

EXPOSITIONAL NOTES ON JOSHUA

Introduction

The Lord GOD formed the land out of the water (Gen. 1:9) and created the earth to be inhabited (Isa. 45:18). This land mass was earth (Gen. 1:10), and ultimately He gave a certain parcel of earth to Abraham and his seed (Gen. 12:1-7; 15:18-21). This special land gift was called Canaan (94x), “*the land which...he hath promised*” (Ex. 12:25; Dt. 6:3; Josh. 23:15), “*the land of Israel*” (Mt. 2:20-21, *et al*), “*the holy land*” (Zech. 2:12), but never “Palestine.”¹ Moses instructed the people of Israel with the LORD’s command, saying, “*Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them*” (Dt. 1:8). This command united the two great promises of the Lord, namely the Seed Promise (Gen. 3:15) with the Land Promise (Gen.12:1-7). Its ultimate fulfillment was prophesied by Micah and fulfilled in Christ’s birth in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2; Mt. 2:1, 5-6). Historically, the man Joshua was the human agent to fulfill by faith² and obedience the conquest of the Land Promise. This conquest was long (Josh. 11:18; cf. 14:7, 10)³ and incomplete (Josh. 13:13), but the Canaanite dominance was broken and the Land was indeed the Israelites. The book of Joshua connected the Egyptian-delivered Jews to the Promised Land and its ultimate subjugation under the Judges.

Authorship and Date

The Jews, following the reading of the *Tanak*, understood that the man Joshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ)⁴ the son of Nun (1:1; 2:1, 23; 6:6; 14:1; 17:4; 19:49, 51; 21:1; and 24:29) was the author of the book of his namesake. Christian commentators and theologians held to obvious conclusion as well. The internal evidence demands that the authorship leads to Joshua hands for several reasons. 1) The book was written by an eyewitness to the events (5:1, 6; 15:4). 2) The book

¹Tyre and Zidon were major cities along “*the coasts of Palestine* (1x)” (Joel 3:4). “*The Land of Israel*” (I Sam. 13:19) was called “Palestine” by the Romans in the AD second century. Contrary to popular opinion and expression, there is no “land of Palestine,” in spite of the anti-Semitic efforts to run counter to Asaph’s plea, saying, “*They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance*” (Ps. 83:4).

²Two episodes in the book of Joshua find emphasis on Israel’s faith in the land conquest of Canaan (Heb. 11:30-31).

³The LORD prophesied the progressive conquest and its reason, saying, “*And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee*” (Dt. 7:22; Ex. 23:29-30). The reason included their protection from the animals which would become a significant threat. During the Tribulation, with so much death and destruction, carnivorous animals will become a major source for hunting and killing mankind (Rev. 6:8).

⁴The Hebrew name occurs 218x, ranging from Ex. 17:9 to Zech. 6:11, and refers to at least four different individuals. It means “Jehovah saves,” as Joshua typifies Jesus whose name he bears (Acts 7:45; Heb. 4:8).

was written early, since Rahab was still alive (6:25) and the Jebusites were still dwelling in Jerusalem (15:63).⁵ 3) The book was written in part by Joshua, and so no reason that he did not write all of it (18:9; 24:26).⁶ 4) The book may have concluded with his prophecy of his own death, or finished by others such as Eleazar or Phineas (24:31-33).

Since the Exodus was 1446 BC and the wilderness wanderings were forty years, then the entrance into Canaan was about 1406 with Joshua leading the way. Joshua may have been the same age of forty as was Caleb when he espied the land (Num. 32:11; cf. also Josh. 14:6 ff.), then lived forty years in the wilderness, making him about eighty, and lived another thirty years, dying at age one hundred and ten (Josh. 24:29).

Purpose

The purpose was to show Israel's responsibility to conquer the land which Jehovah gave to them, so that eventually the seed (Gen. 3:15) and land promises (Gen. 12:1-3) would coincide in the birth scenario of the Saviour.

