitical cities found in I Chr. 6:58-81 which has some basic differences. This is possibly due to the fact that the Israelis did not fully occupy their tribal allocations.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 20:1-6

¹Then the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying, ²"Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'Designate the cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, ³that the manslayer who kills any person unintentionally, without premeditation, may flee there, and they shall become your refuge from the avenger of blood. ⁴He shall flee to one of these cities, and shall stand at the entrance of the gate of the city and state his case in the hearing of the elders of that city; and they shall take him into the city to them and give him a place, so that he may dwell among them. ⁵Now if the avenger of blood pursues him, then they shall not deliver the manslayer into his hand, because he struck his neighbor without premeditation and did not hate him beforehand. ⁶He shall dwell in that city until he stands before the congregation for judgment, until the death of the one who is high priest in those days. Then the manslayer shall return to his own city and to his own house, to the city from which he fled.'"

20:2 This verse has two commands from YHWH to Joshua.

1. "speak," BDB 180, KB 210, *Piel* IMPERATIVE
2. "designate," BDB 678, KB 733, *Qal* IMPERATIVE

These commands relate to previous revelation about these special cities of asylum and mercy.

1. Exodus 21:12-14
2. Numbers 35:10-28
3. Deuteronomy 19:1-13

No other culture in the ancient Near East has cities like these. They uniquely reflect the mercy of YHWH toward those who act without malice or forethought.

▣ **"cities of refuge"** Originally those who were fleeing from hasty justice could grab the horns of the altar for safety (cf. Exod. 21:14; 1 Kgs. 1:50-53; 2:28-31). However, this system was replaced by having set cities within the Promised Land. Moses had already designated three cities in the trans-Jordan area (cf. Deut. 4:41ff). There are several discussions in the Pentateuch related to the cities of refuge (cf. Exod. 21: 12-14; Num. 35:10-28; Deut. 19:1-13). If a person killed a fellow Israelite by accident, he could flee to one of these six cities. There, a trial would be held (cf. v. 4). If innocent of premeditated murder, he still had to remain in the city until the death of the High Priest. If guilty of murder, he was turned over to the blood avenger of the family he violated for the immediate punishment of death (cf. v. 9).

20:3 "who kills any person unintentionally, without premeditation" The entire sacrificial system was geared toward those who sinned in ignorance or passion. NIDOTTE, vol. 2, states,

"the concept of 'unintentionally' or 'inadvertently' (Lev. 4:2) is both strategic and problematic (cf. 4:13,22,27; 5:15,18; 22:14; Num. 15:22,24-29). Because of it some scholars have concluded that the sin offering only treated inadvertent sin, that is, sins that were committed by mistake or sins which were done not knowing that the particular act was sinful (see Milgrom, 1991, 228-29). However, the word 'unintentionally' means basically 'in error' (the vb. means to commit an error, go astray). Although it can also mean that the error was unintentional or inadvertent (see e.g., Num. 35:11,15,22-23; Josh. 20:3,9), this is not necessarily the case (see I Sam. 26:21; Eccl. 5:6)" (p. 94).

There was no sacrifice for high-handed, defiant, premeditated, or known sin (e.g., Ps. 51:17). This concept of intentionality (BDB 993) is referred to in Lev. 4:2,22,27; 5:15; 22:14; Num. 4:42; 15:27-31; and 19:4.

This is a good place to point out that the commandment “You shall not murder” (cf. Exod. 20:13; Deut. 5:17) does not mean “kill” (KJV), but do not commit “non-legal, premeditated murder” (BDB 953, cf. Exod. 21:12-14). There was legal premeditated killing.

1. blood avenger
2. holy war
3. judicial sentences

▣ **“refuge”** This term (BDB 886) means “asylum.” It has no cognates, which means it was unique to Israel’s judicial system. It is used about twenty times and always in connection with the cities of refuge. This new legal concept reveals the fairness and justice of YHWH. Motives make a difference! However, there are consequences to every act!

▣ **“the avenger of blood”** This is the Hebrew term (BDB 145 I), which denoted a near relative who rendered aid to the family and avenged the family in a case of injury (cf. Num. 35:19,21,24,25,27; Deut. 19:6,12). The concept first appears in Gen. 4:14 and 9:5,6. The positive side can be seen in Ruth 3:13. It is also mentioned in Lev. 25:25; Num. 5:8 and Jer. 32:7.

20:4 “he shall stand at the entrance of the gate of the city and state his case in the hearing of the elders of that city” Because of v. 4, these cities of refuge were not entirely inhabited by Levites or else there would have been no elders. Hebron, mentioned in v. 11, was a Levitical city and was also given to Caleb (cf. Josh. 14:13-15). The city gate was the place where the elders sat and administered justice. The elders of the city initially tried the man to see if he was worthy of being protected. From v. 6 he also had to go to trial before the entire congregation (cf. Num. 35:12).

20:5 “he struck his neighbor without premeditation and did not hate him beforehand” The concept of “neighbor” in the OT refers primarily to one’s covenant partner. The OT talks a lot about one’s responsibility in this area.

1. positively
 - a. love your neighbor - Lev. 19:18 (Jesus’ second most important command, Matt. 19:19; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27)
 - b. Jesus adds, “as yourself” - Matt. 22:39-40; Rom. 13:9
2. negatively (Ten Commandments)
 - a. do not slander
 - b. do not give false witness
 - c. do not covet his property
 - d. do not steal from him
 - e. do not take his life
 - f. do not cheat financially - Deut. 15:2; 24:10
 - g. do not forsake a friend - Pro. 27:10
 - h. do not hate - Lev. 19:17

20:6 “until the death of the one who was High Priest in those days” Even though the man was protected there still was a price to be paid for his actions: he was separated from his own tribal allocation and home (but not his immediate family) until the death of the High Priest (cf. Num. 35:25). Part of the penalty was also the fact that the person had to live with the Levites and, therefore, would be trained in the way of the Law for these many years.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 20:7-9

⁷So they set apart Kedesh in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali and Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the hill country of Judah. ⁸Beyond the Jordan east of Jericho, they designated Bezer in the wilderness on the plain from the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead from the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan from the tribe of Manasseh. ⁹These were the appointed cities for all the sons of Israel and for the stranger who sojourns among them, that whoever kills any person unintentionally may flee there, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood until he stands before the congregation.

20:7 “set apart Kedesh in Galilee” This is a play on the Hebrew word “holy,” which means “set apart” (BDB 872, KB 1073, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT). It is the root of the name “Kedesh” (BDB 873). The word “holy” means “to be set apart by God for a specific purpose” (e.g., Jer. 1:5).

▣ **“Kedesh . . . Shechem . . . Hebron”** These were centrally located cities. We learn from Deut. 19:3 that the roads were made straight so the people could flee to these cities easily.

20:8 “Bezer . . . Ramoth . . . Golan” These were the cities which Moses appointed on the eastern side of the Jordan.

20:9

NASB, NKJV **“the appointed cities”**

NRSV **“the cities designated”**

TEV **“the cities of refuge chosen”**

NJB **“the towns designated”**

This term (BDB 558) is found only here in the OT and means “designated” or “appointed.” These cities were the fulfillment of divine revelatory mercy and were revealed to both Moses and Joshua.

▣ **“for the stranger who sojourns among them”** This shows that God was concerned with more than just the people of Israel (cf. Lev. 19:33-35; Deut. 10:18-19, see Special Topic at Josh. 1:7). Also notice that the same unintentionality is the criteria.

▣ **“until he stands before the congregation”** This refers to an appearance before a called judicial council (BDB 763), not a religious festival.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. What is the difference between a Levitical city and a city of refuge?
2. What is the purpose of a city of refuge?
3. Who is the *go'el* or “avenger of blood”?
4. Does accidental killing have consequences?

JOSHUA 21

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Cities of the Levites	Cities of the Levites	The Levitical Cities	The Cities of the Levites	The Levitical Cities
21:1-4	21:1-8	21:1-3 21:4	21:1-3 21:4-5	21:1-3 21:4-7
21:5		21:5		
21:6		21:6	21:6	
21:7		21:7	21:7	
21:8		21:8	21:8	21:8 The Portion of the Kohathites
21:9-19	21:9-19	21:9-12 21:13-19	21:9-12 21:13-19	21:9-19
21:20-26	21:20-26	21:20-26	21:20-26	21:20-25 21:26 The Portion of the Sons of Gershon
21:27-33	21:27-33	21:27-33	21:27-33	21:27-32 21:28 The Portion of the Sons of Merari
21:34-40	21:34-42	21:34-40	21:34-40	21:34-39 21:40
21:41-42		21:41-42	21:41-42	21:41-42
Not One Promise Failed	The Promise Fulfilled	Another Summary	Israel Takes Possession of the Land	End of the Distribution
21:43-45	21:43-45	21:43-45	21:43-45	21:43-45

**READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)
 FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL**

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. xvi). Compare your subject divisions with the five modern translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

The timing and method of the composition of Joshua is unclear. Many of the accounts go back to Joshua's time. However, some of the events could not have occurred until later. This is especially true of some of the forty-eight Levitical cities. Merrill F. Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, p. 210, lists several cities not under Israelite control until the United Monarchy.

1. Gezer
2. Ibleam
3. Taanach, v. 25
4. Rehob in Asher, v. 31
5. Jokneam, v. 34
6. Nahalal, v. 35
7. Elteke, v. 23
8. Gibbethon, v. 23
9. Anathoth
10. Alemoth (pp. 201-211)

It is also possible that the six cities of refuge were not fully functional until David's day (p. 210).

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 21:1-4

¹Then the heads of households of the Levites approached Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of households of the tribes of the sons of Israel. ²They spoke to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, "The LORD commanded through Moses to give us cities to live in, with their pasture lands for our cattle." ³So the sons of Israel gave the Levites from their inheritance these cities with their pasture lands, according to the command of the LORD. ⁴Then the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites. And the sons of Aaron the priest, who were of the Levites, received thirteen cities by lot from the tribe of Judah and from the tribe of the Simeonites and from the tribe of Benjamin.

21:1 “the heads of households of the Levites” There are going to be forty-eight Levitical cities (cf. vv. 41 and Num. 35:1-8). There are three major households (sons) of the tribe of Levi (cf. Gen. 46:11; Exod. 6:16). The first is the Kohathites, found in vv. 10-19 and 20-26. The second major group is the Gershonites, found in vv. 27-33, the third group is the Merarites, found in vv. 34-40.

When discussing “Levites” in the historical literature of early Israel, there is no distinction made between “Levites” and “priests”; both are allowed to serve YHWH and eat from His offerings (cf. Deuteronomy 18). As the years passed, there developed a specialized recognition of the family of Aaron as denoting priests (which was for life and passed on through families).

▣ **“Joshua the son of Nun”** The Hebrew word for “son” is fluid. The Hebrew *ben* (BDB 119-122) can mean

1. son begotten by a father
2. children (even cousins, e.g., Num. 36:11)
3. grandson (e.g., Gen. 31:28,55)
4. member of a professional guild
5. ancestor/descendant (genealogies)
6. member of a tribe/nation (e.g., “sons of Israel”)
7. common people (sons of the land)
8. member of a religion (son of [name of a god]). The Hebrew king, Psalm 2; II Sam. 7:14
9. angels (cf. Gen. 6:2,4; Job 2:1)
10. an idiom of characterization (e.g., “sons of Belial,” “sons of the wise,” “sons of valor”)

In this chapter the term is used several times:

1. of an individual - Joshua, the son of Num, v. 1
2. of a tribal/national group - sons of Israel, vv. 1,3,8,41
3. of a professional guild (i.e., priests/Levites)
 - a. sons of Aaron, vv. 4,10,13,19
 - b. sons of Levi, v. 10 (cf. v. 27)
4. of members of individual tribes
 - a. sons of Judah, v. 9
 - b. sons of Simeon, v. 9
5. of members of family groups
 - a. sons of Kohath, vv. 5,20,26
 - b. sons of Gershon, vv. 6,27
 - c. sons of Merari, v. 34

This kind of fluidity makes it impossible to add up the dates of ancestors and come up with a date for creation (i.e., Ussur’s 4004 B.C.). Often, only the significant dates (either of evil or good or some remembered action) are listed. Several generations are often omitted (e.g., the genealogies of Jesus).

21:2 “Shiloh” We learn from Josh. 18:1 that Joshua had moved the camp and the tabernacle to Shiloh.

