

The Book of JOSHUA

INTRODUCTION

1. Title. The title of the book is taken from the name of the successor of Moses, Joshua, the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim. He was at first called *Hoshea*¹, transliterated Hoshea or Oshea (Deut. 32:44; Num. 13:8, 16), which signifies “savior” or “salvation.” According to v. 16, Moses changed his name to *Yehoshua*², Jehoshua, by prefixing the abbreviated form for Jehovah (Yahweh) to Joshua’s former name. It now signified “salvation of [or by] Jehovah.” Joshua is merely a shortened form for Jehoshua, the form always found in the Hebrew Old Testament. In the LXX he is called *Iesous huios Naue*, “Jesus, son of Naue [Nun].” In the New Testament he is expressly called *Iesous*, Jesus (Acts 7:45; Heb. 4:8). The ASV has “Joshua” in both references.

Christ and the Jews recognized three divisions in the Old Testament: the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, or Writings (Luke 24:44). Joshua is the first book in the second division, called “the Prophets” in Hebrew Bibles, because its author occupied the office of prophet. In Hebrew Bibles the section entitled “the Prophets” is divided into two parts: the Former Prophets, comprising Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, and the Latter Prophets, comprising those we commonly know as the Prophets. Thus Joshua stands as the first book of the Prophets, although in content it is closely related to the Pentateuch, known to the Jews as the Law.

2. Authorship. Commentators and critics are divided in opinion as to whether the book was actually compiled by Joshua. Critics insist that the book is not a literary unit, composed by one author, but pieced together from several documents. But the internal unity of the book is so evident from its connected narrative that no serious consideration need be given such a documentary analysis. It is argued by those who deny Joshua as the author that there are both names and transactions mentioned in it that did not exist or occur until a considerable period after the time of Joshua. The expression “unto this day,” found in a dozen or so places, say they, indicates it was written long after Joshua’s time. However, at least one of those texts proves just the opposite. In ch. 6:25, speaking of Rahab, it says, “She dwelleth in Israel even unto this day.” There is no reason why this could not have been written by Joshua. It certainly could not have been written as late as modern critics imply, since it was obviously written in Rahab’s lifetime.

None of the 12 texts referred to, with the possible exception of ch. 15:63, can be definitely established as having been written after Joshua’s time. According to this text, “the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day.” In Judges 1:21, after the death of Joshua (v. 1), the story is told of Benjamin’s not driving out the inhabitants of Jerusalem but of his allowing them to dwell there “unto this day.” But this was as true before the death of Joshua as it was after his death.

A more difficult problem, perhaps, is the account of the capture of Leshem by the Danites, in ch. 19:47. A comparison with Judges 18:27–29 may possibly imply that the capture of Leshem occurred long after the time of Joshua. But there is no evidence to prove that this was so.

Other objections are mentioned, such as place names that were not given until later times—Cabul (Joshua 19:27; cf. 1 Kings 9:13), Joktheel (Joshua 15:38; cf. 2 Kings 14:7), and a few others. It has therefore been supposed by many devout men that the book was

written by some inspired person after the time of Joshua but before many kings had reigned in Israel. However, Joshua 6:25 does not permit so late a date of writing as implied in ch. 19:47, or as late as indicated by the argument of the names referred to previously. What, then, is the solution?

The fact that the book is written in the third person in no way tends to exclude Joshua as its author; Moses also wrote in the third person, keeping an accurate record of all events that occurred under his leadership, up to his death. It is certainly reasonable to suppose that Joshua, chief assistant to Moses, would follow the example set by his great predecessor. The apparent difficulties mentioned previously may reasonably be accounted for on the basis that when the book was transcribed in later years, particularly up to the time of the kings, certain minor alterations were made, such as the substitution of contemporary place names for ones that were older and less familiar. We speak of New Amsterdam as New York, for the sake of clarity. Other minor explanatory additions may have been made, as for instance the expression “unto this day.” Such modifications would in no way detract from the authenticity of the book as the work of Joshua, prepared under the guidance of Inspiration.

It is generally agreed that the record of Joshua’s death in ch. 24:29–33, like that of Eleazar, was recorded by someone else. But even this would in no way affect the inspiration or authorship of the book. Books today often contain prefatory or biographical notes prepared by someone other than the author himself. With few exceptions until modern times, Jews and Christians have uniformly acknowledged Joshua as the author of the book bearing his name. The Jewish Talmud (*Baba Bathra* 14b) specifically affirms this to be so, and states further that Eleazar, the son of Aaron the high priest, added the conclusion (ch. 24:29–32), with v. 33 being appended by Phinehas (*Baba Bathra* 15a, 15b).

3. Historical Setting. On the basis of Joshua being the author, and of the Exodus being in the year 1445 B.C., it is clear that the book of Joshua was written in the early part of the 14th century B.C. Portions of it may have been recorded in the last years of the 15th century. Slight additions, by way of explanation, as previously mentioned, may have been made by later transcribers, but hardly later than the very early kings. Israel was now entering the land of the Amorites west of Jordan, to possess it according to the promise to Abraham in Gen. 15:16. The iniquity of the Amorites was now full.

Modern excavations have given us much information regarding Palestine and surrounding nations at the time of Joshua. For several centuries Palestine had been intermittently under the influence, and at times the control, of Egypt. Thutmose III, who died about 1450, conducted 17 campaigns in or through Palestine to quell what had developed into a general revolt against Egypt. These campaigns continued over a period of 18 years. Even after that there were additional minor campaigns, and several new strongholds were erected. In certain times of the year soldiers and supplies were constantly being moved along the coastal highway, called in the Bible “the way of the land of the Philistines” (Ex. 13:17). This was probably just prior to the time of the Exodus if, as seems likely, the Exodus took place about 1445 (see p. 125; also Introduction to Exodus, Vol. I).

After the Exodus the strength of Egypt began to wane. However, war between Egypt and the nations of Canaan continued until the reign of Thutmose IV (c. 1425–1412 B.C.). A new enemy, the Hittites, began to menace the Mitannians, Egypt’s former enemy.

Thutmose IV made peace with the Mitannians because of their new common foe, shortly before 1400 B.C., and the long standing hostility between them came to an end. In the days of his successor, Amenhotep III (c. 1412–1375 B.C.), the high tide of Egyptian power began to ebb. However, he ruled in security and unparalleled splendor. Egypt was enjoying the wealth she had obtained in past conquests. Her military might was ending; and as revealed by the Tell el-Amarna Letters, correspondence from vassal princes in Syria and Palestine to Amenhotep III and his successor, Ikhnaton (c. 1387–1366 B.C.), Syria and Palestine were seething with intrigue internally and were under attack from without. Yet help from Egypt was not forthcoming. Scarabs of Amenhotep III, the latest found in the tombs outside Jericho, are regarded by some scholars as evidence that the city fell during his reign. Conditions in Palestine were thus such as to make possible the Israelite conquest, without their having to meet the strength of the Egyptian Empire.

The Hittites, mentioned in Joshua 1:4, were rising to power at this time, but had no power in Palestine (see pp. 30, 31). This served to restrain the power of the Mitannians in the north. Assyria was in periodic decline, and therefore weak. The Kassites ruled in Babylon, but because of the uncertainty of their position—due to their fear of the Mitannians, to pressure from Assyria, and to the constant struggle for pre-eminence in Mesopotamia—they too were exerting every effort to gain the friendship of Egypt. The main wave of Philistine immigrants had not yet arrived in Palestine, to build up their power on the coastal area (see p. 27). Thus the political world was in a state of flux, and no power from without was in a position to come to the rescue of the peoples of Canaan.

The land of Canaan was divided among numerous small kingdoms and one autonomous state, Gibeon, with its dependent towns, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim. East of the Jordan there were the kingdoms of Sihon and Og. The land was already cultivated. The inhabitants lived in cities, but tilled the ground outside the walls and planted oliveyards and vineyards. They were acquainted with writing, as the original name of Debir—Kirjath-sepher, “city of books” (ch. 15:15)—proves. The people of Canaan owned horses and chariots (Joshua 11:4; 17:18); but religiously and morally they were very degraded (Deut. 12:29–31; 18:9–12), practicing almost every kind of superstitious art and immorality.

The chronological data of the book are limited. Unfortunately, no historical or archeological data are yet available to cross-reference any part of the Joshua narrative with known events in secular history. According to ch. 4:19, it was on the tenth day of the first month (Abib) that the people “came up out of Jordan.” The crossing of Jordan therefore occurred in the spring of the year (see also ch. 3:15). If the Exodus occurred in 1445 B.C.—as the evidence seems to indicate—this would be the spring of 1405 B.C.

The next question that arises is, How long a time was required for the conquest of Canaan? The answer is found in chs. 11:18; 14:7, 10, 11; 23:1; 24:29. In ch. 11:18 it is simply stated that Joshua waged war “a long time.” According to ch. 14:7, 10, 11, Caleb was 40 years old when Moses sent him from Kadesh-barnea to explore the land of Canaan, and 45 years had passed since that time. The conquest of the land was by this time considered complete, as chs. 11:23 and 14:5 indicate. This does not mean that every part of the land was under Israelite control, for God had promised only a gradual taking over lest the land revert to wilderness (Ex. 23:29, 30). Since the mission of the spies coincided with the second year of the Exodus (Deut. 2:14), and the wandering in the wilderness lasted 38 years, the conquest occupied between 6 and 7 years ($45 - 38 = 7$).

Josephus, on the contrary, gives the duration of the conquest as only five years, and with this some modern scholars tend to agree. See pp. 125, 126.

A third question follows: How long, in all, did Joshua hold the reins of government? In other words, what space of time is covered by the book? Chapter 23:1 speaks vaguely of “a long time,” after which Joshua, who was now old and advanced in years, assembled the nation (v. 2). According to ch. 24:29, Joshua was 110 years old when he died. There are no other references to this period of time here or elsewhere. Josephus (*Antiquities* v. 1. 29) divides Joshua’s life into three parts: 45 years before the Exodus, 40 years with Moses, and 25 years as sole leader. Writers of later times, such as Theophilus, Clement, and Eusebius, give 27 instead of 25, because, it is explained, of reckoning the conquest as 7 years. This would simply make him two years younger at the time of the Exodus, and in no way affects the historical accuracy of the statement of ch. 24:29.

4. Theme. In viewing the book of Joshua as a whole, the careful reader is impressed with the fact that he is reading a sequel to the record of the Pentateuch by an eyewitness of the events narrated in the book. The great theme is the faithfulness of Jehovah in the fulfillment of His promises (ch. 21:43–45), under the able leadership of Joshua, the one chosen of God to accomplish the divine purpose.

The book of Joshua is a most important part of the Old Testament, and should not be considered separately from the Pentateuch, of which it is the continuation and conclusion. This book is related to the five books of Moses in somewhat the same way as the book of Acts is related to the four Gospels. The Gospels give an account of the ministry of Jesus Christ, the Christian Legislator, as the books of the Pentateuch give, for the most part, an account of the ministry of Moses, God’s representative and legislator for the Israel of his day (see Deut. 18:18). As long as men were content to remain under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the early church prospered; as long as Joshua and Israel depended wholly on God, the conquest of Canaan progressed. God ever works through human instrumentalities, qualified as leaders by years of training, yet conscious of their own unworthiness. When such men trust to their own wisdom and fail to depend wholly on God, many mistakes occur—as at Ai and with Gibeon. Lives are lost, and the work of the Lord is delayed. But when deep humility is felt, and courage to deal with sin is manifested, then victory is certain.

5. Outline.

- I. The Conquest of Canaan, 1:1 to 12:24.
 - A. Crossing the Jordan, 1:1 to 4:24.
 - 1. The Lord’s charge to Joshua, 1:1–9.
 - 2. Preparations for crossing the Jordan, 1:10–18.
 - a. Announcement of the crossing, 1:10, 11.
 - b. A reminder to the two and one-half tribes, 1:12–18.
 - 3. The sending forth of the spies, 2:1–24.
 - 4. The crossing of the Jordan, 3:1 to 4:24.
 - a. Preparatory instructions, 3:1–13.
 - b. Waters of the Jordan cut off, people pass over, 3:14–17.
 - c. Erecting memorials of the crossing, 4:1–24.
 - B. The fall of Jericho, 5:1 to 6:27.
 - 1. Preparation for taking Jericho, 5:1–15.
 - a. Rumors dishearten the people, 5:1.

- b. The people circumcised, 5:2–9.
- c. The Passover observed, 5:10–12.
- d. Joshua’s vision, 5:13–15.
- 2. Jericho compassed and destroyed, 6:1–21.
- 3. Rahab saved, 6:22–27.
- C. The capture of Ai, 7:1 to 8:35.
 - 1. Preliminary defeat and retreat, 7:1–5.
 - 2. Joshua’s humiliation and instructions from the Lord, 7:6–15.
 - 3. The trespass of Achan, 7:16–26.
 - 4. The final conquest of Ai, 8:1–29.
 - 5. The reading of the blessings and cursings, 8:30–35.
- D. The treaty with the Gibeonites, 9:1–27.
- E. The Canaanite confederacy, 10:1–27.
 - 1. The siege of Gibeon, 10:1–5.
 - 2. Joshua crushes the Canaanites, 10:6–27.
- F. Joshua’s conquests, 10:28 to 12:24.
 - 1. Conquests of the south country, 10:28–43.
 - 2. Conquests of the north country, 11:1–15.
 - 3. The conquests completed, 11:16 to 12:24.
- II. The Partition of the Land, 13:1 to 22:34.
 - A. The tribal allotments, 13:1 to 19:51.
 - B. Cities of refuge appointed, 20:1–9.
 - C. Cities assigned to the Levites, 21:1–45.
 - D. The tribes of Transjordan, 22:1–34.
 - 1. Their return home, 22:1–9.
 - 2. Their offending altar, 22:10–20.
 - 3. Their defense of the altar, 22:21–34.
- III. Joshua’s Farewell, 23:1 to 24:33.
 - A. His address to Israel, 23:1 to 24:28.
 - B. His death, 24:29–32.
 - C. The death of Eleazar, 24:33.

CHAPTER 1

1 *The Lord appointeth Joshua to succeed Moses.* 3 *The borders of the promised land.* 5, 9 *God promiseth to assist Joshua.* 8 *He giveth him instructions.* 10 *He prepareth the people to pass over Jordan.* 12 *Joshua putteth the two tribes and half in mind of their promise to Moses.* 16 *They promise him fealty.*

I. Now. Or, “and it came to pass,” as in Num. 7:1; etc. “And,” the first word in Hebrew, may imply that the narrative of Joshua is a continuation of that of Deuteronomy. This suggests Joshua as the writer of the last chapter of Deuteronomy; here he takes up the story and continues with an account of his own experiences. The time here referred to must have been after the 30 days of mourning mentioned in Deut. 34:8.

Servant. The word thus translated often denotes a person completely in subjection to his master. Here it indicates one in complete submission to God and obedient to His biddings. Thus Paul commonly spoke of himself (Rom. 1:1; etc.). A “servant of the Lord” is under bonds to Christ, who has redeemed him from bondage of sin. So it had been with Moses. Joshua, who had served as prime minister to Moses, was now confirmed by God

as leader of Israel. His quiet, unpretending fidelity and steadfastness had given evidence of his fitness to succeed Moses. Joshua was born probably a few years before Moses' flight from Egypt to the wilds of Midian. It did not seem likely then that Moses would ever become the emancipator of a nation. But Providence foresees and prepares long in advance to meet the needs of His people. God holds in reserve agents and forces of which we are unaware until the time comes. How was an unknown university professor, for instance, to shake all Europe and cause the pope to tremble on his throne? Nothing seemed more impossible; yet Frederick, prince of Saxony, was placed by God upon his throne, ready to help when the time should come. And long before Luther was born, Providence ordained the printing press, which was to become Luther's deadliest artillery. God's plans are perfect, and for the accomplishment of His every purpose there comes the hour, and with it, the man for the hour.

God's plans are never dependent on one man alone. When a Moses dies, God has a Joshua ready. Moses was best qualified to stand before Pharaoh; Joshua, to stand before the Canaanites. God's choice of a man is made with respect to four factors: (1) His temperament and disposition. Joshua had a natural capacity for military affairs. He was bold and firm (Num. 14:6–9) and wielded a powerful personal influence (Joshua 24:31). (2) His previous training. Joshua had already served for 40 years as a responsible leader (Ex. 17:9, 10; Num. 13:2, 3, 8). Training and experience are essential. (3) His reputation. He and Caleb had stood alone for an unpopular cause. (4) The task to be accomplished. To dispossess the Canaanites, a soldier was needed. The man and the need must correspond.

Moses' minister. In Hebrew as in English the term "minister" is not used exclusively of religious service. It indicates a voluntary attendant, one who waits on another, in contrast with a "servant," who is under obligation for one reason or other.

2. Jordan. Heb. *Yarden*, from the verb *yarad*, "to go down." The name aptly describes the swift current of the river, which rises on the slopes of the 9,232 ft. (2,814 m.) Mt. Hermon, and descends at the rate of 60 ft. to the mile, to the Sea of Galilee, 686 ft. (209 m.) below sea level. After it leaves the Sea of Galilee the rate of fall is much less, approximately 10 ft. (3 m.) to the mile. In spring, when the snows on Mt. Hermon are melting, it overflows its banks and becomes a rushing torrent all the way from Hermon to the Dead Sea, about 1,300 ft. (400 m.) below sea level, the lowest body of water on earth. The reason for its Hebrew name, "the descender," is obvious. It was over this river that Joshua was to lead Israel.

I do give. God places emphasis on the fact that it is He who gives them title to the land of Canaan. The promise made to Abraham (Gen. 13:15) was now to be fulfilled to his descendants (see Gen. 15:16–21). The iniquity of the Amorites was "full," and they were to be dispossessed. The conquest of Canaan, however, was to be progressive. It was to be theirs only as in faith and obedience they should go forward to possess it. Thus it is with all of God's promises. They are ours only as we press forward to obtain them. His gifts are greater in proportion to our capacity to receive them. Our capacity for receiving increases with each added gift, and God's resources are unlimited. His ability to give is limited only by our capacity to receive.

3. Every place. It has been supposed that v. 3 was intended to imply the ease with which the Israelites were to conquer the whole land, as illustrated by the taking of

Jericho. It was only their unfaithfulness to God that, in any instance, as later at Ai, rendered the conquest more difficult than it would otherwise have been.

The sole of your foot. It was primitive custom to measure out by foot the land to be cultivated or built upon. The footprint was regarded as the symbol of possession, denoting that the land had been marked out by the foot of the supposed owner, who thereby acquired it as his own property. This still holds, figuratively, in the taking of a homestead.

The implication, then, is that they must do something to gain possession of the land. The Israelites were to have only as much of the land as they actually trod with the soles of their feet. Theirs was a bountiful promise, but it was to be realized only by their own exertion. It is a divine law, as true of our spiritual inheritance as of the ancient inheritance of literal Israel, that only as we march forward in faith, claiming the promises, do they become ours. We have the Bible, and may think we know it well; yet of this vast field of unlimited treasures we may in reality possess no more than a mere fragment. Only the “place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon” is yours. Only that which we appropriate to ourselves is our own. Large neglected areas await our possession. The same is true of the privilege and blessings of grace. It is limited only by the bounds we ourselves put upon it. What a vast, unclaimed, untrodden land of promise it is! There is, finally, the heavenly Canaan, which God has promised to all true Israelites down through the ages.

4. Land of the Hittites. This expression is omitted in the LXX, perhaps because the memory of Hittite greatness had already been forgotten when that translation was made. Prior to the recovery of knowledge about the Hittites, with the excavation of Khattushash (Boghazköy), the old Hittite capital, critics challenged the accuracy of the Scripture record in ascribing so extensive a dominion to the Hittites. Until the late 19th century only the Bible had preserved so much as even the name of this people, who at one time exercised almost as great an influence as Egypt or Assyria.

Now we know that the Hittite empire arose toward the close of the 17th century B.C. under its King Labarna. In the second half of the 16th century, under their King Murshilish I, the Hittites raided Babylonia and sacked the capital.

The Hittite empire reached its zenith under Shubbiluliuma, its greatest ruler, about 1375–1335 B.C. About 1200 B.C. the Hittite empire was destroyed by the Sea Peoples (see pp. 30–33). At one time the Hittite territory included Asia Minor and extended southward to Damascus, from Lebanon to the Euphrates. During the 14th century a king with the Hittite name Abdu-Khepa ruled in Jerusalem. There were also, no doubt, city states under Hittite control in Palestine proper. Jerusalem seems to have been founded by Amorites and Hittites (Eze. 16:45). There were proto-Hittites in Hebron at the time of Abraham (see Gen. 23:3). The Hittites were one of the seven nations whose land was promised to Abraham (Gen. 15:20). This ancient nation thus provides us with a noteworthy example of the historical accuracy of God’s Word. The archeologist’s spade confirms, and does not contradict, Scripture.

5. Stand before thee. Literally, “set himself up against thee,” that is, “successfully oppose thee.” God promised Joshua no more than He promises the Christian today. The Creator of the universe, the Father of eternity, has pledged all His resources to see us through; He promised no more than that to Joshua. God never makes provision for the Christian to retreat. He clears the way to Canaan if we go ahead; to retreat is often to die.

Fail thee. Literally, “slacken the hand from thee,” that is, “not give thee up.”

Nor forsake thee. The two Hebrew words reflected in the expressions “fail thee” and “forsake thee” are synonymous, and are used together here for emphasis. Any man may conquer who has the Lord on his side. Victory is then as certain in one place as in another. Joshua faced a great task with a people who had so often failed in the past. God here promises that He would not get them into a situation and then leave them there. He would see them through to the end. The same holds true for Christians (Matt. 28:20).

6. *Good courage.* To lack courage is to lack faith, and “without faith it is impossible to please him” (Heb. 11:6). One of the greatest wants of the day is courage—courage to confess Christ in word and deed upon all occasions, courage to believe the Bible and to live in harmony with it, courage to express and to follow our convictions when in the minority. Satan has no dread of learning, of influence, or of riches; but he quails before the dauntless courage of a humble soul who presses forward in faith. Divinely inspired courage arms the soul with invincible power. God was preparing Joshua for a task that would require full faith and trust in Him.

But though it is our privilege to have boundless confidence in God, we are ever to fear and distrust ourselves. Fear as we look within is to be quelled by courage as we look up to God. Joshua was no doubt conscious of his own inadequacy. He had not aspired to the high honor and great responsibility that were now his. He sought them not. When, therefore, the call came to him to assume the office left vacant by Moses, his courage may have failed him momentarily, and he needed encouragement from both God and man. It is when men sense truly their own inadequacy that God considers them qualified to undertake great and sometimes even overwhelming responsibilities. Often we are too self-confident for Him to use us effectively, too full of our own schemes and ways of doing things—like Abraham (Gen. 12:11–13; 16:1–3) and Moses (Ex. 2:12).

Shalt thou divide. “Thou” is emphatic in the Hebrew. “Divide” means “cause to possess.” In a secondary sense this would also include the dividing of the land, probably a more difficult process than taking possession of it. It would call for sound leadership to do this to the satisfaction of all. The apparent absence of even one serious complaint indicates that Joshua was guided by wisdom from God as he proceeded with the delicate task. Do we lean so heavily on divine guidance that those under us feel satisfied, or does our leadership produce grumbling and complaining?

7. *Only be thou strong.* The exhortation of v. 7 reads, literally, “Only be strong and very courageous in observing all the instructions [*torah*],” etc. This was the condition of success: complete surrender to God and cooperation with His expressed will. The task was such that he could not accomplish it by himself; divine power must be united with human effort. God’s plan ensured success. Joshua could not follow his own devices and still expect God’s favor. So it is with salvation, with victory over sin. We too must “be strong and very courageous in observing all the instructions” of the Lord.

Turn not from it. If God in His wisdom has given a command, every detail of it is as sacred as the whole. It would be a challenge to God’s integrity to ignore “one of these least commandments” (Matt. 5:19). We may, perhaps, think we agree with the general principle, yet fail to see the importance of certain details. In so doing we are obeying not God but ourselves. Thus the seeming minutiae become the real test of full allegiance to God.

Joshua needed God with him in such an undertaking as the conquest of Canaan; hence, he was warned not to go his own way in the least degree. "Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left." The path of obedience is the middle path. There is always a bypath to the right, and one to the left; both are undoubtedly wrong. A person may go to extremes on either side of the pathway of duty. The evil one is as content for a Christian to take the right-hand path of fanaticism as the left-hand path of liberalism. Both lead to destruction. Compare Deut. 5:32 for similar instruction referring to the Ten Commandments.

Prosper. Or, "be prudent." "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9:10). Prosperity comes as a result of wise action. A man can act wisely only when and to the extent that he cooperates with the Source of all wisdom.

8. Not depart. "After the settlement in Canaan, the divine precepts were to be repeated daily in every home" (PK 464). Joshua himself was expected to do what the people had been commanded, not as an arbitrary decree, but because it would be the key to his own success. This was also the instruction of God to Israel's king, when they should have one (Deut. 17:18–20). He was to have his own copy transcribed from the one preserved in the sanctuary. Here is evidence of a copy of the Pentateuch made for the priests. Now Joshua was given similar instructions (see on Deut. 17:18). Pursuant to the command of Deut. 31:10–13, providing for a public rehearsal of the words of the book of the law every seven years, other copies were made. This process was both expensive and tedious, and the number of copies was limited. From such a copy Joshua read all the words of the law before the entire congregation (Joshua 8:35).

That the people might commit the law to memory, they were to write it on the doorposts and to teach it continually to their children (Deut. 11:18–12). Today everyone may have his own copy of "the law." Wonderful privilege! If it was important for Joshua ever to have these words on his lips, it is today an equally important and sacred duty. Obedience to the law of life is still the key to success, for it attunes us to the harmony of heaven. Created in God's image, we were formed to live in harmony with God's laws. Obedience to them assures both physical and spiritual success (see DA 827).

Meditate. The Hebrew word thus translated implies the kind of mental cogitation that may at times vent itself in an audible voice—the result of intense concentration. If man's business might ever excuse him from meditation and other acts of devotion, for lack of time, Joshua might qualify. In spite of the great trust and responsibilities vested in him, he must yet find time for meditation. How much our hurried lives lose for lack of meditation! We pass so rapidly over texts of Scripture that we often lose gems of rare value. If we would take a phrase and meditate upon it, shutting out the world and permitting God to speak to us and direct our minds, we would discover wondrous truths we never dreamed were there. "One passage studied until its significance is clear to the mind, and its relation to the plan of salvation is evident, is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view and no positive instruction gained" (SC 95). Meditation logically results in, and is to be followed by, appropriate conduct—"that thou mayest observe."

9. Be strong. For the third time God gives this command (see vs. 6, 7). Joshua had shown courage in years gone by, yet God repeats this precept again and again. Joshua was humble in his own eyes, not distrustful of God's power and His promises, but diffident of himself and of his own wisdom, and strength, and sufficiency for the task that

lay ahead. Perhaps this feeling was due in part to association with so great a man as Moses. God highly esteems a humble spirit, for God can work for and with such a person (see Isa. 57:15). The very humility of Joshua testifies eloquently to his fitness for the sacred task committed to him.

10. Then. From the same word usually translated “and.” This indicates a close connection between the command and its execution. Joshua did not procrastinate. Immediately upon receiving orders he proceeded to execute them.

Officers. That is, “scribes.” These were lesser administrative officials who carried out the commands of the leaders.

11. Victuals. From a word whose root meaning is “to hunt.” The derived masculine noun means “venison.” Through usage it had come to mean “provisions” in general, as for a journey. This could not refer to the manna, for that fell daily (Ex. 16:4); yet soon it would cease forever (Joshua 5:11, 12). Joshua’s command probably anticipated that day as well as the crossing of the Jordan.

Within three days. The question naturally arises, How can it be said that Israel was to cross the Jordan “within three days” when the spies, who seem not to have been sent out as yet, remained three days in the mountains (ch. 2:22), and the people seem not to have passed over for another three days (ch. 3:2)? Some say the time statements are not exact; others claim that chs. 1:11 and 3:2 cannot be identified as to time. Still others attempt to shorten the three days of the spies to parts of days, and thus harmonize the two statements; and others, that the word “within” did not mean that they would pass over “within three days,” but only leave Shittim within that time (see ch. 3:1). The further explanation has been made that Joshua intended to pass over “within three days,” but that his plan was frustrated by the delay the two spies experienced. None of these explanations, however, are satisfactory.

The word translated “within” is a combination of ‘*od*, “continuation,” “duration,” and the preposition *be*, “within” or “in the continuation of.” The LXX renders “within three days” (ch. 1:11) as “yet three days,” and the Syriac, “from this time to three days,” or “within three days.” The word translated “after” in ch. 3:2 is from the preposition *min*, “from,” “after,” and *qaseh*, “end” or “extremity.” It thus reads, literally, “from the end of” the three days. In either case both “within” (ch. 1:11) and “after” (ch. 3:2) refer to approximately the same time. Two facts are clear: (1) The spies were sent out from Shittim and returned to Shittim (chs. 2:1 and 2:23 to 3:1). (2) The morning after their return the people left Shittim for the Jordan, some 7 mi. away, and lodged there 3 days (ch. 3:2) before crossing. See pp. 136, 137.

The command of ch. 1:10, 11, though recorded here, was not actually issued till after the return of the spies (PP 483). Thus the account of ch. 2, concerning the two spies, precedes the command of ch. 1:10, 11. Such proleptic transpositions are frequent in Scripture (see on Gen. 38:1; 39:1). Their purpose is to preserve continuity. Here Joshua’s purpose was to let it be known that he *did* issue orders in harmony with the command he had just received from God (vs. 1–9), and that without undue delay. For a chronological analysis of the sequence of events, see on ch. 3:2.

13. Remember the word. Joshua proceeded immediately to carry out Moses’ program. He did not feel it necessary to alter the general plan and initiate a new program of his own, to make a name for himself, as so often happens today in both the political

and the religious world. He did not, for instance, seek to win friends for himself by releasing the two and one half tribes from their obligation. Rather, he reminded them of their promise. They kept their word at no small cost of toil and danger, and furnished thereby a perpetual lesson for those, who, having made a promise under great pressure, are tempted to retire from it when the pressure is removed.

14. Armed. Heb. *chamushim*. Considerable question has arisen as to the meaning of this word. It appears in Ex. 13:18 as “harnessed” (“by five in a rank,” margin), in Joshua 4:12 as “armed,” and in Judges 7:11 as “armed” (“ranks by five,” margin). In a parallel passage (Num. 32:17) the word appears as *chushim*, with the middle consonant *m* of *chamushim* omitted. This was probably a copyist’s error, for the word as it stands should be translated “haste” or “quick,” neither of which makes sense. English translations, therefore, follow the LXX and the Vulgate, which read “armed.” The Syriac reads, “We will conquer.” There seems to be no authority for translating *chamushim* as either “armed” or “harnessed.” It seems to refer to an orderly manner of marching (see on Ex. 13:18). Thus, the two and a half tribes were to proceed in an organized manner, submitting to the leadership of Joshua.

All the mighty men. That is, of the two and a half tribes. All must be ready and willing to go. According to ch. 4:13, only some 40,000 went over to battle. But there were about 110,580 from the two and a half tribes eligible for military service (Num. 26:7, 18, 34). Thus, more than 70,000 must have remained behind to protect their families and flocks.

16. They answered. Theirs was a fourfold reply: (1) They promised him obedience. (2) They prayed for the presence of God with him, or perhaps expressed confidence that God would be with him (v. 17). (3) They decreed death for anyone who disobeyed him (v. 18). (4) They encouraged and admonished him to be strong and courageous. Though God had promised Israel divine assistance, He also insisted on their cooperation. Today He requires the use of every talent and ability He has given us. The two and a half tribes stand forth a commendable example of cooperation with God and His appointed leaders.