Theological Themes

Several basic theological themes include Jehovah's gift of the land, Israel's responsibility to conquer it, and their consistent separation unto holiness while invading a spiritually hostile territory. Another theme with which liberals especially struggle is that of the slaughter of the Canaanites. However, it must be remembered that Jehovah is both Creator and Judge of mankind, and has the sole privilege of determining birth and death for each (Eccl. 3:2; *vide* Acts 12:1-23). He is to be feared not man, as the Lord stated, saying, "*fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*" (Mt. 10:28). The LORD did give the Canaanite people four hundred years to repent and they did not (Gen. 15:16). Therefore, the Lord GOD used Joshua as the instrument to judge the wickedness of the Amorites with his sword, saying, "*Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city...And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent...And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it...And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.*" (Josh. 6:16, 17, 21).

⁵The expression "*unto this day*" occurs throughout (4:9; 5:9; 6:25; 7:26; 8:28-29; 9:27; 10:27; 13:13; 15:63; 16:10; 23:9).

⁶He was a writer and he wrote the Law of Moses upon stones (Josh. 8:32).

The Man Joshua

Joshua, apparently born in Egypt, was a young man charged by Moses to lead the military forces at Rephidim. He was victorious over the Amalekites (Ex. 17:8-16). Later, he accompanied Moses on Mt. Sinai and was in the presence of Jehovah as they saw plans for the Tabernacle and received the Decalogue (Ex. 24:13-18). Furthermore, he was with Moses when they heard the worship of the golden calf and broke the tablets of the commandments (Ex. 32:17). He was one of the twelve spies, along with Caleb, who went out and espied the land (Num. 13:16-17), and returned with an encouraging report (Num. 14:22-24). He was Moses' servant (Josh. 1:1) and ultimately became his successor (Josh. 1:5). He was the Lord's choice, since he had divine empowerment, as Scripture revealed, saying, "*And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses*" (Dt. 34:9). As the book concluded, Joshua finally received the same title as Moses (13x), "*the servant of the LORD*" (24:29).

The Outline of Joshua

I. The Subjugation of the Land of Canaan (1:1-12:25)

- A. The Commission (1:1-18)
- B. The Canvassing (2:1-24)
- C. The Crossing (3:1-5:15)
- D. The Campaigns (6:1-12:24)
 - 1. The Central Campaign (6:1-8:35)
 - 2. The Southern Campaign (9:1-10:43)
 - 3. The Northern Campaign (11:1-12:24)

II. The Subdivision of the Land of Canaan (13:1-19:51)

- A. The Division of Transjordan (13:1-33)
- B. The Division of Canaan (14:1-19:51)

III. The Settlement of the Land of Canaan (20:1-24:33)

- A. The Cities of Refuge (20:1-9)
- B. The Cities of the Levites (21:1-45)
- C. The Challenge of Joshua (22:1-24:33)

EXEGESIS

I. THE SUBJUGATION OF THE LAND OF CANAAN (1:1-12:25)

A. The Commission (1:1-18)

The Book of Joshua picks up immediately after the conclusion of Deuteronomy (Dt. 34:12). Chronologically, Joshua shows the continuation of the history of the children of Israel as they must now enter and conquer the Promised Land of Canaan.

Chapter One

The LORD commissioned Joshua to cross over Jordan and conquer every place his feet should touch in Canaan.⁷ He promised to be with Joshua as he hearkened to the book of the law daily. Joshua's "success" (לְשִׁכְלָה)⁸ was dependent on his spiritual obedience to Scripture (vv. 1-9).⁹ As the newly and divinely appointed successor of Moses, Joshua commanded his leaders to instruct the host¹⁰ about preparation into Canaan, and the people responded, including the two and half tribes (cf. Josh. 4:12-13; 13:8-32; 22:1-34),¹¹ affirming obedience to the new leader Joshua (vv. 10-18).

B. The Canvassing (2:1-24)

Apparently Joshua had commanded the spies to search out the land before he commanded the leaders to prepare the people (cf. 1:11 with 3:2).

Chapter Two

Having learned from the experience of Kadeshbarnea (Num. 32:8-12), Joshua sent out only two spies, and secretly, to view the land. They encountered Rahab,¹² whom the Lord had

⁷The broadest parameters of the Promised Land range from the Nile to the Euphrates, from the west side of Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea (Gen. 15:18-21; *vide* I Ki. 4:21).