21:3

NASB “these cities with their pasture lands”

NKJV “these cities and their common-land”

NRSV “the following cities and pasture lands”

TEV “certain cities and pasture lands”

NJB “towns with their pasture lands”

We learn from Num. 35:4 that around the walls of the Levitical cities each Levitical family was given land extending a thousand cubits (for “cubit,” see Special Topic at Josh. 3:4). This was apparently to be used for growing crops or to keep a few animals in order to supplement their food supply which was provided by one of the three tithes of the people.

It is not certain how to translate “pasture lands” (BDB 177). It could simply denote common land or open space (i.e. NKJV). Context seems to denote a special usage for priests/Levites, possibly

1. a place to bury the dead
2. a place to grow a garden
3. a place to raise animals for domestic use
4. a place of separation symbolizing a holy place (i.e., Levitical city/city of refuge)

See note by James Barr in NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 1140

21:4 “the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites” The “lot” is not understood exactly. Some believe that it refers to the Urim and Thummim (see note at 19:51) in the breastplate of the High Priest, while others believe it refers to black or white stones which were cast like dice or drawn from a pouch.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 21:5

⁵The rest of the sons of Kohath received ten cities by lot from the families of the tribe of Ephraim and from the tribe of Dan and from the half-tribe of Manasseh.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 21:6

⁶The sons of Gershon received thirteen cities by lot from the families of the tribe of Issachar and from the tribe of Asher and from the tribe of Naphtali and from the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 21:7

⁷The sons of Merari according to their families received twelve cities from the tribe of Reuben and from the tribe of Gad and from the tribe of Zebulun.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 21:8

⁸Now the sons of Israel gave by lot to the Levites these cities with their pasture lands, as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

21:8 This is an example of the repetitive style of Hebrew historical narrative.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 21:9-12

⁹They gave these cities which are *here* mentioned by name from the tribe of the sons of Judah and from the tribe of the sons of Simeon; ¹⁰and they were for the sons of Aaron, one of the families of the Kohathites, of the sons of Levi, for the lot was theirs first. ¹¹Thus they gave them Kiriath-arba, *Arba being* the father of Anak (that is, Hebron), in the hill country of Judah, with its surrounding pasture lands. ¹²But the fields of the city and its villages they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as his possession.

21:10 “the sons of Aaron” This is the special family from the tribe of Levi from which the High Priest and Priests would come (cf. Exod. 28:1).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 21:13-19

¹³So to the sons of Aaron the priest they gave Hebron, the city of refuge for the manslayer, with its pasture lands, and Libnah with its pasture lands, ¹⁴and Jattir with its pasture lands and Eshtemoa with its pasture lands, ¹⁵and Holon with its pasture lands and Debir with its pasture lands, ¹⁶and Ain with its pasture lands and Juttah with its pasture lands *and* Beth-shemesh with its pasture lands; nine cities from these two tribes. ¹⁷From the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with its pasture lands, Geba with its pasture lands, ¹⁸Anathoth with its pasture lands and Almon with its pasture lands; four cities. ¹⁹All the cities of the sons of Aaron, the priests, were thirteen cities with their pasture lands.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 21:20-26

²⁰Then the cities from the tribe of Ephraim were allotted to the families of the sons of Kohath, the Levites, *even* to the rest of the sons of Kohath. ²¹They gave them Shechem, the city of refuge for the manslayer, with its pasture lands, in the hill country of Ephraim, and Gezer with its pasture lands, ²²and Kibzaim with its pasture lands and Beth-horon with its pasture lands; four cities. ²³From the tribe of Dan, Elteke with its pasture lands, Gibbethon with its pasture lands, ²⁴Aijalon with its pasture lands, Gath-rimmon with its pasture lands; four cities. ²⁵From the half-tribe of Manasseh, *they allotted* Taanach with its pasture lands and Gath-rimmon with its pasture lands; two cities. ²⁶All the cities with their pasture lands for the families of the rest of the sons of Kohath were ten.

21:20 “the Kohaths” This is a group which numbered 8,600 at Sinai (cf. Num. 3:28). During the movement of the tabernacle they were to move the ark and its furniture with the altars and the vessels of the tabernacle. We learn from Num. 16 that some of this group, along with part of the tribe of Reuben, rebelled against Moses and Aaron and were destroyed.

21:23 “the tribe of Dan” This refers to the southern allotment of Dan in the coastal southwest part of Canaan. It is obvious from looking at a map that Dan had a difficult time possessing its land because of the Philistines, therefore, part of the tribe had moved north (cf. 19:47; Judges 18).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 21:27-33

²⁷To the sons of Gershon, one of the families of the Levites, from the half-tribe of Manasseh, *they gave* Golan in Bashan, the city of refuge for the manslayer, with its pasture lands, and Be-eshterah with its pasture lands; two cities. ²⁸From the tribe of Issachar, *they gave* Kishion with its pasture lands, Daberath with its pasture lands, ²⁹Jarmuth with its pasture lands, En-gannim with its pasture lands; four cities. ³⁰From the tribe of Asher, *they gave* Mishal with its pasture lands, Abdon with its pasture lands, ³¹Helkath with its pasture lands and Rehob with its pasture lands; four cities. ³²From the tribe of Naphtali, *they gave* Kedesh in Galilee, the city of refuge for the manslayer, with its pasture lands and Hammoth-dor with its pasture lands and Kartan with its pasture lands; three cities. ³³All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families were thirteen cities with their pasture lands.

21:27 “Gershon” They numbered 7,500 at Sinai (cf. Num. 3:34). When the tabernacle was moved, they were in charge of the covering, the curtains, and the boards (cf. Num. 3:25-26).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 21:34-40

³⁴To the families of the sons of Merari, the rest of the Levites, *they gave* from the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with its pasture lands and Kartah with its pasture lands. ³⁵Dimnah with its pasture lands, Nahalal with its pasture lands; four cities. ³⁶From the tribe of Reuben, *they gave* Bezer with its pasture lands and Jahaz with its pasture lands, ³⁷Kedemoth with its pasture lands and Mephaath with its pasture lands; four cities. ³⁸From the tribe of Gad, *they gave* Ramoth in Gilead, the city of refuge for the manslayer, with its pasture lands and Mahanaim with its pasture lands, ³⁹Heshbon with its pasture lands, Jazer with its pasture lands; four cities in all. ⁴⁰All *these were* the cities of the sons of Merari according to their families, the rest of the families of the Levites; and their lot was twelve cities.

21:34 “Merari” They numbered 6,200 at Sinai (cf. Num. 3:34). When the tabernacle was moved they were in charge of the boards, the bars, the pillars, the sockets and the pins (cf. Num. 3:27).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 21:41-42

⁴¹All the cities of the Levites in the midst of the possession of the sons of Israel were forty-eight cities with their pasture lands. ⁴²These cities each had its surrounding pasture lands; thus *it was* with all these cities.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 21:43-45

⁴³So the LORD gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it. ⁴⁴And the LORD gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the LORD gave all their enemies into their hand. ⁴⁵Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass.

21:43-45 This is another summary paragraph about the conquest of Canaan. In a sense, the following chapters (22-24) are an appendix.

21:43 “which He had sworn to their fathers” This again is an allusion to the Abrahamic covenant of Gen. 12 which was later reaffirmed to Isaac, Jacob, and the people of Israel through Moses.

21:44 Not only did YHWH give the land to the Patriarchs and their descendants (cf. v. 43; Gen. 12:7; 15:18-19; 17:7-8; 26:1-5; 28:10-15; 35:12), but He also gave them the military victories to conquer it (e.g., Deut. 7:24; 11:25; Josh. 1:5; 10:8; 23:9; Jdgs. 3:28; 11:21). The conquest was an act of YHWH, using natural, supernatural, and military means.

21:45 “not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass” This is our great hope: when God speaks, we can depend upon His word (cf. 23:14; 1 Kgs. 8:56; and note Isa. 55:11). Yet covenant disobedience can negate the blessings of the promises of God! There is an inseparable bond between a faithful God and a faithful people. Covenant has privileges and responsibilities. Israel’s inability to perform the covenant will require a “new covenant” (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-38; Galatians 3; and the book of Hebrews).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. List the families of the Levites.
2. What is the difference between a priest and a Levite?
3. Why were the Levites spread out among the tribes?
4. Why is verse 45 so important?

JOSHUA 22

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Tribes Beyond the Jordan Return 22:1-9	Eastern Tribes Return to Their Land 22:1-9	The Trans-Jordan Tribes 22:1-6 22:7-9	Joshua Sends the Eastern Tribes Home 22:1-8a 22:8b	The Trans-Jordan Tribes Are Sent Home 22:1-5 22:6 22:7-8 22:9-10
They Built an Altar Which Offends 22:10-12	An Altar by the Jordan 22:10-12	22:10-12	The Altar by the Jordan 22:10-12	An Altar is Built Beside the Jordan 22:11 22:12 Reproaches Addressed to the Eastern Tribes
22:13-20	22:13-20	22:13-20	22:13-20	22:13-15 22:16 22:17-18 22:19-20
Justifying the Altar 22:21-25 22:26-29	22:21-29	22:21-29	22:21-29	The Trans-Jordan Tribes Justify Their Actions 22:21 22:22-25 22:26-29 Peace Restored
22:30-34	22:30-34	22:30-31 22:32-34	22:30-31 22:32-33 22:34	22:30-31 22:32-34

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

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Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. xvi). Compare your subject divisions with the five modern translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following

the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Joshua 22:1-8 is Joshua's farewell address to the trans-Jordan tribes.
- B. Joshua 22:9-34 is the account of a serious misunderstanding between these eastern tribes and their brothers on the western bank in the Promised Land. It shows that problems and misconceptions can be solved in non-violent ways. Israel had seemingly misunderstood the motive behind the altar and the eastern tribes failed to clearly communicate its purpose. Honest dialog can bring peace!

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:1-6

¹Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, ²and said to them, "You have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have listened to my voice in all that I commanded you. ³You have not forsaken your brothers these many days to this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God. ⁴And now the LORD your God has given rest to your brothers, as He spoke to them; therefore turn now and go to your tents, to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan. ⁵Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God and walk in all His ways and keep His commandments and hold fast to Him and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul." ⁶So Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their tents.

22:1 "and Joshua summoned" Based on v. 3, some commentators have wondered about how long these three tribes stayed and helped their brothers. It is possible that they were home and Joshua summoned them, but it is more likely that v. 3 states they had stayed the whole time, possibly even as long as fourteen years.

▣ **"Reuben"** This is the oldest son of Jacob, who was rejected as family leader because he lay with one of Jacob's concubines (cf. Gen. 35:22; 49:4).

22:2 "You have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have listened to my voice in all that I have commanded you" Joshua addresses the eastern tribes and affirms them for (1) obeying Moses (cf. Num. 32:28-32; Deut. 3:18-20) and (2) listening to him (cf. Josh. 1:12-18). It is significant that in v. 3 they are told that they kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord, which implies that God's words through Moses and Joshua are God's words (cf. v. 3).

22:4 “now the LORD your God has given rest to your brothers” This “rest” (BDB 628, *Hiphil* PERFECT, cf. Exod. 33:14; Deut. 3:20; Josh. 1:13,15) refers to a time of peace and the absence of internal conflict.

▣ **“go to your tents”** Since the Israelites took over the homes of the people they conquered, this must be an idiom for “go to your homes.”

The verse has two commands from Joshua.

1. “turn,” meaning “return” (BDB 815, KB 937, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, cf. v. 8)
2. “go,” literally “walk” (BDB 229, KB 246, *Qal* IMPERATIVE)

22:5 “only be very careful to observe the commandments” Verse 5 (BDB 1036, KB 1581, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, “keep”) clearly states that the covenant requirements were still in force and required obedience and faith. This verse is a series of quotes from themes in the book of Deuteronomy. It has three pairs of emphases: (1) observe and love; (2) walk and keep; and (3) hold fast and serve. They are a series of *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCTS. This emphasizes not only lifestyle obedience, but also complete loyalty. Some of the places these themes can be seen in Deut. are: 5:32; 6:5; 7:9; 10:12; 11:1,13,22; 19:9; 30:6,16,20. Notice that love for God is expressed through obedience to His covenant.

▣ **“hold fast to Him”** Notice the emphasis here is not only on rules, which is the focus of the law of Moses, but also on the motive of serving God--because you love Him. This is also the focus of the prophets.

▣ **“with all your heart and with all your soul”** This is an emphasis on our entire person loving and serving God (Deut. 4:29; 6:4-5; 10:12). This is the essence of a covenant relationship!