17. Only. Or, “surely,” as it is elsewhere translated (Gen. 20:11; Deut. 4:6; etc.).

Be with thee. More accurately, “will be with thee.” With confidence in this fact they expressed their complete submission to Joshua’s commands.

18. Be strong. As the people had a part to perform, so Joshua, as leader, had a responsibility to carry out. It was the solemn sense of this responsibility that made him hesitate and shrink from the chief place of leadership. Many are charmed by what they consider the glory of leadership, but fail to sense its solemn responsibilities and personal sacrifice. With every privilege there is always an equal responsibility. A leader must be strong even when others weaken. He must have courage when others are discouraged, and be able to inspire others with courage. He must gather warmth from the coldness of others. A leader for God must live close to the Lord, that he may be able to encourage those associated with him. Sensing his fellowship with God, they would be the more ready to cooperate with him, and there would thus exist in the church the unity for which Jesus prayed (John 17). With such unity the conquest of Canaan could not fail. Leaders must be men who have an “understanding of the times” and “know what Israel ought to do” (1 Chron. 12:32), who merit the confidence of those who follow, and who inspire their followers with joy in working together as a united force. Followers, for their part,

must be people who know how to cooperate cheerfully with their leader and with one another.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–18PP 481–483; SR 175

2, 3 PP 482

5 MH 405; PP 482, 485; 4T 156

6 7T 185

6–8PP 482

7 ML 120; 4T 157

8 PK 465; 5T 328

9 MH 405; ML 10

11 SR 175

16, 17 PP 483

16–18SR 175; 4T 157

CHAPTER 2

1 *Rahab receiveth and concealeth the two spies sent from Shittim.* 8 *The covenant between her and them.* 23 *Their return and relation.*

1. Sent. Perhaps preferably, “had sent.” The spies had been sent out prior to the events recorded in ch. 1:10–18 (see on ch. 1:11). It is clear that Joshua did not send the spies out as a result of distrust, but rather, probably, by divine command. The two men sent were guided and protected in a remarkable way. Faith in God’s promises does not supersede, but rather complements, diligence and effort on our part.

Shittim. Or, “Abel-shittim,” meaning “meadow of acacia trees” (Num. 33:49). Some suggest Tell el-Kefrein, about 6 mi. (10 km.) east of the Jordan; others as *Tell el-*

Hammâm, 9 mi. (14 km.) east of it. Here Israel had camped for some time. Here the Moabite and Midianite women had tempted them. Nearby lay the town of Beth-peor. Here also Moses had delivered his last discourse, and near here he was buried (Deut. 4:46; 34:6).

Secretly, saying. Or, “secretly saying.” Joshua’s instructions to the men were given secretly, that is, without the knowledge of the people. He remembered vividly the adverse reaction to the report of the spies 38 years previously. The 12 spies (Num. 13:2, 26) had been sent out from the people (Deut. 1:22) and reported to the people (Num. 13:32), whereas these 2 spies were sent out by Joshua and reported directly to Joshua (Joshua 2:23). Prudence on the part of a leader is necessary. Even though Joshua had all faith in God, yet he must do all in his power to ensure the success of the attack. He should not, as general, enter a strange and hostile land without first exploring it. This precaution may have been taken under God’s explicit direction as a means of encouraging Joshua. Also God knew of Rahab and her faith (vs. 9–11), and would save her and her family.

An harlot’s house. Jewish writers and some Protestant commentators have sought to show that Rahab was simply an innkeeper. But neither the Heb. *zonah* nor its Greek equivalent in the LXX permits such a rendering. As used throughout the OT, and as translated in Heb. 11:31 and James 2:25, the word denotes a “harlot.” Such she either now was or formerly had been, and into such a person’s house the spies might enter less conspicuously than into a more public place, for food and lodging.

As the light of the true God dawned upon Rahab's heart, she repented and cast her lot with God's people (PK 369). To her was granted the honor of becoming a progenitor of Christ (see on Matt. 1:5). Nevertheless, the opprobrium of her former life clung to her, for she is ever after known as "the harlot." Her experience teaches three great lessons: (1) Great sin is no bar to repentance. (2) Many who before their conversion led wicked lives may thereafter distinguish themselves as heroes of faith. (3) A reputation once established may cling to a person long after repentance has erased sin from his life.

2. *It was told.* The city was in a state of emergency. An army that had but recently conquered two powerful kings was camped less than 15 mi. away. The people of Jericho knew of the miracles attending Israel's wilderness journey, as evidenced by Rahab's testimony (vs. 9–11). They were living in dread of imminent siege, and every stranger looked suspicious to them.

To night. The spies had chosen evening time to enter, for it was then that the tillers of the fields would be returning and the least attention would be directed toward the two spies. They had hoped thus to escape attention, but evidently their dress, language, or features gave them away. Had God not provided them a refuge, they would have been captured and no doubt lost their lives. Even the harlot recognized them as Israelites, but uninhibited by prejudice, she realized that it was useless to fight against Jehovah, and cast herself upon the mercy of their God. She may not have known what the word "faith" meant, but the thing itself was in her heart (Heb. 11:31), and found expression both in words and in deeds (James 2:25).

3. *Come to thee.* The king of Jericho apparently thought that the spies had not only come for lodging ("entered into thine house") but also to visit Rahab personally. Now she must choose between her country and her conscience. Whether the spies had as yet had time or opportunity to tell her about their God, we do not know, but with whatever light she did have she made the momentous decision to cast her lot with God's people. Following the words "come to thee" both the LXX and the Syriac add, "during the night," suggesting that it was dark when they entered. The Holy Spirit had been impressing Rahab's heart, and apparently led them to her house, even as He leads God's messengers to homes that are looking for light today.

4. *Took.* Obviously, "had taken," that is, before the officers arrived. Aware that the arrival of the strangers was known and that search would likely be made for them, and knowing also of their errand and having made her decision, she had already safely hidden the men where search was not likely to be made for them.

Hid them. Or, "had hidden them [literally, "him"]," that is, she hid each one separately in a place by himself. It would be easier to hide them separately, and also, if one was found, there was a possibility that the other might escape. Such details could have been reported only by an eyewitness.

I wist not. Here and in v. 5 is a series of lies told in order to save life. Is this justifiable? Rahab was faced with what seemed to her a choice between a greater and a lesser evil: to share in the responsibility of the death of two men whom she believed to be messengers of God, or to tell a lie and save them. To a Christian a lie can never be justified, but to a person like Rahab light comes but gradually. There was a time when God's people did not know of the true Sabbath, and so transgressed it. There was a time when we did not understand tithing or healthful living. "The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). God

accepts what is sincerely and honestly intended, even though there be a mixture of frailty and ignorance in it. Rahab's faith was tested and it rang true. God accepts us where we are, but we must "grow in grace" 2 Peter 3:18).

6. Brought them up. Literally, "caused them to go up," that is, to the flat roof, so common in the Near East. According to Jewish law, the roof was to be provided with a parapet (Deut. 22:8). Even the roof of a public building was flat (Judges 16:27). A roof might be used as a promenade (2 Sam. 11:2) or for prayer (Acts 10:9). Rahab used it, as did many others, for drying stalks of flax, from which she would make linen cloth, and so it is used today. Flax and barley are both early crops (Ex. 9:31), and this was the first month (Joshua 4:19).

8. Before they were laid down. Sleeping on the roof was common practice in warm weather, and in the tropical climate of Jericho summer arrives early. There was nothing the spies could do until she came with further instructions. She could yet deliver them over to the king if she would. With faith in her heart she came up to where they were to make arrangements for her own safety and for that of her relatives, when Israel should take the city.

9. I know. The Hebrew reads, "I knew," or, "I have known." Here she uses the language of the prophets, expressing that which is promised as though it were already fulfilled. Her faith was equal to theirs. This was the encouragement that Joshua and the children of Israel needed.

Faint. Literally, "melted away." Here she refers particularly to the peoples that Israel had already overcome, as listed in v. 10. A report of the great things God had done for them had come to Jericho (v. 10).

10. Amorites. A powerful race that subdued the aboriginal Rephaim (Deut. 2:20, 21, Israel's victory over the Amorites was in fulfillment of a promise God had made while Moses was still alive (Deut. 11:25).

11. Our hearts did melt. The word translated "hearts" is singular in the Hebrew, and probably refers to their will to resist. In such a state of mind men are easily overcome. The people of Jericho were in terror, and the two spies no doubt realized that victory was certain.

This experience may serve to encourage us. We too are fighting the battles of the Lord under the heavenly "Joshua." All appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, the forces of evil cringe before the manifest power of God. He is going before us, and the fear of us and of what the Lord has done for us is in the heart of His enemies. The kingdom of darkness is tottering to its fall, and Satan and his hosts know it. In view of this fact let us be strong; perfect faith and love cast out fear (1 John 4:18). The inhabitants of Jericho all heard and trembled; only Rahab passed from fear to faith and service.

He is God. How Rahab had learned of the true God is not revealed. There had not been time for her to get much information from the two spies. Her chief knowledge had no doubt come from the reports of how Jehovah, the God of Israel, was working for them. After making her confession of faith Rahab proceeded to enter into covenant relations with God and the representatives of His people for the preservation of her life. Surrendering her life to God, she received assurance that it would be preserved in the coming judgment of Jericho.

12. A true token. Literally, "a token of truth." She asked two things: (1) that she and her family might be preserved, as she had preserved them, and (2) that the spies would

give her “a token of truth,” which the Israelites would recognize and respect. She had no husband, but mentioned a mother, father, brothers, and sisters. After she had extracted from the spies an oath that they would preserve her life and that of her family, they designated the “token”—a scarlet cord in the window (v. 18). Like the blood sprinkled upon the doorposts, this cord assured the safety of those residing within.

14. *Our life for your’s.* They pledged their lives as security for hers. Should they fail, she and her family would be slain.

This our business. Literally, “this our word,” here evidently a reference to the “true token” she had requested. Before giving it they sought assurance that she would keep secret the fact that Israel expected soon to take Jericho. Carelessness or duplicity on her part would release them from their pledge.

15. *Let them down.* But not before the conversation of vs. 16–20 had taken place. As in ch. 1:10, 11, a future fact is injected earlier than its chronological position would lead us to expect. Such repetitions occur frequently in the Bible.

Upon the wall. Living as she did upon the wall, it would be comparatively easy for her to lower the spies. For archeological information concerning the ancient city of Jericho, see p. 42.

16. *The mountain.* The site of ancient Jericho is situated near the western edge of the valley, here some 14 mi. wide, and the only “mountain” nearby is to the west. In that direction, but a mile from Jericho, rise the hills that form what is known as the Wilderness of Judah. The nearest ridge is so high that long before evening it casts a shadow on the city. In this mountainous area are many caves, and here the spies might have fled and been safe until the searchers returned. Then, at night, they might safely have made their way to their camp at Shittim.

17. *The men said.* Or, “had said,” that is, before she let them down. It is most improbable that she would have dismissed them before the conditions discussed in vs. 16–20 were agreed upon, or that she would converse with them about such matters after they were let down. Nor would she begin her discourse in her house, and not complete it until she had let them down the wall. The statement in v. 18, “which thou didst let us down by,” does not necessarily prove that these words were spoken after they had descended. Speaking of the future, they naturally think of the present as being in the past, and of the action now contemplated as already completed (see Vol. I, p. 27).

18. *This line.* The scarlet “line” is not the same as the “cord” (v. 15) by which the men were lowered. These are described by different words in the original. The word translated “cord” (v. 15), or “rope,” is *chebel*, whereas the word here translated “line” is *tiqwah*. Elsewhere in the OT (31 times) it is translated “hope” or “expectation” (Ps. 62:5; 71:5; etc.). It comes from a root meaning “to twist,” “to bind,” and consequently, “to be firm,” “to be strong,” or figuratively, “to be confident,” “to hope.” It would have been preposterous to require Rahab to display in her window the means by which the spies had escaped. It would at once have declared to all beholders the very thing Rahab was pledged not to disclose. The “line of scarlet thread” was probably of linen. A product of her trade (v. 6), it would not be likely to attract undue attention.

Which. That is, the window, not the “cord.”

Thou shalt bring. A reasonable provision. If her relatives would not perish with the people of Jericho, who believed not, they must manifest their belief by finding shelter in the place of refuge, as Noah and his family did in the ark. In a similar way, those today

who would escape the judgments of God upon an unbelieving world will be found associating with others who have chosen the way of life.

21. *She bound.* Perhaps not until the time when this precaution became necessary, but more likely that very night, lest she should forget it later. Furthermore, it would inspire her with courage and hope to be able to see there the sign of deliverance.

23. *Came to Joshua.* The spies reported directly to Joshua (see on v. 1). He had probably learned a lesson from the time he with 11 others had been sent out from Kadesh-barnea, and 10 had returned with a discouraging report. He may have felt it wise for this reason to keep the mission of the two spies secret until he had received their report. Their message (see ch. 2:9–11, 23, 24) must have encouraged Joshua and the people to advance without delay across the Jordan and against Jericho.

24. *The Lord hath delivered.* How different the report of the two spies at the close of the 40 years of wandering, compared with that of the ten spies 38 years earlier (Num. 13:31–33) Compare the experience of Gideon (Judges 7:9–14).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–24PP 482, 483

10 PP 483

11 PK 369; PP 369, 483, 492

24 PP 483

CHAPTER 3

1 *Joshua cometh to Jordan.* 2 *The officers instruct the people for the passage.* 7 *The Lord encourageth Joshua.* 9 *Joshua encourageth the people.* 14 *The waters of Jordan are divided.*

1. *Joshua rose early.* Joshua could not rest when important work for the Lord awaited his attention. He did not consider his own ease. As leader, he must set a right example before the officers under him. The Lord's business ever requires the best we have to offer. Those who would accomplish great things for God must rise "early."

In the morning. That is, "in the morning" of the day following the return of the spies (see ch. 2:23, 24).

They removed. They had camped more than 2 months in Shittim, having arrived here by the 1st day of the 11th month in the 40th year after they had left Egypt (Deut. 1:3). This, their first march under Joshua, was only about 7 mi. in length, but may have required most of the day, on account of the flocks and the little ones.

Lodged. Literally, "spent the night," that is, set up a temporary camp. They probably remained there for three days (vs. 2, 5), making final preparations for crossing the Jordan.

2. *After three days.* At the close of the three days Joshua sent officers through the camp with a second proclamation. According to ch. 4:19, the people crossed the Jordan on the 10th day of Abib, the 1st month. This was in the 41st year of the Exodus. The proclamation was therefore issued on the day preceding (ch. 3:5), the 9th. The 9th was, in turn, the 3d day after their march from Shittim to the Jordan (v. 2). According to Oriental reckoning (see p. 136), that would place the arrival at Jordan on the 7th of the month, that is, the day after the spies returned to Shittim, the 6th of Abib (chs. 2:22, 23; 3:1). Inasmuch as the spies returned 3 days after entering Jericho (ch. 2:2, 16, 22, 23), they had probably been sent out by Joshua on the 4th of the month, Oriental reckoning. But according to PP 483, the instructions of ch. 1:10, 11, were issued upon the return of the spies, probably on the morning of the 7th (ch. 3:1). Chronologically, the account of the 2

spies in ch. 2 thus precedes the command of ch. 1:10, 11. The command of ch. 1:10, 11, was therefore given on either the 7th or the 8th, and that of ch. 3:2–5 on the 9th.

3. *The ark.* Hitherto the pillar of cloud and fire had guided Israel on their way. Now it was to be seen no more. In their crossing of the Jordan the ark, which had formerly been carried in the midst of the camp (Num. 2:17), was to lead the way. It was the center of their religion and a symbol of God's presence. Thus the Lord was with them still, though no longer in the pillar of cloud. The ark was the repository of His holy and immutable law. Above the ark was the mercy seat, reminding them of God's mercy, patience, forgiveness, and grace. Thus early in their national experience God said to them, in effect, Let My character, My justice, and My mercy be your guide. Let the Ten Commandments, My standard of right, show you how to live, and My grace help you to obey it. As long as they would follow these principles they would be safe.

The priests the Levites. Or, "the Levitical priests" (RSV). Ordinarily the sons of Kohath bore the ark (Num. 4:15). The Jewish rabbis say that it was thus carried upon only three other occasions—when they marched around Jericho, when Zadok and Abiathar returned it to Jerusalem as David fled from Absalom (2 Sam. 15:29), and when it was brought into the Temple of Solomon. Here, at Jordan, the priests, representing Christ as our mediator and high priest, must go first and lead the way.

Go after it. Contrary to the usual custom (Num. 2:17), the ark was now to lead the way. Once before, upon their first removal from Mt. Sinai, it had gone before them for three days (Num. 10:33). Now another special occasion had arrived. To impress upon them the fact that it was God who gave them entrance to Canaan, and who would lead them in its conquest, His presence was to go before them. In a similar way He has promised to lead us. As Israel followed the ark, representative of divine justice and mercy, it is our privilege to follow on. At the end of the journey we will find "honour and immortality, eternal life" (Rom. 2:7, 8), and a ready welcome into the heavenly Canaan (Matt. 25:21, 34).

4. *A space.* The ark needed no guards, other than the priests who carried it. The distance between the ark and the people made it possible for many more to observe the rolling back of the Jordan than if it had been followed closely by a throng of people. Also, reverence and respect for the ark and the law would thus be emphasized. Had Israel been unwilling to follow the sacred precepts of the Decalogue, they would never have entered Canaan. Nor will we enter the heavenly Canaan unless we are obedient—obedient through the enabling grace of God.

Two thousand cubits. About 1/2 mi. (.8 km.).

Not passed this way. The ark must be clearly visible to all, inasmuch as the pillar of cloud led them no more. Had many been permitted to crowd closely around it, it would soon have been lost to the sight of the great majority. To be guided without the pillar of cloud was a new experience. Providence leads us, from time to time, by strange paths and into new experiences; and we too must keep the ark of the covenant ever in sight, that we may follow on wherever God leads us.

5. *Sanctify yourselves.* Joshua probably refers here to the same type of experience God required of the people at Sinai (see on Ex. 19:10). They were to wash themselves and their garments, and to abstain from everything that might prevent them from fixing their attention on the great miracle soon to be wrought in their behalf. To their work of preparation God would, of course, add His blessing. Man must ever cooperate with God

in the working out of his own salvation (Phil. 2:12). If we would expect the blessing and leadership of God in our preparations for entering the heavenly Canaan, it is essential that we “sanctify” ourselves by consecrating our lives to God that He may purify and make us holy. If this was necessary for entrance into the earthly Canaan, how much more necessary it is for admission to the heavenly Canaan.

Wonders. The word thus translated is from a verb meaning “to separate,” “to distinguish.” The “wonders” God performed from time to time distinguish Him as the true God. In that these “wonders” were done for Israel, they would set Israel apart from other peoples as the special object of God’s favor. But there could be no “wonders”—God could not work on their behalf—unless they first heeded the command to “sanctify yourselves.”

6. Took up the ark. A parenthetical statement included here to indicate obedience to the command to “take up the ark.” The instructions of vs. 7–13 preceded the march to Jordan.

7. Magnify thee. Crossing the Jordan was to do for Joshua what the giving of the law at Sinai did for Moses—“that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever” (Ex. 19:9). Both men were established before the people because they were first established with God. Worldly honors often have no relation to character, whereas the outward honor that comes from God testifies to the presence of God’s character within.

8. The brink. Literally, “the extremity”—not merely to the bank of Jordan, but to the water itself. The river overflowed its banks at this time of the year (v. 15). The priests were to enter the shallow water at the edge. When the water had ceased flowing, they were to proceed to the middle of the river and remain there until all Israel had passed over. The waters flowed on and left the whole river bed dry, from a point above the ark down to the Dead Sea. This was a distance of several miles, and provided ample room for the multitude of people, with their cattle, to pass over quickly (see on v. 16).

9. Come hither. The people must have been in a state of great expectancy. They knew that something unusual was to happen (v. 5). The officers had already instructed the people about following the ark (v. 3), but nothing had been said as to where it would lead them. Joshua had sent the word around the camp that they should sanctify themselves (v. 5), and now he called them to hear additional instructions the Lord had given him. He informed the people as to precisely what would happen. Sharing this information with the people bound them more closely to him. This marked him as a wise and able leader, for an informed people can follow their leader more intelligently.

10. The living God. The signal manifestation of divine power they were about to witness would distinguish their God as the true and “living God.”

The Amorites. The Amorites were among the early inhabitants of the land of Palestine. In the days of Joshua they occupied the mountainous country west of the Dead Sea and also that portion of Transjordan Israel had taken from Sihon and Og. Their kinsmen, the Canaanites, lived chiefly in what is called Phoenicia and in the mountainous areas to the north and south of Jerusalem. According to 1 Chron. 1:13–15, the Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, and Hivites were all descendants of Canaan (see Vol. I, p. 270). The Hittite empire, centered in Asia Minor, controlled certain city-states as far south as the land of Palestine. A great racial migration had taken place in the first half of the second millennium B.C. in the eastern Mediterranean area, during the course of which the

Hyksos had spilled over into Palestine, and even as far south as Egypt. It is thought that this movement was responsible for bringing south into Palestine a large number of Hittites, Hurrians (Horites, sometimes classed with the Hivites), and possibly the Jebusites of Jerusalem, the Perizzites, and other non-Semitic tribes. These were scattered in various areas of Palestine, which are not always clearly defined. These six or seven nations are frequently referred to in the early books of the OT, often in connection with a promise to drive them out.

13. As soon. The priests carrying the ark were to manifest their faith in God's word by stepping into the water. God ever calls upon His people not only to face difficulties but to march boldly forward in faith, at His command, confident that He will open a way. He has promised to turn the waters aside and to overcome all obstacles (Isa. 43:2).

The Lord, the Lord. Literally, "Jehovah, Lord."

Cut off from. The word "from" is not in the original. Hence, "the waters that come down from above" is in apposition to, and explanatory of, "the waters of Jordan shall be cut off." In other words, the waters from above were "cut off" and heaped up. The waters below that point flowed on down to the Dead Sea, leaving the river bed dry. The miracle of the Red Sea, the opening of a path through the waters, is here repeated as evidence that God has the same power to complete the salvation of His people that He had to begin it (see Heb. 12:2). Why did the Lord have Israel wait until Jordan was in flood stage before crossing? A month earlier or a month later this would not have been so, and they had been encamped at Shittim for two months. There were probably two reasons: (1) God's power would be more evident (see on Ex. 9:16; see also 2 Cor. 12:9). (2) The people in Jericho would not be expecting them, and would not have guards at the river. Being fearful and intending to resist, the people of Jericho could be expected to guard the fords of Jordan, where it would have been easy to resist the Israelites. The people of Jericho remembered well the report of Israel crossing the Red Sea 40 years previously, and this even yet struck terror to their hearts (Joshua 2:9, 10); a repetition of that miracle, close at hand, could be counted on to intensify their fear. For God, the volume of water in the Jordan made no difference.

14. Bearing the ark. See on v. 3.

15. All the time of harvest. Not the wheat harvest but the barley harvest, which, according to Ruth 1:22 and 2 Sam. 21:9, came first. According to Joshua 4:19 the crossing occurred on the 10th day of the 1st month, and on the 14th the people kept the Passover (ch. 5:10). On the 15th they were to present the first fruits (Lev. 23:10, 11)—a sheaf of barley, according to Josephus. In the hot Jordan valley the harvest came very early in the spring; at the same time the streams were swollen from recent winter rains and from the melting snow in the mountains. According to Ex. 9:31, 33, the barley and flax ripened together. Rahab had flax bundles drying on her roof, a fact that confirms the previous statements regarding the barley harvest and marks the Bible narrative as a reliable eyewitness account.

16. From the city Adam. The original Hebrew text reads, "at" Adam. This the Masoretes changed to read "from Adam." Their reason for doing so is not clear. The LXX reads, "There stood one solid heap very far off"—with no mention of "Adam." The intent of the original Hebrew text seems to be that the damming up of the waters took place *near* the city of Adam, "very far" from the place of crossing. This city has been identified with the modern *Tell ed-Dâmiyeh*. Nearby is the ford of Damieh, where the

remains of a Roman bridge may still be seen. Here the Jordan valley is compressed within its narrowest limits, the rocks on both sides almost meeting. This is perhaps 20 mi. (32 km.) from where Israel crossed over. There would thus be an ample distance on both sides of the ark for the people to cross on dry ground. As to the miracle aspect of the drying up of the river, see p. 41.

Zaretan. A site in the Jordan Valley. Some locate this place near Beth Shean (1 Kings 4:12), others near Succoth (1 Kings 7:46). Some think it to be identical with Zereda, Jeroboam's birthplace (1 Kings 11:26). Some identify it with *Tell-es-Sa'idīyeh*, about 11 mi. (18 km.) north of Adam.

The sea of the plain. Literally, "the sea of the Arabah," that is, the Dead Sea. The Arabah was the great depression of the Jordan valley extending southward to the Gulf of Aqabah.

Against Jericho. It would have been difficult, if not impossible, for the whole camp to pass over at one spot. Indeed, they may have made use of several miles of the bed of the Jordan. The priests with the ark evidently crossed opposite Jericho, and the multitude passed over on both sides of the ark. It is likely that the Canaanites would have attempted to defend the fords of the Jordan if they had expected that such a passage would be attempted. They surely knew that the Israelite camp was on the other side of Jordan, but the crossing took them entirely by surprise.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–17PP 483–485

1, 3 PP 483

4 PP 484

5, 6 PP 483

5–7SR 176

7 PP 485; 4T 157

8–17SR 176

10, 11 PP 484

13 AA 357

15–17PP 484; 4T 157

CHAPTER 4

1 *Twelve men are appointed to take twelve stones for a memorial out of Jordan.* 9 *Twelve other stones are set up in the midst of Jordan.* 10, 19 *The people pass over.* 14 *God magnifieth Joshua.* 20 *The twelve stones are pitched in Gilgal.*

1. The Lord spake. Perhaps it was by Eleazar the priest that God gave these instructions to Joshua, for when Joshua was ordained to this great trust, God ordained that Eleazar should inquire of the Lord for him. It was at his word that Joshua and all the children of Israel must "go out" and "come in" (Num. 27:21).

2. Twelve men. These men had already been chosen for the work (ch. 3:12). Chapter 4:4 plainly recognizes this previous selection.

3. Where the priests' feet stood firm. Literally, "from the station [standing place] of the feet of the priests." The stones were to be taken from this spot, that the monument to be erected might be more vivid in its appeal to the memory and to reflection upon the signal power of God so gloriously manifested in their behalf.

4. Whom he had prepared. A reference to their appointment, as recorded in ch. 3:12, one man for each tribe and one stone for each man (see on v. 6).

6. *What mean ye?* God knew His people, knew how soon they would forget His great works of deliverance for them unless provision be made for keeping this great event in mind. Future generations must not be permitted to forget God's leading. Even so today "we have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history" (LS 196). There were 12 tribes and 12 stones, all the people thus being represented. There were two monuments—one erected in the midst of the river, and another of stones taken from the bed of the river, set up at the site of their first encampment in the Land of Promise. These monuments to the power of God were to be a memorial of the successful completion of the wilderness wanderings. The murmuring, rebellion, and disappointment of the wilderness were to be things of the past. In the Red Sea, Israel had been "baptized unto Moses" (1 Cor. 10:2); here they were baptized, as it were, unto Joshua. Through these demonstrations of His power God sought, among other things, to confirm the confidence of the people in their appointed leaders (Joshua 3:7; 4:14).

9. *In the midst of Jordan.* There has been a difference of opinion as to whether this should read, "*in* the midst of Jordan," or, "*from* the midst of Jordan." The KJV represents the Hebrew text as we now have it. The Syriac reads, "from the midst of Jordan," but no other manuscript supports this reading. The best evidence supports the KJV and RSV rendering.

Unto this day. See the Introduction to Joshua.

10. *The people hasted.* Some "hasted," perhaps in fear that the waters might return at any moment. Others may have felt that unnecessary delay on their part would not be pleasing to God. Still others may have "hasted" because of eagerness to be in the land of Canaan. Some may have "hasted" just because others were hastening, not thinking or knowing why.

13. *About forty thousand.* At the last census (Num. 26) the men eligible for military service numbered: Reuben, 43,730 (v. 7); Gad, 40,500 (v. 18); Manasseh, 52,700 (v. 34), or, for the exact half, 26,350. Thus the entire force of the two and a half tribes was about 110,580. They therefore left more than half their number to protect their families and their dwellings. This was not inconsistent with the spirit of their agreement with Moses.

Prepared for war. In ch. 1:14 this expression is translated "armed," literally "an army in five parts." The phrase, "prepared for war," is from a word meaning "stripped" or "equipped for war."

14. *They feared him.* That is, in the sense of awed reverence. This gained for Joshua the same respect that the dividing of the Red Sea did for Moses (Ex. 14:31).

16. *Testimony.* Or "law," generally understood to be the ten-commandment law, which Moses had placed in the ark (Ex. 25:21; Deut. 10:2; see on Ex. 25:16). Here God emphasizes the law as the basis of the covenant between Himself and His people. This law He desired to write in their hearts.

19. *The tenth day.* That is, four days before the Passover. This was the day when the Passover lamb was to be selected (Ex. 12:3, 6).

Gilgal. See on ch. 5:9.

20. *Pitch.* Literally, "caused to stand." A stonework foundation or mound of earth of considerable height was probably laid first, and the 12 stones placed on top of it. Twelve stones of a size that could be carried that distance on a man's shoulder would not have made a very conspicuous monument unless erected on such a base.

22. *Let your children know.* God ordained that the great “wonders” (ch. 3:5) Israel had witnessed this day should not soon be forgotten. It was His purpose that they should keep His “wonderful works” (Ps. 111:4) ever vivid in their memory, as a means of binding them in loyalty to Him. It was 40 years before in that very month that they had crossed the Red Sea. This was springtime (see on ch. 3:15), and even though the stream was strong and deep, God rolled back the waters and they crossed over safely. The queries of the children (ch. 4:21) would provide the parents with an opportunity to recount the story of God’s patient dealings with Israel in the wilderness. Joshua’s admonition to the fathers and mothers of his day provides a pattern parents of today would do well to emulate (LS 196).

24. *All the people.* God designed that His dealings with Israel should become an object lesson to all mankind. The people of Israel were not selfishly to hoard to themselves the knowledge of the true God and of His power to save. This knowledge was to go to all the earth as a result of the proper education of their children (cf. v. 22), who in their turn were to become missionaries. As Israel grew in numbers and in influence, the whole earth would soon learn of the true God and give glory to Him. But Israel failed, and this same commission was later given by Christ to His disciples (Matt. 28:19, 20). The “word of reconciliation” has now been “committed unto us” (2 Cor. 5:19). We must not fail.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–24PP 484, 485; SR 177

2, 3 4T 158

2–9PP 484

12, 13 PP 518

14 PP 485

18 PP 484

20–244T 158

24 PP 484

CHAPTER 5

1 *The Canaanites are afraid.* 2 *Joshua reneweth circumcision.* 10 *The passover is kept at Gilgal.* 12 *Manna ceaseth.* 13 *An Angel appeareth to Joshua.*

The Land of Canaan Before the Israelite Conquest

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¹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Jos 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.



1. Amorites. That portion of Amorite territory to the east of Jordan had already been conquered (Num. 21:21–24); now the Amorites in the mountains to the west of Jordan trembled. The Amorites had constituted the second great wave of Hamites that moved out of the Arabian peninsula into the Mesopotamian valley during the early years of the second millennium B.C. There they broke up into two groups. One of these groups intermingled with the cultured Sumerians, and out of that union developed the great early

Babylonian culture. The second group moved westward, and then south into Palestine, whence some of them spread across the Jordan River to the east (see on Gen. 10:16). Others remained in Palestine and intermingled with the native non-Semitic population. From this fusion came the Phoenicians, named in the LXX of Joshua 5:1, 12. Here they are described as being “by the sea,” where, in later years, we find the Phoenicians.