⁸The Hebrew verb occurs 63x and is translated "success" once. The English word "skill" comes from the root (s-c-l > s-k-l).

⁹Joshua was to "meditate" (הִתְחַלֵּץ) regularly on Scripture (v. 8; Dt. 17:18-20).

¹⁰This pattern of leadership recurs throughout the book: the Lord commanded Joshua who commanded the elders who commanded the people, showing united obedience (cf. 3:2; 4:8 *et al*).

¹¹The two and half tribes, namely "the Reubenites...the Gadites, and...half the tribe of Manasseh" were promised the great pasture land east of the Jordan as long as they helped the other nine and half tribes conquer the Promised Land (Num. 32:1 ff.).

¹²The name רַחַב (*rachav*) means "wide" and occurs 5x in the OT, and Ραῶβ occurs 2x in the NT.

prepared (vv. 9-11), and found protection from her, and apparently from her family (vv. 1-16). In exchange for her gracious deliverance, they promised to spare her and her family from the impending slaughter, with three conditions: 1) scarlet thread in window; 2) family stays in house; and 3) oath kept secret (vv. 17-22). The spies reported the deliverance and also acknowledged the Lord's hand in preparation for conquering the land (vv. 23-24).

C. The Crossing (3:1-5:15)

Chapter Three

The time came for Israel to encounter the watery barrier to the LORD's will for them.¹³ After three days of spiritual preparation, the Jews were to follow the priests who had the Ark of the Covenant, about three thousand feet behind the Ark (vv. 1-4). All needed to exercise faith in the Lord's word for crossing the Jordan, including the priests who were to step by faith¹⁴ on the water before it divided (vv. 5-15). The swath in the water was from about fifteen miles upriver from the city of Adam (v. 16).¹⁵ As the Lord had promised, the priests and the host passed over Jordan (while swollen—v. 15)¹⁶ on dry ground (v. 17).

Chapter Four

The Lord wanted to memorialize this great miracle of crossing the Jordan, and required twelve men to take twelve stones and place them at their first night lodging place. These would be an important theological and historical memorial for their children when they would ask about the significance (vv. 1-8).¹⁷ Furthermore, Joshua setup a second set of twelve stones in the mid-point of the Jordan to memorialize their crossing (v. 9). The Transjordan tribes with 40,000 warriors went before Israel, and as soon as the priests' feet touched the other bank, the Jordan waters returned to its overflowed status (vv. 10-18). Joshua took the twelve stones and set them in Gilgal ("circle")¹⁸ as a memorial. The "tenth day" reminded the Jews of the Red Sea deliverance (Ex. 12:3), and they commemorated the Passover (vv. 19-24).

¹³Water has been a natural barrier to the geographical will of God since the beginning (Gen. 1:9-10; Ex. 13:18-15:4). There will be no seas on the New Earth (Rev. 21:1).

¹⁴"(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)" (II Cor. 5:7).

¹⁵David recorded the geological trembling (i.e. earthquakes) and atmospheric activity (rain) at the times of crossing the Red Sea and the Jordan (Ps. 114:1-8; cf. Ps. 68:7-9).

¹⁶The Lord brought them into the Promised Land at harvest season so that they could reap the labors of the Canaanites.

¹⁷Stone memorials were significant in the OT (cf. Gen. 28:18-22; 31:45-47; I Sam. 7:12).

¹⁸גִּלְגָּל is related to the verb גָּלַל (5:9).

Chapter Five

After this stupendous miracle, the kings of the Amorites became fearful of Israel and the Lord. Jehovah required His people to begin again the practice of circumcision for all males under fifty-eight (Dt. 2:14).¹⁹ The Jews were not circumcised during this time because they were under judgment, and now the Lord rolled away the reproach of Egypt and called the place Gilgal. They commemorated the Passover²⁰ and the Heavenly Manna ceased (vv. 1-12; cf. Ex. 16:15). Now that the people were right with the LORD, He visited Joshua as “*the captain of the Lord’s host*” and demanded holy subservience, and received it from Joshua (vv. 13-15).²¹

D. The Campaigns (6:1-12:24)

Joshua, being led by the LORD, started the campaigns to conquer the Promised Land of Canaan, beginning with the central area of their current presence (Josh. 6-8), then moving south (Josh. 9-10), and finally conquering the northern region (Josh. 11-12).