22:6 “Joshua blessed them” This seems to be very similar to the blessing of Jacob, Moses, and the patriarchal blessings in general. These were seen almost as an independent power performing good on behalf of the people to whom they were spoken. This reflects the Hebrew concept of the power of the spoken word (cf. Genesis 1; Isa. 55:11; John 1:1).

▣ **“and they went to their tents”** This has been interpreted in two ways. It is either just a romantic way of referring to the wilderness wandering period and they were really going back to their houses, or they still lived in tents and did not divide their inheritance until all the men of war had returned.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:7-9

⁷ Now to the one half-tribe of Manasseh Moses had given *a possession* in Bashan, but to the other half Joshua gave *a possession* among their brothers westward beyond the Jordan. So when Joshua sent them away to their tents, he blessed them, ⁸and said to them, "Return to your tents with great riches and with very much livestock, with silver, gold, bronze, iron, and with very many clothes; divide the spoil of your enemies with your brothers." ⁹The sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh returned *home* and departed from the sons of Israel at Shiloh which is in the land of Canaan, to go to the land of Gilead, to the land of their possession which they had possessed, according to the command of the LORD through Moses.

22:7 “but to the other half Joshua gave *a possession* among their brothers westward beyond Jordan”
See Josh. 17:1-13.

22:8 This shows three of the four ancient sources of wealth: (1) livestock; (2) weights of precious metals; and (3) clothing. The one source that is not specifically mentioned here is foodstuffs, but it is implied in the term “wealth” (BDB 647). The eastern tribes received part of the spoils of the defeated cities in Canaan.

▣ **“divide the spoil of your enemies with your brothers”** We know that not all of the men of war crossed the Jordan with the rest of the tribes. Possibly during these months or years the men of war exchanged positions; that is, those who were home would go to war and those at war would go home. So the final division of the spoils (“divide,” BDB 323, KB 322, *Qal* IMPERATIVE) of the Canaanites was not done until all the men of war returned home.

22:9 “the sons of Israel at Shiloh” Gilgal was the first special site in the Promised Land, but later the tabernacle was moved to Shiloh.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:10-12

¹⁰When they came to the region of the Jordan which is in the land of Canaan, the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh built an altar there by the Jordan, a large altar in appearance. ¹¹And the sons of Israel heard it said, "Behold, the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh have built an altar at the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region of the Jordan, on the side *belonging to* the sons of Israel." ¹²When the sons of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the sons of Israel gathered themselves at Shiloh to go up against them in war.

22:10 “the region of the Jordan” The term translated “region” (BDB 165, cf. 13:2) could refer to Galilee, Gilgal (LXX), or the city of Geliloth.

▣ **“built an altar there by the Jordan, a large altar in appearance”** We learn from vv. 28-29 that it was a large replica of (1) the altar of sacrifice which was in the tabernacle or (2) the altar on Mt. Ebal (cf. 8:30-35). Apparently it was not for the purpose of sacrifice, but for a memorial like so many others (stone heaps) in Joshua.

22:12 “to go up against them in war” There was such an over-reaction! How could these brothers so quickly be willing to kill each other over something like this? There are several theories:

1. it was strictly for religious purposes; it was a violation of Deut. 12:5-11, which says there was only one site where the Israelites could sacrifice and that was to be connected with the Tabernacle (cf. v. 16)
2. it was somehow related to a territorial jealousy because of v.11
3. it was related to a sense of corporate guilt (cf. vv. 17-20); if the trans-Jordanian tribes had somehow offended God or become idolatrous, all of Israel would have suffered for their sin
4. the other tribes were afraid that Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh had become involved in the idolatrous practices of the Canaanites (cf. v. 19)

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:13-20

¹³Then the sons of Israel sent to the sons of Reuben and to the sons of Gad and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, ¹⁴and with him ten chiefs, one chief for each father's household from each of the tribes of Israel; and each one of them *was* the head of his father's household among the thousands of Israel. ¹⁵They came to the sons of Reuben and to the sons of Gad and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, to the land of Gilead, and they spoke with them saying, ¹⁶"Thus says the whole congregation of the LORD, 'What is this unfaithful act which you have

committed against the God of Israel, turning away from following the LORD this day, by building yourselves an altar, to rebel against the LORD this day? ¹⁷Is not the iniquity of Peor enough for us, from which we have not cleansed ourselves to this day, although a plague came on the congregation of the LORD, ¹⁸that you must turn away this day from following the LORD? If you rebel against the LORD today, He will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel tomorrow. ¹⁹If, however, the land of your possession is unclean, then cross into the land of the possession of the LORD, where the LORD'S tabernacle stands, and take possession among us. Only do not rebel against the LORD, or rebel against us by building an altar for yourselves, besides the altar of the LORD our God. ²⁰Did not Achan the son of Zerah act unfaithfully in the things under the ban, and wrath fall on all the congregation of Israel? And that man did not perish alone in his iniquity.'"

22:13 “Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest” The person in charge of the delegation which was to visit the eastern tribes was none other than the son of the High Priest. This was a very distinguished delegation. We hear about Phinehas earlier in Num. 25:7,11 and 31:6, where his zeal for the Lord is clearly seen. Later, this same priest will deal with another problem of impurity in Jdgs. 20:28.

22:14 “chiefs” One of the major leaders (BDB 672, cf. vv. 30,32; 9:15,18,19,21; 17:4; Exod. 16:22) of each tribe accompanied Phinehas. This was a very illustrious group which was sent to the eastern tribes.

▣ **“head of his father’s household among the thousands of Israel”** One reason why we are not sure about the number of people who came out of Egypt is because the Hebrew word for “thousands” can be used literally, or it can mean a family unit (cf. Jdgs. 6:15; I Sam. 23:23; Zech. 9:7), or military unit (cf. Exod. 18:21,25; Deut. 1:15). See Special Topic at Josh. 3:17.

22:16 The eastern tribes’ actions are described in three ways.

1. “an unfaithful act,” BDB 591, KB 612, *Qal* PERFECT. This term is often used in connection with an act specifically toward YHWH, cf. 2:20; 7:1; 22:16,20,31; Lev. 6:2; 26:40; Num. 5:6,12,27. This term can have a sexual connotation.
2. “turning away from following the LORD,” BDB 996, KB 1427, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT, which implies they had purposefully violated the Mosaic covenant (i.e., by building an altar to rebel against the Lord). There is a play on the VERB in this chapter.
 - a. “return to your tents,” vv. 8,9
 - b. “turn away,” vv. 16,18,23,29,32
3. “to rebel against the LORD,” BDB 597, KB 632, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT, cf. vv. 18, 19(twice), 29; Num. 14:9

22:17 “Is not the iniquity of Peor enough for us” This is a reference to the Israelites worshipping the Canaanite fertility gods. This occurred on the plains of Moab and is recorded in Num. 25:1-13. It was apparently instigated by Baalam’s advice to Balak, which is also recorded in Num. 22-24. Israel was severely punished for this by God and the implication here is that they still carried the scars of that punishment.

22:18 “that He will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel tomorrow” Notice the sense of corporeality is not only seen in the closing verse of chapter 17, but is reaffirmed in the account of Achan’s sin (cf. Joshua 7), mentioned in v. 20. It seems that this delegation mentioned one account of sin which had occurred on the eastern side of the Jordan, i.e., the Baal of Peor, and another account which happened on the western side of the Jordan, i.e., Achan and the defeat at Ai (cf. Joshua 7). When one person (or a few) sins, all are negatively affected!

22:19 “If, however, the land of your possession is unclean” There are two ways to understand this phrase:

1. the eastern lands were considered outside the Promised Land
2. the sin of Peor permanently polluted the whole area.

▣ Phinehas and the delegation confronted the eastern tribes to take decisive action.

1. “cross into the land,” BDB 716, KB 778, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
2. “take possession among us,” BDB 28, KB 31, *Niphal* IMPERATIVE
3. “only do not rebel against the LORD,” BDB 597, KB 632, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense
4. “or rebel against us,” same VERB as above

The rebellion is characterized as “building (BDB 124, KB 139, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT) the altar.” There was to be only one Hebrew altar of sacrifice, which was to be located at the tabernacle (cf. Deut. 12:11).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:21-25

²¹Then the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh answered and spoke to the heads of the families of Israel. ²²“The Mighty One, God, the LORD, the Mighty One, God, the LORD! He knows, and may Israel itself know. If *it was* in rebellion, or if in an unfaithful act against the LORD do not save us this day! ²³If we have built us an altar to turn away from following the LORD, or if to offer a burnt offering or grain offering on it, or if to offer sacrifices of peace offerings on it, may the LORD Himself require it. ²⁴But truly we have done this out of concern, for a reason, saying, ‘In time to come your sons may say to our sons, ‘What have you to do with the LORD, the God of Israel? ²⁵For the LORD has made the Jordan a border between us and you, *you* sons of Reuben and sons of Gad; you have no portion in the LORD.’ So your sons may make our sons stop fearing the LORD.

22:22 “the Mighty One, God, the LORD, the Mighty One, God, the LORD!” Here we have three of the most common names for God in the Old Testament: (1) “*El*,” which is the general name for God and seems to mean “the strong One”; (2) “*Elohim*,” which is the plural form of “*El*” and is translated “God” in Genesis 1; it can refer to angels (cf. Ps. 8:5) or judges of Israel (cf. Ps. 82:6); and (3) the term “LORD,” which seems to refer to the covenant name for God given in Exod. 3:14, “YHWH.” The fact that these three names (cf. Ps. 50:1) are repeated twice possibly refers to the Hebrew concept that when something is stated three times it becomes a superlative. This may be a way of saying “the highest and only God” (cf. Ps. 50:1). This repetition of God’s name is meant to show the solemnity of their oath. See Special Topic: The Names for Deity at Josh. 1:1.

Deity is not only characterized by titles, but by His actions.

1. “He knows,” BDB 393, KB 390, *Qal* PARTICIPLE
2. “may Israel itself know,” BDB 393, KB 390, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense
3. “save” (negated conditional sentence), BDB 446, KB 448, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense. The implication here is “save” us from the attack of the rest of the Israeli army.

22:23 The eastern tribes answer in a series of CONDITIONAL SENTENCES.

1. “If we have built us an altar to turn away from following the LORD”
 - a. “build,” BDB 124, KB 139, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT
 - b. “to turn,” BDB 996, KB 1427, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT
2. “If to offer a burnt offering or grain offering on it,” “to offer,” BDB 748, KB 828, *Hiphil* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT

3. "If to offer sacrifices of peace offerings on it," "to offer," BDB 793, KB 889, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT
4. "Then may the LORD Himself require it," BDB 134, KB 152, *Piel* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense, cf. I Sam. 20:16; II Sam. 4:11. The NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 723, asserts that this usage of the VERB means "investigate" in a legal sense.

22:24 "but truly we have done this out of concern, for a reason" This explanation, phrased in such strong terms, is meant to show the visiting delegation that they have totally misunderstood the reason for the altar. The altar was not meant for sacrifice, but to remind the tribes of the western bank that the three eastern tribes were also their brothers and that they should not be cut off from each other.

22:25 We see again the emphasis on training sons in religious ways, which is a recurrent theme of Deuteronomy (cf. 4:9; 6:20-25; 11:19; and 32:46).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:26-29

²⁶"Therefore we said, 'Let us build an altar, not for burnt offering or for sacrifice; ²⁷rather it shall be a witness between us and you and between our generations after us, that we are to perform the service of the LORD before Him with our burnt offerings, and with our sacrifices and with our peace offerings, so that your sons will not say to our sons in time to come, You have no portion in the LORD.'" ²⁸"Therefore we said, 'It shall also come about if they say *this* to us or to our generations in time to come, then we shall say, "See the copy of the altar of the LORD which our fathers made, not for burnt offering or for sacrifice; rather it is a witness between us and you.'" ²⁹Far be it from us that we should rebel against the LORD and turn away from following the LORD this day, by building an altar for burnt offering, for grain offering or for sacrifice, besides the altar of the LORD our God which is before His tabernacle."

22:26 "Let us build an altar" This phrase has two VERBALS.

1. "do" or "make," BDB 793, KB 889, *Qal* IMPERFECT, but used in a COHORTATIVE sense
2. "build," BDB 124, KB 139, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT

Verses 26-28 are what the eastern tribes were saying to themselves.

22:28 "the copy of the altar of the LORD" For a detailed description of the bronze sacrificial altar see Exod. 20:24-26.