Until we were passed over. The LXX reads, “when *they* passed over,” and the Syriac, “until *they* passed over.” The Masoretes in the margin corrected this passage to read, “until *they* passed over.” However, “we” seems to have been the original reading. If so, this would be evidence that the author of the book shared in the experience, despite the critical view of many modern scholars.

Their heart melted. The mighty works of God struck fear to the hearts of the Canaanites and dispirited them, as He had promised (Ex. 23:27). The Jordan had been their line of defense. Furthermore, the Israelites had camped east of Jordan for months without making any attempt to cross over, with the result that the Amorites felt secure, especially now that the river was in flood stage. For this reason they set no guard to hinder the crossing. Even though their hearts had “melted” before, as Rahab admitted (ch. 2:11), they had maintained a degree of courage. They trusted, no doubt, in their numbers and in their fortified cities to repel the invaders. But when they heard that Israel not only had crossed the Jordan, thus breaking through their supposed defense, but had been able to do so as the result of a divine miracle, their hearts utterly failed them. “Neither was there spirit in them any more.”

2. *Sharp knives.* Literally, “knives of stones,” or “flint knives” (RSV). It was probably considered unlawful to use metal of any kind in this religious rite, as perhaps may be implied from Ex. 4:25. Egyptians considered it unlawful or profane to use any kind of metal for making incisions in the human body when preparing it for embalming. In some parts of the world, it is reported, the rite of circumcision is still performed with stone knives.

Circumcise again. This is not to be understood as a command to repeat circumcision on those individuals who had already received it. The command implies only that they were to renew the observance of a rite that had been discontinued during their wilderness travels (PP 406). A “second time” implies that there had been a *first* time when God ordered the general administration of this rite. It seems that circumcision had not been practiced in Egypt (PP 363), and that possibly in connection with the ratification of the covenant at Sinai (Ex. 24:3–8) this rite, the sign of the covenant (Gen. 17:10, 11; Rom. 4:11), was reinstituted. It has also been suggested that the *first* time occurred before Israel left Egypt. The Passover was then first observed, and according to instruction given afterward, no uncircumcised male might eat of it (Ex. 12:43–49). Now, upon their entry into Canaan, the Israelites were renewing their covenant with God, and this called them to adopt once more the sign of that covenant. This outward rite was to represent true circumcision of heart (Deut. 10:6; Jer. 4:4; Rom. 2:29). The wilderness had been the scene of distrust, murmuring, and rebellion against God. Now, in obedience to His directions, they were to begin anew a life of faith and obedience.

3. *Hill of the foreskins.* A translation of the Heb. *gib'ath ha'araloth*, transliterated “Gibeath-haaraloth” (RSV). This is a reference to the location where the rite was administered.

4. *This is the cause.* Suffering under the “breach of promise” of Jehovah (Num. 14:34) and as a reminder of the broken covenant, the people had been forbidden to practice circumcision in the wilderness (PP 406). Their entrance into Canaan was evidence of restoration to divine favor (see Num. 14:23; Ps. 95:7–11). For 38 years they had borne the reproach of apostasy at Kadesh.

6. *All the people.* That is, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua (Num. 14:30). It seems that the priests, possibly all the Levites, were exempted from the death sentence at Kadesh and that some of them survived. Eleazar, the son of Aaron, is specifically named as entering the Promised Land (see Ex. 6:25; 28:1; Joshua 24:33). There was no representative of the Levites among the 12 spies (Num. 13:3–16), nor among the “men of war.”

9. *Reproach of Egypt.* Because of rebellion at Kadesh, God had been unable to lead Israel into Canaan—the very purpose for which He had led them forth from Egypt. They had not been permitted to receive circumcision, the sign that marked them as God’s chosen people. The suspension of this rite was a constant witness to them that they had broken the covenant.

Though the “Angel” of the covenant continued to lead Israel throughout their wilderness wanderings, they were, nevertheless, not completely restored to covenant relationship during that long period. So long as they remained, in a measure at least, outside of the covenant, they stood in the same relationship to God as if they had never left Egypt. The “reproach of Egypt” was still upon them. Now, by the restoration of the Passover—the memorial of deliverance from Egypt—and the reinstitution of circumcision the “reproach” was effectively removed, or “rolled” away. Already their feet were planted on the soil of the Promised Land. The removal of the curse was memorialized by naming the site of their first encampment in Canaan, Gilgal, which means “rolling.”

There is a measure of reproach resting upon God’s people today. They too should have been in the kingdom long ago, but like Israel they have been wandering about in the wilderness (GC 458). “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God” in our day (Heb. 4:9). “Let us labour” diligently “to enter into that rest”(v. 11).

Gilgal. The name thus transliterated is from the root *galal*, “to roll.” From this time onward Gilgal occupies a place of importance in sacred history. Here the Israelites pitched camp the first night after entering the Promised Land. Here the reinstitution of the rite of circumcision signified the renewal of the covenant (vs. 2–8). Here Israel celebrated their first Passover in the Promised Land (v. 10). Here the manna ceased to fall (v. 12). Gilgal served as the base for military operations during the early part of the conquest of Canaan. It appears also to have been the place where the women, children, and cattle remained during this time. In later history it was here that Saul was confirmed as first king of Israel (1 Sam. 11:15). Here the ark remained till, after the conquest of the country, it was removed to Shiloh (Joshua 18:1; PP 514).

Gilgal cannot now be definitely located. According to Josephus, it was about 5 mi. (8 km.) from the Jordan and about 1 mi. (1.6 km.) from New Testament Jericho. But see p. 501.

12. *The manna ceased.* God had provided the manna for nearly 40 years to satisfy the needs of the people under circumstances that made it impossible for them to secure an adequate supply of food for themselves. Now that they “did eat of the old corn of the

land” (v. 11), there was no longer need for the manna. God does not do for men what they are able to do for themselves.

13. By Jericho. Or, near Jericho. The Syriac reads, “in the plains of Jericho.” Joshua directed his attention to his next great task, the taking of Jericho, and he left the camp to meditate and to pray for divine guidance in the accomplishment of this task.

His sword drawn. The Lord had appeared to Moses at Horeb (Ex. 3:2) as he was about to take up the task of delivering Israel from the house of bondage. Now, as Joshua began the conquest of Canaan, the Lord appeared to the new leader of His people, to assure him of victory and success. “The iniquity of the Amorites” was now “full,” and as the Lord had solemnly promised Abraham four centuries earlier, his “seed” had now “come hither again” (Gen. 15:13–16). Israel entered upon the conquest of the nations of Canaan with divine approval. The witness of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and news of the manner in which God had, upon repeated occasions, interposed in behalf of His people—all this was known in Canaan. But these heathen nations followed ways of their own choosing rather than submit to God.

14. The host. Not primarily the Israelite armies, but the armies of heaven (PP 493). Elsewhere the word translated “host” refers specifically to armies (Judges 4:2, 7; etc.), often to the army of Israel (2 Sam. 2:8), sometimes to angels, as here (1 Kings 22:19), and frequently to the stars of heaven (Isa. 34:4). Angels stand ready at all times to minister to the needs of the church and to carry out the commands of their Captain. Those who are confronted with formidable “Jerichos” in their experience may call upon the help of these invisible forces and receive the assurance, as did Joshua, that the resources of heaven are available to every trusting soul. Joshua received the assurance that he would not stand alone at the head of the Hebrew army. As Captain, the Lord Himself would be there, superintending and disposing, ordering and commanding.

Did worship. By accepting the worship offered by Joshua the heavenly Visitor proved Himself to be more than an angel (see Rev. 19:10).

15. Loose thy shoe. Here is further evidence that “the captain of the host” was more than an angel; He was, in fact, none other than Christ Himself in human form (see PP 488). In Joshua 6:2 He is designated by the divine name (see on Ex. 6:3; 15:2). It should be noted that Joshua 6 is a continuation of the narrative of ch. 5:13–15, ch. 6:1 being a parenthetical statement inserted by way of explaining what follows in vs. 2–5.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1–15PP 485–488, 613; SR 177, 178
- 1 SR 177
- 1–34T 158
- 3–5PP 485
- 9 SR 177; 4T 158
- 9–12PP 486
- 10 PP 485; 4T 158
- 12 SR 178; 4T 159
- 13 PP 487
- 13–15SR 178; 1T 410; 4T 159; 6T 140; 8T 284
- 14 SL 12
- 14, 15 PP 488
- 15 4T 160

CHAPTER 6

1 *Jericho is shut up.* 2 *God instructeth Joshua how to besiege it.* 12 *The city is compassed.* 17 *It must be accursed.* 20 *The walls fall down.* 22 *Rahab is saved.* 26 *The builder of Jericho is cursed.*

1. *Straitly shut up.* In the Hebrew this statement is emphatic, indicating that the gates were not only shut but also securely fastened with bolts and bars. The LXX renders it, “closely shut up and besieged.” This verse, as stated before (see on ch. 5:15), is parenthetical. It describes the condition of the city as a result of the danger posed by the presence of the Israelites at its very gates.

2. *I have given.* The outcome of the divine prediction is so sure that it is stated as already having happened. An expression such as this is called “prophetic perfect,” and is used to emphasize the certainty of fulfillment. The doom of Jericho was thus irrevocably assured. As far as its inhabitants were concerned, they had had ample opportunity to seek salvation of the God of Israel. Had they so desired, they might all, like Rahab and her family, have been saved. God “will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4).

3. *All ye men of war.* Or, perhaps, “all, men of war.” That is, all who were to march round the city were to be men of war. This did not necessarily include the whole army, but representatives from each tribe. The common people apparently were not included. Such a large number would have created too cumbersome a retinue. Though described as a “large” city (PP 487), Jericho was “large” only in comparison with the fortified cities of its day, rather than with cities of our time. Excavations of the ruins reveal its area to have been only 8 acres (3.23 hectares). The size of the procession must have been proportionate to this limited area. First in order was a body of chosen warriors. These were followed by seven priests bearing trumpets. Then came the ark, borne by other priests. Last of all, the army of Israel made up the “rereward.”

4. *Trumpets of rams’ horns.* Not the silver trumpets of Num. 10:2 but probably trumpets manufactured of rams’ horns, bored hollow, or, perhaps, made of metal and called rams’ horns from their shape. Literally, they are called “trumpets of *jobelim*,” from which the term “jubile” is derived. The year of “jubile” was introduced by the sounding of trumpets (Lev. 25:9).

5. *Fall down flat.* See p. 42.

7. *Unto the people.* This expression does not refer to all the people. The reference is still only to the divisions specified in vs. 3 and 4. The command was for the designated groups to proceed with the divine order to compass the city.

Compass the city. They made the circuit once each day. The solemn, silent procession struck terror to the hearts of the watchers from the walls of the doomed city. They recalled how God miraculously wrought for His people in opening up a passage for them through the Red Sea, and more recently through the Jordan, and they tried to fathom the mystery of these strange proceedings. But the lesson was rather for the Israelites. God commanded that these solemn ceremonies be extended over seven days before He brought down the city walls. He wished to give the Israelites time to develop faith (PP 493). “By faith the walls of Jericho fell down” (Heb. 11:30). The people needed to understand fully that the battle was not theirs but the Lord’s. He could do great things for them if they cooperated with Him. Faith is simply the acceptance of God’s program and

full cooperation with His plan. This is the kind of faith that will accomplish as great things for us as it did for the ancients.

9. *The rereward.* An obsolete English word better rendered “rear guard.” The Heb. *me’asseph* means “those that bring up the rear.” Following the ark, borne by priests dressed in special vestments, came the army of Israel with representatives from every tribe.

10. *Any noise.* The solemn silence of the procession presented an ideal opportunity for meditation and reflection on the part of the besiegers of the city, on whose hearts God was seeking to impress the great lesson of faith. Such lessons are not easily learned, and often much time is required. If God always answered our requests immediately, we would not have the opportunity of exercising or developing faith. Delay impresses upon us our dependence on God and teaches us to trust in Him. But such a result comes only if the period of waiting is devoted to quiet meditation and the exercise of full submission to the divine plan. How many blessings we miss by not keeping silence before the Lord, and waiting for Him to work in our behalf. “Be still, and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10). Only slowly do we learn the lesson, “He that believeth shall not make haste” (Isa. 28:16). For the besieging of a walled city nothing seemed quite so ridiculous as what the Israelites were doing. But God had His design in such a procedure, and the lessons of unconditional faith and patient trust in the power and assistance of God were deeply impressed upon the Israelites. They knew that the omnipotence of Jehovah alone gave this walled city into their hands.

15. *The seventh day.* The wording of the narrative has led some to believe that this expression refers to the Sabbath day. Such a conclusion is by no means indicated. We do not know what day of the week the proceedings began. But inasmuch as the Israelites employed seven days in making the circuits of the city, it seems that one of these days must have been the Sabbath. This observation raises the question as to whether the act of marching around the city was in harmony with the spirit of true Sabbath worship. We may observe that the Sabbath is a day devoted to God, and that whatever He may see fit to command upon that day is certainly in harmony with the spirit of its observance. According to the divine command, the Sabbath is not to be devoted to “doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure” (Isa. 58:13). But we may safely devote its sacred hours to doing that which God enjoins to be done upon that day (see Matt. 12:5).

16. *Shout.* Six times on this seventh day Israel compassed the city in silence, in full obedience to the command of Joshua. Not till commanded to do so did all the people shout. Their implicit obedience in this was a striking demonstration of their faith (see Heb. 11:30). In that crucial hour Israel acted with unanimity and singleness of heart. Had they continued in that experience their course in history would have been entirely different. They would have fulfilled the divine plan, and their witness would have gone to the whole world. Jerusalem would have been established forever as the center of a great spiritual kingdom.

17. *Accursed.* Heb. *cherem*. This noun can also be translated “a thing” or “a person devoted” either to destruction or to sacred use, and therefore excluded from common use (Lev. 27:28, 29). The noun comes from the verb *charam*, which means “to shut up” or “to seclude.” Jericho was to be under a ban, with none of its wealth to be devoted to personal use, and all of its living things utterly devoted to destruction. Its metals were to

be consecrated to the Lord and brought into His treasury. Jericho was the first fruits of Israel's conquest, and perhaps in this sense also, dedicated to God.

18. Trouble it. The Heb. '*akar*' means "to trouble." '*Akan* (Achan) appears to come from this root. He was the one who later troubled Israel (Joshua 7:25). Joshua sought to forestall this type of "trouble" by giving strict instruction to the people to keep themselves from the "devoted" things.

19. Silver, and gold. No doubt heed was given to the specific instruction to burn all graven images with fire, for they were an abomination to the Lord (Deut. 7:25).

Consecrated. Perhaps by first being passed through the fire, as commanded in Num. 31:21-23.

20. Fell down flat. See on p. 42.

21. Utterly destroyed. This has seemed to some an act of utter barbarity and cruelty. However, a careful investigation of the whole problem of the ways and works of God as revealed in the Scriptures leads to a very different conclusion. It must be remembered that the Israelites acted strictly according to divine orders (Deut. 20:16, 17), and any charge against them is a charge directly against the justice of divine judgments. The Canaanites had reached the limit of their probation. God had given them an adequate opportunity for repentance, just as He gives to every person in this world (John 1:9; 2 Peter 3:9). At last mercy can go no further without interfering with the justice of God. At such a time God must act in order to be true to His character, which includes justice as well as mercy. It often becomes an act of love to cut off those who have had their opportunity, lest their evil example corrupt others (see PP 492). Had the inhabitants of Jericho so desired, they might all have shared in the salvation that came to Rahab and her house (see Additional Note at the close of this chapter).

23. Without the camp. Rahab was left for some time without the camp, no doubt to prepare herself for admission as a proselyte. In due time she was admitted into the congregation of Israel, presumably after she and her kindred had been instructed in the religion of Jehovah and had purified themselves from their heathen ways and beliefs. She probably became the wife of Salmon, prince of Judah, and the mother of Boaz, and thus one of the ancestors of our Saviour (see on Matt. 1:5). What a blessed privilege awaits those who by faith join themselves to the people of God! How wonderful to know that the gospel of Jesus Christ transcends even the most unfavorable heredity and environment "Whosoever will," of any color or race, or station in life, may partake of the glorious privileges of sonship.

26. Adjured them. That is, "caused them to swear." He no doubt made the elders and heads of their several tribes bind themselves by a solemn oath, so that a knowledge of their pledge might be passed on from generation to generation.

Cursed be the man. In the case of Jericho the curse was doubtless intended to keep the memorial of the destruction of the city ever before the eyes of coming generations. The ruins of the city would go on bearing mute testimony, but a new city on the old site would obliterate the traces of such a memory. The curse was uttered by divine direction (see 1 Kings 16:34).

In his firstborn. The fulfillment of the prediction by Hiel the Bethelite is recorded in 1 Kings 16:34. The absence of this record in the book of Joshua is further proof that Joshua is further proof that Joshua was written some time before Kings. Five centuries after this curse was pronounced Hiel, following the example of the wicked king Ahab in

resisting the word of the Lord, rebuilt the city of Jericho. Hiel might have thought that time had rendered the curse null and void, or that such a pronouncement could not have come from God. Perhaps he could see no reason at all for the strange command. But human reasonings are not a sufficient pretext for disobedience or unbelief.

There are records of a settlement in the vicinity of Jericho antedating the rebuilding of the city by Hiel. Deut. 34:3 makes mention of a city called the “city of palm trees.” This was an inhabited place early in the period of the judges (Judges 1:16), a short time after the death of Joshua. The same city appears to have been taken from the Israelites by Eglon, king of Moab (Judges 3:12, 13). Moreover, David’s ambassadors, who were maltreated by Hanun, king of the Ammonites, were commanded to tarry at Jericho till their beards were grown (2 Sam. 10:4, 5). It appears, therefore, that there was a town called by the name long before the time of Hiel. Yet probably this was not on the mound, but in the neighborhood. Josephus speaks of the site of the *old* city as if in distinction from a modern one; New Testament Jericho was a mile south of the mound.

Archeologists have never discovered remains of the walls of Hiel’s 9th-century city, built probably on a much smaller scale on the ruins of the old city, and eventually eroded away. The fragmentary evidence from before Hiel’s day tends to indicate that there had been only a few intermittent occupants of the site, and no city had been built, for an interim of about 500 years after the fall of the old city. This fact agrees with the Scriptural account of the rebuilding by Hiel. Men may challenge God’s Word, but when they have spent their arrows of challenge and criticism, the ruins uncovered by the pick and shovel of the archeologist silently testify to the truthfulness of the Scripture record.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 6

The history of Israel’s conquest of Canaan, so strikingly illustrated by the capture of Jericho, presents a record of wholesale destruction by the edge of the sword. Even devout believers have often been troubled by this record, particularly because skeptics have sought thereby to prove God bloodthirsty and merciless.

However, if certain facts are kept in mind, the record of destruction takes on a very different hue, and God stands forth as One who has displayed both mercy and justice in His dealings with men.

The first fact to bear in mind is that any and all who sin against God and thus rebel against His government, forfeit their right to life. In our world a man who turns rebel and fights against the government is declared worthy of death. In the very nature of the case, no government can continue to exist unless it uses every necessary means to put down all enemies. It is no straining of analogies to declare that the great government of God’s universe cannot successfully continue if no plan is in operation that will ultimately, if not immediately, put down all rebellion. Simply for God to hold rebels at bay because of His omnipotence would be no satisfactory solution, for the ideal world or the ideal universe cannot include the thought of any restricted area where rebellion festers and foment.

The second fact is this: Though rebellion must be put down, and though on the principle of justice a rebel has forfeited his right to life, God has not proceeded simply along the lines of justice as an earthly government would, but has also displayed mercy. The Bible explanation of why the coming of Christ, which means the ultimate destruction of all the wicked, is delayed, is that the Lord “is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). And again in Ezekiel we read that the Lord takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Eze. 18:23).

These statements of Scripture showing the Lord's policy in relation to sinful men are as definitely a part of the Bible as are those concerning the Israelites' being commanded to destroy the Canaanites. A man cannot consistently hold to the latter statements as describing the plan of God, and reject the former.

The third fact is this: Even though the Ruler of the universe displays mercy and gives to men time in which to turn from their rebellion, there must ultimately come a day of reckoning. If grace and probation are extended indefinitely, we have merely a never-ending truce with rebellion and iniquity, which is the same as capitulating to it.

The problem before us in connection with the destruction of the Canaanites by the Israelites, then, is simply this: first, to prove that the Canaanites were rebels against God's government, thus to demonstrate the justice of God in having them destroyed; second, to prove that they had been given a period of grace and probation, thus to demonstrate the mercy and long-suffering of God. It is not difficult to prove both of these propositions.

As to the first, it is a simple matter of history that the peoples on the eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean were as corrupt and depraved as any who have ever dwelt upon this earth. They made a religion of lust. They sent their children into the fires of the god Molech. Lev. 18 presents briefly something of the moral rebellion of the Canaanites. The imagination and a little knowledge of history supply the rest. According to the Bible the Canaanites were so vile that the very land "spued" them out (see Lev. 18:28). On the religion and cult practices of the Canaanites, see Vol. I, pp. 126, 129, 162; Vol. II, pp. 38-40.

As to the second proposition, the Bible is equally explicit. In the 15th chapter of Genesis is the record of the promise of God to Abraham, that his seed should inherit the land of Canaan. The explanation that God gave to Abraham as to why the promise would be so long in fulfilling, was that "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (v. 16). The Amorites here stand for the peoples of Canaan, for they were the powerful, dominant race. There is no statement anywhere in the OT that more clearly sets forth the fact of God's mercy to sinners, and of how He gives to them a time of probation.

Here was Abraham, the friend of God. The Lord desired to give to him the land of Canaan for an inheritance. If God had been like an earthly ruler, He would doubtless have taken immediate steps to see that His promise was fulfilled for His favorite, and would have driven out or put to the sword all who stood in the way. That has been the history of despots who had all power in their hands. But not so with God. He declared in effect to Abraham, You must be patient. Your children and your children's children to the fourth generation must also be patient. My love to you is great. I long to fulfill for you and yours My promise. Nothing would bring greater pleasure to My heart. But—ah, here is the significant fact. Did the Lord say, But I have no power to fulfill My promise now? No; He had all power. He could have sent fire from heaven suddenly to consume all the inhabitants of Canaan. No, that was not the problem. The delay was because the cup of the "iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." In other words, they had not completely sinned away their day of grace. There was still further mercy to be extended to them. God's Spirit was yet to plead with their hearts.

And so for 400 years more, generation after generation of the Amorites was permitted to live and to practice increasing abominations. Then God ordered their destruction. The

reasonable conclusion is that their destruction was decreed because their cup of iniquity was full, that nothing would be gained by further extending mercy to them.

The destruction of the children along with their parents finds its justification on the ground that the younger generation would follow exactly the path of all the generations that had gone before them, that they bent to corruption and rebellion and depravity was deep seated and all-dominant in their natures, the same as in that of their parents. To have destroyed the parents and left the younger generation would have been but to preserve the seed of corruption. On the skeptic rests the burden of proof if he claims that the rising generation would not have followed the very same course that the preceding generations had followed without exception. But all the presumptions are against any such claim, and thus the destruction of the younger generation becomes as reasonable as the destruction of the older.

Further evidence regarding God's dealing with men in judgment is revealed in the record of the Flood. God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Here was certainly a hopeless state. For God to allow such a condition to continue indefinitely would be tantamount to admitting before the universe that He either was indifferent to such flagrant, outrageous rebellion, or else was unable to cope with it. Yet the Lord did not immediately bring judgment upon the antediluvians. He declared, "My spirit shall not always strive with man," yet He gave them 120 years more (see Gen. 6:3). The reasonable conclusion is that by the end of this time nothing more could be gained by God's Spirit striving with sinful hearts. And when God can do nothing more to woo human hearts back to allegiance, then the day of mercy ends. Man indeed has himself ended it by his refusal to listen to the pleadings of the Spirit, and nothing but judgment can remain.

We cannot too often emphasize the fact that such statements as these from the Bible regarding God's dealings with man before the Flood, and His long-suffering with the Canaanites before their destruction, are as definitely a part of the Bible, and a revelation of the plans and character of God, as the command to the Israelites to destroy the Canaanites. To fasten upon the isolated command for the destruction of the inhabitants of Canaan, and insist on measuring the character of God by this lone fact, is as unreasonable as to seize upon a lone statement of a governor of one of our modern states, wherein he refuses further reprieve for a criminal and gives him over to the gallows, and attempt therefrom to prove that the governor was a heartless, cruel man.

Death and destruction are horrible thoughts to contemplate under any circumstances, and the most God-fearing and Bible-believing individual may willingly admit that he is filled with distressing thoughts as he reads of the destruction of the wicked at different times in the history of the world, and as he contemplates the final destruction of all evildoers. But it would be far more distressing to contemplate the kind of world and the kind of universe we would be forced to live in, if summary destruction were not ultimately meted out to all who were stubbornly determined to continue on in their sinful, corrupting ways.

Indeed, this whole question of judgment upon the wicked reveals the inconsistency in the attitude of the skeptic. How often a scoffer hurls at Christians the inquiry, If there is a God in heaven who rules and directs affairs, why does He permit evil men to dominate this world and to carry on all their terrible practices that bring sorrow and trouble to poor

innocent creatures? Then the same scoffer will turn around a little later and ask sneeringly, If God is a God of love, as you Christians declare, why did He bring destruction on people at different times in the world, and why is He finally going to destroy all except a select group? But the skeptic does not seem to realize that the first question finds its answer in the second. And accordingly, he does not realize that he is inconsistent in raising a clamor against the judgments of God when he has just inquired why God does not wreak vengeance upon evildoers.

The harmony in this whole problem is found in such dealings of God as are here cited. God does rule in the universe, as the Bible declares. His will and government ultimately will be supreme everywhere, and rebellion will be put down. The wicked will not always oppress the innocent. Injustice will not always be meted out to the weak and helpless. The God who looks at all things in a longer perspective than man, and whose love for fallen creatures is greater than that of even the most devout believer, desires not only to save the meek and the upright and give to them ultimately a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness but also to salvage from the hosts of the rebellious as many as possible.

It is this fact of the Lord's long-suffering, of His not being willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, that gives plausibility to the first of these two skeptical questions. When we have this fact of God's long-suffering, we have the answer to the first question; we can view the injustice in our world, and still believe that God is ruler. And when we keep in our minds the simple fact that justice ultimately demands the destruction of those who continue in open rebellion, we have the answer to the second question. There is no necessity for offering an apology for the judgments of God that have been meted out to sinners in the past and are yet to be meted out in the future.

It is hardly necessary to discuss the question of the *method* God employed in bringing destruction to the Canaanites; it is enough to note that God was *just* in destroying them. That He should at one time use water, another time fire, another time plague, and still another time, as in the case of the Canaanites, the sword, has no more bearing on the question of the *justification* for the destruction than has the relative use of electrocution, hanging, or a firing squad on the question of capital punishment today. It is the *justice* of capital punishment and not the *method* that properly receives our attention.

Commentators have suggested that perhaps the Lord saw fit to have His chosen people, Israel, as executioners, in order that they might have mostly vividly impressed on their minds the awfulness of sin and rebellion; for the warning to the Israelites was that they should take care not to fall into the abominations of the Canaanites lest they suffer the same fate (see Lev. 18:28–30; cf. Rom. 11:15–22).

However, had Israel fully carried out God's plan for the conquest of Canaan, the course of events, as regards the destruction of the Canaanites, would have been different, at least in great degree, from what actually took place. This becomes evident when the principles already given are restated in the context of related principles:

1. God, the great arbiter of history, determines the duration and territorial extent of the nations (Dan. 2:21; Acts 17:26; see on Deut. 32:8; see also Ed 174, 176, 177). Silently, patiently He guides the affairs of earth in order to work out the counsels of His divine will (Ed 173, 178). Each nation, nevertheless, determines its own destiny by its use of the power granted to it by God, by the fidelity with which it fulfills His purpose for it

(Ed 174, 175, 177, 178; see on Ex. 9:16). Opposition to God's principles means national ruin (see Dan. 5:22–31; GC 584; PP 536), for only that which is bound up with His purpose and expresses His character can endure (Ed 183, 238, 304).

2. God did not select Israel as His chosen people because of partiality for them; He would have accepted any nation on the same conditions that He accepted them (Acts 10:34, 35; 17:26, 27; Rom. 10:12, 13). It was simply that Abraham responded without reserve to the invitation to covenant relationship with God, to serve God faithfully himself, and to train his posterity to do likewise (Gen. 18:19). Accordingly, Abraham's descendants became God's representatives among men, and the covenant made with him was confirmed to them (Deut. 7:6–14). Their chief advantage above other nations was that God made them the custodians of His revealed will (Rom. 3:1, 2) and charged them with the dissemination of its principles throughout the world (Gen. 12:3; Isa. 42:6, 7; 43:10, 21; 56:3–8; 62:1–12; PP 492; COL 290).

In order that they might carry out this task effectively, and subject to their compliance with His requirements (Deut. 28:1, 2, 13, 14; cf. Zech. 6:15), it was God's plan to bestow unparalleled blessings upon Israel (Deut. 7:12–16; 28:1–14; COL 288, 289). He proposed to furnish them with every facility for becoming the greatest nation on earth (COL 288). In the blessings thus accruing to Israel the nations about them would have tangible, convincing evidence of the fact that it pays to cooperate with God (Deut. 4:6–8; 28:10). It was His original plan that the personal missionary labors of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob should provide the peoples of Canaan with an opportunity to worship and serve Him (COL 290; PP 128, 133, 134, 141, 368). All who turned from idolatry were to unite with God's chosen people (Isa. 2:2–4; 56:6–8; Micah 4:1–8; cf. CT 454–456; Zech. 2:10–12; 8:20–23; COL 290). But should they prove unfaithful, He would reject them as He now rejected the nations of Canaan (Deut. 28:13–15, 62–66, cf. Isa. 5:1–7; Rom. 11:17–22; PP 688), and drive them also from the Land of Promise (Deut. 28:63, 64).

3. The Canaanites enjoyed a probationary period of 400 years (see on Gen. 15:13, 16), but instead of responding to the opportunity thus accorded them they filled up their cup of iniquity (Gen. 15:16; see on Deut. 20:13; see also Vol. I, pp. 126, 129, 162; Ed 178) and were to be dispossessed (COL 290). It was necessary that the land should be cleared and cleansed of what would so surely prevent the fulfillment of God's gracious purposes (PP 492). Divine justice and mercy could no longer suffer the nations of Canaan to continue (see 5T 208; 9T 13; cf. Gen. 6:3), and God's account with them was closed (cf. Dan. 5:22–29).

Having granted Canaan to Israel, God appointed them His instruments for the execution of divine judgment upon the inhabitants of the land (PP 491). They were to smite the Canaanites "utterly" (Deut. 7:2) and to "save alive nothing that breatheth" (Deut. 20:16); all were to be put to the sword (PP 491). This did not mean, however, that individuals who might yet choose to serve the true God must perish. The conversion of Rahab the Canaanite testifies to the fact that divine mercy would spare those who forsook idolatry (Joshua 2:9–13; 6:25; cf. Heb. 11:31; James 2:25). At the Flood, the destruction of Sodom, and the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans all who heeded the warning given them were saved (Gen. 6:9–13, 18; 18:23–32; Luke 21:20–22 GC 30). The close of probation for a nation, as such, did not necessarily mean that innocent individuals would have to suffer death with those who deserved it.