1. The Central Campaign (6:1-8:35)

The Israelites established themselves as a credible threat by defeating the cities of Jericho and Ai.

Chapter Six

The Lord God gave Joshua instructions on defeating Jericho with unusual but significant tactics (vv. 1-5). He in turn instructed the leaders with the details of the military strategy (vv. 6-10). The narrative describes the details of the Ark compassing Jericho (vv. 11-19).²² As the LORD determined, the city walls²³ were flattened and the city burned by Joshua and the Jews (vv. 20-24). Joshua honored the request of the two spies and spared Rahab and her family from utter destruction (v. 25). He then cursed anyone attempting to rebuild Jericho,²⁴ and the presence and power of the Lord was with him (vv. 26-27).

¹⁹Circumcision identified Israel with the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 17:9-14).

²⁰The Israelites kept the Passover during the wilderness wanderings (Num. 9:1-5).

²¹Moses was another who stood on holy ground (Ex. 3:5).

²²The city was under the divine curse of destruction. It was accursed (אָרֵרָה) by the LORD, meaning that it was completely devoted to Jehovah for judgment.

²³Allegedly, the cities were walled to heaven, according to the spies (Dt. 1:28). Militarily, city walls were 1) scaled over, 2) dug under, 3) punched through, 4) ramped upon, or 5) kept intact for starvation. Never before or after were city walls fallen over by the blowing of shofars!

²⁴Apparently Hiel and his sons fulfilled this prophecy (I Ki.16:34).

Chapter Seven

After the outstanding victory at Jericho, Israel went up against the city of Ai (אֵי = “ruins”) and was readily defeated. The narrative described the sin before the fall (vv. 1-5).²⁵ Joshua went before the Lord and complained about the defeat (vv. 6-9). Jehovah began to reveal that Israel²⁶ had sinned and took the accursed thing. Because they were disobedient, they failed, and now they needed to sanctify themselves (vv. 10-15). Joshua investigated the transgression as the Lord prescribed, and discovered that Achan had taken the “*goodly Babylonish garment*” (אַדְרָת שְׁנֵעֵר אֲחָת טוֹבָה). Achan confessed to the sin, stating that “*I saw...I coveted...took*” (vv. 16-21, especially v. 21).²⁷ Joshua required affirmation of the sin and then capital punishment on him and his family (vv. 22-26).

Chapter Eight

Having been demoralized by defeat at Ai, and having dealt with Achan’s sin, Joshua was ready for encouragement, which he received from the LORD. He assured the servant of the Lord that the king and city would be overcome (vv. 1-2). Jehovah began to unfold a military strategy for conquering Ai, which plan included an ambush of five thousand men to draw men from Ai and thirty thousand to come in afterward and rout the city (vv. 3-12).²⁸ The battle began²⁹ and the strategy worked, allowing the Israelites to slaughter all of the inhabitants of the city, even twelve thousand men. Joshua burnt the city and hanged the king (vv. 13-29). Subsequently, he built an altar and wrote the Law of Moses on special stones to claim the territory and to worship the Lord of the words of God, including the blessings and cursings sections (vv. 30-35; cf. Dt. 27:1-26).

2. The Southern Campaign (9:1-10:43)

Chapter Nine

As Israel’s military reputation began to spread, several reactions from neighboring territories occurred. First, the city-states in the mountains formed a coalition against Israel’s

²⁵Israel’s army was 601730 (cf. Num. 26:2 and 51).

²⁶Whole nation held culpable because of one man (cf. v. 20; Rom. 5:12).

²⁷This was the re-enactment of the Garden sin (Gen. 3:6).

²⁸The LORD commanded that Joshua employ an “ambush” (מִבְּרָח). An ambush (מִבְּרָח) is a deceptive military ploy to defeat enemy. The Lord does deceive the wicked who reject His truth, as Ezekiel stated, saying, “*And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the LORD have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel*” (Ezk. 14:9).