22:29 "Far be if from us" This is an emphatic exclamation (cf. 24:16; Gen. 44:7; I Sam. 2:30; 14:45; 20:2,9; 22:15).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:30-31

³⁰So when Phinehas the priest and the leaders of the congregation, even the heads of the families of Israel who *were* with him, heard the words which the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the sons of Manasseh spoke, it pleased them. ³¹And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said to the sons of Reuben and to the sons of Gad and to the sons of Manasseh, "Today we know that the LORD is in our midst, because you have not committed this unfaithful act against the LORD; now you have delivered the sons of Israel from the hand of the LORD."

22:30 "it pleased them" This VERB (BDB 405, KB 408, *Qal* imperfect) is used in this sense several times (cf. v. 33; Lev. 10:19,20; Deut. 1:23; I Sam. 18:5; 24:4; II Sam. 3:36; 18:4; I Kgs. 3:10).

22:31 “Today we know that the LORD is in our midst, because you have not committed this unfaithful act against the LORD” Notice that the presence of God was related to the sin or lack of sin on the part of the believing community. In the Old Testament the holiness of God requires holiness in His people.

▣ **“you have delivered the sons of Israel from the hand of the LORD”** This VERB (BDB 664, KB 717) in the *Hiphil* means “rescue,” “save,” or “snatch away” (cf. 2:13; 9:26; Jdgs. 9:17; I Sam. 14:48).

If these tribes would have acted unfaithfully, then YHWH’s judgment would have fallen on all Israel (cf. vv. 17,20). Since the eastern tribes had not rebelled, then all of Israel was “delivered”!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:32-34

³²Then Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest and the leaders returned from the sons of Reuben and from the sons of Gad, from the land of Gilead to the land of Canaan, to the sons of Israel, and brought back word to them. ³³The word pleased the sons of Israel, and the sons of Israel blessed God; and they did not speak of going up against them in war to destroy the land in which the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad were living. ³⁴The sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad called the altar *Witness*; "For," they said, "it is a witness between us that the LORD is God."

22: 34 “called the altar *Witness*” In the New American Standard Bible, the term “witness” is in italics, which means that it is not in the ancient Masoretic or Hebrew text. This term does not appear in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, or the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Old Testament. It is simply supplied for an English reader to understand what the altar was called (following the Syriac translation). It really refers to the term mentioned in v. 27.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. How was it decided which tribes would inherit land on the eastern side of the Jordan?
2. What is the significance of verse 5?
3. What is the significance of Joshua’s blessing?
4. What happened at Peor? What happened on account of Achan?
5. What is the significance of verse 22?
6. Why did the eastern tribes build an altar on their side of the Jordan?

JOSHUA 23

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NKB
Joshua's Farewell Address	Joshua's Farewell Address	Joshua's Farewell Admonitions	Joshua's Farewell Address	Joshua Sums Up His Work
23:1-13	23:1-13	23:1-13	23:1-13	23:1-5 Rules of Conduct When Living Among Foreigners 23:6-11 23:12-13
23:14-16	23:14-16	23:14-16	23:14-16	23:14 23:15 23:16

**READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL**

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. xvi). Compare your subject divisions with the five modern translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 23:1-13

¹Now it came about after many days, when the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies on every side, and Joshua was old, advanced in years, ²that Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders and their heads and their judges and their officers, and said to them, "I am old, advanced in years. ³And you have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the LORD your God is He who has been fighting for you. ⁴See, I have apportioned to you these nations

which remain as an inheritance for your tribes, with all the nations which I have cut off, from the Jordan even to the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun. ⁵The LORD your God, He will thrust them out from before you and drive them from before you; and you will possess their land, just as the LORD your God promised you. ⁶Be very firm, then, to keep and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, so that you may not turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, ⁷so that you will not associate with these nations, these which remain among you, or mention the name of their gods, or make *anyone* swear *by them*, or serve them, or bow down to them. ⁸But you are to cling to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day. ⁹For the LORD has driven out great and strong nations from before you; and as for you, no man has stood before you to this day. ¹⁰One of your men puts to flight a thousand, for the LORD your God is He who fights for you, just as He promised you. ¹¹So take diligent heed to yourselves to love the LORD your God. ¹²For if you ever go back and cling to the rest of these nations, these which remain among you, and intermarry with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, ¹³know with certainty that the LORD your God will not continue to drive these nations out from before you; but they will be a snare and a trap to you, and a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good land which the LORD your God has given you."

23:1 “after many days” Although it seems the conquest of Canaan happened very rapidly, in reality it took a long time. The Canaanites were not easily or totally defeated (cf. Judges 1). The delay in the last seven tribes’ land allotment is one evidence of the protracted timeframe.

▣ **“when the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies”** This is an idiomatic statement. It is a recurrent theme (cf. Deut. 12:10; 25:19; II Sam. 7:1,11; II Chr. 14:7). It probably means there was no current national military campaign in progress (cf. 21:44). It did not apply to the individual tribes possessing their own allotted territories. The phrase has connotations of

1. no war
2. security from invasion
3. peace

23:2 “Joshua called” Chapter 23 seems to have been a private meeting with the tribal representatives, while chapter 24 is a more public meeting calling for a public decision.

▣

NASB, NKJV,

NRSV, TEV “elders. . .heads. . .judges. . .officers”

NJB “elders. . .leaders. . .judges. . .officials”

JPSOA “elders. . .commanders. . .magistrates”

The exact function of each of these groups is uncertain (cf. Deut. 1:15-16; Josh. 8:33) but there was a distinct division of leadership on a tribal level. See fuller note at 24:1.

23:3 “the LORD your God” This is a technical phrase for the Covenant relationship. It is used extensively in Deuteronomy and Joshua. See Special Topic: Names for Deity at 1:1.

▣ **“to all these nations . . . which remain”** It seems that Joshua defeated the military resistance of the Canaanites, but each tribe had to finish the conquest in its own inheritance (compare 11:23-24; 21:43-45 with 13:1-4; 15:63; 23:5 and Jdgs. 2:21,23).

▣ **“He who has been fighting for you”** This same truth is repeated in vv. 5, 9, and 10. God as warrior is a common theme of the Pentateuch (e.g., Deut. 1:30; 3:22; 20:4; Exod. 14:14) and Joshua (e.g., 4:13-15;

10:14,42). Notice, however, the previous phrase which emphasized the necessary cooperation of Israel (“because of you”).

23:4 “See” This term (BDB 906, KB 1157, *Qal* IMPERATIVE) is often used by YHWH in Deuteronomy. It helps the people recognize what He had done (cf. Exod. 31:2; Deut. 1:8,21; 2:24,31; 11:26; 30:15; 32:39). Here it is used by Joshua for the elders to recognize his advanced age and the beginning of a new period in Israel’s history in the Promised Land.

23:5 “He will thrust them out from before you” The VERB (BDB 213, KB 239, *Qal* IMPERFECT, cf. Deut. 6:19; 9:4) is SINGULAR in form, but with a PLURAL suffix. This seems to imply YHWH’s agency through Israel’s instrumentality (divine will and human free will).

▣ **“just as the LORD your God promised you”** This is a recurrent theme.

23:6-8 There is a series of things Israel should do to maintain her relationship with YHWH.

1. “be very firm,” v. 6, BDB 304, KB 302, *Qal* PERFECT, cf. 1:6,7,9,18; 10:25; 23:6; Deut. 31:6,7,23
2. “to keep,” v. 6, BDB 1036, KB 1581, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT, cf. Deut. 4:6; 29:9
3. “to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses,” v. 6, BDB 793, KB 889, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT, cf. 1:7; Num. 15:39; Deut. 16:12; 30:8
4. “you may not turn aside from it,” v. 6, BDB 693, KB 747, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT, e.g., using two synonymous VERBS, 1:7; Exod. 32:8; Deut. 2:27; 5:32; 9:12; 11:16; 17:17,20; 28:14; I Sam. 12:20
5. “you will not associate with these nations,” v. 7, BDB 97, KB 112, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT
 - a. “do not mention the name of their gods,” cf. Exod. 23:13
 - b. “do not make *anyone* swear by them”
 - c. “do not serve them,” cf. Exod. 20:5; 23:33
 - d. “do not bow down to them,” cf. Jdgs. 2:19
6. “you are to cling to the LORD,” v. 8, BDB 179, KB 209, *Qal* IMPERFECT, cf. 22:5; Deut. 10:20; 11:22; 13:4; 30:20; II Kgs. 18:6. This is the same VERB used to describe Adam and Eve’s relationship (cf. Gen. 2:24).

23:9 “For the Lord has driven out great and strong nations before you” The VERB (BDB 439, KB 441, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) is recurrent (e.g., 3:10; 13:6; Num. 33:52,55, used in the sense of “dispossess”).

YHWH’s ownership of the land is symbolized in His victory over the Canaanites. Yes, Israel goes to battle, but it is the power and presence of YHWH that brings victory over vastly superior foes (cf. Deut. 4:38; 9:1; 11:23).

Israel’s lack of military success (i.e., they did not dispossess, cf. 13:13; 16:10; 17:13; Jdgs. 1:29,30,31, 32,33) was due to their lack of faith in YHWH’s promises and their unwillingness to seize the moment! The unbelief of the ten original spies returns!

▣ **“no man has stood before you to this day”** This is a metaphor for negated effective resistance (cf. 1:5; 10:8; Deut. 7:24; 11:25).

23:10 “one of your men put to flight a thousand” This is hyperbolic expression of YHWH’s victorious presence (cf. Lev. 26:7-8; Deut. 32:30).

23:11 Loving YHWH is expressed by covenant obedience! Love is an action, not just a feeling. Believers must make a decisive and personal choice to obey God! This is a recurrent theme in Deuteronomy (e.g., 6:5; 10:12; 11:13).

23:12 This is a list of the ways of not being faithful to the covenant.

1. “if you ever go back,” BDB 996, KB 1427, both the INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and *Qal* IMPERFECT from the same root for emphasis
2. “cling to the rest of these nations,” the same VERB used positively in v. 8 (*Qal* IMPERFECT, here *Qal* PERFECT)
3. “intermarry with them,” BDB 368, KB 364, *Hithpael* PERFECT, cf. Exod. 34:15-16; Deut. 7:3
4. “associate with them and they with you,” BDB 97, KB 112, *Qal* PERFECT, cf. v. 7

23:13 “know with certainty” This is an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and a *Qal* IMPERFECT of the same root (BDB 393, KB 390) for emphasis.

▣ This is a list of the consequences of disobedience to the covenant.

1. “The LORD your God will not continue to drive these nations out”
2. They will be
 - a. “a snare” (used to catch birds, BDB 809 I, cf. Exod. 23:33; 34:12; Deut. 7:16)
 - b. “a trap” (a trap set on the ground, BDB 430)
 - c. “a whip on your sides” (like an animal goad, BDB 1002)
 - d. “thorns in your eyes” (BDB 841, cf. Num. 33:55; Jdgs. 2:3)
3. “they will perish from this good land,” BDB 1, KB 2, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT, cf. Deut. 4:26; 7:4

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 23:14-16

¹⁴Now behold, today I am going the way of all the earth, and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one word of all the good words which the LORD your God spoke concerning you has failed; all have been fulfilled for you, not one of them has failed. ¹⁵It shall come about that just as all the good words which the LORD your God spoke to you have come upon you, so the LORD will bring upon you all the threats, until He has destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God has given you. ¹⁶When you transgress the covenant of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them, then the anger of the LORD will burn against you, and you will perish quickly from off the good land which He has given you.

23:14 “I am going the way of all the earth” This is an idiom or euphemism for death (cf. I Kgs. 2:2).

▣ **“you know in all your hearts and in all your soul”** The VERB (BDB 393, KB 390, *Qal* PERFECT) reinforced the Israelites’ sense of YHWH’s special presence and provisions, which have completely fulfilled all of His promises.

The parallel phrases “in all your hearts” and “in all your souls” are synonymous and refer to the entire person. Each Israelite knew for sure, completely, without doubt that YHWH was faithful to His word to them (cf. 21:45)! They must emulate this same faithfulness (i.e., vv. 6-13). See Special Topic below.

SPECIAL TOPIC: KNOW (using mostly Deuteronomy as a paradigm)

The Hebrew word “know” (BDB 393) has several senses (semantic fields) in the *Qal*.