4. In the conquest of Canaan divine power was to be combined with human effort. God intended all men to recognize that it was by His favor alone that Israel prevailed (PP 491, 496). Military reverses at Kadesh-barnea (Num. 13:28–31; 14:40–45) and some 38 years later at Ai (PP 493) taught them that in their own strength they could never subdue the land (see Dan. 4:30; PP 491; Ed 176). However, God did not intend Israel to take Canaan by ordinary warfare, but rather by strict compliance with His instructions (PP 392, 436). In some instances the report of God’s mighty deeds on behalf of His people would have smitten the Canaanites with fear and they would have surrendered without out fighting (Num. 22:3; Joshua 2:9–11; Deut. 28:10; Ex. 23:27; Deut. 2:25; 11:25; Ex. 15:13–16; Joshua 5:1; Ex. 34:24; cf. Gen. 35:5; Joshua 10:1, 2; 1 Sam. 14:15; 2 Chron. 17:10). At other times they would have become confused, and turned on one another (Judges 7:22; 1 Sam. 14:20; 2 Chron. 20:20–24). Also, God would have utilized, at times, the forces of nature (Joshua 10:11, 12; etc.) even as He had done in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and at the crossing of the Jordan. Had Israel only cooperated with Him, He would have worked for them in many unexpected ways. Perhaps, too, some nations—like the Gibeonites (PP 507, 508)—would have come to a knowledge of the true God.

But Israel’s repeated failure to give strict obedience to God’s commands at Kadesh (PP 394), Shittim (Num. 25:1–9), and Ai (Joshua 7:8, 9; PP 494) in large measure allayed the fears of the Canaanites, gave them time to prepare for the fray, and made the conquest of the land far more difficult than it would otherwise have been (PP 437). Nevertheless, divine love no longer availing to bring repentance, divine justice decreed the probation of these rebels against God closed, demanded their prompt execution, and assigned their land to His chosen representatives (see Num. 23:19–24; PP 492; cf. GC 37; Matt. 21:41, 43).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–27PP 488–493; SR 178–181

1–4SR 178

2 PP 488, 493; 4T 161

3, 4 PP 488; 4T 160

6 4T 160

6–11SR 179

8, 9 PP 488

9, 11 4T 160

12, 13 SR 179

14 PP 488; SR 180

14–164T 161

15, 16 SR 180

15–18PP 491

17 3T 264

18 PP 495; 3T 264

18, 19 3T 269; 4T 491

20 SR 180; TM 410; 4T 161, 164

21 PP 491; 4T 161

24, 25 PP 491

26 PK 230; PP 492; 3T 264

CHAPTER 7

1 *The Israelites are smitten at Ai.* 6 *Joshua's complaint.* 10 *God instructeth him what to do.*
16 *Achan is taken by the lot.* 19 *His confession.* 22 *He and all he had are destroyed in the valley of Achor.*

1. Committed a trespass. From the Heb. *ma'al ma'al*, literally, “trespassed a trespass.” The verb is generally translated “committed” when followed by its cognate noun, but originally it meant “to cover,” as is apparent from the derived noun *me'il*, “garment.” Thus the word means “to act underhandedly,” “to act treacherously,” and with its noun, “to commit a treacherous act.” It is noteworthy that all Israel is considered guilty because of the transgression of one of its members. Even though the sin was not known, Israel as a nation was held accountable, and God’s blessing withheld from them. We see an example of such corporate responsibility in the intercourse of nations. A whole nation is held accountable for the words and acts of its ambassador. If he should insult another nation, the whole nation is held accountable until such a time as reparation is made. In like manner offenders in a church may hinder the divine blessing upon that church (see 4T 68; 6T 371). If the church fails to take appropriate action when sin is known, the church then becomes a partaker in that sin. However, this does not necessarily imply personal guilt upon each of the members as individuals (yet see 3T 266).

Israel’s First Campaigns West of the Jordan

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²Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Jos 5:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.



Achan. The LXX and Syriac both support the reading “Achar,” as the name appears in 1 Chron. 2:7. The Heb. *‘achar* means “trouble” or “troubler,” and the name was obviously given this culprit in allusion to the effects of his conduct (see on Joshua 6:18; 7:4, 9). It is common in the Scriptures to have the names of persons and places changed in consequence of, and in allusion to, certain remarkable events by which they may have been distinguished. A notable example is Hosea 4:15, where Bethel, “house of God,” is called Beth-aven, “house of vanity,” on account of the idolatry practiced there.

Zabdi. Also called Zimri (1 Chron. 2:6). Such variant readings are common. In this case the change is probably due to the mistaking of one letter for another—a *d* for an *r* and a *b* for an *m*. In the Hebrew one letter of each pair might easily be taken for the other. The genealogy here given suggests that Achan was probably past middle age, unless we assume his forefathers to have been old when their children were born. Thus his own children must already have arrived at the age of accountability by the time of this tragedy, and may have shared in the crime, and hence also in the responsibility for it.

2. Ai. Heb. ‘Ai, “ruin” or “heap.” This city (also known as Hai, by the inclusion of the Hebrew definite article) is spoken of as early as the time of Abraham (Gen. 12:8; 13:3).

Beside Beth-aven. This phrase is omitted in the LXX. Chapter 18:12 mentions the wilderness of Beth-aven, and the intent of the statement is probably that Ai is in proximity to the wilderness of Beth-aven.

Go up and view. Literally, “go up and foot,” that is, tramp about the country. The geography of this region shows that there were two chief passes that led from the city of Jericho into central Palestine. The most practicable and direct of these was the one that veered somewhat to the north, and is now known as the *Wadi Kelt*. This gorge meets another, *Wadi Harith*, a deep ravine some 8 mi. from the Jordan valley. Somewhere among the hills and ravines a little to the east of the town of Bethel stood the city of Ai. In a region of hills and valleys the spies could readily advance without being seen.

3. Not all the people. According to ch. 8:25, the population of Ai was 12,000. Evidently the spies, in their self-confidence, had underestimated the defenses of the city. But more than that, the Israelites, flushed with victory, failed to realize that divine help alone could give them success, and neglected to take God into their counsel when planning to take Ai.

4. They fled. Trust in God means success. Failure to trust in Him means defeat. Many a carefully laid scheme miscarries because God is not taken into account. Three lessons stand out among those that may be learned from this experience: (1) It was God and not their own valor that gave the Canaanites into the hands of the children of Israel. (2) Success cannot come when there is sin in the camp. (3) When sin is confessed God takes man’s failures and turns them into blessings.

Every man enjoys a personal relationship with his Creator that can be severed only by his own choice. But God also deals with men in a corporate relationship, as groups; thus there is group as well as individual responsibility (see Ed 178, 238). God holds nations, for instance, accountable for their corporate actions. This was true in a special way of the chosen nation, Israel, and it is equally true of spiritual Israel, the church, today. At times the entire group suffers as a result of the deeds of its individual members (Eze. 21:3, 4; PP 497). It is within the power of any member of a group to benefit the others or to bring suffering and evil upon them (2 Cor. 2:15). And, as in the case of Achan, God holds the entire group, as a group, accountable for the deeds of its individual members. Nevertheless, as then, God acts through the recognized leaders of the group in requiring cooperation and in inflicting punishment. God has a church, and has set leaders over it. He looks to them to take the initiative in carrying out His will. Furthermore, God requires His people to cooperate with their leaders (Heb. 13:17), and will not tolerate independent action on the part of individuals, in opposition to His appointed leadership. Great is the curse that comes upon those leaders who are unfaithful in their task (Isa. 3:12; Isa. 9:16;

Jer. 13:20; Eze. 34:10), and upon those individuals who deliberately hinder them in their work (see Judges 5:23). God's presence with us in the past is not a guarantee of His continued presence with us in the future. In the religious life there must be a continual dependence upon God, and constant inquiry as to what God would have us to do. The grace and strength granted for the accomplishment of one task are not sufficient for the demands of the next. Joshua failed to take this spiritual law into account. In laying plans for the conquest of Ai, he neglected to take God into his counsel (PP 493). How we need to be on guard lest we merely go through the motions of religious service, and fall short of victory, because we have neglected to work according to God's plan. Our zeal for God must be under the control of sanctified knowledge (see Rom. 10:2; cf. Ps. 111:10).

5. *Shebarim*. The word thus translated is from a root meaning "to break in pieces." Most versions give it as a proper name. This would make of it a site between Ai and Jericho, presumably of a stone quarry. However, no stone quarry has been located in the vicinity, and it is reasonable to suppose that the remains of a stone quarry would not be completely obliterated by time. The Vaticanus manuscript and some Syriac versions, together with the Targums, translate the expression, "unto their [Israel's] being broken." One Syriac edition reads, "until they [Israel] were routed," translating rather than transliterating the Hebrew. The latter suggestion appears to be more in harmony with the context.

The going down. The LXX reads, "from the steep hill," and the RSV, "at the descent." Evidently the fleeing Israelites entered a narrow and steep ravine that delayed them in flight. Here, it would seem, they became panic-stricken, and in the confusion the hindmost were smitten.

6. *Rent his clothes.* The rending of the clothes as a sign of mourning and distress originated in ancient times (Gen. 37:34; 44:13). Generally the outer garment was torn in front, over the breast, but for no more than a handbreadth. This act became a custom among the Jews, as an external symbol of a broken heart (see Joel 2:12, 13. Placing dust or ashes on the head represented even greater grief and unworthiness 1 Sam. 4:12; 2 Sam. 1:2; 13:19). Joshua's faith had led him to expect nothing but victories, and he now seemed to be at a total loss to understand this failure. But there are conditions to the promises of God, and these Joshua and Israel had not met (see on Joshua 7:3).

7. *Would to God.* This expression indicates a profound feeling of despair and utter inability to understand the situation. Joshua's prayer almost takes on the spirit of murmuring and complaining, so characteristic of the children of Israel on numerous occasions. But even the best of men at times give way to discouragement and fear (see 1 Kings 19:9–18; Jonah 4:1–9). Joshua rightly interpreted the defeat at Ai as a mark of God's displeasure upon His people, yet did not understand the reason for it. His words may have been ill-chosen, but his resort to prayer at such a moment of crisis is commendable.

8. *What shall I say* In desperation Joshua seeks counsel.

9. *Thy great name.* However much Joshua was concerned about Israel's fortunes, he was even more concerned for Jehovah's name. Surely God would not allow it to be ridiculed, would He? Moses had used the same argument upon several occasions (Ex. 32:12; Num. 14:13–16; Deut. 9:28). God Himself made use of it in the song He bade Moses teach the people (Deut. 32:26, 27). We should ever remember that our faithfulness or unfaithfulness involves the honor not only of the church but of God's name.

10. Get thee up. Or, “stand up for thyself.” This was a time for action, not for repining.

11. Israel hath sinned. The guilt was attributed to all Israel (see on v. 1). God was not to be charged with the humiliating defeat. He had not deserted them; they had disobeyed. Had God continued to fight for His people, He would have been sanctioning sin and encouraging its continuance.

Which I commanded. This may refer specifically to the command regarding the spoils of the city of Jericho, but in a broader sense it includes God’s original covenant with Israel. This was based on the Ten Commandments, described in Scripture as “his covenant, which he commanded you to perform” (Deut. 4:13). Both aspects of the divine command are referred to in the expressions, “they have even taken of the accursed thing,” and “have also stolen.” In the Hebrew each of the five items listed in v. 11 is connected to the preceding statement by the conjunction *we*, “also.”

Dissembled. Literally, “lied,” “deceived.” In this case they lied by their actions. They kept the matter secret and acted as though they were not guilty. Lying is often companion to stealing.

Their own stuff. As though it belonged to them. Some of the stolen things God had ordered destroyed; others, the gold and the silver, had been dedicated to the Lord and were to be placed in His treasury. But Achan had fearlessly appropriated them to himself as though they were his own. There are Achans in the camp today. Of the tithes and offerings it is declared, “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings” (Mal. 3:8). The tithe is consecrated to the Lord and is to be put into His treasury. There are those who take the tithe as though it belonged to them, and “put it ... among their own stuff.” Israel lost the blessing of God because of this type of sin. Can it be that the curse of Mal. 3:9 rests upon the camp of Israel today? We are not living under a theocracy now, and transgressors do not immediately receive the punishment that is their due (see Eccl. 8:11). But this does not make their sin less heinous. “Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb. 13:8). Eventually all sin will receive its just punishment.

12. Accursed. Or, “devoted to destruction” (see on ch. 6:17). The curse was such that those who took of the thing devoted to destruction themselves thereby became “devoted” to the same. This sentence doubtless was understood at the time the curse was pronounced. Furthermore, Achan had seen in the destruction of the inhabitants of Jericho the sure result of transgression. Yet in the face of all this he chose to pursue his wicked course. The utter deceptiveness of sin is revealed in the fact that it leads its victims to believe that somehow or other they will escape punishment (see Gen. 3:4; Eccl. 8:11).

13. Sanctify yourselves. As they had done when they met the Lord at Sinai (Ex. 19:10). The external cleansing there enjoined was to be symbolic of the inner cleansing. Times of peculiar danger and calamity should be seasons of heart searching and earnest reformation. The heart searching here commanded gave Achan a unique opportunity to reconsider and acknowledge his crime. But sin has a peculiar way of hardening men’s hearts and lessening their abhorrence of it. Not until forced to do so did Achan acknowledge his guilt, and even then not in the true spirit of repentance. He probably flattered himself that others were equally as guilty as he. A guilty person often holds others to be guilty of the same act he habitually commits.

14. According to your tribes. As is evident from the records in the books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and others, the Israelites preserved genealogical records with the greatest of care. Thus Achan's name is found faithfully chronicled in the genealogy of Judah (1 Chron. 2:7).

Which the Lord taketh. The method was by lot (PP 494), a device frequently mentioned in the Scriptures. Caution, however, needs to be exercised in the use of this means of ascertaining the will of God. The course is safe only when God, through inspiration, indicates that He wishes this method to be employed. If God is not in the procedure, it becomes nothing more than a chance method like the flipping of a coin or the dropping of a card. There are times when in a crisis God may answer by an audible voice or by direct signs (see Judges 6:34–40). Such, however, are not His usual means of communicating His will. God has endowed men with intelligence, and He expects them to develop the faculty of making decisions for themselves. If, in every decision of life, men could determine by a sign the divine will, they would become mentally impotent and fail of the necessary development of mind and character. Those who consistently follow chance methods will weaken their entire religious life. In the beginnings of religious life and occasionally since, God may have honored our developing faith by giving us remarkable answers by such means, but this does not imply that He wants us consistently to depend upon this method. The ideal of Christian attainment is to have the mind so imbued with divine knowledge, and the faculties so trained, that in following our own impulses we will but be doing the will of God (DA 668).

15. All that he hath. Including the children (vs. 24, 25). Yet in Deut. 24:16 the Lord had declared that children should not be put to death for their father's sins, but each man for his own. Perhaps Achan's family had been party to the act (see on v. 1), and shared with him the evil secret. Men are responsible not only for the sins they themselves commit, but also for sheltering an evildoer, by withholding information that might assist those responsible for administering justice.

19. My son. This expression may give us a glimpse into the heart of Joshua. It seems to indicate that he loved the offender as a tender father, and that his heart went out to him as though he were indeed his own son. Such an attitude shows true magnanimity, and should be emulated by those who are called upon to administer discipline. Many a soul has become discouraged for life by receiving unduly harsh discipline, whereas a different method might have led to repentance and restitution. Jesus, our Exemplar, pronounced His most scathing rebukes with tears in His voice (DA 353), and Joshua exhibited many of the qualities of Christ. No wonder God chose him; no wonder the people served the Lord all his days.

20. I have sinned. The public revelation of his guilt secured Achan's cooperation, and he promptly confessed his crime. His guilt was thus established beyond question, and no room was left for his sympathizers to charge that he had been unjustly condemned. The problem could thus be settled once and for all, instead of smoldering on for years in the hearts of any minded to criticize.

21. A goodly Babylonish garment. The LXX reads, "an embroidered [many-colored] mantle." Such garments were decorated with figure work, either woven into the fabric or wrought with a needle (see Eze. 23:15). They were costly, and could be afforded only by royalty and by the most opulent citizens. Josephus says that it was "a royal garment woven entirely of gold."

Achan likely followed the usual steps in sin. First he looked, then, he coveted, then he took. And when he had taken, his next step was to conceal what he had done. Successfully to avoid sin, one must promptly expel the first insinuations of evil—the first look (see Gen. 3:6).

22. They ran. Probably to avoid anyone's removing the treasures, but doubtless also because they were anxious to clear the camp of the accursed thing and to regain the favor of God. It is well to make haste in putting away sin. Delay is dangerous.

24. His sons. See on v. 15.

His oxen. Brute beasts are of course incapable of sin, and so also not deserving of punishment. But they suffer, along with inanimate creation, the effects of the curse upon Adam. Thus “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Rom. 8:22).

Valley of Achor. See on chs. 6:18; 7:1. In Hosea 2:15 the valley of Achor is said to be given for a door of hope. God is always willing to turn our defeats into blessings if we are willing to “take away the accursed thing” from our hearts (Joshua 7:13).

25. All Israel stoned him. The Hebrew here uses two different words for stoning, *ragam* and *saqal*. It has been suggested that the former means to stone a living person, whereas the latter signifies to heap stones upon a dead person, from its possible connection with the Heb. *sheqel*, which means “a weight.” But in the OT the two words seem to have been used interchangeably. In this verse the writer may have purposely chosen a synonym to avoid repetition. The punishment is said to have been executed by all Israel. Though probably not all actually cast stones, all were presumably present as spectators and “consenting unto his death” (Acts 8:1).

With fire. It seems that Achan and his family were first stoned to death, and afterward their bodies together with the spoil and other things pertaining to them were burned. Stoning by the congregation was a legal form of punishment for certain crimes (see Lev. 24:14; Num. 15:35).

26. Heap of stones. As a warning to future generations to prevent them from falling into the same snare of covetousness that caused Achan's ruin.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–26PP 493–498

1 1T 122; 3T 239, 264; 4T 564

2–4PP 493

4 3T 264

5–12PP 494

6 3T 266

6, 7 3T 264

6–94T 491

10 4T 493

10, 11 4T 492

10–123T 264, 520

10–13TM 91

12 3T 239, 267

12, 13 TM 428

13 1T 140; 3T 267

16–19PP 495; 3T 268; 4T 492
20 3T 271
20–23PP 495
20–253T 268
21 PP 496; 3T 239; 5T 157
25, 26 PP 495

CHAPTER 8

1 *God encourageth Joshua.* 3 *The stratagem whereby Ai was taken.* 29 *The king thereof is hanged.* 30 *Joshua buildeth an altar,* 32 *writeth the law on stones,* 33 *propoundeth blessings and cursings.*

1. Dismayed. The sin of Achan and its consequences must have brought great discouragement to Joshua. But now that he had done God's will in ridding the camp of sin, the Lord gave him fresh encouragement to proceed with the conquest.

Take all the people. The spies had suggested that Joshua not require all the people to participate in the attack on Ai (ch. 7:3), and he had acceded to their suggestion. Human wisdom, guided by over-confidence, dictated this first plan and it failed. Now it seems that God administered a tacit rebuke to the scheme of partial participation. He directed that all were to share in the task of taking Ai, and to receive a portion of the spoils. Thus it is in the cause of God today. All are to labor in the work of the gospel, and all are to share in its rewards.

2. Lay thee an ambush. God Himself gives detailed instruction as to strategy to be employed. Joshua should have waited for such divine direction before pressing his first attack. Often we too run ahead of God, and walk in the sparks of our own kindling (see Isa. 50:11), all the while thinking that we are doing the will of God. In every decision in life we should earnestly inquire, Is this the will of God?

3. Thirty thousand. There is some difficulty in harmonizing the figures mentioned in this chapter, possibly because the narrative is so briefly recorded. In vs. 1 and 3 the expression "all the people of war" (see also v. 11) seems to indicate that God commanded all the men of war to join in this battle. This verse mentions 30,000 who were to lie in wait "between Beth-el and Ai, on the west side of Ai" (v. 9), whereas in v. 12 he took 5,000 men and set them to lie in ambush "between Beth-el and Ai, on the west side of the city." This latter group may have been an additional ambush later sent out on a special assignment. If so, the two ambushes together with the main body of forces with Joshua would make up the total number of men of war. In support of this suggestion is the observation that the 30,000 were directed to take the city and set it on fire at a given signal from Joshua. The 5,000, on the other hand, received no direction, as far as the record goes, as to what they were to do. It has been suggested that their assignment had to do with the proximity of hostile Bethel to Ai (see on v. 12).

9. Among the people. That is, at Gilgal, where the main body of troops were stationed.

10. Numbered the people. Literally, "visited the people," that is, "reviewed," or "mustered," them. This would, of course, have reference, as explained in v. 11, to the people of war. The LXX here reads, "concealed the people." Perhaps Joshua gave final instruction on secrecy, how the men of war might proceed and remain undetected until the opportune time. They pitched camp that night on the north side of the city. The LXX reads, "on the east." There is a ravine running east and west on the north of *et-Tell*, the

supposed site of Ai, and here on the north side of this ravine they probably took their position.

12. Five thousand men. See on v. 3. The following explanation has been given as to the assignment of the group. There are two ravines, which come to a head between Bethel, the modern *Beitîn*, and Ai, *et-Tell*. The body of men who were to attack and fire the city were posted in the ravine nearer to Ai. When they should leave their ambush to attack the city, it would be necessary to have someone to protect their rear and ward off any men of war who might sally forth from Bethel to assist the king of Ai. The 5,000 would then be posted in the other ravine with their eyes toward the west in defense against Bethel. They were probably the ones who took care of the men of war from Bethel, so that they were not able to attack Joshua's men in the rear. However, the mention of the troops from Bethel also pursuing the Israelites (v. 17) suggests that this ambush was likely involved in another part of the stratagem.

13. The valley. From *-emeq*, a low, wide tract of land. It seemed to be distinguished from the "valley" of v. 11, which is from the Heb. *gai'*, "ravine." Inspiration does not tell us the purpose of his visit to the valley. We may conjecture that with the battle impending, Joshua spent the night in prayer to make sure nothing would intercept the blessing of God and prevent victory. Compare 1 Sam. 17:3.

14. When the king of Ai saw. Literally, "according to the seeing of the king of Ai," that is, immediately upon his seeing or knowing. The word sometimes takes on this latter sense. Probably the guards were the first to discover Joshua and his troops and to report them to the king. A leader is often given credit for that which is done by those under him. Immediately he wakens his officers and men, and together they rush out to meet Israel, perhaps in hope of another easy victory.

At a time appointed. Heb. *lammo'ed*. The LXX here reads, "straight out," and the Syriac, "in the valley." By reading *mored* for *mo'ed* we get the translation "to the descent" (see on chs. 7:2, 5; 8:13).

Before the plain. Literally, "in the sight of the Arabah." The Heb. *'arabah* means, "a waste region," "a desert." With the article it refers specifically to the valley, or plain, of Jordan. Israel's flight probably took them toward Gilgal.

16. Were called together. Literally, "were cried together," that is, they were assembled, as by a public crier. This seems to indicate that the sudden flight of Israel's army came as a surprise, for the inhabitants of Ai were not expecting it. In their zeal to defend themselves the men of Ai at least displayed greater courage than their neighbors in Jericho. They were not afraid to take the offensive. Encouraged by their previous victory, they had great confidence in success. But their zeal was misspent because they were fighting against God. Thus it is with all who carry on a program in opposition to God. The all-important question is, In my feverish endeavor, on whose side am I? If I am on the wrong side, then there is only one sane course to follow—surrender. If I am on the Lord's side, then it is mine to "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12) with all the energies of my soul.

17. Or Beth-el. This city was only a few miles from Ai. The two cities may have had a signal system between them, so that when one was attacked, immediately the other could be alerted and come to the rescue. It may have been the work of the 5,000 in

ambush to attack the assisting force from Bethel. The city of Bethel itself was not completely overthrown until later (see Judges 1:22). It is probable that events on the day that Ai was taken inflicted a measure of defeat upon the men of Bethel permitting the postponement of the capture of the city for a time.

19. Set the city on fire. The Hebrew for “set on fire” has the idea of “kindling a fire.” This expression is to be distinguished from the word “burnt” used in v. 28. The men set fire to the city, that is, they started a fire, but they did not consume the city with this fire. The word used in v. 28 has the idea of consuming. There is no discrepancy between the two statements.

26. Drew not his hand back. Some have suggested that Joshua lifted up his spear, perhaps with some banner or emblem on it, and that he held it aloft as Moses uplifted his arms 40 years before when Joshua fought the Amalekites. On the other hand, the language need imply nothing more than that he desisted from withdrawing his spear in battle until the work God had commanded was completed. It is likely, however, that Joshua would have recalled the scene at Rephidim when he had personally led in the battle against Amalek (Ex. 17:8–13), and prevailed as long as Moses held up the rod of God in his hand.

28. Heap for ever. Here it definitely states that Ai was made a heap forever. The Hebrew for “heap” is *tel*, which means “a hill,” especially “a heap of ruins.” Compare the Arabic *tell*, “mound,” used in so many place names.

29. Hanged on a tree. Possibly slain with the sword first as in the case of the five kings of the Amorites (ch. 10:26). The Hebrew reads “hanged on *the* tree.” This may have reference to some specific tree, or it may be that the kings of both Jericho and Ai were hanged on the same tree, and exhibited, each in turn, as under the curse of God. It appears that the king of Jericho was also hanged, for as Joshua “had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king” (ch. 10:1; cf. ch. 8:2). Anyone committing a sin worthy of death and hanged on a tree was “accursed of God” (see Deut. 21:22, 23). Jesus, though He had done no sin, was made a curse for us, being hanged on a tree (Gal. 3:13).

The entering of the gate. The gate of a city was the usual place of judgment as well as of most other important public business. The king of Ai himself may have frequently sat in this very gate in judgment. Now he himself was judged. Since the gate of the city was its most public place, the judgment upon the king was thus publicly displayed before all.

30. Then Joshua built an altar. The word translated “then” is not the ordinary connective that is so frequently translated “then” elsewhere. The word here used is more emphatic, placing special stress on the time. It marks the fact that the development of the building of the altar began *then*, growing out of the situation just described. Israel had been victorious, and had received evidence that God was with them and would drive out the nations before them. It was an opportune moment for them to interrupt their military campaign and to renew their covenant with God. On two separate occasions God had instructed Israel to call a solemn assembly of all the tribes upon Mts. Ebal and Gerizim, shortly after their entrance into Canaan (Deut. 11:26–30; 27:2–8). Israel was to hear the law reread, and its precepts were to be inscribed on stone and placed in the very heart of the country for all, both the Israelites and the other nations, to read. By this means God

extended an invitation to all nations to become acquainted with His benevolent purposes, and to join His people.

Geographically the place was in the very center of the land and at the crossroads of travel. Some historians have found great difficulty in admitting the possibility of such a journey through hostile enemy territory at such a time. Josephus supposes that this religious ceremony happened after five years, and the LXX places this passage after ch. 9:1, 2. But all attempts to adjust the time are entirely unnecessary. Though in the midst of an enemy's country, as yet unconquered, Israel passed on unharmed, because the terror of God had fallen upon the cities round about, as when Jacob long before had passed through this very region on his way to Bethel (Gen. 35:5). It has also been suggested that no mention is made of a strong place north of Bethel in that part of the country, and that from other passages (see Joshua 17:18) there seems reason to think that a large part of this district was wooded and unpopulated. The confederacy of the southern kings had its center far to the south, and there was a considerable distance between Shechem and the strong places to the north. See on 1 Sam. 9:4.

Mount Ebal. Mt. Ebal was only about 20 mi. from Ai. Leaving their encampment at Gilgal, probably in charge of a guard, all Israel journeyed to Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim for this sacred service and the renewal of the covenant. Though they were anxious to obtain settlement in their homes, the work of conquest had to come to a standstill while they made the long march, attended this solemn ceremony, and returned to Gilgal. Thus they were taught that the way to prosper is to make God first. Jesus later reiterated this great principle in the words, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God" (Matt. 6:33). Mt. Ebal is situated on the north, and Mt. Gerizim on the south. The valley between them is about one third of a mile wide, and runs east and west. The summits of the 2 mountains are about 2 mi. apart. Where the 2 mountains face each other, at the point of their closest proximity, there is a green valley of about 500 yd. in width. The limestone stratum of each mountain is broken into a succession of ledges forming a natural amphitheater on either side. Here Abraham had erected his first altar in the Land of Promise. Here the people now congregated, six of the tribes on one side and six on the other—the six on Mt. Gerizim to respond with an Amen after each blessing was read and the six on Mt. Ebal as each curse was read. Spurs jut out from each of these mountains forming natural pulpits from which the speaker's voice could be heard throughout the valley. According to directions, an altar was erected on Mt. Ebal, the mount of cursing (Deut. 27:4, 5). But why on the mount of cursing? This was fitting. In that place from which the curses of the law were read against sinners, there must also be an indication of the means of grace and forgiveness. The sacrifices on that altar prefigured Christ.

31. Whole stones. This was in harmony with God's command (Deut. 27:5, 6). The reason for the use of "whole stones" was that there was danger that by the use of the chisel the Israelites might fashion for themselves images upon these altars, and thus be tempted to idolatry (see on Ex. 20:25).

32. A copy of the law. According to Deut. 27:2–8, a stone monument was to be erected next to the altar. This was to be covered over with plaster. Upon this plaster the Ten Commandments and the law of Moses were inscribed. These, together with the blessings for obedience and the curse for disobedience, were read to the whole congregation of Israel. In that country, where heavy frosts would not disintegrate the

letters, this monument may have remained for centuries as a witness to Israel of their covenant, as well as a witness to the nations about.

35. *All the congregation.* The women, the children, and strangers, like Rahab and her family, were there. All, old and young, were to hear the words of the Lord. The enlightenment of the intellect is one of the first steps in Christian growth. One cannot live in harmony with God while in ignorance. Ignorance and true Christianity can never continue in the same individual. This is why God has laid great stress on Christian education. Nothing should be permitted to interfere with giving our children the education God enjoins. In spite of the hardship of the journey to Ebal, the children of ancient Israel were to accompany their parents.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–35PP 499–504

30–35PP 499

35 PK 465; PP 503

CHAPTER 9

1 *The kings combine against Israel.* 3 *The Gibeonites by craft obtain a league.* 16 *For which they are condemned to perpetual bondage.*

1. *When all the kings.* Undoubtedly the reports that came to these kings both angered and frightened them, with the result that they called this emergency meeting. They had heard not only of the fall of Jericho, and of Ai, but doubtless also of the great meeting at Ebal, where the Israelites had proclaimed the law of Jehovah as the law of the entire land of Canaan. The convocation at Mt. Ebal showed clearly that the children of Israel intended to be its sole rulers. The resulting anger of the Canaanites probably overcame their fright, and they determined to resist together, hoping thereby to prevent any encroachment upon their territory. For a description of “the kings” see the Introduction to Joshua.

This side Jordan. The Hebrew has, “beyond the Jordan.” The reference, of course, is definitely to the western side of the river, and either the writer was writing on the eastern side, or the arrival on the western side had been so recent that he still thinks of the territory as “beyond the Jordan.” If the writer had already made the land of Palestine his permanent home, he would hardly have used such an expression. This observation argues for an early writing of at least this portion of the book of Joshua. The expression “beyond the Jordan” subsequently refers to the east side of Jordan, unless the speaker is there or thinks of himself as being there (see Judges 5:17).

Hills. By the “hills” is meant the mountainous uplands in the central part of Palestine that afterward became the territory of Judah and Ephraim. The “valleys” are what is called the Shephelah, or western foothills. The “coasts of the great sea” include the maritime plains of Philistia and Sharon.

2. *One accord.* Literally, “one mouth.” The word for “mouth” is frequently used for “command,” and this might here be the intent of the expression. These six nations pooled their military forces and banded themselves together under one command to meet the emergency. Although of different clans, and with differing interests, doubtless often at variance with one another, they were ready to make common cause against the people of God. Their hatred of the righteous was the common bond that united them, as has often been true of wicked men. For instance, opposition to Christ brought Pilate and Herod together. In the last days it will unite all the religious and political forces against the true

remnant of God, “which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus” (Rev. 12:17).