²⁹Joshua commenced the ambush with his raised spear head (vv. 18-19).

advance (vv. 1-2). Second, the Gibeonites planned a ruse to deliver them Joshua's army, pretending to have come from a far country (vv. 3-13).³⁰ They were able to deceive Joshua, who in turn did not seek the Lord's counsel, and to enter into league with the Israelites (vv. 14-15). Their ruse was found out and their cities were spared by Joshua because of his oath (vv. 16-20). Consequently, Joshua enslaved them, making them hewers of wood and drawers of water for Jehovah worship (vv. 21-27).

Chapter Ten

A five city-state coalition formed against Gibeon since they had federated with Israel. This Amorite confederation felt threatened and began an attack upon this great royal city of Gibeon (vv. 1-5). Joshua responded and delivered Gibeon with the help of the Lord's hail stones (vv. 6-11). Still needing more daylight, Joshua made a unique request to the Lord, saying, "*Sun stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon*" (v. 12).³¹ On a unique day,³² the Lord stopped the geocentric orbits of the Sun and Moon within the rotating firmament around the earth³³ and allowed Joshua to pursue and trap the five kings in the cave at Makkedah (vv. 13-14). Receiving the report that the Amorite kings were in the cave, Joshua ordered them out and symbolically put feet on their necks. He then killed them and hanged them on five trees. They were taken down from the trees and buried in the cave (vv. 15-28). With great military finesse and precision, Joshua destroyed seven more cities and kings, including Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Gezer, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir (vv. 29-39). Joshua's military efforts moved into the southern arena of the Promised Land, and he was successful because the Lord was with him (vv. 40-43; *vide* 1:8)

3. The Northern Campaign (11:1-12:24)

³⁰Joshua was caught in the deception because he did not ask counsel from the LORD (vv. 8, 14).

³¹Job predicted this sun stoppage and Habakkuk confirmed it (Job 9:7 and Hab. 3:11, respectively).

³²The *Book of Jasher* recorded this event. Many believe that this may refer to a non-canonical writing, but it may refer to the *Torah*. *Jasher* means "upright," and the two references to the book (Ex. 34:10-11 and II Sam. 1:18) could be cryptic references to the promise of "*marvels*" (i.e., the long day) and to the responsibility of Jewish fathers to teach sons the use of the bow (Gen 27:3).

³³Biblicists believe the Scripture which states that the heavens (cf. Job 22:14), including the sun (cf. Ps. 19:5-6), moon (uncontested as geocentric), and stars (cf. Jdg. 5:21), rotate around the earth daily. Therefore, any change in the relative motion would relate to the heavens' rotational speed around the stationary earth (cf. Josh. 10:13; Ps. 50:1, *et al*). Heaven[s] is the "*firmament*" (Gen. 1:6-8) which is a super-dense, although invisible, medium that carries the sun, moon, and stars daily in its rotation. Its rotational period is one day, and it reacts instantly to any changes, including earthquakes. The Lord Jesus Christ's declaration is NOT phenomenological, but absolutely true, saying, "*That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust*" (Mt. 5:45).

The fall of the northern territories represented the completion of Joshua's efforts in obedience to the LORD.

Chapter Eleven

Way up in Naphtali territory, Jabin king of Hazor formed a coalition of northern city-states and met at Merom for battle (vv. 1-5). The LORD informed Joshua of the battle plan to hamstring (“*hough*”) the horses, burn their chariots, and destroy the people of the northern alliance, which he indeed did (vv. 6-15). After describing the victories of the northern campaign, Joshua summarized the conquests coming from long campaigns including those over the Anakims, and resulting in the land resting from wars (vv. 16-23).³⁴

Chapter Twelve

Joshua listed a summary of the kings of which Israel disposed, first giving Moses' victories over Sihon and Og³⁵ (vv. 1-6). Second, he summarized Israel's victories in general (vv. 7-8), then gave specifics on the central and southern campaigns (vv. 9-16), and then the northern campaign (vv. 17-24). Each of the thirty-one fallen kings represented the fulfillment of the Lord's promises to Joshua and the Israelites. This chapter is the answered prayer list of the Lord's, showing His faithfulness to the people of God (cf. I Thes. 5:24)

³⁴The leader Joshua is emphasized in vv. 15-23 some 8x.