1. to understand good and evil - Gen. 3:22; Deut. 1:39; Isa. 7:14-15; Jonah 4:11
2. to know by understanding - Deut. 9:2,3,6; 18:21
3. to know by experience - Deut. 3:19; 4:35; 8:2,3,5; 11:2; 20:20; 31:13; Josh. 23:14
4. to consider - Deut. 4:39; 11:2; 29:16
5. to know personally
 - a. a person - Gen. 29:5; Exod. 1:8; Deut. 22:2; 28:35,36; 33:9
 - b. a god - Deut. 11:28; 13:2,6,13; 28:64; 29:26; 32:17
 - c. YHWH - Deut. 4:35,39; 7:9; 29:6; Isa. 1:3; 56:10-11
 - d. in a sexual sense - Gen. 4:1,17,25; 24:16; 38:26
6. a learned skill or knowledge - Isa. 29:11,12; Amos 5:16
7. to be wise - Deut. 29:4; Pro. 1:2; 4:1; Isa. 29:24
8. God’s knowledge
 - a. of Moses - Deut. 34:10
 - b. of Israel - Deut. 31:21,27,29

▣ **“not one of them has failed”** God’s promises are sure and conditional (cf. v. 15; 21:45; I Kgs. 8:56).

23:15 As God’s promises of blessing are sure, so are God’s warnings of the consequences of covenant disobedience (cf. Deut. 4:23-31). As God destroyed the Canaanites (cf. Gen. 15:12-21), if Israel picks up their habits, He will destroy them (i.e., Assyrian and Babylonian exiles).

23:16 “transgress” The VERB “transgress” (BDB 716, KB 778, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT) means “to pass over.” When used of sin, it means “to pass over a known boundary”—in this case, the Mosaic covenant.

▣ **“the anger of the LORD will burn against you”** This VERB (BDB 354, KB 351, *Qal* PERFECT) is often used of YHWH’s burning anger for covenant violations (cf. 7:1; Exod. 4:14; 22:24; 32:10; Num. 11:1,10,33; 12:9; 22:22; 32:10,13; Deut. 6:15; 7:4; 11:17; 29:27; 31:17; Jdgs. 2:20; 3:8; 6:39; II Sam. 6:7). This is anthropomorphic language. Humans use human vocabulary to describe the actions and feelings of God. There is always only an analogous sense.

JOSHUA 24

PARAGRAPH DIVISION OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Tribes Gather at Shechem 24:1-13	The Covenant at Shechem 24:1-13	The Covenant at Shechem 24:1-13	Joshua Speaks to the People at Shechem 24:1-7a 24:7b-13	The Great Assembly at Shechem 24:1-2a 24:2b-10 24:11-13
“We Will Serve the Lord” 24:14-15 24:16-18 24:19-28	24:14-25	24:14-15 24:16-18 24:19-28	24:14-15 24:16-18 24:19-20 24:21 24:22a 24:22b 24:23 24:24 24:25-28	Israel Chooses YHWH 24:14-15 24:16-18 24:19-24 24:25-28
Joshua Dies 24:29-31	Death of Joshua and Eleazar 24:29-33	Final Notes 24:29-30	Joshua and Eleazar Die 24:29-30	The Death of Joshua 24:29-31
Joseph’s Bones Buried 24:32-33		24:31 24:32 24:33	24:31 24:32 24:33	The Bones of Joseph and the Death of Eleazar 24:32-33

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR’S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. xvi). Compare your subject divisions with the five modern translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author’s intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Verses 1-13 are a summary of YHWH's activity toward the man Abraham and his seed.
- B. The Hittite treaties of the second millennium B.C. offer us an ancient, historically contemporary parallel to the structure of Deuteronomy (as well as Exod. - Lev. and Josh. 24). This treaty pattern changed by the first millennium B.C. This gives us evidence for the historicity of the Pentateuch and Joshua. For further reading in this area, see G. E. Mendenhall's *Law and Covenants in Israel and the Ancient Near East* and John Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature in Its Cultural Context*, pp. 95-107.
- C. The Hittite treaty of the second millennium B.C. and its parallels in Deuteronomy
 1. preamble (Deut. 1:1-5, introduction of speaker, YHWH)
 2. review of the past acts of the King (Deut. 1:6-4:49, God's past acts for Israel)
 3. treaty terms (Deuteronomy 5-26)
 - a. general (Deuteronomy 5-11)
 - b. specific (Deuteronomy 12-26)
 4. results of treaty (Deuteronomy 27-29)
 - a. benefits (Deuteronomy 28)
 - b. curses/consequences (Deuteronomy 27)
 5. witness of deity (Deut. 30:19; 31:19, also 32, Moses' son functions as a witness)
 - a. a copy in the temple of the deity
 - b. a copy with the vassal to be read annually
 - c. the uniqueness of the Hittite treaties from the later Assyrian and Syrian treaties were:
 - 1) the historical review of the past acts of the king
 - 2) the cursing section was last pronounced
- D. The Hittite treaty pattern of the second millennium and its parallels in Joshua:
 1. identification of the King (24:2)
 2. narrative of the King's great acts (24:2-13)
 3. covenant obligations (24:14,23)
 4. instructions for depositing the treaty in the sanctuary (24:25-26)
 5. the deities of the parties involved invoked as witnesses (24:22)
 6. blessing of fidelity; curses for violation (24:20)

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED TEXT): 24:1-13

¹Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel and for their heads and their judges and their officers; and they presented themselves before God. ²Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, *namely*, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods. ³Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River, and led him through all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac. ⁴To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau, and to Esau I gave Mount Seir to possess it; but Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt. ⁵Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagues Egypt by what I did in its midst; and afterward I brought you out. ⁶I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea; and Egypt pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. ⁷But when they cried out to the LORD, He put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them and covered them; and your own eyes saw what I did in Egypt. And you lived in the wilderness for a long time. ⁸Then I brought you into the land of the Amorites who lived beyond the Jordan, and they fought with you; and I gave them into your hand, and you took possession of their land when I destroyed them before you. ⁹Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and fought against Israel, and he sent and summoned Balaam the son of Beor to curse you. ¹⁰But I was not willing to listen to Balaam. So he had to bless you, and I delivered you from his hand. ¹¹You crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho; and the citizens of Jericho fought against you, *and* the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Girgashite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. Thus I gave them into your hand. ¹²Then I sent the hornet before you and it drove out the two kings of the Amorites from before you, *but* not by your sword or your bow. ¹³I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and cities which you had not built, and you have lived in them; you are eating of vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.'"

24:1 “Shechem” This was a sacred site for the patriarchs (cf. Gen. 12:6-7; 33:18-20; 35:2-4). Also it is mentioned later in Deut. 27 and Joshua 8: 30-35. See NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 1213-1216 or ABD, vol. 5, pp. 1174-1186. Shiloh became the dominate sacred site in the period of the Judges because of the presence of the tabernacle.

▣ There are several terms that describe leaders within Israel (cf. 23:2). Their exact meaning is often speculation:

1. Elders, 8:33; 23:2; 24:1 - BDB 278
2. Heads, 23:2; 24:1 - BDB 910
3. Judges, 8:33; 23:2; 24:1 - BDB 1047
4. Officers, 8:33; 23:2; 24:1 - BDB 1009

24:2 “Joshua said to all the people” He obviously spoke through the officers and the elders of v. 2 because the number of people would be too great for him to speak to them all at once.

▣ **“Thus says the LORD the God of Israel”** This is the covenant title for deity. Notice the number of “I’s” in vv. 1-13. Joshua is speaking directly for YHWH (cf. vv. 3, 4 (twice), 5 (four), 6, 7, 8 (three), 10 (twice); 1:1,12,13)!

▣ **“ancient times”** “*Olam*” must be interpreted in light of its context. It is often translated “forever” or “eternal,” but this context shows its fluidity (semantic field). See Special Topic: Forever (*Olam*) at Josh. 4:7.

▣ **“the River”** This refers to the Euphrates.

▣ **“they served other gods”** Ur and Haran were both centers of the worship of the Moon goddess. Terah’s name (wandering, BDB 1076) itself may reflect this worship. Abraham was obviously involved to some extent. God chose him in grace, not because of his theology or unusual merit. The rabbis say he was persecuted by his neighbors because he was against idolatry. The hero in this text (and all other texts) is YHWH, not the human beings. The choice of Abraham was an act of pure grace and redemptive purpose (cf. Gen. 3:15; Acts 2:23; 3:18; 4:28; Luke 22:22).

24:3-4 The VERB “gave” (BDB 678, KB 733, *Qal* IMPERFECT) occurs three times in these verses, emphasizing YHWH’s power, control, and eternal purposes.

24:4 “Mount Seir” This refers to the land south of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba, usually associated with Edom. YHWH gave this land to the descendants of Ishmael (cf. Gen. 16:7-14; 17:18,20).

24:5 Read Gen. 15:12-21. This was purposeful action on YHWH’s part.

24:6 “chariots” See Special Topic at 11:4.

24:7 “darkness” This cloud represented YHWH’s presence, to one, darkness (Egyptians), to the other, light (Israelis, cf. Exod. 14:19-20). This same word (BDB 66) is used of the ninth plague on Egypt (i.e., darkness, cf. Exod. 10:22).

24:8 “the land of the Amorites” This refers to the land east of the Jordan River, which became the territory of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh (cf. Num. 21:21ff).

24:9 “Balah . . . Balaam” This false prophet’s attempt to curse Israel (cf. Numbers 22) is alluded to several times (cf. Deut. 23:4-5; Josh. 13:22; here; Neh. 13:2; Micah 6:5).

▣ **“fought against Israel”** The UBS *Translators Handbook on Joshua* makes the good point that “fought against Israel” seems to contradict Num. 22:6,11; Deut. 2:9; Jdgs. 11:25. Therefore, some commentators have suggested

1. “prepared to fight”
2. “stood up against”
3. “opposed”
4. “stood in your way”

The VERB (BDB 535, KB 1086, *Niphal* IMPERFECT) seems to always mean “fight” (e.g., 9:2; 10:25,29,31; 19:47; Jdgs. 1:5; 9:17; 11:8,25).

24:10 The term translated “bless” is the *Piel* IMPERFECT and the *Piel* INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE of the same root (BDB 138, KB 159), which is a way to express intensification.

24:11 “Amorite” This term may mean “highlanders.” It was a collective term for all the tribes of Canaan. See Special Topic at 3:10.

▣ **“Canaanite”** This term may mean “lowlanders.” It was a collective term for all the tribes of Canaan. See Special Topic at 3:10.

24:12 “hornet” This is possibly a metaphor of divine activity causing fear because, although it is mentioned several times (cf. Exod. 23:28; Deut. 7:20), it is never listed as actually happening. The metaphor is also used in Deut. 1:44.

24:13 The Promised Land was an undeserved grace gift from YHWH for the purpose of establishing a people who would reflect His character and love to the nations. See Special Topic at Josh. 1:7.

NASB (UPDATED TEXT): 24:14-15

14“Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. 15If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

24:14-15 This is a series of IMPERATIVES from Joshua to the tribes.

1. “fear,” BDB 431, KB 432, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, cf. Lev. 19:32; 25:36,43; Deut. 5:29; 6:2,13,24; 10:12,20; 13:4; 14:23; 17:19; Josh. 4:24
2. “serve,” BDB 712, KB 773, *Qal* IMPERATIVE; notice how often this VERB is used in Joshua 24 (cf. vv. 2,14[twice],15[four],16,18,19,20,21,22,24,31)!
 - a. in sincerity (BDB 1071)
 - b. in truth (BDB 54)
3. “put away” (lit. “turn aside”), BDB 693, KB 747, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE, cf. Gen. 35:2; I Sam. 7:4
4. “choose,” BDB 103, KB 119, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, cf. v. 22. Covenant faith involves a decision of human choice, as well as a divine choice! Covenant faith is more than family faith or national faith. It must be personal faith (cf. John 1:12; 3:16; Rom. 10:9-13).



NASB “in sincerity and truth”
NKJV “in sincerity and in truth”
NRSV “in sincerity and in faithfulness”
TEV “sincerely and faithfully”
NJB “truly and sincerely”

The JPSOA translation has “with undivided loyalty.” These terms focus on an inner attitude and outer lifestyle (cf. Deut. 6:4-5). The term “truth” (BDB 54) is the OT root for faith, believe, trust, which is paralleled to the NT term (*pistis, pistos, pisteuō*). See Special Topic below.