3. Gibeon. Literally, “a hill.” The city was situated on a terraced hill, and had a pool of water in it. Jeremiah refers to it as “great waters” (Jer. 41:12). The city was nearly 6 mi. (9 km.) northwest of Jerusalem, on the road to Joppa. Its inhabitants, the Hivites (Joshua 9:7; see on Gen. 10:17), were included in the confederacy of vs. 1 and 2. When the Gibeonites received the news of the destruction of Jericho and Ai, they concluded that it was futile to resist the army of Israel, and accordingly worked out a carefully planned scheme to gain favor with Israel and make a league with them.

Some scholars have considered the Hivites (see on Gen. 10:17) to be the same as the Horites or Hurrians (see on Gen. 36:20). The LXX calls the Hivites the *Chorraion*. If this identification has any validity, then a group of Horites, originally from the region southwest of Lake Van, in Armenia, settled in the vicinity of Gibeon some time before the arrival of the Hittites.

The Gibeonite form of government must have been more or less democratic, for the Gibeonites spoke of their elders and all their people as sending them (v. 11). Had their government at this time been headed by a king, his heart might have been too proud to bow to the conquering Israelites. In that event the Gibeonites might have joined with the other Canaanite kings in resisting Israel. The Gibeonites may have had spies at Ebal, when the law was read, who brought them word of the command given to Israel (see Deut. 7:1–3) to show no mercy to the Canaanites, to give them no quarter in battle, and to make no league with them (see on Ex. 23:32). To say the least, their determination not to resist showed a degree of faith in the strength of Israel’s God. They were willing to enter into a league, which included their pledge to renounce idolatry and to accept the worship of Jehovah (PP 506).

4. They did work wily. The ruse would immediately have been disclosed had Joshua sought counsel of the Lord, but once more, as at Ai, he neglected to do so.

Made as if. The clause thus introduced is translated from a single Hebrew word, one that occurs nowhere else in the Scriptures. The root idea of the word is “to revolve.” Elsewhere the word is unknown, except in Arabic. By the substitution of a *d* for an *r*, which letters are easily mistaken in the Hebrew, we get the translation “and provided themselves with provisions.” The word then becomes the same as that found in v. 12 and there translated “took hot for our provision.” This reading agrees with many MSS and ancient translations, including the LXX and Syriac. That they would go as ambassadors is understood. “Provided themselves with provisions” seems to fit the context more adequately.

6. The camp at Gilgal. The children of Israel returned to their former camp at Gilgal near Jericho, and not to some new “Gilgal” near Shechem as some have thought (see PP 505 and on 2 Kings 2:1). Chapter 9:17 states that Israel arrived at the city of Gibeon from their encampment at Gilgal on the third day. But Shechem is only a short distance from Gibeon, and three days would not have been required to make the journey. The expression, “Joshua ascended” (ch. 10:7), again points to the Israelite camp as being in the Jordan valley.

7. The men of Israel. The Hebrew has the singular “man,” not “men,” but the verb is plural, evidently because the “men” are thought of as individuals. The LXX reads, “sons

[children] of Israel,” and the Syriac, “[they] of the house of Israel.” Apparently the negotiations were carried on by the princes (v. 18).

The Hivites. See on v. 3.

Make a league. The Israelites were permitted to make peace with cities that were far off, but not with the seven Canaanite nations living in close proximity to them (Deut. 7:1, 2; 20:10–15). These were to be completely destroyed (Deut. 20:17) lest Israel become contaminated by their false religion and low moral principles. Hence the repeated instruction to Israel not to make any league with them (see Ex. 23:32; 34:12; Deut. 7:2; 20:16–18). The Gibeonites seem to have been aware of this edict, and accordingly resorted to the strategy of feigning to come from a far country.

8. We are thy servants. This statement was probably more of a polite form of address rather than a sincere declaration of their submission (see Gen. 32:4, 18; 50:18; 2 Kings 10:5; 16:7). However, it was calculated to impress Israel. The Gibeonites, no doubt, expected to make some concession such as paying tribute, but they hoped that the contract would be as favorable as possible. Nevertheless, their carefully worded reply did not satisfy Joshua, as is clear from the questions he continued to direct at them. At this moment of doubt and uncertainty he should have sought the Lord. He probably felt as many Christians do today, that here was a matter he could handle without troubling the Lord. But God has bidden us to come to Him with all of our problems. We are not to feel that we weary or burden Him. Many pitfalls might be avoided by taking all our problems to the Lord, not trusting to our own understanding (Prov. 3:5–7).

9. Because of the name. Literally, “for the name,” or, “in respect to the name,” of Jehovah thy God. These words reveal a degree of reaching out after God on the part of the Gibeonites. They had received a measure of knowledge, and they acted upon this limited enlightenment. We find fault with their approach, but we should not find fault with the fact that they here made a beginning at serving the true God. They did not know all that was involved, but they did know that what Jehovah had done for Israel was greater than what any so-called god had done for his people. By this rule they measured the relative merit of the gods. God honored their limited faith, and would not permit Israel to cancel their pledge to them. God accepts men where they are, and then seeks to lead them on to more perfect service. Some begin their worship of God from entirely wrong motives, but God accepts the surrender of the soul and then works to more commendable motives. Thus it was with the Gibeonites. To them were opened the full covenant blessings, as far as spiritual privileges were concerned.

All that he did. They were careful to enumerate only the events in Egypt and beyond Jordan. Had they mentioned Jericho or Ai, their subterfuge would have been exposed, for anyone coming from a far country would not, presumably, have had time to hear of so recent an event.

11. Our elders. From this it is inferred that Gibeon and her cities had no king over them (see on v. 3).

12. Mouldy. The word here translated “mouldy” is used only three times in the OT, twice in this chapter (vs. 5, 12) and in 1 Kings 14:3, where it is translated “cracknels” (“cakes,” margin). In this last instance it would be impossible to translate it “mouldy,” and there is a question as to whether it should be so translated here. It has been suggested that it would be appropriate to translate it the same way in Joshua as in 1 Kings. Furthermore, in the case of each of occurrence in Joshua the word is preceded by the

perfect tense of the verb “to be.” Thus here it would read literally, “And now, behold, it is dry, and it was cakes.” Most translators and commentators, however, take it to mean “mouldy” (see PP 505).

14. Took of their victuals. This seems to be a better translation than that suggested in the margin, “they received the men by reason of their victuals.” Many commentators favor the marginal reading, in spite of the fact that there is nothing in the Hebrew that requires it. Their reason for doing so is that it seems to agree better with the context. The Hebrew leaders took from the provisions to taste, handle, and test for themselves, so that they might be certain in their decision. Having done so, they felt confident in their own judgment. This test differed from the one they had met at the time of their first attempt to take Ai, or they might have recognized the tempter in his new guise. Satan has many tricks, and employs the one he thinks will best suit his victim. We are never safe in any problem with human wisdom alone.

Asked not counsel. God had made provision for His will to be known through Eleazar, the priest, by means of the Urim and Thummim (Num. 27:18–23). Joshua might thus have obtained divine guidance in this important decision. What the Lord’s answer in this instance would have been, we are not told. Possibly the Gibeonites would still have been spared; God’s mercy embraces all who seek His salvation. He had forbidden His people to make any covenant with the inhabitants of the land, but this was for a specific reason, namely, that they might not be turned to follow the abominations of the inhabitants. Had any of these heathen people, like Rahab, turned from their abominations and sought divine mercy, God would have accepted them as readily as He afterward accepted Nineveh (Jonah 3:10). But the ultimate decision in each case must rest with God. He is the only one who can truly read the heart. He could not entrust such decisions to men. Therefore, He gave command for the total annihilation of all the Canaanitish nations, but this did not mean that He might not make exceptions where the circumstances so indicated. It would not be safe to trust the people with power to make peace with even single cities, lest repentance be simulated by the Canaanites. Such deception could rapidly spread, and many of the inhabitants of the land would feign repentance, while remaining in heart as idolatrous as ever.

The worker for God today should exercise great care in ascertaining whether an individual has given evidence of faith before admitting him into the covenant of faith. In such instances it is well not to be self-assertive and confident in one’s own opinions, but always humble, sincerely seek the guidance of God (Ps. 32:8).

15. The princes. Literally, “the lifted up ones,” that is, the heads of the various tribes.

17. The third day. That is, the third day after they set out for Gibeon. They were thus on the journey for two days. This is evidence that they did not set out from the new Gilgal, as some think, because it would not have taken more than a few hours at most from there to Gibeon (see on v. 6). Three days after the treaty had been made and the messengers had departed, the Israelites discovered that the Gibeonite cities were close by and that they had been deceived. Perhaps some deserter told them, or Israelite scouts may have found someone who told them the truth. Under Joshua’s direction the army of Israel immediately set out to investigate. Possibly Joshua had in mind to revise the treaty because of the deception practiced upon him by the Gibeonites, and to see what use could be made of their cities.

Their cities. Gibeon, meaning “a hill,” Chephirah, “a young lioness,” and Beeroth, “wells,” later fell to the tribe of Benjamin (ch. 18:25, 26), while Kirjath-jearim, “city to the tribe of Judah (ch. 15:60). It was later at Kirjath-jearim that the ark rested before David moved it to Jerusalem (1 Sam. 6:21; 7:1, 2; 2 Sam. 6:2). Gibeon is known today as *ej-Jīb*, Chephirah as *Tell Kefīreh*, and Kirjath-jearim as *Tell el-Azhar*.

18. Smote them not. Even though the congregation murmured against the princes, and the princes had done wrong in making such an agreement, the Israelites felt obligated to keep their oath. A promise, once made, should be held sacred if it does not bind the one making it to perform a wrong act (see Prov. 12:22; Ps. 24:4; 15:4; PP 506). The leaders of Israel involved the whole congregation in trouble because of their mistake. Yet, to their credit, they felt that they should abide by the promise they had made. How careful those in responsibility need to be lest, by reliance on their own judgment, they bring difficulty on the whole congregation.

20. Because of the oath. Had the fulfilling of the oath required a sinful deed, it would not have been binding, for we cannot be bound to commit a sin (see Judges 11:29–40). Though the princes were at fault in engaging so rashly in this matter, they were not to violate the oath, even though it was to their own hurt (Ps. 15:4). It is evident that God approved their conduct in this, and was displeased with Saul when, long after, he infringed it (2 Sam. 21:1–3).

21. Hewers of wood. According to vs. 23 and 27, this service was to be for the congregation and for the house of God. Such laborers were reckoned among the lowest class of people (Deut. 29:10, 11), and these services were to be performed by the strangers among them. The assignment of these menial tasks constituted the punishment of the Gibeonites. Had they dealt honestly with Israel, their lives would still have been spared, and they would probably have been exempted from servitude. Yet even a curse may be turned into a blessing. They were servants, it is true, but their service was for the house of God. By doing the work of the house of the Lord, they would be in a position where they could readily learn of the true God. They were thus placed under an influence that would prevent their returning to the idolatry of their fathers. Though bondmen to Israel, they would be freemen of the Lord, for in His service the lowest office is liberty, and His work is its own wages. Some have thought that the “Nethinims” of Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra 2:70; 8:20; Neh. 7:60) were the Gibeonites, inasmuch as the Nethinim were the temple servants. The Heb. *nethinim* means “given ones” or “devoted ones”; this lends some support to their possible identity with the Gibeonites. That the Gibeonites existed as such in the time of David is evident from the circumstance mentioned in 2 Sam. 21:1–9. However, it is possible that Saul’s misguided zeal all but annihilated them, and that David replaced them with a new order—the Nethinim of Nehemiah’s day.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–27PP 505, 506

7, 8, 12–16PP 505

15–19PK 369

18 PP 506

21, 23 CE 30

24–27PP 506

CHAPTER 10

1 *Five kings war against Gibeon. 6 Joshua rescueth it. 10 God fighteth against them with hailstones. 12 The sun and moon stand still at the word of Joshua. 16 The five kings are mured in a cave. 23 They are brought forth, 24 scornfully used, 26 and hanged. 28 Seven kings more are conquered. 43 Joshua returneth to Gilgal.*

1. Adoni-zedec. Literally, “my lord is righteousness.”

Jerusalem. The first occurrence of this name in the OT. Opinions differ as to the origin of the name. It is generally conceded that the last part of the word means “peace” (see Heb. 7:2). The first part may come either from a word meaning “inheritance” or from a word meaning “settlement,” the basic ideas of which are similar. There is little doubt that the Jerusalem of Joshua’s time is identical with Jerusalem of today. Egyptian texts as early as the 19th and 18th centuries mention the city. Its existence at that time is confirmed by archeology.

The Amarna Letters, dating from the 14th century B.C., near the time of the conquest of Canaan by Israel, mention a city of Palestine by the name of Urusalim, “city of peace.” This is its name in later Assyrian records. Rabbinical sources claim the word is derived from the name Abraham gave to Mt. Moriah, the place where he offered up his son, plus the name Salem of Gen. 14:18. Mt. Moriah later became the site of the temple Solomon built (Sam. 24:18–25; 2 Chron. 3:1). From the story recorded in Gen. 22 it seems that there was no city on Mt. Moriah in Abraham’s day, but only on the neighboring hills (see PP 703). Abraham called the place Jehovah-jireh (Gen. 22:14). “Jehovah will provide.” Moriah has been held by some to be derived from the same root and to signify “vision of Jehovah.” According to rabbinical interpretation, the name Jerusalem would be a combination of Jireh and Salem.

Another of Jerusalem’s ancient names was Jebusi or Jebus (Joshua 18:16, 28; Judges 19:10, 11). The Jebusites dwelt there in the time of the judges, and the city was not taken from them until the time of David.

Were among them. The LXX reads, “had changed sides.” The Gibeonites’ transfer of allegiance precipitated upon them the bitterest hatred of their former friends. Their decision made, the Gibeonites seem ever after to have remained loyal to Israel and the true God. This fact implies that though their method of securing the friendship of Israel was questionable, they were, nevertheless, sincere to the extent of the light they had.

2. Feared greatly. They feared now not only the power of Israel and Israel’s God, as evidenced by the reports from Jericho and Ai, but also the military strength of the cities of Gibeon. They felt that any inclination toward changing sides must be stopped immediately.

As one of the royal cities. Literally, “as one of the cities of the kingdom.” The importance of the word “as” should not be lost, because it reveals the accuracy of the writer. As previously mentioned, the city had no king but was governed by “elders” (see on ch. 9:3). Here, again, is an indirect intimation that Gibeon had no king, for it was *like* a city with a king for greatness. Gibeon was afterward the city of the first king of Israel, Saul (1 Chron. 8:29, 30, 33).

3 Hebron. Literally meaning “union,” “league,” or “association.” It is one of the oldest inhabited communities of Palestine, situated about 19 mi. (30 km.) southwest of Jerusalem. It was built seven years before Zoan (Tanis) in Egypt (Num. 13:22), the old Hyksos center of Avaris. Many patriarchal events are associated with Hebron. Here Abraham dwelt in the plains of Mamre (Gen. 13:18; 18:1). Here Sarah died, and

Abraham bought the cave of Machpelah from Ephron the Hittite (Gen. 23:7–16) for her burial place. Later, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Rebekah, and Leah were buried there. At Hebron the 12 spies found the giant Anakim (Num 13:22, 33). The place held many sacred memories for the Israelites.

Piram king of Jarmuth. Piram signifies “a wild ass”; Jarmuth (meaning uncertain) was about 15 3/4 mi. (25.5 km.) west-southwest from Jerusalem. It has been identified with the modern *Khirbet Yarmûk*, where remains of some ancient walls and cisterns have been discovered. Nothing is known of its size in the time of Joshua, but it must have been reckoned as one of the larger royal cities of southern Palestine.

Japhia king of Lachish. Japhia probably means “visible,” or “the radiant one,” with the possible idea of the impersonation of the god. Lachish, now identified with the large mound of *Tell ed-Duweir*, is the site of one of the largest occupied cities of ancient Palestine. It is about 27 mi. (44 km.) southwest of Jerusalem in what is known as the Shephelah, or low hills, of Judah. It dominated the main road from central Palestine to Egypt. Although this is the first reference to it in the Bible, Lachish is frequently mentioned in later Israelite history.

Debir king of Eglon. Debir means “oracle.” Eglon may mean “rolling.” The place has been tentatively identified with *Tell el-Hesî*, which was formerly thought to contain the ruins of Lachish.

4. Come up. This expression is geographically correct, since the other kings dwelt in the lowlands and hills, and Jerusalem was of a relatively higher altitude. Jerusalem was the nearest city of importance to the now-common foe, and thus stood in the greatest danger. This may account for the leadership of Jerusalem in this crisis.

Smite Gibeon. Instead of Joshua. It is remarkable that we do not hear of one direct attack against Joshua and his army in the wars of Canaan. The conquest was chiefly an offensive campaign on the part of the Israelites. In spiritual battles as well as in military the best form of defense is often offensive action against the enemy.

5. Amorites. This term is often taken generally for any of the Canaanitish nations, probably because the Amorites were the most powerful people of the country. The inhabitants of Jerusalem were called Jebusites (Joshua 15:63); and those of Hebron, Hittites (Gen. 23:2, 3; 25:9, 10). The Gibeonites are sometimes called Hivites (Joshua 9:7), and occasionally Amorites.

6. Sent unto Joshua. The Gibeonites were in sore straits. Their defenses were inadequate against so powerful a coalition. They appealed to Joshua, in the hope that he, despite their fraud, would come to their aid. The way in which they looked to their allies for help in time of trouble may be thought of as illustrating how we may call upon God for assistance when we are hard pressed by spiritual foes. We may feel unworthy of divine aid because of our sins, but we may also know for certain that no sincere prayer for help will be unanswered.

In the mountains. Reference is to the central range called “the hill country,” in which were situated some of the five cities mentioned previously (ch. 21:11). Others were in the Shephelah; but the Gibeonites, in their haste, probably did not trouble to make the distinction. As far as they were concerned the armies of the five nations were approaching them from the mountainous region of Jerusalem (vs. 3, 4). What may appear to be a contradiction is in reality an assurance of the authenticity of the record, inasmuch

as the writer faithfully recorded what the messengers told Joshua even though it may not have been entirely correct geographically.

7. *Ascended.* This expression and the “went up” of v. 9 are geographically correct, because the line of march from Gilgal to Gibeon is an ascent all the way. The distance from Gilgal to Gibeon was 16 1/2 mi. (26.7 km.). Marching all night up the *Wadi Kelt* and through the *Wadi Suweinit*, Joshua arrived early in the morning in the neighborhood of the city of Gibeon before the Amorites were aware that he had left camp at Gilgal. In going to the defense of Gibeon, Joshua also helped the cause of Israel. The city commanded important passes to central and southern Palestine and needed to be held.

And all the mighty men. The LXX and the Vulgate omit the “and.” The Hebrew word translated “and” may also be translated “even,” which seems to express better the meaning intended here. The passage, then, would imply that Joshua went up with an army of picked men, men of valor and courage, and skilled in warfare. The Syriac agrees with the idea thus expressed, reading, “and all of them [were] mighty men of valor.”

8. *And the Lord said.* Perhaps better, “for the Lord had said.” It is clear that Joshua did not undertake the expedition without seeking counsel of God. He seems at last to have learned this lesson.

9. *Suddenly.* Joshua was a man of dispatch. The task at hand required immediate action. Many a cause is defeated by lack of action, or action that comes too late. Joshua marched all night, and in the morning was ready for action before the enemy had time to prepare for battle.

And went up. Preferably, “having marched up” (RSV). This clause is simply explanatory of how Joshua “came unto them suddenly.” This he did by marching “all night.”

10. *Discomfited them.* Or, “threw them into a panic” (RSV). The Hebrew word here used means “to rush about madly.” When it takes an object, as here, it means “to confuse,” “to throw into confusion,” or “to rout.” In Ex. 23:27 God had promised to send His fear before Israel and cause their enemies to turn their backs before them. The discomfiture of the five kings was a fulfillment of this promise, and is an example of how the Lord would have wrought in the entire conquest of Canaan if the Israelites had always been willing to work according to His plan.

Beth-horon. Literally, “house of [the god] Choron.” Beth-horon was made up of twin towns comprising the upper and lower cities, today known as *Beit ‘Ur el Fōqā* (upper) and *Beit ‘Ur et-Tahtā* (lower). These towns controlled the mountain pass. Joshua and his men pursued the Amorites in a northwest direction to this point. The path descending from Beth-horon Upper to Beth-horon Lower was very rocky and rugged, so steep that steps have been cut in the rock to facilitate the descent. It was here that the Lord sent hailstones upon them. From this point the enemy turned in a southerly direction, toward Jarmuth and Lachish, the cities of two of the kings.

Azekah. A strongly fortified city about 11 mi. (17 km.) northeast of Lachish, known today as *Tell ez-Zakarîyeh*. It is referred to a number of times in later OT history.

Makkedah. The site of Makkedah is uncertain. Some believe it to be the excavated stronghold at *Tell es-Safî*, but that tell is held by others to be Libnah. Some prefer *Tell*

Maqdûm, 6 5/8 mi. (10.8 km.) southeast of *Beit Jibrin* (Eleutheropolis) and 8 mi. (13 km.) west by north from Hebron.

11. Great stones. Defined in this same verse as “hailstones.” The LXX has “hailstones” in both instances. It is hardly necessary to think of these stones as being meteors, or literal “stones.” God had on a previous occasion used hailstones as an agency of destruction (Ex. 9:18–26). Records of several storms in the East are preserved, in which it is stated that the hailstones were found to weigh from one half to three quarters of a pound. In Northern China some have been known to weigh several pounds and to have killed cattle. God has in store “treasurers of the hail” (Job 38:22, 23) to use in the day of final battle (Rev. 16:21).

12. To the Lord. The Syriac reads “before the Lord,” or, “in the presence of the Lord.” The Hebrew preposition *le* has a variety of meanings, such as “with regard to,” “on account of,” “concerning,” “because of.” These meanings convey the idea that what Joshua said was, “because of the Lord,” or, “with regard to the Lord,” that is, spoken under divine direction or at least with divine approval. Consequently, his words were not presumptuous.

Stand thou still. The verb here translated “stand still” is generally rendered “be silent.” However, it can also mean “be motionless,” depending upon what it is applied to. Being addressed to the sun and moon, which ordinarily have no sound, it would naturally have the meaning of the latter. The inspired writer used the popular language of the day in describing matters of science. Actually it is not the sun that moves in the heavens but the earth turning on its axis that marks off the day. But even in our modern age of scientific enlightenment we speak of the sun rising or setting. Some, whose limited concept of God leaves Him powerless to interfere with natural law, feel that a halt in the rotation of the earth would have disastrous effects upon the earth itself and possibly upon the entire solar system, if not the universe. Whether the phenomenon was produced in this fashion or by the refraction of light or in some other way, the fact remains that a miracle of some kind occurred. If we believe in an omnipotent God, who, as Creator and Sustainer, controls the works of His creation, there is no problem.

The lengthening of the day not only provided additional time for the total destruction of the enemies of Israel but was a signal demonstration of the power of Israel’s God. It showed that the very gods whom the heathen worshiped were powerless before the true God. They worshiped the Canaanite god Baal and the goddess Ashtoreth. Both the sun and the moon whom they worshipped were shown to be subservient to Joshua’s command, under the direction of Israel’s God, Jehovah.

Some, on casual reading, have believed that the miracle took place as the sun was setting, and that the sun, therefore, was held just above the horizon. But v. 13 states that “the sun stood still in the midst of heaven.” Joshua and his men were pursuing the Canaanites beyond Beth-horon. Inasmuch as the battle started early in the morning, it would have been possible to reach this spot before noon. As Joshua stood at the summit of the pass at Beth-horon and looked down upon the vast multitudes of the enemy fleeing to the southwest toward their strongholds, he feared that the day would prove too short to bring complete victory. He knew that the opportune time to strike was while the enemy was disorganized. Delay would give time for reorganization. So as he looked back eastward toward Gibeon he saw the sun, as it were, above that point. To the west, over the Valley of Aijalon, the waning moon was still faintly visible. Had the time been near

sunset, he would have seen the sun toward the west sinking in the sea instead of toward the east over Gibeon.

As to the length of time that the sun was delayed in its course, it is generally assumed to have been a whole day. However, the Hebrew is not specific. Literally, it reads, the sun “did not hasten to go down as a perfect day,” that is, as it does when the day is finished. But the language also permits the reading “about a whole day.” This would give time for the accomplishing of the events noted through v. 28, since the wording of that verse seems to imply that Makkedah was taken on the same day.

13. *Book of Jasher.* Literally, “book of the upright.” The Syriac calls it “book of praises,” or “book of hymns.” The book is directly referred to only twice in the OT, here and in 2 Sam. 1:18–27. The LXX of 1 Kings 8:53 mentions a “book of the song,” probably also a reference to the book of Jasher. The book, as a whole, seems to have been made up of ballads accompanied by prose introductions, dealing with historical heroes—upright men—showing how they lived and what they achieved. It was evidently compiled by degrees, as the events performed by these upright men and women occurred. That the ballad of 2 Sam. 1:19–27 was composed by David and recorded in the book of Jasher is no proof that parts of the book were not in existence earlier, even, perhaps, in the time of Joshua. The remarkable event of the standing still of the sun and moon may have been recorded soon after its occurrence. If so, when Joshua recorded the battle of Gibeon (see p. 169), probably a short time before his death, it would seem that he quoted this particular ballad with its prose introduction as part of his account of this remarkable incident. Verse 15 implies that it is a part of the quotation, or at least words of comment on the contents of the ballad. The first part of v. 12, by way of introduction, and v. 15, by way of conclusion, may have been added by the writer of v. 14, but it seems more probable that all except the formula of citation, “is not this written in the book of Jasher?” is part of the quotation.

16. *In a cave.* Literally, “in the cave.” The site of Makkedah is uncertain (see on v. 10). Evidently a cave was nearby.

19. *And stay ye not.* Literally, “and you, ye shall not stand still.” Joshua’s prompt dispatch revealed the skill of his inspired generalship. The time was advantageous for action against the main forces of the enemy. Any diversionary action, such as the execution of the five kings, would have meant costly delay.

Smite the hindmost. That is, rout the rear of the host. The Hebrew word translated “smite” occurs only here and in Deut. 25:18.

21. *All the people.* If the “all” is to be taken literally, it means that no Israelite was slain, none wounded, none missing from the battle. The Hebrew expressly states that against one single Israelite none dared lift up the voice, much less a weapon. It was a complete, glorious victory.

24. *All the men.* That is, all the men of war “which went with him,” as stated in the same verse. Joshua knew how to keep the good will of his men. He took them into his confidence. They had shared in the battle, and they deserved to see the fruits of their labor and to share in the final results. The true leader shares both the joys and the sorrows of service with his fellow laborers—not only the labor but the fruits of labor as well. He makes his men feel that they are a part of the task and not mere cogs in the wheel of success. Joshua had confidence in his men, and they had confidence in him. For a leader

thus to share is to strengthen his position, not to weaken it. Confidence begets confidence.

Upon the necks. This procedure was a custom of the Orient as can be seen from certain Assyrian and Egyptian monuments. It was a token of complete victory. To the Israelites it was a demonstration of the complete subjection to which God would reduce all their adversaries (see Gen. 49:8; 2 Sam. 22:41).

26. Hanged. The Hebrew people did not hang men alive on OT times. The victim was first killed and then hanged by way of example, to deter others from similar crimes. But according to the law of Deut. 21:23, the body must not hang overnight lest the land be defiled.

27. It came to pass. In view of the fact that the day was lengthened, there is no reason to doubt that “the going down of the sun,” mentioned in this verse, was on the evening of the remarkably long day.

28. That day. Apparently the day of the battle of Beth-horon. It seems that the taking of Makkedah completed the series of accomplishments of that memorable day. It left the Israelites, for a time, without danger of attack. It was a great day, full of great accomplishments.

29. Libnah. The operations against Libnah mark the beginning of a further stage of the campaign. Libnah was a strongly fortified city north of Lachish. Excavations on the site reveal that it was once a well-built fortress and that fire practically destroyed it at about this time.

31. Lachish. This was the chief “fenced city” of the area and continued to be a stronghold in later Israelitish history. The site has been excavated, and is known today as *Tell ed-Duweir*. Here the famous Lachish Letters, from the time of Jeremiah, were found. The ruins are about 27 mi. (44 km.) southwest of Jerusalem and 19 mi. (31 km.) from the seacoast. Lachish is frequently mentioned in the OT. It was an important stronghold, whose control an enemy from the south must secure before advancing on Jerusalem (see 2 Kings 18:14, 17; 19:8).

33. Gezer. This city is the present *Tell Jezer*. Important archeological material has been found in excavations at this site, 19 1/4 mi. (31 km.) west-northwest of Jerusalem. It was out of Joshua’s line of march, but Horem, its king, came to the assistance of Lachish. Joshua smote him and his army, but did not take his city (ch. 16:10). Horem evidently had a pact of mutual assistance with the king of Lachish, effective in the event of an attack on either city. Gezer was later designated a Levitical city (ch. 21:21).

34. Eglon. See on v. 3.

36. Hebron. See on v. 3. Evidently the inhabitants of Hebron had appointed a new king to succeed the one previously slain (vs. 24–26). The expression “all the cities thereof” (v. 37) indicates that Hebron was a metropolis, that is, a mother city, with several cities subject to its jurisdiction and dependent upon it. Such also was Gibeon, mentioned in ch. 9:17.

38. Debir. The Canaanite name was Kirjath-sepher, which means “city of books.” In ch. 15:49 it is called Kirjath-sannah, city of palm trees. It was in the highlands of Judah about 12 mi. (19 km.) southwest of Hebron and about 8 mi. (13 km.) southeast of Lachish. It has been identified with *Tell Beit Mirsim*. The Canaanites subsequently retook the city, but Othniel, the brother of Caleb, later recaptured it for Israel. For his bravery he

received Achsah, the daughter of Caleb, in marriage (ch. 15:17). The city was given to the priests (ch. 21:15).

40. All the country. The expression “the hills” denotes the mountainous region extending southward from Jerusalem.

South. Heb. *negeb*. A semiarid region of limestone, with but few perennial springs, bereft of trees, and green only in the rainy season. The territory offered an opportunity for the diligent husbandman who would not only plow up every level spot but utilize the very rocks and make them support his crops and vines.

The vale. This lowland, the Shephelah, was the foothill region between Judah and Philistia.

The springs. Probably the undulating land at the foot of the Shephelah, and between it and the plain of Philistia. This region was intersected by brooks and ravines, and so fertile and prosperous.

41. Goshen. Not the country of that name in Egypt, the former residence of the Hebrews, but a section in southern Judah (chs. 11:16; 15:51).

43. Gilgal. See on chs. 9:6 and 10:7.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–43PP 506–510

1–6PP 507

2 PP 506

7–14PP 508

12 PP 509

40, 42, 43 PP 510

CHAPTER 11

1 *Divers kings overcome at the waters of Merom.* 10 *Hazor is taken and burnt.* 16 *All the country taken by Joshua.* 21 *The Anakims cut off.*

1. Jabin. Meaning, probably, “he understands.” It may have been the common name of all the kings of Hazor, for the king of this city by whom the Israelites were afterward held in bondage for 20 years, and who was defeated by Deborah and Barak, was also known by this name (Judges 4:2–24). Jabin appears now as the head of the confederacy of the northern tribes.