³⁵King Og was a remnant of the satanic effort to thwart the seed and land promises (Gen. 3:15 and 12:1-3, respectively; see also Num. 21:23 ff. and 33 ff.) with “*giants*.” The bed size of King Og (עֹג = “long neck”) was thirteen and a half feet long, sizeable enough to handle this giant. The giants or נְפִילִים (Gen. 6:4) were the same as the giants אֲנָכִים in the land (Dt. 2:10-11; 20-21; 3:11).

II. THE SUBDIVISION OF THE LAND OF CANAAN (13:1-19:51)

A. The Division of Transjordan (13:1-33)

Joshua lived to be one hundred and ten, and so he was probably about the same age as Caleb who was eighty-five (cf. 14:10). He still had much work to do, as the chapter described the territories from south to north (cf. 23:1).

Chapter Thirteen

The Lord recorded the land that aged Joshua still needed conquering, from Egypt to Lebanon. The land was to be divided by the casting of lot, which the Lord would providentially control (vv. 1-7).³⁶ Moses had promised the good grazing Transjordan (east of the Jordan) territories to the tribes of Reuben and Gad since they had much cattle (Num. 32:1-42). The Israelites had failed to conquer the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and the Levites received no territory (*vide* v. 33), Joshua revealed (vv. 8-14). The text records the areas of inheritance for the tribes of Reuben (vv. 15-23) and of Gad (24-28), and for the half-tribe of Manasseh, which inheritance was not west of the Jordan but east (vv. 29-32). Of course, the Levites received no territory, west or east, since the Lord was their inheritance (v. 33; also 14). They were set apart for service in the Tabernacle and the altar (Ex. 32:29, 38:21).

B. The Division of Canaan (14:1-19:51)

This section of Joshua records the various territories that the tribes received, from Judah to Dan.

Chapter Fourteen

The account summarizes the distribution of the allotments by Eleazar the priest,³⁷ Joshua, and the leaders to the nine and a half tribes, reminding of the distribution to the two and half tribes and to the Levites. Joseph's allotment was divided between his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim (vv. 1-5). Beginning with the tribe of Judah, the writer recognized the singular

³⁶The casting of lots was one of several principles for determining land inheritance: 1) the heads of Israel were involved (14:1), 2) a group of men surveyed and informed about the remaining land (18:4-9), the size of tribe was considered (Num. 26:51-56), and natural boundaries formed logical divisions (13:16).

³⁷Eleazar the priest (cf. Num. 16:39) helped Joshua distribute the land allotments, presumably using the *Urim* and *Thummim* for guidance (Num. 27:21; 34:17).

position and privilege of Caleb³⁸ to inherit the city of Hebron. He overcame again by faith the obstacles facing the conquest of Hebron, namely the mountainous terrain, the great and walled cities, and the presence of the Anakim. Formerly known as Kirjatharba, Hebron became his possession and experienced rest from war (vv. 6-15).

Chapter Fifteen

The tribe of Judah received primary privilege in the allotment receiving central Israel including Jebus or Jerusalem (vv. 1-12). Caleb smote the three sons of Anak in conquering Hebron and Othniel took the city of Debir (vv. 13-19). Joshua then listed thirty-eight cities and villages which fell to the Israelites.³⁹ However, Jebus remained until David finally conquered it and renamed it the city of David (vv. 20-63; cf. II Sam. 5:6-7).⁴⁰

Chapter Sixteen

The tribe of one of Joseph's son, Ephraim, received the southern part of the central region from the Jordan to the coast of the Mediterranean. The importance of Joseph's ministry is reflected in his sons' offspring receiving second inheritance (vv. 1-10).⁴¹

Chapter Seventeen

The half-tribe of Manasseh received the northern central territory (1-11).⁴² Even though they could not destroy the Canaanites they put them under tribute (vv. 12-13). When they complained that the land was too narrow, Joshua then recommended that they clear trees in the forested mountain area (14-18).

Chapter Eighteen

Seven tribes remained without land, and Joshua appointed three men from each to survey the non-allotted land. They then cast lots at Shiloh and distributed accordingly (vv. 1-10). Benjamin received land between Judah and Ephraim, including Jebus (vv. 11-28).⁴³

³⁸Eighty-five year old Caleb (כָּלֵב = "dog") was a faithful spy at Kadeshbarnea (Num. 13:30 ff.) and had been promised possession in the Promised Land (Num. 14:24).