SPECIAL TOPIC: FAITH (*PISTIS* [NOUN], *PISTEUŌ*, [VERB], *PISTOS* [ADJECTIVE])

- A. This is such an important term in the Bible (cf. Heb. 11:1,6). It is the subject of Jesus’ early preaching (cf. Mark 1:15). There are at least two new covenant requirements: repentance and faith (cf. 1:15; Acts 3:16,19; 20:21).

B. Its etymology

1. The term “faith” in the OT meant loyalty, fidelity, or trustworthiness and was a description of God’s nature, not ours.
2. It came from a Hebrew term (*emun, emunah*, BDB 53), which meant “to be sure or stable.” Saving faith is mental assent (set of truths), moral living (a lifestyle), and primarily a relational (welcoming of a person) and volitional commitment (a decision) to that person.

C. Its OT usage

It must be emphasized that Abraham’s faith was not in a future Messiah, but in God’s promise that he would have a child and descendants (cf. Gen. 12:2; 15:2-5; 17:4-8; 18:14). Abraham responded to this promise by trusting in God. He still had doubts and problems about this promise, which took thirteen years to be fulfilled. His imperfect faith, however, was accepted by God. God is willing to work with flawed human beings who respond to Him and His promises in faith, even if it is the size of a mustard seed (cf. Matt. 17:20).

D. Its NT usage

The term “believed” is from the Greek term (*pisteuō*), which can also be translated “believe,” “faith,” or “trust.” For example, the NOUN does not occur in the Gospel of John, but the VERB is used often. In John 2:23-25 there is uncertainty as to the genuineness of the crowd’s commitment to Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. Other examples of this superficial use of the term “believe” are in John 8:31-59 and Acts 8:13, 18-24. True biblical faith is more than an initial response. It must be followed by a process of discipleship (cf. Matt. 13:20-22,31-32).

E. Its use with PREPOSITIONS

1. *Eis* means “into.” This unique construction emphasizes believers putting their trust/faith in Jesus:
 - a. into His name (John 1:12; 2:23; 3:18; I John 5:13)
 - b. into Him (John 2:11; 3:15,18; 4:39; 6:40; 7:5,31,39,48; 8:30; 9:36; 10:42; 11:45,48; 17:37,42; Matt. 18:6; Acts 10:43; Phil. 1:29; I Pet. 1:8)
 - c. into Me (John 6:35; 7:38; 11:25,26; 12:44,46; 14:1,12; 16:9; 17:20)
 - d. into the Son (John 3:36; 9:35; I John 5:10)
 - e. into Jesus (John 12:11; Acts 19:4; Gal. 2:16)
 - f. into Light (John 12:36)
 - g. into God (John 14:1)
2. *En* means “in” as in John 3:15; Mark 1:15; Acts 5:14
3. *Epi* means “in” or “upon,” as in Matt. 27:42; Acts 9:42; 11:17; 16:31; 22:19; Rom. 4:5,24; 9:33; 10:11; I Tim. 1:16; I Pet. 2:6
4. The DATIVE CASE with no PREPOSITION as in Gal. 3:6; Acts 18:8; 27:25; I John 3:23; 5:10
5. *Hoti*, which means “believe that,” gives content as to what to believe
 - a. Jesus is the Holy One of God (John 6:69)
 - b. Jesus is the I Am (John 8:24)
 - c. Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in Him (John 10:38)
 - d. Jesus is the Messiah (John 11:27; 20:31)
 - e. Jesus is the Son of God (John 11:27; 20:31)
 - f. Jesus was sent by the Father (John 11:42; 17:8,21)
 - g. Jesus is one with the Father (John 14:10-11)

- h. Jesus came from the Father (John 16:27,30)
- i. Jesus identified Himself in the covenant name of the Father, "I Am" (John 8:24; 13:19)
- j. We will live with Him (Rom. 6:8)
- k. Jesus died and rose again (I Thess. 4:14)

24:15 This is Joshua's affirmation of personal faith and family faith. He had served YHWH all his adult life and now at the end, he reaffirms his faith.

NASB (UPDATED TEXT): 24:16-18

¹⁶The people answered and said, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; ¹⁷for the LORD our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and who did these great signs in our sight and preserved us through all the way in which we went and among all the peoples through whose midst we passed. ¹⁸The LORD drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites who lived in the land. We also will serve the LORD, for He is our God."

24:16-18 "The people answered" This is another of Israel's affirmations of faith. This is a covenant renewal ceremony, cf. vv. 26-27 (also see vv. 16-18, 21, and 24).

24:17-18 These verses reiterate YHWH's faithfulness and redemptive acts toward Israel: (1) the exodus from Egypt; (2) the miracles of deliverance; (3) God's presence and care during the wilderness wandering period; and (4) the defeat of the Canaanites and the possession of the Promised Land (cf. Gen. 15:16).

NASB (UPDATED TEXT): 24:19-28

¹⁹Then Joshua said to the people, "You will not be able to serve the LORD, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgression or your sins. ²⁰If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you after He has done good to you." ²¹The people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the LORD." ²²Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen for yourselves the LORD, to serve Him." And they said, "We are witnesses." ²³Now therefore, put away the foreign gods which are in your midst, and incline your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel. ²⁴The people said to Joshua, "We will serve the LORD our God and we will obey His voice." ²⁵So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. ²⁶And 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. ²⁷Joshua said to all the people, "Behold, this stone shall be for a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD which He spoke to us; thus it shall be for a witness against you, so that you do not deny your God." ²⁸Then Joshua dismissed the people, each to his inheritance."

24:19 "You will not be able to serve the LORD" This follows the revelation to Moses in Deut. 31:16-22. Joshua seems to be emphasizing the difficulty in serving a holy God. The sacrificial system of Leviticus was a means for sinful people to approach a holy God and maintain fellowship (i.e., covenant). It is impossible in our own strength.

▣ **“holy God”** Both terms are PLURAL (i.e., PLURAL OF MAJESTY), which intensifies the concept.

▣ **“jealous God”** This is a love word which implies a deep personal relationship (cf. Exod. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15). He is spoken of as a “father” or even a “husband” (cf. Hosea 1-3).

▣ **“He will not forgive your transgressions and sins”** Covenant obedience is crucial. God is faithful, but the covenant is conditional. Sin has consequences! YHWH will not overlook rebellion (cf. Exod. 23:21). This is the problem of the first covenant—fallen human inability to maintain fellowship with a holy God.

24:20 “if” The “if” shows the conditional nature of YHWH’s covenant and promises to Israel (e.g., Deut. 28:1-2,15). All of YHWH’s blessings of Deuteronomy 27-28, as well as His land promises, are conditioned on a faithful, obedient, believing Israel. This is true of the Old Testament and the eschaton!

24:22 “you are witnesses against yourselves” The covenant has rights and responsibilities. To say “yes” has definite privileges and consequences. Israel had affirmed their covenant relationship to YHWH in 24:16-18 and again in v. 24.

24:23 “put away foreign gods which are in your midst” The VERB “put away” (BDB 693, KB 747) is a *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE, cf. v. 14; Gen. 35:2; I Sam. 7:4). The gods were already in their midst (i.e., the Canaanite gods). Amos 5:27 seems to confirm this possibility, but the second half of the verse implies attitudes, (“incline your hearts,” BDB 639, KB 692, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE), not actual objects. This verse calls on Israel to “incline,” but I Kgs. 8:58 calls on YHWH to cause His people to “incline” (cf. Prov. 21:1; Psa. 141:4 negated). The Hebrew can mean either.

24:26 “took a large stone” In Deut. 16:21-21 this was prohibited. But, remember, the purpose of this stone is the key. This was a third covenant renewal service!

24:27 “it has heard” This is a personification of the stone which was common (cf. Hab. 2:11; Ezek. 36:4,6). It is characteristic of Hititite treaties for natural objects to act as witnesses (rocks, trees, clouds, mountains). Joshua has used stones as memorials in the past (i.e., two piles in Joshua 4).

NASB (UPDATED TEXT): 24:29-30

²⁹It came about after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being one hundred and ten years old. ³⁰And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-serah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, on the north of Mount Gaash.

24:29 “the servant of the LORD” This was used often of Moses, but only here of Joshua. See note at 1:1.

▣ **“one hundred and ten”** This is also the age of Joseph when he died (cf. Gen. 50:26). This age may have been a symbol of a blessed life.

NASB (UPDATED TEXT): 24:31

³¹Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, and had known all the deeds of the LORD which He had done for Israel.

24:31 This is a common theme in the OT. Those who experienced YHWH's power and deliverance remained faithful, but the next generation which only heard about it often went astray (e.g., the book of Judges).

NASB (UPDATED TEXT): 24:32-33

³²Now they buried the bones of Joseph, which the sons of Israel brought up from Egypt, at Shechem, in the piece of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of money; and they became the inheritance of Joseph's sons. ³³And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him at Gibeah of Phinehas his son, which was given him in the hill country of Ephraim.

24:32 "bones of Joseph" This was Joseph's request (cf. Gen. 50:24-26; Exod. 13:19). He had been embalmed with great care in the tradition of the Egyptians.

▣ **"which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor"** (cf. Gen. 33:19). Shechem was also in the land allotment of Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.



NASB, NRSV "pieces of money"

NKJV, TEV, NJB "pieces of silver"

The Hebrew is uncertain (BDB 903, Gen. 33:19; Job 42:1). It occurs three times in the OT. It seems to refer to an unknown weight functioning as money. The Septuagint translates the term as "lamb," which may mean (1) shape of a lamb or (2) the value of a lamb (cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 4, p. 239).

24:33 "Eleazar" The High Priest during Joshua's day also died and was buried at Gibeah, not the city in the tribal allocation of Benjamin, but a place near Shiloh in the allocation of Ephraim.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. What is the difference between chapter 23 and 24?
2. Does the Bible teach against inter-racial marriage?
3. Is this chapter a literary unit written in Joshua's day or a later compilation?
4. Why does "I" appear so often in vv. 3-13?
5. Was Abraham a polytheist before God called him?
6. Why are vv. 14 and 15 so important in describing biblical faith?
7. Are verses 29-33 a later addition?

APPENDIX ONE

A BRIEF HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE POWERS OF MESOPOTAMIA

(using dates based primarily on John Bright's *A History of Israel*, p. 462ff.)

I. Assyrian Empire (Gen.10:11)

A. Religion and culture were greatly influenced by the Sumerian/Babylonian Empire.

B. Tentative list of rulers and approximate dates

1. 1354-1318 - Asshur-Uballit I:
 - (a) conquered the Hittite city of Carchemish
 - (b) began to remove Hittite influence and allowed Assyria to develop
2. 1297-1266 - Adad-Nirari I (powerful king)
3. 1265-1235 - Shalmaneser I (powerful king)
4. 1234-1197 - Tukulti-Ninurta I
 - first conquest of Babylonian empire to the south
5. 1118-1078 - Tiglath-Pileser I
 - Assyria becomes a major power in Mesopotamia
6. 1012- 972 Ashur-Rabi II
7. 972- 967 - Ashur-Resh-Isui II
8. 966- 934 - Tiglath-Pileser II
9. 934- 912 - Ashur-Dan II
10. 912- 890 - Adad-Nirari II
11. 890- 884 - Tukulti-Ninurta II
12. 883- 859 - Asshur-Nasir-Apal II
13. 859- 824 - Shalmaneser III
 - Battle of Qarqar in 853
14. 824-811 - Shamashi-Adad V
15. 811-783 - Adad-Nirari III
16. 781-772 - Shalmaneser IV
17. 772-754 - Ashur-Dan III
18. 754-745 - Ashur-Nirari V
19. 745-727 - Tiglath-Pileser III:
 - a. called by his Babylonian throne name, Pul, in II Kings 15:19
 - b. very powerful king
 - c. started the policy of deporting conquered peoples
 - d. In 735 B.C.. there was the formation of the "Syro-Ephramatic League" which was an attempt to unify all the available military resources of the transjordan nations from the head waters of the Euphrates to Egypt for the purpose of neutralizing the rising military power of Assyria. King Ahaz of Judah refused to join and was invaded by Israel and Syria. He wrote to Tiglath-Pileser III for help against the advise of Isaiah (cf. II Kgs. 16; Isa. 7-12).
 - e. In 732 Tiglath-Pileser III invades and conquers Syria and Israel and places a vassal king on the throne of Israel, Hoshea (732-722). Thousands of Jews from the Northern Kingdom were exiled to Media (cf. II Kings 15).
20. 727-722 - Shalmaneser V
 - a. Hoshea forms an alliance with Egypt and is invaded by Assyria (cf. II Kgs.17)
 - b. besieged Samaria in 724 B.C.