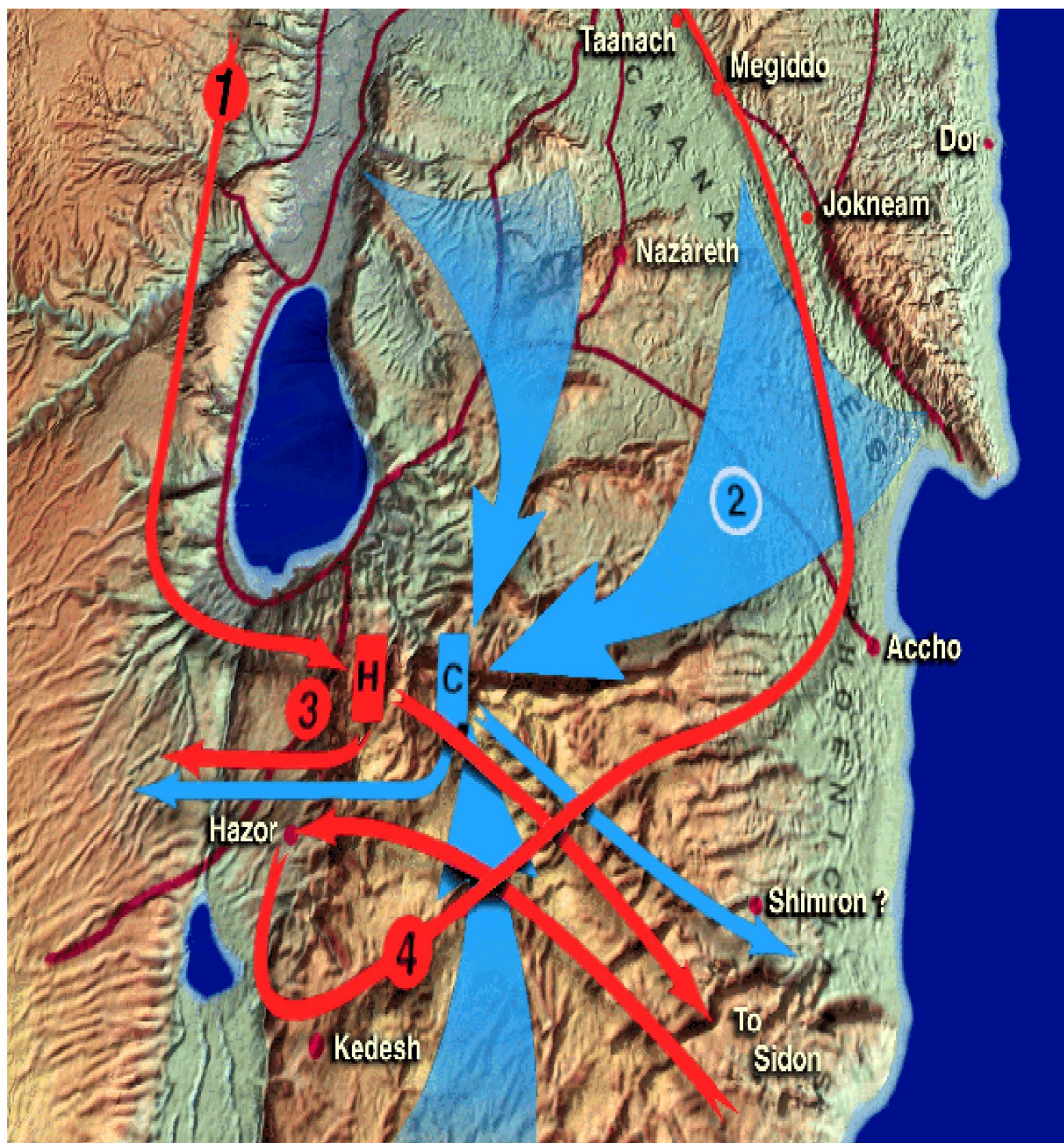
Hazor. Literally, “an enclosure.” It was a strongly fortified city southwest of the now drained Lake Huleh, identified today as the fortified enclosure 131 ft. (40 m.) high at *Tell Waqqâs*, 3.8 mi. (6.3 km.) from the south end of the former lake, which lay in one of the most pleasant valleys of Palestine. The open water was then about 2 mi. (3 km.) broad at its widest part, and 3 mi. (5 km.) long. A great marsh of papyrus reed stretched for nearly 6 mi. (10 km.) north of the clear surface, from 1 to 3 mi. (1 1/2 to 5 km.) in breadth.

Jobab. Meaning, possibly, “battle crier” or, perhaps, “crier” or “proclaimer.”

Israel’s Last Campaign West of the Jordan

3

³Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Jos 7:2). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.



Madon. Meaning “strife” or “contention,” or perhaps “extension” or “height.” Its location is unknown; it may have been west of the Sea of Galilee.

Shimron. Literally, “a watch,” “a guard.” This was a Canaanite town situated somewhere in Galilee. Some identify it with Shimron-meron (ch. 12:20). The town was later given to Zebulun.

Achshaph. Literally, “incantation.” It was one of the border cities of the territory later assigned to the tribe of Asher (ch. 19:25).

2. North of the mountains. Probably the mountainous region of Galilee.

Plains. Heb. *‘arabah*. This word is usually translated “plain” or “plains,” though occasionally it is left untranslated. In the later books of the OT it is frequently translated “desert.” It often refers to the great depression of the Jordan valley and the Dead Sea. Here it probably designates the northern part of this depression, extending for some distance south of the town of Chinnereth, from which the Sea of Chinnereth (the Sea of Galilee) received its name. The LXX reads “opposite to Chinnereth.”

Borders of Dor. Rather, “heights of Dor.” Probably a reference to the promontories or rocky ridges behind Dor. Dor was south of Carmel on the seacoast, 9 mi. (14.5 km.) north of Caesarea.

3. The Canaanite. This expression describing the Canaanites as being to “the east” and to “the west” is somewhat ambiguous. The LXX reads, “and to the Chananites on the coast eastward, and to the Amorites on the coast.” There were probably Canaanite city-states in both directions. Jabin summons all of them, as well as the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, and Hivites.

Hivite under Hermon. In distinction from the other section of the same tribe at Gibeon, as has already been mentioned (ch. 9:3, 7).

Mizpeh. Literally, “watchtower.” Mizpeh was near Mt. Hermon, at the southern end of the Anti-Lebanon range and on the extreme northern boundary of Israel. It was probably situated west of the base of the mountains. Its location made it a desirable military watchpost.

4. As the sand. A proverbial expression used to denote a vast but indefinite number (Gen. 22:17; 41:49; Judges 7:12; 1 Sam. 13:5; etc.). Other comparisons used in a similar sense are the stars of heaven (Gen. 15:5) and grasshoppers (Judges 6:5; 7:12) Josephus gives the number as “three hundred thousand armed footmen, and ten thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand chariots” (*Antiquities* v. 1. 18).

Very many. Literally, “exceedingly many.” The horses were probably brought from the land of Armenia, since Canaan may not have been a country favorable to their breeding or use (1 Kings 10:28, 29). In view of such a formidable army it is no wonder the Lord gave Joshua special encouragement and promises of success.

5. Were met together. The Hebrew implies that the kings were “met together at an appointed time and place.” The place selected for meeting was, no doubt, territory suitable for chariots to maneuver, because these vehicles could not be used in mountainous terrain. The vast concourse must have given the Canaanite confederacy a measure of confidence in victory. But numbers and equipment are of no avail against a force that has the God of heaven on its side, a fact on which Jonathan later commented to his armorbearer (1 Sam. 14:6).

Waters of Merom. Although many regard this as Lake Huleh, others think that the terrain there is too swampy for chariots and horses. For that reason they take the expression to refer to the *Wadi Meirôn* southwest of Hazor. The LXX has *Maron*, which lends support to this view. News of this great gathering at the waters of Merom soon reached Joshua at Gilgal. It is uncertain whether the Canaanites intended to attack the Hebrews. Inasmuch as their force consisted so largely of chariots and horses, it is unlikely that they would attempt to move it from the plains where alone it could be of

service. More likely, they expected to draw the Israelites to a territory they themselves had selected, where they might have the advantage. Joshua, a skillful commander, determined to take the enemy by surprise, as he had done at Gibeon. The distance from Gilgal to Merom is about 70 (112.7 km.) Josephus says that the march took five days, which may well be true, since an army with supplies moves slowly.

6. *Will I deliver.* This encouragement came the day before the Israelites were to meet the Canaanites in battle. In this statement the word “I” is emphatic: “I myself will deliver.” In this campaign God was going to be with the armies of Israel as definitely as He had been with them in the former campaign. True, the miracles might be less spectacular, but this was no evidence of a diminishing of divine help. The wonders God had wrought for Israel were not intended to lead them into inaction, rather they were to animate and encourage them to act vigorously for themselves. God would subdue the Canaanites by making Israel’s efforts effective. This would be as surely God’s work as though He had rained down great hailstones.

Miracles have often occurred at the beginning of new ventures, to provide a basis for faith and to give the assurance of divine assistance. Later they may become less frequent, not as a sign that God has forsaken His people, but as a token that He calls for greater faith to be exhibited by those who, though they have not seen, may thus learn to believe (John 20:29). In part, this principle explains the abundance of miracles at the opening of the Christian Era. But as historical evidence increases, the need for miracles decreases. Today, in the full blaze of Scriptural and historical evidence, there is sufficient basis for faith apart from any confirmatory supernatural sign. This does not mean, however, that the day of miracles is past. It is God who decides the need and the occasion for them.

Hough. The meaning of the Hebrew is to “hamstring,” that is, “to cut the large tendon above the hock.” The LXX also uses a word that means “to cut the tendon.” It was the practice of victors thus to treat the horses taken in battle, and for which they themselves had no use. Why was such a command given? Horses were used in Palestine for military purposes only, and God did not want Israel to put their trust in horses or chariots (Deut. 17:16; Ps. 20:7), but in Him alone. Furthermore, for Israel to have retained the horses would have been a double burden, since the horse is not suited for agriculture in Palestine. Israel was to be an agricultural and not a commercial people. They were not to rely on human resources for victory, nor were they to be a wandering military people with a large army. God purposed to remove such a temptation from them, and for this reason ordered the horses “hamstrung.”

7. *Suddenly.* That is, by a forced march, and before the enemy could have supposed him at hand. Joshua fell “suddenly” upon them before they had time to organize their chariots in battle array. What God commanded, Joshua did without delay.

8. *Great Zidon.* Called “great,” both here and in ch. 19:28, not as superior to another city of the same name, but to indicate its greatness from the standpoint of population and as the chief city of Phoenicia. In the time of David and Solomon, Tyre had replaced Sidon as the metropolis of Phoenicia. The route of the fleeing Canaanites can be traced in three different directions: some fled to the northwest, some to the south and southwest, others to the east. Evidently Joshua divided his army and sent them in pursuit in each of the three directions. Sidon, to which one body of the fugitives fled, was some 40 mi. (64 km.) away.

Misrephoth-maim. Literally, “a place of lime burnings at the water.” Some render it “house of gathering together of waters.” From the above it would seem that this may have been a place of hot springs rather than of salt pits or glass houses, as some have interpreted the name. It is thought to have been the same as *Khirbet el-Mushei-refeh*, about 11 mi. (18 km.) north of Acco, on the coast where there are warm springs. Other fugitives fled in this direction.

Valley of Mizpeh. A broad valley with surrounding walls. As Sidon was north as well as west, so this was north as well as east, under Mt. Hermon, from whence some of the fleeing fugitives had come (vs. 3, 17).

None remaining. The language here is not to be construed in its most literal import. Numbers of the Canaanites did undoubtedly escape the sword of the Israelites, and flee to Tyre, Sidon, and other cities. But the intent of the words is to intimate that they left none alive who fell into their hands—whomsoever they encountered or overtook they slew.

10. Hazor. See on v. 1.

11. Utterly destroying. For the meaning of the Hebrew word thus translated, see on ch. 6:17. Nothing is said about the taking of the spoils. From the context it would appear that everything, including the spoils, was burned along with the city of Hazor, whereas in the other cities the Israelites took the spoil for themselves. Inasmuch as v. 11 is seemingly a repetition of v. 10 it has been thought, by some, to describe a different event. The phrase “at that time” (v. 10) would then refer to the original investment of Hazor. Jabin, the leader of the confederacy, had fled there for refuge. Joshua took Hazor and smote the king with the sword. It is not unlikely that he reached an agreement at this time that reduced the city to a vassal state. It has also been thought that while Joshua was pursuing his victories in distant quarters the inhabitants of Hazor had revolted and resumed their independence. Verse 11, then, is believed to describe the punishment of Hazor.

13. In their strength. Literally, “on their mound.” The LXX may also be translated “which are upon mounds,” or “fenced with mounds.” The Heb. *tel*, in the text translated “strength,” in its cognate Arabic form *tell*, is a familiar word in Palestine today. It is used for the mounds of ancient cities. It was the custom, generally, to rebuild a city on its former ruins. Eventually such a process would produce a mound of considerable height. Such texts as Deut. 13:16; Joshua 8:28; Jer. 30:18; 49:2, show the genuine force of the word *tel*. From a comparison with the context it appears that the kings and the inhabitants of these various cities were all put to the sword, though the cattle and the cattle and the spoil generally went to the captors. It is not difficult to imagine the condition of one of these captured cities with its heaps of lifeless bodies, gathered spoil, and debris accumulated in the streets. Such cities could easily be spoken of as standing “on their mound,” or “on their ruinous heaps.” Not all cities were to be destroyed, however, for Israel was to dwell in “great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not” (Deut. 6:10).

15. Left nothing undone. Literally, “set aside nothing.” This text is a noble commentary on the character of Joshua. He obeyed implicitly every command of God. He had a simplicity of character that took God at His word, and then acted on that word, whether the future was all understood or not. Some men are faithful only in the things that are pleasant to them, or in things they can fully understand and are in full agreement with. But true fidelity to God aims at full compliance with His will. Personal wishes and

desires may conflict with known duty, but the surrendered soul chooses the will of God no matter how crucifying the experience may be to natural inclinations. To a noble-minded man like Joshua the work of blood and judgement must have caused great pain. But like a true soldier he respected the orders of his Commander. He left no known duty unfulfilled. It is on this point that many fail in their Christian experience. They may keep themselves from positive sin, but they leave untouched the exercise of the positive graces and requirements. Such neglect, too, is sin—sin of omission. “To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4:17).

16. The hills. See on ch. 10:40, 41.

17. Mount Halak. Literally, “smooth mountain,” or perhaps “divided mountain.” The LXX gives it the name *Chelcha*, whereas the Syriac calls it “the dividing mountain.” It is located 35 mi. southwest of the Dead Sea. The writer’s design seems to be specify the extreme southern and northern limits of the Promised Land. Joshua’s conquests extended from the borders of Seir, or Edom, where Mt. Halak was situated, northward to Baal-gad, which lies at the foot of Mt. Lebanon. This latter place some identify with Paneas or Caesarea Philippi, others with Baalbek.

18. A long time. Literally, “many days.” According to ch. 14:7–10, the conquest of Canaan must have required 6 or 7 years. Caleb, who was 40 when Moses sent him as a spy from Kadesh-barnea, about 2 years after they had left Egypt, was now 85 years old. Thus it was between 38 and 39 years from Kadesh to the time when Israel laid siege to Jericho. Subtracting 78 or 79 from 85 leaves 6 or 7 years for the campaign. It would seem that the writer, by inserting the statement here to the effect that the wars continued a long time, designed to guard the reader against the impression that, since the record of these wars is very brief, the space of time in which they were accomplished was also brief. God had given a definite reason for prolonging the time of conquest: “lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee” (Deut. 7:22). Perhaps, also, the long series of arduous struggles was designed to develop the faith of His people.

19. Not a city. This verse intimates that other cities might have made terms of peace for themselves as had the Gibeonites, if they had so desired. Although in the commands of Moses for the extermination of the Canaanites there seems to be no intimation that in case any of them surrendered to Jehovah they were to be spared, yet judging by the case of Rahab and the Gibeonites, and especially by the words of the text, this was apparently possible. If these nations, doomed to destruction, had renounced their idolatry and had come to cooperate sincerely with Israel, there would have been no danger to Israel. Thus the reason prompting the decree to destroy them would have disappeared, and consequently, we may suppose, the obligation to do so (see Jer. 18:7, 8). But apparently these heathen nations were not disposed to recognize the true God.

20. Harden their hearts. See on Ex. 4:21. God does not exercise arbitrary power to control a person against his will. The case in question has nothing to do with the free moral agency of man, which permits him to choose eternal life and does not prevent his contrary choice. God was here dealing with nations that had already refused His repeated offers of mercy. They had been given ample opportunity for repentance. Now divine justice demanded their prompt execution (see PP 492) and selected the means of their extermination (see Additional Note on ch. 6).

God might have chosen other means for the accomplishment of His judgments upon these nations. His choice of the arms of Israel as His instrument of destruction was for the

benefit of the Israelites. They needed to be brought face to face with various tests that would try their faith and prepare them to fulfill their high spiritual destiny. Their failure at Kadesh and the resultant delay in their entry into Canaan had greatly increased the difficulties of the invasion. The Canaanitish nations were thus given ample time to build up their defenses and to prepare their military forces. God intended the extended conquest to be for the discipline of His people, to help them to overcome where formerly they had failed (see PP 437).

No favour. This implies that had these nations repented, God would have shown them favor. Such an attitude is in harmony with His character as expressed in Eze. 33:11 and 2 Peter 3:9. On the other hand, God has a right to destroy those who, having had opportunity for salvation, have not taken advantage of it. Thus He will deal with the finally impenitent. No one may deny Him the right to do the same at any other period in history.

21. At that time. That is, at the time of the continuance of the war as described above. This cannot be merely a recapitulation of the military operations described in ch. 10:36–41. In many cases territory once conquered was reoccupied by the original inhabitants on the withdrawal of the victorious Israelites, and had to be recovered by further conquests. This was the case with Hebron and the towns in its vicinity, Debir and Anab (see Joshua 11:21; 15:15–17; Judges 1:19, 20). The cutting off of the sons of Anak is particularly mentioned, because they had been a terror to the spies 40 years before. The spies had represented their size and strength as an insuperable barrier to the conquest of Canaan (Num. 13:28, 33).

The Anakims. A race of gigantic stature, these may have been either aboriginals or very early immigrants from the region of the east. At first they settled on the eastern side of Jordan, but subsequently occupied the hill country of Judea and the coast cities later taken by the Philistines.

22. Only in Gaza. Though these Anakim were now for the most part subdued, yet numbers of them escaped and took refuge in the country and cities that later belonged to the Philistines, and settled there. Goliath and other giants seem to have descended from them. From here they appear to have returned and again occupied Hebron (ch. 15:13, 14) before Israel was able to subdue the land. Years later after Joshua's death, they were again driven out by Caleb and Othniel (Judges 1:9, 10).

23. Whole land. The Heb. *kol*, "whole," often does not imply what might at first seem to be its meaning. It cannot here be understood in the absolute sense, for the Lord Himself told Joshua, "There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed" (ch. 13:1). Joshua had made a military conquest of the land, and there was now no unified resistance. It was not God's plan to exterminate the Canaanites immediately, and to do so was not a part of Joshua's military program. Before the conquest could be completed to its full extent, it was necessary to divide the land among the tribes of Israel and make provision for the peaceful settlement of the tribes in the land already conquered. But the Canaanites were so thoroughly defeated and dispirited that they dared not offer any further resistance.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–23PP 510, 511

4–6, 8, 11PP 510

23 PP 511

CHAPTER 12

1 *The two kings whose countries Moses took and disposed of. 7 The one and thirty kings on the other side Jordan which Joshua smote.*

1. *These are the kings.* The writer is about to enter upon a particular account of the distribution of the land among the tribes. He here pauses to give a short summary of the work that has been done. In this summary the accomplishments of Moses are recorded along with those of Joshua. Inspiration points out how God uses many instruments in the carrying forward of His work, and that He is not dependent on any one man. The chapter gives a brief account of the victories of Israel, together with the defeats inflicted upon the Canaanites.

Chapter 12 describes the extent of the conquest and shows the land that now lay open for settlement. Verses 1–6 describe the territory to the east of Jordan and the list of kings conquered by Moses, and the remainder of the chapter is occupied with a catalog of those on the west of Jordan that were reduced by Joshua. In this summary we see traced both the course and the end of those who resist God. Both the narrow road and the broad way are pointed out in this lesson. That of Israel was the path of obedience, under divine direction. But the pathway of obedience was not always easy. It often meant going forward in spite of great obstacles. Hesitation would have meant failure and loss. But Israel's history at this time was marked by patient and steadfast endurance. On the part of the Canaanites, their course was marked by rebellion. They said, "Who is lord over us?" and hardened themselves against God's will and the revelation of Himself through Israel. They fought it out to the bitter end, learning no lesson and refusing to yield. All through this war of conquest Israel had as their hope a divine inheritance, and all the glory and honor that it implied. As for the Canaanites, they were without God and without hope.

Arnon. This river was the boundary between the kingdoms of Sihon and Moab (Num. 21:13), and formed the southern boundary of Israel to the east of Jordan. The river rises in the mountains of what is now the Kingdom of Jordan and enters the Dead Sea at about the midpoint of its eastern side. It forms a deep gorge, both banks of which were fortified in the period of Joshua.

Mount Hermon. This mountain is a short distance south and a little west of Damascus. The territory between Mt. Hermon and the Arnon comprised the deep valley of the Jordan and the plateau to the east, whose borders are lost in the eastern desert.

All the plain on the east. Literally, "all the Arabah eastward." The Arabah is the entire deep rift extending south from the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan valley as far as the Gulf of Aqabah. However, this description would include only the area south as far as the river Arnon and east of the river Jordan.

2. *Aroer.* This city stood on the north bank of the river Arnon and was later allotted to the tribe of Reuben (ch. 13:9, 16).

Gilead. This territory included the highland grazing ground east of the Jordan from the river Yarmuk to the river Arnon. The river Jabbok divided it in two. Sihon ruled the half of Gilead south of the river Jabbok.

3. *Plain.* Heb. *arabah*, the depression through which the Jordan flows (see on chs. 11:2; 12:1). Beth-jeshimoth, literally, the "house of desolation," was about 5 mi. east of the Jordan in a desert section near the Dead Sea called Jeshimon, or the "waste" district.

From the south. Rather, "southward," that is, from Beth-jeshimoth, to below Ashdodth-pisgah, literally, "the ravines of Pisgah." The author here points out that the Arabah

turns southward, east of the Dead Sea, in the area below the ravines of the mountains. Pisgah was a familiar landmark—the place where Moses went to view Canaan. This verse concludes the description of the extent of Sihon's kingdom.

4. Bashan. An area east of the Sea of Chinnereth and extending south from the Pharpar River to the Yarmuk, the border of Gilead. Og also ruled the northern half of the Gilead to the Jabbok River.

Giants. Heb. *repha'im*. The derivation of this word is uncertain. The Rephaim were the aboriginal inhabitants of Ammon, Moab, Edom, and Canaan. Og was one of the last of this race. Other remnants lived around Hebron and were known as Anakim (see on Gen. 14:5).

Ashtaroath. The Hebrew plural for Ashtaroath (Astarte), a goddess of sex and war. The city was a center of Astarte worship in the kingdom of Og, and has been identified as *Tell 'Ashtarah*, situated about 20 mi. (32.2 km.) east of the Sea of Galilee. It was one of Og's royal cities.

Edrei. One of Og's royal cities on the plateau southeast of the Sea of Galilee. It was the place where Og was slain by the Israelites (Num. 21:33–35; Deut. 3:1–3). The king dwelt in both Edrei and Ashtarot probably using one city for his summer home and the other for his winter home.

5. Salcah. Og ruled as far north as Mt. Hermon and as far east as Salcah, which was in the mountains on the far east border of his kingdom.

Geshurites. An Aramaean tribe living on Og's western border, east of the Sea of Galilee. They were not expelled by the Israelites (ch. 13:13), and continued their independence until the time of David.

Maachathites. A tribe living immediately north of the Geshurites, to the east of Lake Huleh and overlooking its marshes. Their principal town was Abel-beth-maachah, identified with the mound *Tell Abil*. The city was prominent in the days of David (see 2 Sam. 20:14–22). Israel did not expel the Maachathites, who continued to dwell there (Joshua 13:13). Og's kingdom extended from Mt. Hermon in the north to the river Jabbok on the south, and from Salcah in the extreme east to the Geshurites and Maachathites in the west, but did not include any part of the Arabah.

7. These are the kings. Here begins an enumeration of the kings of the country to the west of Jordan whom Joshua smote. The details of their slaughter were recorded in earlier chapters.

8. In the mountains. This verse, in striking contrast, describes the general features of the country of Palestine with its rich variety of soils. It was the land “flowing with milk and honey” that God appointed for Israel. Today, by contrast, the land, except where irrigated, is one of the most barren countries.

Hittites. These were the descendants of Canaan, the wayward son of Ham (Gen. 9:25; see on ch. 10:15). Deut. 7:1 lists seven nations that were to be cast out. This verse mentions only six, the Girgashites being omitted. It has been suggested that the Girgashites had by now either been incorporated with some of these other nations or, according to the tradition of the Jews, had withdrawn to Africa upon the approach of Israel under Joshua, leaving their country to be possessed by Israel. The Girgashites inhabited the country to the north of the lake Gennesaret, or Galilee, and are supposed to have migrated in a body on the approach of the Israelites.

9. King of Jericho. Here and in the following verses the vanquished kings are enumerated, generally in the order in which they were conquered. There are 31 of them, which, together with the 2 on the east side of the Jordan, make a total list of 33. A large proportion of these kings have already been mentioned in previous chapters. The most important of the new names are Geder, Hormah, Arad, and Adullam, all belonging to the southern league.

13. Geder. Probably the same as Gedor (1 Chron. 4:39), a town in southern Simeon.

14. Hormah. The name, meaning “devoted to destruction,” was given the city after it had incurred this fate. Its earlier name was Zephath (Judges 1:17). Its site is unknown, but is believed to have been not far from Beersheba. We read of Hormah in Moses’ time (Num. 14:45; Deut. 1:44). It was the place to which the Israelites were driven by the Amalekites and the Canaanites, when, after the rebellion at Kadesh on the report of the spies, the Israelites obstinately persisted in attacking the inhabitants in spite of Moses’ emphatic warning (Num. 14:40–45).

Arad. This place is mentioned as destroyed by Moses in punishment for an unprovoked attack made upon the Israelites when they approached that neighborhood (Num. 21:1–3). The spot is easily identified. On a plateau 17 mi. (28 km.) south by east of Hebron, and the same east of Beersheba, is an eminence, with remains of a reservoir and ancient pottery upon it, called *Tell–‘Arâd*. It likely represents the site of the city then destroyed.

15. Adullam. A town southwest of Jerusalem, about halfway between it and Lachish, now known as *Khirbet esh–Sheikh Madhkûr*. It is best known for its cave, in which David found refuge (1 Sam. 22:1).

16. Beth-el. Bethel was doubtless taken during this campaign, though the details of the conquest are not given.

17. Tappuah. Identified with *Sheikh Abû Zarad*, 7 7/8 mi. (12.6 km.) south-southwest of Shechem. Lasharon may be a city unidentified, or may be the Plain of Sharon. Aphek is generally believed to be the Antipatris of the NT (Acts 23:31), 29 mi. (46.6 km.) from Jerusalem on the road to Caesarea.

21. Taanach. Several towns connected with the northern league, not previously mentioned, are next listed. Among them are two frequently named together, Taanach and Megiddo. Megiddo is in the great plain of Jezreel, whereas Taanach is only a short distance to the southeast, on the border of the plain. The site of Megiddo is now called *Tell el–Mutesellim*. Its strategic location gave it historic importance. Taanach is now called *Tell Ta‘annak*.

22. Kedesh. Also called “Kedesh in Galilee” (Joshua 20:7). This is thought to be a fortified Canaanite hill center northwest of the former Lake Huleh. It was the home of Barak, the general under Deborah who fought Sisera, and the place where he assembled his troops on that occasion (Judges 4:6, 9, 10).

Jokneam. Another town not previously named, on a tributary of the brook Kishon about 14 mi. (23 km.) from the Carmel promontory and commanding the pass across the ridge. It is now known as *Tell Qeimûn*.

23. Nations of Gilgal. This does not refer to the camp in the Jordan valley, but probably to a place now known as *Jiljûlieh* in the Plain of Sharon, 14 mi. (22.5 km.)

northeast of Joppa. This seems to have been the headquarters of certain mixed and nomadic tribes, here called “nations.”

24. Tirzah. A city highly celebrated in later Jewish history as the capital of Jeroboam and his successors. From the beauty of its situation it was taken by poets as the type of all that is lovely. It has been tentatively identified as *Tell el-Fâr‘ah*, “mound of the elevated ridge,” about 7 mi. (11 km.) northeast of Nablus. The existence of so many kings in so small a territory shows that their kingdoms must have been comparatively small. Many kings in ancient times ruled over a territory no larger than that represented by a village or a town. These towns were independent of one another, and each had its own local chief.

CHAPTER 13

1 The bounds of the land not yet conquered. 8 The inheritance of the two tribes and half. 14, 33 The Lord and his sacrifices are the inheritance of Levi. 15 The bounds of the inheritance of Reuben. 22 Balaam slain. 24 The bounds of the inheritance of Gad, 29 and of the half tribe of Manasseh.

1. Joshua was old. This chapter is generally considered to be the beginning of the second part of the book of Joshua. The first part has given a history of the conquest of the land. The second part deals with the division of the land among the conquerors.

Literally the first clause reads, “Joshua had aged and was advanced in days.” This statement was made some time before his death at 110 years of age (ch. 24:29). At times the Hebrew word translated “old” seems to be used with respect to the state of vitality rather than with respect to the number of years men lived. Gen. 27:1 states, “Isaac was old,” that is, he had aged; yet he lived 43 years after that. Likewise, it is said concerning David, “the king was very old” (1 Kings 1:15), but he could not have been more than about 70 when he died. The hardships and anxieties of the king’s life had aged him. In many countries 50 or 60 years is considered a great age. So it was, perhaps, with Joshua. His strenuous life as a warrior and leader of Israel, and the intenseness of the last years of conquest, had probably aged him, perhaps somewhat suddenly. His energies may have failed rather rapidly after his long course of active and anxious military service, so that he was glad to hear God utter the word that called for a halt in the campaign, to apportion the land. He may himself have been wondering how he would live to carry through the campaigns yet necessary to place the children of Israel in full possession of the land. As God’s true servant, Joshua had been willing to “spend and be spent.”

We have no definite information as to Joshua’s age at this time, but Josephus (*Antiquities* v. 1. 29) asserts that he was associated with Moses for 40 years, and that after his master’s death he governed Israel for 25 years. Since he died at the age of 110, this would have made him 85 years old at the death of Moses and about 45 years of age at the time of the Exodus. Comparing this with the stated age of Caleb (see on ch. 11:18 and Introduction, p. 172), Joshua would have been about 92 years of age at this time, that is, if we can rely on the figures of Josephus.

There remaineth. The military conquest in general was completed. Now it remained for the Israelites to possess the land. So far they had settled comparatively little of it. For the present there seemed to be no point in proceeding with the military campaigns, because often as soon as the armies of Israel had gone the vanquished people would move back and repossess the land. The plan was for the tribes, after they were established in their inheritance, to extend their own territories. Many battles remained yet to be

fought in order to complete the possession, but God's blessing in the past was an assurance for the future.

So it is in the spiritual warfare. The work of overcoming the defects of character is progressive. The dispossessing of enemies from the heart is a continuous struggle. Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary and cultivated tendencies toward evil.

It is important to mark clearly the distinction between the work done by Joshua and the work left for Israel. Joshua overthrew the ruling powers and defeated their armies to such an extent that Israel was given a firm foothold in the country. But he did not exterminate the population from every portion of the country. Some nations were left entirely intact (Judges 2:20–23; 3:1–4). In the conquest and in the expansion the rules laid down in the law of Moses were to be the guiding principle. The 7th and 12th chapters of Deuteronomy set forth three main rules that the children of Israel were to follow: (1) utter extermination of the nations Jehovah should deliver into their hands; (2) no covenant or treaty to be made with them, and all intermarriage prohibited; (3) the destruction of all traces of idolatry in the conquered territory. The responsibility of the first of these was upon the leaders; the second and third, upon all the people. It is obvious that the persistent and general destruction of objects of Canaanitish worship, with the refusal to make treaties or intermarry, would tend to perpetuate a state of irritation in the minds of the Canaanites. Had these rules been faithfully observed, there would probably have been constant outbreaks of hostility, terminating in the further and more rapid extermination of the enemies of Israel, or else in their absolute submission to Israelite law. Thus the entire conquest might have been completed in a comparatively short time.