³⁹Although Scripture states that the total was 29, some apparently were villages and not cities.

⁴⁰Three key Philistine cities, namely Ekron, Ashdod, and Gaza (vv. 46-47) fell to the tribe of Judah.

⁴¹Gezer, like Jebus, was not initially conquered (v. 10; 15:63).

⁴²The Lord had informed Moses that he should grant the daughters of Zelophehad (Josh. 17:3 ff.) their father's inheritance, since they had no brothers (Num. 27:1-11).

⁴³Cf. the intimation of "*And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders*" (Dt. 33:12).

Chapter Nineteen

The last six tribes received their inheritances according to the lot, beginning with Simeon (vv. 1-9), Zebulun (vv. 10-16), Issachar (vv. 17-23), Asher (vv. 24-31), Naphtali (vv. 32-39), and Dan (vv. 40-48). The leaders of Israel then gave Joshua his inheritance, the city Timnathserah in Ephraim (vv. 49-51).

III. THE SETTLEMENT OF THE LAND OF CANAAN (20:1-24:33)

A. The Cities of Refuge (20:1-9)

Chapter Twenty

In a society that was gained and organized around military campaigns, the potential for accidental homicides was great. Joshua was to follow the instructions given to Moses about having six cities of refuge, three on each side Jordan (Num. 35:11). If innocent, the refugee would return to one of the cities and remain safely until the high priest died, then he could return home (vv. 1-9).

B. The Cities of the Levites (21:1-45)

Chapter Twenty-One

The Levites were given forty-eight cities scattered around Israel to be a spiritual influence and blessing to the Jews, according to Moses' command (Num. 35:2 ff.). The sons of Aaron (vv. 9-19), the Kohathites (vv. 20-26), the Gershonites (vv. 27-33), and the Merarites (vv. 34-40) received their number of cities, thirteen, ten, thirteen, and twelve, respectively. The chapter concludes with the statement of the fulfillment of LORD's promises to subjugate Canaan (vv. 41-45; Gen. 17:8).

C. The Challenge of Joshua (22:1-24:33)

Chapter Twenty-Two

Joshua had several challenges which allowed him to show his leadership abilities with the help of the Lord. He sent the two and half tribes back to the Transjordan since they had obeyed Moses and helped the rest of Israel (vv. 1-9). They decided to build an altar on the west side of the Jordan to commemorate their involvement with the tribal conquests and inheritances. This unwise effort prompted the potential of war with the nine and half tribes (vv. 10-14). A delegation headed by Phinehas confronted them with two examples of past judgments (vv. 15-20). The two and half tribes explained their innocent gesture of building an altar for witness

(עַר)⁴⁴ and not for sacrifice (vv. 21-29). The matter was cleared up after explanation with no war, and all were pleased (vv. 30-34).

Chapter Twenty-Three

Joshua's last challenge was to the leaders and people to put the LORD first in their lives. He encouraged the elders about faithfulness to the Law of Moses and to the Lord so that blessings would follow (vv. 1-11). Unfaithfulness would bring disaster, he warned, and they would perish from the Land (vv. 12-16).

Chapter Twenty-Four

Joshua rehearsed Israel's history, starting with Abraham,⁴⁵ through Moses, down to the present time of occupying the Promised Land (vv. 1-13).⁴⁶ He challenged the tribes about Whom to serve, using his testimony favoring the LORD, and warning about apostasy. The people testified that they witnessed publicly to serving Jehovah (vv. 14-24). He made and sealed a covenant with the people that they would obey the words of the Lord (vv. 25-28). The book concludes a significant part of Israel's history with three burials: that of Joshua (vv. 29-31), of Joseph (v. 32), and of Eleazar (v. 33).

Finis

⁴⁴The sense of the word `ed refers to two witnesses agreeing or coming together; the English word "eddy" refers to waters joining together around a rock in a river.

⁴⁵The "flood" (נְהַר) refers to the Euphrates River (cf. Gen. 11:31; Josh. 24:14).

⁴⁶The "hornet" (צִרְעָה) refers to discouragement (see also Ex. 23:28; Dt. 7:20).

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