21. 722-705 - Sargon II:
 - a. After a three year siege started by Shalmaneser V, his successor Sargon II conquers the capital of Israel, Samaria. Over 27,000 are deported to Media.
 - b. The Hittite empire is also conquered.
 - c. In 714-711 another coalition of transjordan nations and Egypt rebelled against Assyria. This coalition is known as “the Ashdad Rebellion.” Even Hezekiah of Judah originally was involved. Assyria invaded and destroyed several Philistine cities.
22. 705-681 - Sennacherib:
 - a. In 705 another coalition of transjordan nations and Egypt rebelled after the death of Sargon II. Hezekiah fully supported this rebellion. Sennacherib invaded in 701. The rebellion was crushed but Jerusalem was spared by an act of God (cf. Isa. 36-39 and II Kgs. 18-19).
 - b. Sennacherib also put down the rebellion in Elam and Babylon.
23. 681-669 - Esarhaddon:
 - a. first Assyrian ruler to attack and conquer Egypt
 - b. had great sympathy with Babylon and rebuilt its capital city
24. 669-633 - Ashurbanipal:
 - a. also called Osnappar in Ezra 4:10
 - b. His brother Shamash-shum-ukin was made king of Babylon (later demoted to viceroy). This brought several years of peace between Assyria and Babylon, but there was an undercurrent of independence which broke out in 652 led by his brother (who had been demoted to Viceroy).
 - c. fall of Thebes, 663 B.C.
 - d. defeated Elam, 653, 645 B.C.
25. 633-629 - Asshur-Etil-Ilani
26. 629-612 - Sin-Shar-Ishkun
27. 612-609 - Asshur-Uballit II:
 - a. enthroned king in exile in Haran
 - b. the fall of Asshur in 614 B.C. and Nineveh in 612 B.C.

II. Neo-Babylon Empire:

- A. 703-? Merodach-Baladan
 - Started several revolts against Assyrian rule
- B. 652 Shamash-shum-ukin:
 1. Esarhaddon’s son and Asshurbanipal’s brother
 2. he started a revolt against Assyria but was defeated
- C. 626-605 Nabopolassar:
 1. was the first monarch of the Neo-Babylonian Empire
 2. he attacked Assyria from the south while Cyaxares of Media attacked from the northeast
 3. the old Assyrian capital of Asshur fell in 614 and the powerful new capital of Nineveh fell in 612 B.C.
 4. the remnant of the Assyrian army retreated to Haran. They even installed a king.
 5. In 608 Pharaoh Necho II (cf. II Kings 23:29) marched north to help the remnant of the Assyrian army for the purpose of forming a buffer zone against the rising power of Babylon. Josiah, the godly king of Judah (cf. II Kings 23), opposed the movement of the Egyptian army through Palestine. There was a minor skirmish at Megiddo. Josiah was wounded and died (II Kgs. 23:29-

30). His son, Jehoakaz, was made king. Pharaoh Necho II arrived too late to stop the destruction of the Assyrian forces at Haran. He engaged the Babylonian forces commanded by the crown prince Nebuchadnezzar II and was soundly defeated in 605 B.C. at Carchemesh on the Euphrates River.

On his way back to Egypt Pharaoh Necho stopped at Jerusalem and sacked the city. He replaced and deported Jehoahaz after only three months. He put another son of Josiah, Jehoiakim, on the throne (cf. II Kings 23:31-35).

6. Nebuchadnezzar II chased the Egyptian army south through Palestine but he received word of his father's death and returned to Babylon to be crowned. Later, in the same year, he returned to Palestine. He left Jehoiakim on the throne of Judah but exiled several thousand of the leading citizens and several members of the royal family. Daniel and his friends were part of this deportation.

D. 605-562 - Nebuchadnezzar II:

1. From 597-538 Babylon was in complete control of Palestine.
2. In 597 another deportation from Jerusalem occurred because of Jehoakim's alliance with Egypt (II Kings 24). He died before the arrival of Nebuchadnezzar II. His son Jehoiachin was only king for three months when he was exiled to Babylon. Ten thousand citizens, including Ezekiel, were resettled close to the City of Babylon by the Canal Kebar.
3. In 586, after continued flirtation with Egypt, the City of Jerusalem was completely destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar (II Kgs. 25) and a mass deportation occurred. Zedekiah, who replaced Jehoiachin, was exiled and Gedaliah was appointed governor.
4. Gedaliah was killed by Jewish renegade military forces. These forces fled to Egypt and forced Jeremiah to go with them. Nebuchadnezzar invaded a fourth time (605, 596, 586, 582) and deported all remaining Jews that he could find.

E. 562-560 Evil-merodach, Nebuchadnezzar's son, was also known as Amel-Marduk (Akkadian, "Man of Marduk")

- He released Jehoiakim from prison but he had to remain in Babylon (cf. II Kings 25:27-30; Jer. 52:31).

F. 560-556 - Neriglissar

- He assassinated Evil-merodach, who was his brother-in-law
- He was previously Nebuchadnezzar's general who destroyed Jerusalem (cf. Jer. 39:3,13)

G. 556 - Labaski-Marduk

- He was Neriglissar's son who assumed kingship as a boy, but was assassinated after only nine months (Berossos).

H. 556-539 - Nabonidus (Akkadian, "Nebo is exalted"):

1. Nabonidus was not related to the royal house so he married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar
2. He spent most of the time building a temple to the moon god "Sin" in Tema. He was the son of the high priestess of this goddess. This earned him the enmity of the priests of Marduk, chief god of Babylon.
3. He spent most of his time trying to put down revolts (in Syria and north Africa) and stabilize the kingdom.
4. He moved to Tema and left the affairs of state to his son, Belshazzar, in the capital, Babylon (cf. Dan.5).

- I. ? - 539 - Belshazzar (co-reign)
 - The city of Babylon fell very quickly to the Persian Army under Gobryas of Gutium by diverting the waters of the Euphrates and entering the city unopposed. The priests and people of the city saw the Persians as liberators and restorers of Marduk. Gobryas was made Governor of Babylon by Cyrus II. Gobryas may have been the Darius the Mede of Dan. 5:31; 6:1. "Darius" means "royal one."

III. Medio-Persian Empire: Survey of the Rise of Cyrus II (Isa. 41:2,25;44:28-45:7; 46:11; 48:15)

- A. 625-585 - Cyaxares was the king of Media that helped Babylon defeat Assyria.
- B. 585-550 - Astyages was king of Media (capital was Ecbatana). Cyrus II was his grandson by Cambyses I (600-559, Persian) and Mandane (daughter of Astyages, Median).
- C. 550-530 - Cyrus II of Ansham (eastern Elam) was a vassal king who revolted:
 1. Nabonidus, the Babylonian king, supported Cyrus.
 2. Astyages' general, Harpagus, led his army to join Cyrus' revolt
 3. Cyrus II dethroned Astyages.
 4. Nabonidus, in order to restore a balance of power, made an alliance with:
 - a. Egypt
 - b. Croesus, King of Lydia (Asia Minor)
 5. 547 - Cyrus II marched against Sardis (capital of Lydia) and it fell in 546 B.C.
 6. 539 - In mid-October the general Ugbaru and Gobryas, both of Gutium, with Cyrus' army, took Babylon without resistance. Ugbaru was made governor, but died of war wounds within weeks, then Gobryas was made governor of Babylon.
 7. 539 - In late October Cyrus II "the Great" personally entered as liberator. His policy of kindness to national groups reversed years of deportation as a national policy.
 8. 538 - Jews and others (cf. the Cyrus Cylinder) were allowed to return home and rebuild their native temples (cf. II Chr. 36:22,23; Ezra 1:1-4). He also restored the vessels from YHWH's temple which Nebuchadnezzar had taken to Marduk's temple in Babylon (cf. Ezra 1:7-11; 6:5).
 9. 530 - Cyrus' son, Cambyses II, succeeded him briefly as co-regent, but later the same year Cyrus died while in a military campaign.
- D. 530-522 - reign of Cambyses II
 1. added Egyptian empire in 525 B.C. to the Medo-Persian Empire;
 2. he had a short reign
 - a. some say he committed suicide
 - b. Heroditus said he cut himself with his own sword while mounting his horse and died of the resulting infection
 3. brief usurpation of the throne by Pseudo-Smerdis (Gaumata) - 522
- E. 522-486 - Darius I (Hystapes) came to rule
 1. He was not of the royal line but a military general.
 2. He organized the Persian Empire using Cyrus' plans for Satraps (cf. Ezra 5-6; also during Haggai's and Zechariah's time).
 3. He set up coinage like Lydia.
 4. He attempted to invade Greece, but was repulsed.
- F. 486-465 - Reign of Xerxes I
 1. put down Egyptian revolt

2. intended to invade Greece and fulfill Persian dream but was defeated in the battle of Thermoply in 480 B.C. and Salamis in 479 B.C.
 3. Esther's husband, who is called Ahasuerus in the Bible, was assassinated in 465 B.C.
- G. 465-424 - Artaxerxes I (Longimanus) reigned (cf Ezra 7-10; Nehemiah; Malachi)
1. Greeks continued to advance until confronted with the Peloponnesian Civil Wars
 2. Greece divides (Athenian - Peloponnesian)
 3. Greek civil wars lasted about 20 years
 4. during this period the Jewish community is strengthened
 5. brief reign of Xerxes II and Sekydianos - 423
- H. 423-404 - Darius II (Nothos) reigned
- I. 404-358 - Artaxerxes II (Mnemon) reigned
- J. 358-338 - Artaxerxes III (Ochos) reigned
- K. 338-336 - Arses reigned
- L. 336-331 - Darius III (Codomannus) reigned until the Battle of Issus 331 and was defeated by Greece

IV. Survey of Egypt

- A. Hyksos (Shepherd Kings - Semitic rulers)-1720/10-1550
- B. 18th Dynasty (1570-1310)
1. 1570-1546 - Amosis
 - a. made Thebes the capital
 - b. invaded southern Canaan
 2. 1546-1525 - Amenophis I (Amenhotep I)
 3. 1525-1494 - Thutmosis I
 4. 1494-1490 - Thutmosis II - married Thutmosis I's daughter, Hatshepsut
 5. 1490-1435 - Thutmosis III (nephew of Hatshepsut)
 6. 1435-1414 - Amenophis II (Amenhotep II)
 7. 1414-1406 - Thutmosis IV
 8. 1406-1370 - Amenophis III (Amenhotep III)
 9. 1370-1353 - Amenophis IV (Akhenaten)
 - a. worshiped the Sun, Aten
 - b. instituted a form of high-god worship (monotheism)
 - c. Tel-El-Amarna letters are in this period
 10. ? Smenkhare
 11. ? Tutankhamun (Tutankhaten)
 12. ? Ay (Aye-Eye)
 13. 1340-1310 Haremhab
- C. 19th Dynasty (1310-1200)
1. ? Rameses I (Ramses)
 2. 1309-1290 - Seti I (Sethos)
 3. 1290-1224 - Ramesses II (Ramses II)
 - a. from archaeological evidence most likely Pharaoh of the exodus
 - b. built the cities of Avaris, Pithom and Ramses by Habaru (possibly Semites or Hebrew) slaves
 4. 1224-1216 - Marniptah (Merenptah)

5. ? Amenmesses
 6. ? Seti II
 7. ? Siptah
 8. ? Tewosret
- D. 20th Dynasty (1180-1065)
1. 1175-1144 - Rameses III
 2. 1144-1065 - Rameses IV - XI
- E. 21st Dynasty (1065-935)
1. ? Smendes
 2. ? Herihor
- F. 22nd Dynasty (935-725 - Libyan)
1. 935-914 - Shishak (Shosenk I or Sheshong I)
 - a. protected Jeroboam I until Solomon's death
 - b. conquered Palestine about 925 (cf. I Kgs. 14-25; II Chr. 12)
 2. 914-874 - Osorkon I
 3. ? Osorkon II
 4. ? Shoshnek II
- G. 23rd Dynasty (759-715 - Libyan)
- H. 24th Dynasty (725-709)
- I. 25th Dynasty (716/15-663 - Ethiopian/Nubian):
1. 710/09-696/95 - Shabako (Shabaku)
 2. 696/95-685/84 - Shebteko (Shebitku)
 3. 690/689, 685/84-664 - Tirhakah (Taharqa)
 4. ? Tantamun
- J. 26th Dynasty (663-525 - Saitic)
1. 663-609 - Psammetichus I (Psamtik)
 2. 609-593 - Neco II (Necho)
 3. 593-588 - Psammetichus II (Psamtik)
 4. 588-569 - Apries (Hophra)
 5. 569-525 - Amasis
 6. ? - Psammetichus III (Psamtik)
- K. 27th Dynasty (525-401 - Persian)
1. 530-522 - Cambyses II (Cyrus II's son)
 2. 522-486 - Darius I
 3. 486-465 - Xerxes I
 4. 465-424 - Artaxerxes I
 5. 423-404 - Darius II
- L. Several brief dynasties (404-332)
1. 404-359 - Artaxerxes II

2. 539/8 - 338/7 - Artaxerxes III
3. 338/7 - 336/7 - Arses
4. 336/5 - 331 - Darius III

*for a different chronology, see Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia, vol. 2 p. 231.