The manner of the ancient conquest may be taken to illustrate a spiritual truth. In the Christian warfare, not only may many battles against sin remain to be fought, even after years of warfare, but there may also be much territory of truth yet to be occupied. We have not yet secured all the sacred knowledge which God would teach us from His Word, and which would be profitable for us. Many Christians are in danger of relying on the conquests of some "Joshua," rather than making fresh explorations for themselves in the unexplored mines of truth.

2. *Yet remaineth.* The author proceeds to enumerate the unconquered areas to the west of Jordan (vs. 2–6). He begins at the south and proceeds north and northeast to Lebanon.

Borders of the Philistines. Literally, "circles of the Philistines." The expression probably refers to the patches of cultivated ground extending around each of the cities, which we might call "districts." The LXX reads *horia*, "regions." The Philistines were not Canaanites, but were descended from Mizraim, through Casluhim (Gen. 10:6, 13, 14; 1 Chron. 1:8, 11, 12; see on Gen. 10:14). In Gen. 21:32, 34; Gen. 26:1, 8, the Philistines are named as already inhabiting the neighborhood of Gerar, in the extreme southwestern part of Palestine, and in Gen. 10:14 as relatives of "the Caphtorims, which came forth out of Caphtor," destroying "the Avims" and establishing themselves northward to Azzah (afterward Gaza) in what was subsequently known as "the land of the Philistines." They are mentioned by the prophets as coming from Caphtor (Jer. 47:4; Amos 9:7). At the present time there is no archeological evidence of the Philistines living in the coastal cities until about 1200 B.C. At that time they are reported to have attempted a landing in Egypt but were driven off by Ramses III, in connection with the great movement of "Sea

Peoples,” which led to the downfall of the Hittite empire. However, in a number of instances the Biblical record names the Philistines as already in this coastal territory as early as the days of Abraham. There were probably repeated waves of migration from the island of Caphtor, the last or perhaps major one being about 1200 B.C., the only one attested by archeology. Further excavations may bring additional information to light.

Geshuri. These are not to be confused with the Geshurites northeast of the Sea of Galilee. The Geshuri inhabited a district lying to the south of the Philistines, on the way to Egypt or Arabia (1 Sam. 27:8).

3. Sihor. From the Hebrew form of the Egyptian *Shi-hor*, “Pond of Horus,” which appears in Egyptian documents as a body of water at the eastern border of the Delta. Its exact location is unknown. The LXX reads, “from the uninhabited area which is before Egypt.” In certain other places in the Bible (Joshua 15:4, 47; Gen. 15:18; Num. 34:5; 1 Kings 8:65; Isa. 27:12) the expression “river of Egypt” or “stream of Egypt” is used. But these do not refer to the river Nile, because in the Hebrew the word *nahal*, “a winter torrent,” is used. Also in Jer. 2:18 and 1 Chron. 13:5 Sihor, or Shihor, is used in a way decisively eliminating the Nile. Some think the Sihor to be the brook that runs into the sea at the extreme southern border of Palestine. It flows through a broad, shallow wadi, or valley, that drains the seasonal surplus water from the Wilderness of Paran into the Mediterranean. It is known today as *Wadi el-Arish*, and is about 47 mi. (75 km.) southwest of Gaza.

Ekron. Site uncertain, but assigned most recently to *Khirbet el-Muqanna'*, about 11 mi. (17.7 km.) east-northeast of Ashdod, nearer that city than formerly supposed. This territory is probably “counted to the Canaanite” because its original possessors were descendants of Canaan, the youngest of Ham’s sons. However, the Caphtorim dispossessed the Avites who held this territory (see on Gen. 10:14), and dwelt there in their stead (see Deut. 2:23).

Lords. See on Judges 3:3. The word translated “lords” is peculiar to the Philistines. It literally means “axle,” and, in view of the phrase referred to above, “circles of the Philistines” (see on v. 2), is very fitting. These “lords” were heads rather than kings.

Avites. Literally, “ruin dwellers.” These may have been the aborigines of the area around and to the south of the Philistines who preceded the Canaanites, and were dispossessed by the Caphtorim (see Deut. 2:22, 23).

4. From the south. It cannot be definitely determined whether this phrase should go with the preceding or succeeding verses. The LXX and the Syriac connect it with what follows, which seems to make the better sense. The LXX employs for south the proper name, and translates it, “from Theman,” which was the southern limit of Avite territory.

Mearah. Literally, “cave.” The verse may be translated “and the cave that belongs to the Sidonians.” This cave has been thought to be the cave between Tyre and Sidon, called *Mughār Jezzīn*, where a number of grottoes are hewn out of the limestone rocks of Lebanon. Another tentative identification is *Mogheiriyeh*, about 5 1/2 mi. (9 km.) northeast of Sidon. With this verse the writer turns to the northern unconquered areas.

Aphek. Apparently the northern Aphek (ch. 19:30), now Afka, northeast of Beirut. Not to be confused with the Aphek of ch. 12:18. Called by the Greeks *Aphaka*, it was near the source of the Adonis River. It was in the lot that fell to Asher.

Borders of the Amorites. That is, the land once inhabited by the Amorites, which belonged to Og, king of Bashan. It extended north of the central and upper Yarmuk River.

5. *Giblites.* Heb. *gibli*, translated “stone-squarers” in 1 Kings 5:18. These people inhabited Gebal, an important Phoenician seaport. This city, called Byblos by the Greeks, was 17 1/2 mi. (28.2 km.) north by east from Beirut. From this it is evident that God intended Israel to occupy territory much farther to the north than they actually later conquered. In fact, He had declared that the Euphrates was to be their boundary (Gen. 15:18; Deut. 11:24).

Lebanon, toward the sunrising. The eastern range, that is, the Anti-Lebanon.

Baal-gad. Literally, “lord of fortune.” All the kings south of Baal-gad had been conquered (see on ch. 11:17 and 12:7). Now the reference is to the unconquered territory north from Baal-gad.

The entering into Hamath. Investigation has shown that when the Hebrew word *lebo*’, “entering,” is used with the name Hamath it refers to an ancient city known today as *Lebweh*, 70 mi. (113 km.) south-southwest of *Hamā*, the Biblical Hamath. Ancient Egyptian texts frequently mention the city, which was at that time a dependency of Hamath.

The northern border of Israel is described as extending to the “entering in of Hamath” (Judges 3:3; 1 Kings 8:65; see Num. 34:8; 2 Kings 14:25). There were times when the border of Israel actually extended that far, as in the reign of Solomon and also in the reign of Jeroboam II.

6. *The hill country.* The mountains of southern Lebanon and upper Galilee.

Misrephoth-maim. See on ch. 11:8.

All the Sidonians. All the heathen tribes dwelling south of the Lebanon as far as the promontory of *Rās en-Nakūrah*, or Misrephoth-maim, *Khirbet el-Musheirefeh*.

Will I drive out. The original is emphatic, “It is I that will drive them out.” This promise, however, like other similar declarations, is to be understood conditionally. If the Israelites would go forward by faith as Joshua had done, God would fight for them and give them victory. But Israel failed to press their conquests to completion. Some of the very people whom God had promised to drive out but did not, for lack of Israel’s cooperation, became the source of Israel’s greatest irritation and shame in later years (see Num. 33:55; Judges 2:1–5; 10:6–9; 13:1; 1 Sam. 4). Israel failed to carry out their part of the agreement, and the promise remained unfulfilled. An unfulfilled promise of God to us should cause us to inquire diligently into the cause. God does not intend that the word that has gone out of His mouth shall return unto Him void (Isa. 55:11).

Divide thou it by lot. Literally, “cause thou it to fall for an inheritance.” The phraseology is evidently derived from the method of casting lots by which its distribution was governed. Though still only partially conquered, the great Proprietor would have His people consider the country even now as theirs. As a pledge of the sincerity of His purpose to give the entire land to them, He directs that without further delay it be divided among the tribes.

8. *With whom.* That is, with the other half of the tribe of Manasseh. Literally the phrase reads, “with him,” a personal rather than a relative pronoun. The words of the Lord direct to Joshua close with v. 7. The author uses the pronoun in order to avoid the

repetition of “the half tribe of Manasseh.” So that the reader might understand the reason for the omission of the two and a half tribes in the new distribution, the writer explains (vs. 8–14) that they have already been provided for. The restatement of the fact here, in the formal record of the division of the land, would serve to ratify the grant formerly made by Moses.

9. Medeba. The modern *Mâdebā*, a town east of the Jordan about 40 mi. (65 km.) south of Jerash (Gerasa) and about 15 mi. (24 km.) southeast of the north end of the Dead Sea. Medeba is mentioned in connection with Dibon as having been conquered by Israel (Num. 21:30).

Dibon. This town was 15 mi. (24 km.) directly south of Medeba and 3 1/4 mi. (5 km.) northwest of Aroer, on the river Arnon. It was taken by Israel at an early period and rebuilt by Gad. It was here that the famous Moabite Stone was discovered in 1868. The site is now called *Dhibân*.

10. Border of the children of Ammon. This was northeast of the kingdom of Heshbon. Ammon lay in the watershed of the Jabbok River. It was bounded on the west by Gad and Manasseh, and on the east by the desert, with its northern boundary probably being the southern branch of the Yarmuk River.

11. Geshurites and Maachathites. See on ch. 12:5.

12. Giants. See on ch. 12:4.

14. Levi. The statement that Levi was to receive no inheritance among the tribes is given here at the end of the account regarding the two and a half tribes, and is repeated in v. 33 and again in ch. 14:3, 14:4 God gave them no inheritance, because the tithes of the whole country were to be theirs instead of a portion of the land (Num. 18:20–24). They were also to receive of the offerings (Num. 18; Deut. 18:1, 2). They had as indisputable a right to the tithes and allotted offerings as their brethren had to the land. The priests and Levites could not at once perform the duties of the priesthood, teach the people, and perform other spiritual duties if they were to be burdened with land, cattle, business, and warfare. As it was not in God’s plan to have the Levites take their share of the tithes and at the same time carry on farming or commercial enterprises, so today God asks those dedicated to the ministry to give their full energies to the advancement of the kingdom of heaven.

Sacrifices. Heb. *’ishsheh*, always translated “offering made by fire,” or “sacrifice made by fire.” However, in Lev. 24:7, 9, the shewbread is spoken of as an offering made by fire, yet it was to be eaten by the priests. Hence the word does not necessarily mean that the sacrifices thus designated were always to be consumed with fire.

15. Reuben. Having set forth in general the territory that Moses had assigned to the two tribes and a half, Joshua proceeded to set down the particular boundaries of each tribe. The territory of Reuben was first defined.

16. Aroer. See on ch. 12:2.

Medeba. See on v. 9. From vs. 16–21 the author enumerates in detail the various cities and territories that formed part of the inheritance of Reuben.

19. Zareth-shahar. Meaning “Sereth of the dawn.” This place is unidentified, perhaps near the Dead Sea. Apparently it was on a hill in a valley, probably the Jordan Valley. The name of this place may be preserved in the modern *Zārât*.

21. *With the princes.* The preposition “with” is not in the original. The Hebrew does not say that Moses smote them at the same time he smote Sihon, but only that they were smitten, as well as Sihon.

Dukes of Sihon. Also called princes in this same verse. In Num. 31:8 they are called “kings.” However, in the sacred writings a “king” may be no more than a petty chieftain, perhaps himself subject to some more powerful ruler. In this verse they are called “dukes,” or princes, of Sihon, because they were subject and tributaries to Sihon and assisted him in war. It is probable that when Sihon destroyed the Moabites who dwelt in these parts, he found some of the nomad Midianites living there, placed them under subjection, and forced them to pay tribute. For this reason they may here be called “dukes of Sihon.” The conquest of the Midianites by Israel is recorded in Num. 31. The orders were given to “avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites” (Num. 31:2), because the Midianites had tempted Israel to idolatry and immorality. This verse supplies us with a further reason for hostilities between them and Israel. They were a part of Sihon’s government. In order for the subjugation of Sihon’s territory to be completed, it was necessary to remove Sihon’s dukes or princes. The connection between the Midianites and the Moabites is seen in earlier Israelitic history (see Num. 22:4). An existing relationship between Midian and Moab, which is implied but not explained in Num. 31, is attested by the incidental remark here. It is another example of historical agreement between the book of Joshua and the Pentateuch.

22. *The soothsayer.* Balaam was at one time a prophet of God, but sold himself for reward and honor, and degraded his position as a prophet until he became known as a soothsayer. After returning home from his unsuccessful attempt to curse the camp of Israel, Balaam decided to resort to other means to obtain the reward offered by Balak. Returning to the land of Moab, he persuaded the Moabites to entice the children of Israel into idolatry and immorality. The plan was successful. For thus opposing God’s people Balaam shared the fate of God’s enemies in the destruction that fell upon the Midianites (Num. 25:16–18).

25. *Jazer.* This city was snatched from the Amorites (Num. 21:32), and given to Gad upon his request (Num. 32:1, 2). Later the place became a Levitical city (ch. 21:39). The town was in Ammon, or on its border, a short distance north or northwest of Rabbath-ammon, the modern Amman. The region was excellent for grazing.

Cities of Gilead. That is, the cities of the southern part of Gilead, as far as the Jabbok. The other half of Gilead, which belonged to the king of Bashan rather than Sihon, fell, as we learn from v. 31, to the half tribe of Manasseh (see ch. 12:2). The border of Gad extended farther east than did that of Reuben. The northern border of Gad was the river Jabbok west to the Arabah and then north to the Sea of Chinnereth (Deut. 3:16, 17). Gad evidently was given the plain of Jordan north of the Jabbok and east of the river Jordan.

Ammon. The children of Israel had already been expressly forbidden to meddle with the country of Ammon (Deut. 2:19).

Unto Aroer. This Aroer is not to be confused with Aroer of Reuben on the northern bank of the Arnon (chs. 12:2; 13:9, 16). It is “before” Rabbah, Rabbath-ammon. Some taking “before” in the sense of “east of,” place Aroer east of Rabbah; others, taking it in its time sense, see it as a place reached earlier by one coming from the Jordan, hence west of Rabbah.

26. *Heshbon.* See on Num. 21:25.

Ramath-mizpeh. Literally, “height of the lookout point.” The site, somewhere in the highlands north of the Jabbok, is today unknown unless it is Ramoth-gilead, probably 30 mi. (48 km.) east of Beth-shan, at *Tell er Rumeith* (Rāmīth). It was on the northern border of Gad.

Betonim. A site near Ramath-mizpeh, forming a north point in the boundary of Gad, somewhere near the Jabbok, identified with *Khirbet Batneh*, near *es-Salt*.

Mahanaim. Not as yet definitely identified. This city was east of the Jordan, probably on the banks of the river Jabbok, built on the spot where Jacob saw the camps of angels (Gen. 32:1, 2, 22). It was situated on the border of Gad and Manasseh. Somewhere near Mahanaim lay Debir, which is probably identical with Lo-debar, the home of Machir, who helped to provide David with necessary supplies when he fled from his son Absalom (2 Sam. 17:27).

27. In the valley. The boundary of the kingdom of Heshbon not only went north as far as the Jabbok but also took in the Jordan valley as far north as the Sea of Chinnereth. All this territory was given to the children of Gad, although maps generally show Manasseh’s inheritance as extending all the way to the river Jordan.

Succoth, and Zaphon. These are the only two cities of the four mentioned in v. 27 that have been identified. All these cities, of course, were in the upper Jordan valley. Succoth lay on a highland site near the river Jabbok and has been identified as *Tell Deir‘allā*, a whitish mound 60 ft. (18.3 m.) high. Zaphon may be identified with *Tell el-Qôš*. Zaphon is on the north side of the Rajeb River north of Succoth and south of Zaretan.

29. Manasseh. As far as can be observed, Manasseh did not formally request this inheritance to the east of Jordan, as did Reuben and Gad (Num. 32:1, 2). Probably it was thought fit to join them with the other two tribes because of the large population of the tribe of Manasseh (Num. 26:34). It is also likely that they had a large number of cattle, as did the other two tribes. The Manassites were good warriors, and perhaps Moses felt it would be well to have them to the east of Jordan as an outer guard, especially the families of Machir and Jair (See Deut. 3:14, 15).

30. From Mahanaim. See v. 26. The territory of Gad went from this point in toward the Jordan and the Sea of Chinnereth, whereas the territory of Manasseh lay toward the northeast.

Bashan. The grain country east of the Sea of Chinnereth.

The towns of Jair. Literally, “the dwelling places of Jair.” Jair’s grandmother was of the tribe of Manasseh, but his grandfather was Hezron, a grandson of Judah through Tamar (1 Chron. 2:18-22). Still he was reckoned with the tribe of Manasseh because he was the grandchild of the daughter of Machir, the son of Manasseh. Associated with the valiant Manassites, and with their help, he took many cities (Num. 32:40, 41; Deut. 3:4, 14). Another Jair, who judged Israel two centuries after the time of Joshua, may have been a descendant of this Jair (see Judges 10:3-5). Originally, there were 23 “towns of Jair.”

31. And half Gilead. That is, the other half not given to the Gadites (v. 25). North Gilead was part of the kingdom of Og.

Ashtaroth, and Edrei. See on ch. 12:4.

Children of Machir. The same as those previously called the children of Manasseh. They are now called the children of Machir, because Machir was the first-born and only son of Manasseh (Num. 26:29; 1 Chron. 7:14–16). Thus the “children of Machir” are the Manassites. For the other half of Machir’s children, see Joshua 17:1–6.

33. Tribe of Levi. Again mention is made of the fact that Levi received no inheritance. This is a repetition of v. 14, and the statement is again repeated in ch. 14:3, 4, and in ch. 18:7. This frequent repetition was probably to help the people remember their obligation to the Levites. It may also have been designed to impress the members of the tribe of Levi that they were the ministers of the Lord and that their life was to be devoted to the service of God. God would care for them through the arrangement made concerning the tithes and offerings. Therefore, they should not be concerned over the fact that they received no inheritance.

CHAPTER 14

¹ *The nine tribes and a half are to have their inheritance by lot. 6 Caleb by privilege obtaineth Hebron.*

1. These are the countries. The words “are the countries” are supplied. I would be as correct to read, these “are the inheritances,” or these “are those who inherited.” The LXX has for the opening sentence of this verse, “these are they of the children of Israel that received their inheritance.” This chapter is a preface to the division of the land among the nine and a half tribes. The time had come for the Israelites to disperse themselves and to take over their new conquests. Canaan would have been subdued in vain, if it was not now inhabited. Centuries had passed since the call of Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees, and since the promise that his seed should inherit the land. God’s promises are sometimes long delayed because of the unfaithfulness of those to whom they are made. It is our privilege to hasten the fulfillment of His promises.

Eleazar. Literally, “God has helped.” Eleazar was Aaron’s third son and successor in the high priesthood (Ex. 6:23, 25; Num. 3:2, 4; 20:25–28; Deut. 10:6). The order in which the names appear is not Joshua and Eleazar, but the reverse. The naming of Eleazar first is in accordance with the law of Moses, and the form of government that he was ordered to establish in Israel. God was to be supreme through His priest. Joshua was to stand before Eleazar (Num. 27:21), and the priest was to ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord. At Eleazar’s word both Joshua and the congregation were to go out and come in (see Deut. 17:9). Under the system of government established in Israel by Moses, the priest, under the direction of God, had the legislative authority, and the executive power rested with the judge. Such a system is known as a theocracy. As long as the priest depended wholly on God, the arrangement was ideal. On the other hand, a corrupt priesthood could take control and endanger the whole realm. The theocratic form of government ceased when Israel as a nation was rejected. The system has never been revived.

Heads of the fathers. The names of these are found in Num. 34:19–28. No prince was taken from the tribes of Reuben and Gad, because these had already received their inheritance on the other side of Jordan.

2. Lot. Literally, “pebble,” the name evidently preserved from the primitive method of casting lots by the use of a pebble. Rabbinical scholars have a conjecture that two urns were used. In one had been placed little tablets (anciently perhaps stones) with the names of the tribes, and in the other, similar tablets with the names of the districts, and one of

each was drawn at the same time by Eleazar and Joshua or by the representative of each tribe when his turn arrived. There is, of course, no verification for this story. There may have been only one urn containing the names of the districts, which the heads of the several tribes may have drawn. The exact method employed is not known. It seems evident that the land so divided could only point out the districts in general. The extent of their boundaries had to be decided by the leaders of the people. A larger tribe would require more territory, and a smaller tribe, less. This was the rule specified by the Lord (Num. 26:51–56; 33:54). The whole distribution was evidently overruled by special providence so that it would correspond with the inspired predictions of Jacob and Moses respecting the allotment of each tribe (Gen. 49 and Deut. 33). To Judah fell a country abounding in vineyards and pastures; to Zebulun, seacoasts; to Issachar, a rich plain between ranges of mountains; to Asher, one abounding in oil, wheat, and metals; and so to the others.

4. Two tribes. The Levites were not reckoned among the tribes as far as inheritance was concerned. Their dwelling was to be among all the tribes. One of the sons of Joseph took his place so as to make up the number 12 in the reckoning of the tribes. Thus there are two ways of enumerating the tribes of Israel, each yielding the total 12. It has been suggested that these two systems may have been distinguished in the account given in Ex. 28. Mention is there made that the high priest should bear the names of the children of Israel on his shoulders according to birth (that is, Joseph being counted as well as Levi, but not Ephraim and Manasseh). On his breastplate these names were to appear according to the 12 tribes (that is, Ephraim and Manasseh being specified but Joseph and Levi left out).

Suburbs. Literally, “pastures.” The Hebrew word comes from a root that means “to drive out.” Therefore, literally, the suburbs were places to which cattle were driven to graze. Num. 35:1–5 gives the size of these pasture grounds.

6. In Gilgal. Where the tabernacle and the camp of Israel were still located, for Joshua had not removed his camp from here. The work of dividing the land began in Gilgal. It was completed later in Shiloh (ch. 18). Considerable time must have been required to make all the geographical measurements and observations necessary for the proper and equitable division of the land.

Caleb. An interesting question arises as to the birth and parentage of Caleb. He is always spoken of as the son of Jephunneh, and so must not be confused with the other Calebs referred to in 1 Chron. 2. His younger brother, Othniel, is called the son of Kenaz (Judges 1:13), and here Caleb is called the Kenezite. It may be that Othniel was the son of Caleb’s stepfather. Or, more likely, Kenaz and Caleb were brothers, for the Hebrew can be understood in that way. That would make Othniel a nephew of Caleb rather than brother. Jephunneh’s lineage cannot be traced back, but some have thought that Caleb was a descendant of Kenaz, the grandson of Esau (Gen. 36:11), and that Caleb was a proselyte, one of the mixed multitude who had joined himself to Israel like some of the Kenites, Moses’ relatives (Judges 1:16; Gen. 15:19; see on 1 Sam. 15:2).

The fact that Caleb was loyal and true, for he “wholly followed the Lord” (Num. 32:12), has been taken by some to be the reason that he was chosen to represent the tribe of Judah and was given a part “among the children of Judah” (Joshua 15:13).

The Lord said. There is no direct statement recorded in Scripture that Caleb and his posterity should receive Hebron and its environs. However, God made the promise, “Him

will I bring into the land whereinto he went” (Num. 14:24); and again, “Him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon” (Deut. 1:36). The following circumstances have been suggested as perhaps forming the background to this promise. It is quite likely that, to avoid detection, the 12 spies did not all go together as a group. They may have gone out by twos. In this case it is likely that Caleb and his companion spied out the land of the Anakim around Hebron, but his companion, terrified by the size of the inhabitants and the strength of their fortifications, did not agree that Israel would be able to take the city. This would make the phrases “the land whereinto he went” (Num. 14:24) and “the land that he hath trodden upon” (Deut. 1:36) refer specifically to Hebron. Caleb and Joshua would definitely understand what God meant even though Hebron was not mentioned specifically by name.

7. Forty years. See on ch. 11:18.

As it was in mine heart. Literally, “as it was with my heart.” The expression denotes real sincerity. Without fear or favor Caleb had reported the facts as he saw them, and expressed his faith in the power of God to overcome these giants. Even now, at the age of 85, he was willing to attack these formidable inhabitants, which, also, he successfully undertook a short time later (ch. 15:14).

8. I wholly followed. Literally, “I fulfilled after.” The LXX reads, “I applied myself to follow.” The words give the idea of a traveler, who, intent upon following his guide, walks so closely in his steps as to leave hardly any space between. The value of the character of a man becomes manifest when, despite others’ failures, he stands for principle. Such was the character of Caleb.

9. Moses swear. See Num. 14:20–24 and Deut. 1:34–36, where this oath is attributed to the Lord. There is no contradiction here. Moses was God’s spokesman, and may have afterward repeated the oath of God, and confirmed it with his own mouth. We today use similar terminology when we say that Isaiah says so and so, when the word actually originated with the Lord.

Whereon thy feet. Probably a direct reference to Hebron (see on v. 6).

10. Kept me alive. In the ordinary course of events Caleb would likely have died before this. All his contemporaries in age, except Joshua, had passed from the scene of action years before. Caleb knew that his long life was the result of his obedience. He had fully followed the Lord. His life was a demonstration of faith, for in all things he accepted the program of God instead of his own. God can do great things for those who are wholly surrendered to Him. But those who follow only so much of the divine program as suits them, and neglect those items displeasing to them, cannot expect the blessing of Heaven.

Forty and five years. See on ch. 11:18.

11. As strong. The reward of a life of virtuous youth and temperate manhood, by nature’s own law, is ordinarily a vigorous, healthy, and respected old age. Loyalty to God had apparently preserved Caleb from the dissipating sins of his fellow Israelites. He had not indulged appetite as they had, nor had he lost sleep and rest at night struggling with a pained conscience. His abstemious life had paid off in dividends in this life, and now he presented himself before Joshua with undiminished strength at an age when most others had already been called from this life.

12. This mountain. He did not mean the city of Hebron alone, which had been taken before by Joshua, but he included, in his request, all the adjacent country, including the

caves and strongholds to which the Anakim had retired, and where they were now abiding in considerable force. We may suppose that Caleb, in the light of the stress that the other spies had laid upon the difficulty of conquering Hebron and the surrounding area, asked for the territory of Hebron as evidence of his faith in complete victory.

Thou heardest. Probably, as suggested (see on v. 6), it was another companion and not Joshua who accompanied Caleb to Hebron. But Joshua would later have heard from the lips of Caleb the expression of his convictions.

If so be. The Hebrew word here translated “if so be” may express hope as well as fear, and need not be taken as an expression of doubt as the English makes it appear. The whole statement is the language of one who disclaims reliance on his own ability—one who realizes that the battle is not to the strong, nor the race to the swift (Eccl. 9:11). It may be that Hebron had fallen again to its former possessors after Joshua had once taken it. On the other hand, the request of Caleb, no doubt, had reference mainly to the adjacent country where the Anakim still held out in their strongholds. Caleb’s example of utter dependence upon God should teach us to make certain of the presence of God in all our undertakings. Our equipment may not be the best—we may not have had superior training, but if God be for us, who can be against us (Rom. 8:31)?

14. Wholly followed. See on v. 8.

15. Kirjath-arba. Kirjath means “city,” and Arba is the name of the father of Anak (ch. 15:13), from whom came the Anakim. The first mention of this place in Scripture is by the name Hebron (Gen. 13:18), but it was either built or rebuilt by the Anakim and named Kirjath-arba.

After that territory was reconquered by Caleb, the city was called Hebron. The name Hebron, meaning “alliance,” is a derivative of the Hebrew verb *chabar*, which has the meaning “to associate,” “to join fellowship,” or “to ally.”

The land had rest. This statement appears in ch. 11:23, where its position is perfectly natural. There it closes the record of the wars of Joshua. It is not so easily accounted for here, but its apparent reference is to the land taken by Caleb from the Anakim. Then, again, the statement may be a reiteration of the conclusion of Joshua’s campaigns. After this the conquest consisted more of isolated battles than of general wars. The enemy was now disjointed and broken, and Israel could move in and take over without too much resistance. God had promised to go before His people to subdue the rest of the land, and if Israel had moved forward by faith and obedience, the land would soon have had rest in the fullest sense of the word.

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CHAPTER 15

1 *The borders of the lot of Judah.* 13 *Caleb’s portion and conquest.* 16 *Othniel, for his valour, hath Achsah, Caleb’s daughter, to wife.* 18 *She obtaineth a blessing of her father.* 21 *The cities of Judah.* 63 *The Jebusites not conquered.*

1. Children of Judah. It has been suggested that the section of the narrative beginning with this chapter might better begin with the last sentence of the previous chapter, giving the following reading: “And the land had rest from war, and the lot for the

tribe of the children of Judah according to their families extended to,” etc. Joshua allotted to Judah, Ephraim, and the half of Manasseh their inheritances before the removal of the camp from Gilgal. For some unstated reason the division of the remainder of the land was not completed immediately. Probably Judah and the sons of Joseph were aggressive and desired to take immediate possession of their inheritances, whereas the other tribes were more reluctant and fearful. On the other hand, Judah and Joseph were the two sons of Jacob on whom Reuben’s forfeited birthright devolved. Judah had the dominion given to him and Joseph the double portion, and this is probably the reason that these two tribes were first seated, Judah in the south and Joseph in the central part. Later, after the removal of the camp to Shiloh, portions of their lots were given to some of the remaining seven tribes. Also a more accurate and extensive survey was made of the remaining part of the land before the portions were assigned to the other seven tribes. The detailed arrangements in the first divisions were not arbitrary. Each tribe did not selfishly retain its lot when it was realized that other tribes had less. Several adjustments were later made.

Many of the cities of the Holy Land have long since been destroyed, with no visible remains by which to identify them. But many others retain their ancient names or recognizable characteristics. Enough of the latter can be identified to locate the tribal boundaries with a remarkable degree of precision. Archaeologists are constantly locating more cities and identifying ancient place names more precisely, thus throwing increasing light on the geography of Palestine. The first 12 verses of the chapter define the boundary of Judah.

Border of Edom. The verse reads literally, “to the border of Edom, the Wilderness of Zin, toward the dry country from the extreme limit of the south.” The territory of the tribe of Judah took in the most southern part of the land. It touched Edom in the southeast, and in the south bordered on the Wilderness of Zin. The southern border here given is identical with the southern border of Israel described in Num. 34:3–5.

2. Bay that looketh southward. Literally, “tongue that faces southward.” The LXX reads, “from the high country that extends southward.” The Syriac translates this verse, “And their border was from the south of the shore of the Salt Sea; and it extended from there to the tongue that turns to the south.” It is probable that the translators of the LXX understood the “bay” to be the tongue of land projecting into the Dead Sea. The Syriac, in turn, was probably influenced by the LXX. The term is generally applied to the jutting promontory of land, but from the context here it applies best to the southern extent of the sea.

3. Maaleh-acrabbim. Literally, “hill of scorpions,” or “ascent of scorpions” (see Num. 34:4), perhaps because of the number of scorpions in that area. It was probably situated halfway between Mt. Halak and the Dead Sea. Mt. Halak is mentioned also in Joshua 11:17, 12:7.

Passed along to Zin. It is more accurate to read, “crossed over toward Zin,” that is, the line passed over the mountain.

Kadesh-barnea. The complete clause reads, literally, “and went up from the south to Kadesh-barnea,” a considerable distance south of Beersheba. Some have identified it with ‘Ain el-Qudeirât, 73 mi. (118 km.) south of Hebron; others, with ‘Ain Qedeis, about 5 mi. (8 km.) southeast.