V. Survey of Greece

- A. 359-336 - Philip II of Macedon:
 1. built up Greece
 2. assassinated in 336 B.C.

- B. 336-323 - Alexander II "the Great" (Philip's son)
 1. routed Darius III, the Persian king, at the battle of Isus
 2. died in 323 B.C. in Babylon of a fever at 32/33 yrs. of age
 3. Alexander's generals divided his empire at his death
 - a. Cassander - Macedonia and Greece
 - b. Lysimicus - Thrace
 - c. Seleucus I - Syria and Babylon
 - d. Ptolemy - Egypt and Palestine
 - e. Antigonus - Asia Minor (He did not last long)

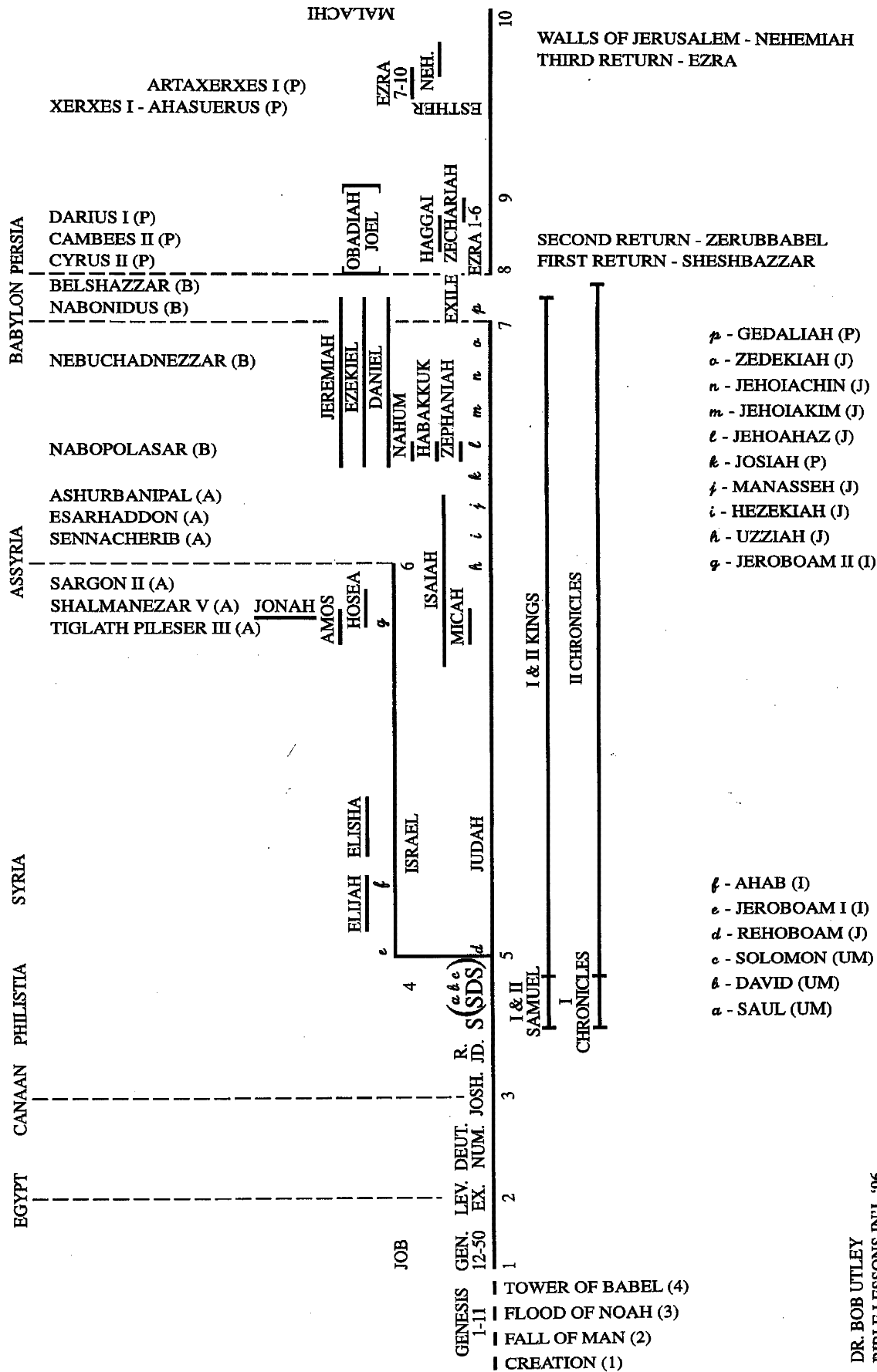
- C. Seleucids vs. Ptolemies struggle for control of Palestine
 1. Syria (Seleucid Rulers):
 - a. 312-280 - Seleucus I
 - b. 280-261 - Antiochus I Soter
 - c. 261-146 - Antiochus II Theus
 - d. 246-226 - Seleucus II Callinicus
 - e. 226-223 - Seleucus III Ceraunus
 - f. 223-187 - Antiochus III the Great
 - g. 187-175 - Seleucus IV Philopator
 - h. 175-163 - Antiochus IV Epiphanes
 - i. 163-162 - Antiochus V
 - j. 162-150 - Demetrius I
 2. Egyptian (Ptolemaic Rulers)
 - a. 327-285 - Ptolemy I Soter
 - b. 285-246 - Ptolemy II Philadelphus
 - c. 246-221 - Ptolemy III Euegetes
 - d. 221-203 - Ptolemy IV Philopator
 - e. 203-181 - Ptolemy V Epiphanes
 - f. 181-146 - Ptolemy VI Philometor
 3. Brief Survey
 - a. 301 - Palestine under Ptolemy rule for 181 years.
 - b. 175-163 - Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the eighth Seleucid ruler, wanted to Hellenize Jews by force, if necessary:
 - (1) constructed gymnasiums
 - (2) constructed pagan altars of Zeus Olympius in the Temple

- c. 168 - December 13, hog slain on the altar in Jerusalem by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Some consider this to be “the abomination of desolation” in Daniel 8.
- d. 167 - Mattathias, priest in Modin, and sons rebel. The best known of his sons was Judas Maccabeas, “Judas the Hammer.”
- e. 165 - December 25, Temple rededicated. This is called Hanukkah or “Festival of Lights.”

For a good discussion of the dating problems, procedures and presuppositions see *The Expositors Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, pp. 10-17.

APPENDIX TWO

CHART OF THE WHOLE OLD TESTAMENT (on next page)



Undateable Events (Genesis 1-11)

1. Creation (Gen. 1-2)
2. Fall of Man (Gen. 3)
3. Flood of Noah Day (Gen. 6-9)
4. Tower of Babel (Gen. 10-11)

Dateable Events

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Patriarchal Period (Gen. 12-50 and Job) | 2000 B.C. |
| 2. Exodus from Egypt (Exodus) | 1445 or 1290 B.C. |
| 3. Conquest of Canaan (Joshua) | 1440 or 1250 B.C. |
| 4. United Monarchy (Saul, David, Solomon) | 1000 B.C. |
| 5. Divided Monarchy (Rehoboam-Jeroboam I) | 922 B.C. |
| 6. Fall of Samaria (Israel) to Assyria | 722 B.C. |
| 7. Fall of Jerusalem (Judah) to Babylon | 586 B.C. |
| 8. Decree of Cyrus (Persia) to Return | 538 B.C. |
| 9. Temple Rebuilt | 516 B.C. |
| 10. Close of OT Period (Malachi) | 430 B.C. |

List of Kings

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| A. United Monarchy | D. Assyria |
| 1. Saul (a) | 1. Tiglath Pileser III (745-727) |
| 2. David (b) | 2. Shalmanesar V (727-722) |
| 3. Solomon (c) | 3. Sargon II (722-705) |
| B. Israel | 4. Sennacherib (705-681) |
| 1. Jeroboam I (e) | 5. Esarhaddon (681-669) |
| 2. Ahab (f) | 6. Ashurbanipal (669-663) |
| 3. Jeroboam II (g) | E. Babylon |
| C. Judah | 1. Nabopolasar (626-605) |
| 1. Rehoboam (d) | 2. Nebuchadnezzar (605-562) |
| 2. Uzziah (h) | 3. Nabonidus (556-539) |
| 3. Hezekiah (i) | 4. Belshazzar |
| 4. Manasseh (j) | F. Persia |
| 5. Josiah (k) | 1. Cyrus II (550-530) |
| 6. Jehoahaz (l) | 2. Cambes II (530-522) |
| 7. Jehoiakim (m) | 3. Darius I (522-486) |
| 8. Jehoiachin (n) | 4. Xerxes I (486-465) |
| 9. Zedekiah (o) | 5. Artaxerxes I (465-424) |
| 10. Gedaliah (p) | |

APPENDIX THREE

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

I do not particularly care for statements of faith or creeds. I prefer to affirm the Bible itself. However, I realize that a statement of faith will provide those who are unfamiliar with me a way to evaluate my doctrinal perspective. In our day of so much theological error and deception, the following brief summary of my theology is offered.

1. The Bible, both the Old and New Testament, is the inspired, infallible, authoritative, eternal Word of God. It is the self-revelation of God recorded by men under supernatural leadership. It is our only source of clear truth about God and His purposes. It is also the only source of faith and practice for His church.

2. There is only one eternal, creator, redeemer God. He is the creator of all things, visible and invisible. He has revealed Himself as loving and caring although He is also fair and just. He has revealed Himself in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Spirit; truly separate and yet the same in essence.

3. God is actively in control of His world. There is both an eternal plan for His creation that is unalterable and an individually focused one that allows human free will. Nothing happens without God's knowledge and permission, yet He allows individual choices both among angels and humans. Jesus is the Father's Elect Man and all are potentially elect in Him. God's foreknowledge of events does not reduce humans to a determined pre-written script. All of us are responsible for our thoughts and deeds.

4. Mankind, though created in God's image and free from sin, chose to rebel against God. Although tempted by a supernatural agent, Adam and Eve were responsible for their willful self-centeredness. Their rebellion has affected humanity and creation. We are all in need of God's mercy and grace both for our corporate condition in Adam and our individual volitional rebellion.

5. God has provided a means of forgiveness and restoration for fallen humanity. Jesus Christ, God's unique son, became a man, lived a sinless life, and by means of his substitutionary death, paid the penalty for mankind's sin. He is the only way to restoration and fellowship with God. There is no other means of salvation except through faith in His finished work.

6. Each of us must personally receive God's offer of forgiveness and restoration in Jesus. This is accomplished by means of volitional trust in God's promises through Jesus and a willful turning from known sin.

7. All of us are fully forgiven and restored based upon our trust in Christ and repentance from sin. However, the evidence for this new relationship is seen in a changed, and changing, life. The goal of God for humanity is not only heaven someday but Christlikeness now. Those who are truly redeemed, though occasionally sinning, will continue in faith and repentance throughout their lives.

8. The Holy Spirit is "the other Jesus." He is present in the world to lead the lost to Christ and develop Christlikeness in the saved. The gifts of the Spirit are given at salvation. They are the life and ministry of Jesus divided among His body, the Church. The gifts which are basically the attitudes and motives of Jesus need to be motivated by the fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit is active in our day as He was in the biblical times.

9. The Father has made the resurrected Jesus Christ the Judge of all things. He will return to earth to judge all mankind. Those who have trusted Jesus and whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will receive their eternal glorified bodies at His return. They will be with Him forever. However, those who have refused to respond to God's truth will be separated eternally from the joys of fellowship with the Triune God. They will be condemned along with the Devil and his angels.

This is surely not complete or thorough but I hope it will give you the theological flavor of my heart. I like the statement:

"In essentials—unity, In peripherals—freedom, In all things—love."