Hezron. The exact locations of Hezron, Adar, and Karkaa are not known. The border evidently ran northwesterly from Kadesh as far as Adar, and then made a turn to the west, following probably the border between the Wilderness of Paran and the Wilderness of Zin. Kadesh-barnea seems to have been situated on this border, since it is spoken of as being in both wilderness (Num. 13:26; 20:1).

4. River of Egypt. This is believed to refer to the north branch of the *Wadi el-'Arish*. The boundary followed this wadi to the Mediterranean Sea.

5. The end of Jordan. The east border was the entire coast of the Salt Sea, from the southern bay to the end of the northern bay, or "tongue" (see on v. 2), to where the river Jordan emptied into the sea. The northern border began from this point.

6. Beth-hogla. Literally, "house of the partridge." The site is known today as *'Ain Hajlah*. It lies 2 mi. (3 km.) from the Jordan between the mouth of the river and Gilgal, the camping site of Israel. Beth-hogla was on the border, but belonged to Benjamin.

Beth-arabah. Literally, "house of the desert," or, "house of the Arabah." The depression of the Jordan was known as the Arabah. The exact site of Beth-arabah is unknown, but it may be near *'en Gharabeh*, the desert plain north of the Dead Sea. It is ascribed at times to Judah (v. 61) and at times to Benjamin (ch. 18:22).

Stone of Bohan. The statement here is that the border went up to the Stone of Bohan and in ch. 18:17, where the border is given in reverse, it is said to descend to the Stone of Bohan. From this observation it seems clear that the stone must have been on the side of the incline near the mountain in this area and thus west of Beth-arabah. Why the stone was named after the son of Reuben is not known. Bohan the Reubenite did not live here. At least the inheritance of his tribe was on the other side of the river. But Bohan probably was one of those who went over to help Israel to conquer the land, and in the course of events did some notable exploit there, was buried on the spot, and a stone was erected to his honor.

7. Debir. This is not the Debir of ch. 10:38 but a place called *Thogret ed-Debr*, halfway between Jerusalem and Jericho.

Valley of Achor. A plain south of Jericho called *el-Buqe'ah*. It runs southwest-northeast about 3 mi. (5 km.) west of *Khirbet Qumrân*, in the northern part of the wilderness of Judah. See on v. 61.

Adummim. This place is on the Jerusalem to Jericho road. The words "going up to Adummim" refer to a mountain pass in this area. The word for river is the word for a "winter torrent," which represents a valley usually dry except during winter rains. The valley is believed to be the modern *Tal'at ed-Damm*.

Waters of En-shemesh. Literally, "the spring of the sun." The exact location of this spring, on the Jerusalem to Jericho road, is uncertain, but it may possibly be the *'Ain el-Hôd*, a short distance beyond Bethany, the last watering place before reaching the Jordan and known as the Apostles' Fountain.

En-rogel. Literally, "spring of the spy." This was a well or spring just outside Jerusalem at the juncture of the Kidron and Hinnom valleys.

8. Valley of the son of Hinnom. Sometimes called merely “the Valley of Hinnom.”

From the Hebrew of this term *ge hinnom*, is derived the Greek word *gehenna*, which is translated “hell” in the KJV (Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; (James 3:6). The place is of evil repute in Scripture from the sacrifices, including children, offered there to Molech, and from the defilement of its high place by Josiah (2 Kings 23:10), and from the fact that Jerusalem’s offal was later burned there. The word Hinnom is most often thought to be the name of a man to whom the valley once belonged. But some have suggested that the word may also come from an obsolete word which means “weeping,” or “moaning,” and that such a designation would be appropriate in the light of the valley’s being the scene of the sacrifice of so many innocent children (see 2 Kings 23:10; Jer. 7:31). After King Josiah removed the image from this valley, and defiled the high place, the valley appears to have become the general receptacle of filth and refuse that were carried out of Jerusalem, and so was held in universal execration. It is supposed that continual fires were there kept burning to consume these impurities and prevent infection. The valley was south and west of Jerusalem, meeting the valley of Kidron at the southeast corner of the city where En-rogel was situated.

South side of the Jebusite. Literally, “shoulder of the Jebusite,” likely with reference to the ridge or plateau on which the Jebusite city was situated. Since the border ran to the south of Jerusalem, the city was left in the territory of Benjamin.

Top of the mountain. The phrase in its context reads literally, “the head of the mountain, which faces the valley of Hinnom, toward the west.”

Valley of the giants. Also called “valley of Rephaim” (2 Sam. 5:18). This valley runs south toward Bethlehem from the southwest corner of the city of Jerusalem. The region was very fertile and a prize possession sought for by the enemies attacking Jerusalem. The valley was twice the scene of defeat for the Philistines (2 Sam. 5:18–22; 23:13; 1 Chron. 11:15; 14:9).

9. Nephtoah. About 2 1/2 mi. (4 km.) northwest of Jerusalem, a short distance east of Emmaus, and known today as *Liftā*.

Mount Ephron. A mountain ridge near which the road from Jerusalem to Joppa runs, on which stand the places Soba, Kartal, Kulonieh, and other small towns. The border still followed a northwest course.

Baalah. More commonly known as Kirjath-jearim. The place was evidently anciently a Canaanitish high place for the worship of Baal. It has been identified by many with the present-day town of *Tell el-Azhar*, a little hill village about 8 mi. (13 km.) from Jerusalem on the road to Joppa. Kirjath-jearim was the place where the ark resided for 20 years after its return by the Philistines (1 Sam. 7:1, 2).

10. Compassed. Literally, “turned.” That is, from Baalah the border turned from a northwest direction to a westerly.

Mount Seir. A ridge running southwest from Kirjath-jearim known today by the name of *Sārîs*. Seir, from which *Sārîs* is derived, means “hairy,” and as Kirjath-jearim means “a city of forests,” this mountain ridge no doubt received its name from its wooded character. This Mt. Seir has no connection with the Mt. Seir, the home of Esau.

Chesalon. Probably the modern *Keslā*, also called Har-jearim, “mountain of forests,” as Kirjath-jearim means “city of forests.” The region appears earlier to have been covered with forests.

Beth-shemesh. Literally, “the house of the sun,” or “the temple of the sun.” The sun was an object of worship among the Canaanites, and hence fountains, hills, etc., were dedicated to it. Beth-shemesh was about 15 mi. (24 km.) southwest of Jerusalem on the way to Ashdod and the sea. It is known today as *Tell er-Rumeileh*. This is the place where many perished for looking into the ark in the days of Samuel (1 Sam. 6:19).

Timnah. A city about 4 1/2 mi. (7 km.) west- northwest of Beth-shemesh.

11. Unto the side. Literally the passage reads, “unto the shoulder of the hill north of Ekron.” Ekron was the northernmost of the five Philistine cities, and lay about halfway between the Judean highlands and the sea. The border passed a short distance north of this city; hence, Ekron was in the territory of Judah (later of Dan).

Shicron. A small town on the northern border of Judah.

Mount Baalah. Probably the short line of hills running almost parallel with the coast, west of Ekron. It has been suggested that they may have been dedicated to Baal in view of the fact that they were the last hills the sun passed over before setting.

Jabneel. Literally, “a god causes to build.” The town was about 13 mi. south of Joppa and 4 mi. inland from the Mediterranean on the road from Gaza. It has been identified with the village of *Yebnā*. Jabneel was the Jamnia of the Apocrypha. Here many of Jewish scholars and members of the Sanhedrin fled before the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. It became a seat of Jewish learning in the first and second centuries A.D.

13. Unto Caleb. See on ch. 14:12. The verb should probably be translated as “had given” (see ch. 14:13). This paragraph also occurs in Judges 1:10–15 with slight variations, where the narrator is probably copying from this earlier narrative with his own minor variations. It can hardly represent, as some have held, two phases of the capture of Hebron, as the same circumstances attend each narration.

It is remarkable that Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, mentioned more than 40 years before when the 12 spies went up from Kadesh-barnea (Num. 13:22), are apparently living. It has been thought that these were the names of three clans of the Anakim, rather than personal names.

14. Children of Anak. Literally, “sons [descendants] of Anak.” This expression supports the observation made above on the three sons of Anak.

15. Debir. See on ch. 10:38.

16. Will I give Achsah. In ancient times fathers assumed an absolute right over their children in disposing of them in marriage, and the children took such an arrangement for granted as a proper procedure. In this offer it is not to be supposed that Caleb was putting up his daughter as the object of a wretched scramble by any type of man. He no doubt was anxious to unite her to a man honorable for his zeal and energy, one who was conspicuous for his bravery and willing to dare for God. Perhaps, also, he had in mind to unite her to one who was on her social level. The promise of her hand in marriage was not to the man who would first enter Kirjath-sepher, but to the one who would smite it and take it. No man singlehanded could smite and take a fortified city, thus the promise was probably limited to the leaders of the army who were under Caleb.

17. Brother of Caleb. It is believed that Kenaz, and not Othniel, was the full brother of Caleb (see ch. 14:6). Othniel later proved himself worthy both of his work and wages, for he afterward became a deliverer and a judge in Israel (Judges 3:9–11).

18. She moved him to ask. A few Greek manuscripts read, “he moved her to ask.” This is also how the transaction is reported in the LXX in Judges 1:14. However, the KJV gives a correct translation of the Hebrew in both passages. The LXX in the verse under consideration reads, “she counselled him, saying, ‘I will ask.’” Apparently Othniel readily consented to the request being made, but seems to have preferred that it should come from her rather than from him. He may not have wanted to do anything that would appear like taking advantage of Caleb’s favorable disposition toward his son-in-law.

19. A south land. Heb. *‘ereṣ hannegeb*. The word *negeb* means “dry.” It became the word for “south” because the south of Palestine was dry and like a desert, and everything to the south of Palestine, as well, was a desert land. Caleb’s daughter was, in effect, saying to her father that he had given her a dry land, and now she wanted a field with springs of water from which she might obtain water also for the dry field. There is no doubt a lesson here for us, seeing that such an item was recorded. We too are to ask our Father for springs of blessing to water our arid hearts. When we do He too will give us a double portion, both the upper and the lower springs, which will replenish us completely.

20. This is the inheritance. This expression shows that the whole preceding paragraph, from the 13th verse through the 19th, is parenthetical. The territory assigned to Judah was about 45 mi. long and 50 broad, of varied character and of great natural strength. It comprised four distinct regions: (1) the Negeb, or the south, the “dry” land, which lay between the central hills and the desert; (2) the low-lying hills, usually called the Shephelah—the strip of country between the central mountains and the sandy shore of the Mediterranean; (3) the mountains, which rose in the Negeb below Hebron and extended north to Jerusalem, being bounded on the east by the wilderness of the Dead Sea, and on the west by the Shephelah; (4) the desolate Wilderness of Judah or “hill country.”

21. The uttermost cities. These are the cities in the Negeb, the southern extremity of the inheritance. There are 38 cities mentioned as belonging to this region, but most of them are of little importance and quite unknown to history. The writer of the book has methodically arranged the towns in four groups, running from east to west. The first, consisting of nine towns situated on the border of Edom toward the southwest of the Dead Sea, contains none that are known except, probably, Kadesh-barnea, and Kabzeel, the birthplace of David’s loyal hero Benaiah, who may well have gained his reputation as a slayer of lions in this locality. The next group of five or six cities contains “Kerioth, and Hezron” (or Kerioth-hezron, RSV), not identified with any known site, but situated in the extreme south of Judah, and according to tradition, the home of the traitor Judas, from which he derived the name Iscariot (Heb. *’Ish Qeriyoyth*, “man of Kerioth”). Among the nine cities of the next group, which lie more to the north, occurs the time-honored Beersheba, still famous for its wells of living water. Though the province of Judah extended originally some distance farther to the south, yet as the last important place between the desert and the uplands, Beersheba is generally taken as representing the southern boundary. Thus, in the phrase “from Dan to Beersheba,” the whole country from north to south is expressed. The fourth group, of 13 towns, lay to the west and southwest, and contained Ziklag, a town celebrated for its connection with David.

32. *Twenty and nine.* There are two explanations of the discrepancy between the actual number of cities listed, namely 38, and the number given here. Nine of the above cities, namely, Beersheba, Moladah, Hazar-shual, Baalah, Azem, Hormah, Ziklag, Ain, and Rimmon, were afterward given to the tribe of Simeon (ch. 19:2–7). It may be that the writer, knowing this, did not include them in the number, although he named them. This is the Jewish explanation and may appear satisfactory. But perhaps the explanation lies rather in the lack of knowledge regarding the way these names should be interpreted. The names of several cities in the area are expressed by compound terms. Since many of the places mentioned have ceased to exist, and the names of others have been changed, translators may combine what should be separated, and in many cases separate what should be combined (see on v. 21). Such lack of information might easily have increased the number to 38.

33. *In the valley.* The next division of the territory of Judah was the “valley,” the lowland, or Shephelah—the strip of country between the central hills and the coastal plain of the Mediterranean. This was a region of limestone hills some 500 ft. (152 m.) above sea level. The territory contained a large number of towns arranged by the narrator in four groups. First comes the northeast portion, among whose 15 cities (v. 36 says 14; the last 2 named may represent the same city) we find 2 places connected with the history of Samson: Eshtaol and Zoreah, the residence of Manoah. Zoreah has been identified with a hill site above what is now the *Wadi es-Şarar*, about 14 1/2 mi. (24 km.) west of Jerusalem. This group also contains the Canaanite capital, Jarmuth; David’s refuge, Adullam; Socoh, now *Khirbet ‘Abbâl*, 2 mi. (3 km.) south of Jarmuth; and Azekah, mentioned in connection with the pursuit after the battle of Beth-horon (Joshua 10:10, 11). The second group comprises 16 cities situated wholly in the plain, including the Canaanite cities, Lachish, Eglon, and Makkedah. The third group, of nine cities, includes the southern portion bordering on the hill region. Here was Libnah, a fruit of Joshua’s prowess; Keilah, on a hill 2 1/2 mi. (4.1 km.) south of Adullam, the town that David rescued from the Philistines; and Mareshah, later fortified by Rehoboam, and famous in the time of Asa. It is near modern Merash, 1 mi. (1.6 km.) south of *Beit-Jibrîn* (Eleutheropolis). The fourth group includes the towns on the Philistine seacoast. All of the cities enumerated above are important places in the Shephelah.

48. *In the mountains.* The third and most important division of the territory was “the hill country.” Beginning in the Negeb below Hebron, this region extends toward the north to Jerusalem, and is bounded on the east by the wilderness of the Dead Sea and on the west by the Shephelah. The highest point is near Hebron, and reaches more than 3,300 ft. (1,006 m.) above sea level. The cities enumerated in this section are arranged in five groups.

The first group (vs. 48–51) contains 11 cities situated in the southwestern portion, among which we may note Jattir, modern *Khirbet ‘Attîr*, 13 mi. (21 km.) southwest of Hebron; Socoh, now the modern *Khirbet Shuweikeh*; Debir, already referred to (ch. 10:38, 39); Eshtemoah, now *es-Semû‘*, one of David’s places of refuge; and Giloh, probably *Khirbet Jâlâ*, 6 1/2 mi. (10.5 km.) northwest of Hebron, the native city of Ahithophel, Absalom’s counselor, and the scene of his suicide. The second group, to the

north of the first group, contains nine cities, among which is reckoned Hebron. None of the others is of any importance.

In the third group of cities (vs. 55–57), consisting of ten towns lying nearer the southern desert, occur some that are connected with the life of David as an outlaw. It includes Maon, 8 mi. (13 km.) south of Hebron, where dwelt the churlish Nabal; Jezreel, from which came David's wife, Ahinoam. Here, too, is Timnah, not the Timnah of Samson's story, but the place where the patriarch Judah "went up" to his sheepshearers, 9 mi. (14.5 km.) west by south of Bethlehem. Remarkably, Bethlehem does not appear in the lists. It never played any important part in history outside of being the birthplace of David and Jesus, but became world famous on this account. According to the prophet Micah (ch. 5:2), the city remained in almost total obscurity. In Joshua's time it had probably not yet become worthy of mention.

The fourth group consists of six cities to the north of Hebron, and the fifth group, of only two cities, on the west of Jerusalem, Kirjath-jearim, known in early times as Baalah or Kirjath-baal, and Rabbah, at an unidentified site in the hills near Kirjath-jearim.

61. In the wilderness. The last six cities listed for Judah are in the wilderness south of Jericho, west of the Dead Sea. The northernmost was Beth-arabah, on the *Wadi Qelt* (see on v. 6); the southernmost two—the City of Salt (probably Qumrân), on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea, and En-gedi, nearly halfway down the west shore (see on 1 Sam. 24:1). Listed between are three cities not certainly identified, perhaps the three ruin sites in the Valley of Achor, or *el-Buqe'ah* (see on v. 7): *Khirbet Abū Tabaq*, *Khirbet es-Samrah*, *Khirbet el-Maqari*. En-gedi, "the fountain of the kid," is still noted for its warm spring, and Khirbet Qumrân is famous as the Essene center where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found.

63. Could not drive. From what is said in Judges 1:18, 21, and in 2 Sam. 5:6 it is evident that the people of Judah took and set fire to at least a part of the city of Jerusalem, but probably were not able to take the stronghold situated on Mt. Zion. The king had been slain by Joshua (ch. 12:10), but the city continued to be held by the Jebusites until the tribe of Judah burned it. After this, as the brief record seems to imply, the Jebusites retook and rebuilt the city and held it until the time of David.

Jerusalem, at the time of the original distribution, was in the territory of Benjamin because the border ran in the valley south of the city. Though it belonged to Benjamin, the children of Judah for some reason, as seen by their attack upon it (Judges 1:8), sought to share with the Benjamites in the possession of it. It later became known as the city of David.

There is a spiritual lesson here for us. Before the time of David, Judah was not able to drive out the Jebusites. It may have been unbelief, coming from conscious sin or from a weak distrust of God, that made the tribe of Judah feel that they were unequal to this task. The lesson is apparent. When we decline to do the work that God has bidden us to perform, on the ground that we are unable to accomplish it, we are equally manifesting our unbelief. When faith departs, fear necessarily enters in to take its place. When we fail to have faith in God, our hearts will fail before our enemies. Then zeal departs also, and inaction and indifference follow.

Unto this day. This verse is an additional proof that the book of Joshua was not written after the times of the Jewish kings, as some have endeavored to prove, for when

this verse was written, the Jebusites dwelt with the children of Judah, which they did not do after the days of David.

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CHAPTER 16

1 *The general borders of the sons of Joseph. 5 The border of the inheritance of Ephraim. 10 The Canaanites not conquered.*

1. Children of Joseph. The order of precedence among the tribes of Israel made Judah first and the sons of Joseph second. These relative positions are suggested in 1 Chron. 5:2: “Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph’s.” Accordingly, in the division of the land of Canaan under Joshua, there were three successive stages: first, the settlement of the tribe of Judah in the strongholds of the south of Palestine; second, the establishment of Ephraim and Manasseh in the center of the country, and in some strong positions toward the north; third, the settlement of the remaining tribes, so as to fill up the gaps left between Judah and Joseph, and also to settle them upon the outskirts of their territory, so as to be, as it were, under the shadow of their wings. In giving the description of the territory of Joseph, the narrator does not go into so much detail as he did with the borders of Judah, and so the border is difficult to trace. Neither do we have the list of the cities given as in the case of Judah. The reason for this is not known. Some have suggested that Joshua, being of the tribe of Joseph, was left to distribute the territory of his tribe, and so the minute details were not brought into the council. Hence, the description of the border and the cities was left out of the record. Another peculiarity in the narrative is the interlocking of the tribe of Ephraim with the tribe of Manasseh by Ephraim’s possessing some of Manasseh’s cities. This seems to have been a peaceful arrangement of good will.

Fell from Jordan. Literally, “went out from Jordan.” Some have seen in the word “fell” a reference to the drawing of the lot out of the urn, but this interpretation is hardly justifiable since the Hebrew makes it clear that the writer is merely describing the beginning of the border of the children of Joseph. Starting from the Jordan directly opposite Jericho, the southern boundary ran to “the water of Jericho”—the “Sultan’s Spring”—the scene of Elisha’s miracle, passing it on the east side. From Sultan’s Spring the border continued eastward, leaving the city of Jericho to the south.

To the wilderness. The Hebrew has no preposition before the word “wilderness,” but it is necessary to supply one. Probably “by way of” would best convey the writer’s thought. The region intended here is what in ch. 18:12 is called the wilderness of Beth-aven. Beth-aven appears from ch. 7:2 to have been east of Bethel.

Throughout mount Beth-el. The Hebrew preposition *be*, here translated “throughout,” has rather the idea of “at,” or “in proximity to.” The mountainous area around Bethel is meant. After having passed Jericho on the east and north, the boundary ran by way of the wilderness of Beth-aven (see ch. 18:12), and up by way of one of the ravines, either the *Wadi Harith* or the *Wadi Suweinit*, and up into the hills around Bethel.

2. Beth-el to Luz. Bethel literally means “house of God,” and was so called because Jacob there received the divine vision recorded in Gen. 28. From Gen. 28:19 it appears that the site was in the vicinity of the city of Luz, but was distinct from the city itself, being in the neighboring fields, where Jacob lay all night. The two cities being so close

together, it is likely that afterward the two places were looked upon in a general way as one city (see Joshua 18:13; Judges 1:23).

Borders of Archi. Literally, “border of the Archites.” Hushai, David’s friend, was an Archite (2 Sam. 15:32), but little else is known concerning his tribe or their place of residence.

Ataroth. There is considerable uncertainty about the location of this city, but it is thought to be identical with Ataroth-addar, unidentified.

3. Coast of Japhleti. Little is known of the clan of Japhleti, since there is only one other reference (1 Chron. 7:32, 33) to a man by this name. According to this reference, Japhlet was a great-grandson of Asher, and it is possible this family of the tribe of Asher early settled in this part of Ephraim’s territory and remained there. From Bethel, then, the border went in a northwesterly direction toward Ataroth, and then on down toward the southwest, touching the border of the Japhletites, to the border of Beth-horon the Lower.

Beth-horon. Beth-horon Lower was about 700 ft. (213 m.) lower than Beth-horon Upper, and yet was only 1 3/4 mi. (2.8 km.) away. These strategic towns controlled the pass leading from the plain of Ajalon to Jerusalem. Today Beth-horon the Lower is known by the name of *Beit ‘Ur et-Tahtā* (see on ch. 10:10).

Gezer. See on ch. 10:33.

5. Ataroth-addar. The mention of this town to the east is not easy to understand. However, if this Ataroth-addar is the same as the Ataroth of v. 2, which it seems that it must be, then the border from Ataroth (see on v. 2) would run quite largely in a southerly direction down as far as Beth-horon. This section, then, could be considered as part of the east border of Ephraim.

6. Went out toward the sea. For clarity this clause ought to have been connected with the final clause in v. 5. “Beth-horon the upper” is here mentioned instead of “Beth-horon the nether” in v. 3. But the two places were very near each other, and perhaps the separate mention of both serves to indicate that both belonged to Ephraim. From here the border went out to the sea passing Gezer, as already mentioned in v. 3.

To Michmethah. The “to” is not in the original text. The writer has begun to define the north border, and the sentence should not be connected to the preceding. Michmethah is described in ch. 17:7 as being before Shechem, probably a short distance to the east or southeast.

Went about eastward. Literally, “turned eastward.” The course is thought to be from Tappuah (see v. 8) northeast to Michmethah, and then eastward to Taanath-shiloh.

Taanath-shiloh. It is thought to be the same as *Khirbet Ta‘nah el-Fôqā* or *‘Ain Tana*, a place of ruins southeast of the modern Nablus, which is near the site of ancient Shechem.

East to Janohah. Probably *Khirbet Yānūn*, now a ruin, about 6 mi. (9.6 km.) southeast of Shechem.

7. Ataroth. Not the Ataroth of vs. 2 and 5, but a town on the north border of Ephraim near the Jordan valley. It was evidently down at the edge of the valley, for the text says, “went down from Janohah to Ataroth.” The town’s name means “crowns.”

Naarath. Called Naaran (1 Chron. 7:28). A town in the east of Ephraim, probably *Khirbet el 'Auja*, 5.3 mi. (8.5 km.) north-northeast of Jericho. From here the border ran south and reached to the border of Jericho, Jericho itself belonging to Benjamin.

8. From Tappuah westward. Tappuah signifies “apple.” According to ch. 17:7 Tappuah was southwest of Michmethah. The author now begins to describe in more detail the western half of the northern border. Tappuah is thought to have been almost 8 mi. (12.8 km.) southwest of Shechem. From here the boundary went westward to the river Kanah.

River Kanah. Again, the word for “river” used here is the word for “winter torrent.” It is named Kanah, “place of reeds,” from its many reeds and canes. The border followed this river to the sea.

9. The separate cities. Literally, “the cities, the separations,” that is, “the cities set apart.” These were cities set apart from the territory of Manasseh for the children of Ephraim, of which only Tappuah is mentioned (ch. 17:8). In ch. 17:11 is found a list of the cities of Asher and Issachar that were given to Manasseh. In turn Manasseh permitted Ephraim to have some of her cities. This mutual sharing and yielding of territory to each other would tend to produce a solidarity among the several tribes, and prevent disunion. The interest of the stronger tribes would be served by completing the conquest of the territory assigned to the weaker. We help ourselves when we help others. The cohesion of the ten tribes in opposition to Judah later, until the break came, may have had its beginning in the manner in which the territory was originally divided and shared. For centuries a feeling of jealousy and bitterness against Judah, because of the largeness of her territory in contrast with theirs, probably rankled in the hearts of the northern cities.

10. Drive not out. An indictment is brought against the Ephraimites for not driving out the Canaanites from Gezer. Instead they put them under tribute. The real motive was probably covetousness, so that the Ephraimites might be profited by their services. The city and its inhabitants were not destroyed until Solomon’s time, when Pharaoh, king of Egypt, took Gezer and gave it to his daughter, Solomon’s wife (1 Kings 9:16).

By allowing these foreigners to stay in their midst, the Ephraimites were endangering themselves spiritually. The future history of this tribe shows them lapsing completely into idolatry until God was forced to declare through His prophet, “Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone” (Hosea 4:17). The fate of Ephraim and the associated tribes should serve as a warning to us, not to yoke ourselves together with unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14). Such an association is almost always detrimental.

To profess fellowship with those who love the Lord, without resolutely setting about to drive out from the life those habits that bind one to this world, is to be in danger of succumbing to the evil these habits are certain to produce in the life. A Christian cannot expect to retain the friendship of the world, to continue his association with worldly-minded persons as before conversion without being influenced by them. Our only safety is to drive out from the life all that tends to evil (see on ch. 17:18).

CHAPTER 17

1 *The lot of Manasseh.* 7 *His coast.* 12 *The Canaanites not driven out.* 14 *The children of Joseph obtain another lot.*

1. There was also a lot. Jacob had preferred Ephraim before Manasseh (Gen. 48:17–20), even though Manasseh was the first-born. Now Ephraim had been honored by having his lot described first. Nevertheless, Manasseh was the first-born and was to have

the “double portion” (Deut. 21:17), which was his right. This chapter deals primarily with the territory allotted to Manasseh west of the Jordan, but reference is also made to that portion already allotted to the half tribe east of the Jordan.

To wit. These words are supplied, and the verse might better read, “To Machir ... and to him was Gilead and Bashan.” The reason for this assignment is stated in the parenthetical clause, “because he was a man of war.” Machir himself by this time must have been dead. He had been born to Manasseh in Egypt and had he lived, he would have been about 200 years old. He had probably distinguished himself sometime in battle, or else his descendants were of a warlike spirit, and his name was retained by them. At any rate Moses and Joshua recognized the skill of this family at war, and were willing to entrust to them the defense of the frontier country of Bashan.

2. Rest of the children. In actuality the names listed are the great-grandchildren of Manasseh, for they are the sons of Gilead (Num. 26:28–34), who is the son of Machir, who is the son of Manasseh. In Num. 26:30 “Abiezer” is written “Jeezer,” probably by an error of transcription. The other names are identical. From a comparison with 1 Chron. 7:14–19, on the other hand, it may seem more reasonable to consider these six names as names of important families and not necessarily the names of brothers.

3. Zelophehad. Hephher, one of the aforementioned six sons of Gilead, had one son named Zelophehad, who died in the wilderness without any sons. Zelophehad had five daughters, however (Num. 26:33, 34; 27:1–5). The young women themselves had to be champions of their own cause before Moses so as to retain their father’s inheritance and name. The decision that Moses rendered under the direction of God was that the women should inherit their father’s inheritance on the condition that they married within their own tribe so as to keep the property in their own tribe. In point of fact, the sisters married their own cousins, and thus fulfilled the law (Num. 27:6–11; 36:10–12). This incident showed a larger regard for the rights of women than is usually conceded for that time. It established the principle that a woman was not a mere chattel, with no rights of her own. Wherever the principles of the true God have been established, there the state of womanhood has been exalted.

5. Ten portions to Manasseh. Literally, “the lots of Manasseh, ten.” Verse 2 lists six families including Hephher’s. Inasmuch as Hephher’s son Zelophehad died without leaving a son, Zelophehad’s five daughters received their father’s portion. It would seem that Hephher’s portion was divided into five. This makes ten portions in all.

7. Asher to Michmethah. The south border of Manasseh is first described, that is, the border next to Ephraim. The description begins with the town Asher, which, as nearly as we can ascertain, lay somewhere on the road between Shechem and Bethshan (Scythopolis), if in fact it was a town, rather than the territory of the tribe. From this point the border went to Michmethah, which was before Shechem, or a little to the east (see ch. 16:6). Shechem is near the modern Nablus situated between Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal.

Along on the right hand. The Hebrews thought of their directions from the standpoint of facing east, which was the front side. To the right would be south, especially when the Hebrew word for “right,” *yamin*, is preceded by the article and the preposition *’el* (toward), as here. So from Michmethah the boundary turned south to the inhabitants of En-tappuah. The city of Tappuah belonged to Ephraim, but the country adjoining belonged to Manasseh. The line evidently approached the outer limits of the city and from there turned westward.

9. Southward of the river. The word for “river” here is the word meaning “winter torrent.” Some identify this watercourse as the *Abu Zabura*, and others as the *Nahr el-Kassab*, in which the old name Reedbrook is retained. It is probably the brook that flows into the Mediterranean north of Joppa.

These cities of Ephraim. It is not clear just what these cities were. They are also referred to in ch. 16:9, and it may be that Tappuah was one of them. The others are not named, but it is clear that Ephraim had cities in the territory of Manasseh, and Manasseh had cities in the territories of Issachar and Asher. These were special arrangements entered into between the tribes in order to make certain territorial adjustments to suit the population. It does indicate a degree of unity existing between the tribes mentioned, at least in the early period of their existence.

10. They met together. In view of the description of the territories of Ephraim and Manasseh in which Manasseh lies north of Ephraim across the length of Ephraim’s territory, the antecedent of “they” seems somewhat obscure. But in view of the previous description and the further statements in the 11th verse, it is probable that the “they” refers to the Manassites. Then the sentence would read, “and they [that is, the Manassites] border on Asher to the north, and on Issachar to the east.” According to ch. 19:26, the tribe of Asher extended southward as far as Mt. Carmel, and the tribe of Manasseh extended to Dor and her towns (see v. 11), which were in the vicinity of Carmel. Thus it appears that these two tribes formed a junction at the Mediterranean Sea.

11. Beth-shean. Literally, “house of rest.” This was a city in the tribe of Issachar that was assigned to Manasseh. It was in a strategic place at the junction of two important valleys, namely, the deep Jordan valley and the Valley of Jezreel. It is possible that because Manasseh was a warlike tribe, and thus an able defender for Israel, it was thought wise to allow Manasseh to man this stronghold and dwell in it. In NT times Bethshan was one of the largest of the ten Greek cities known as the Decapolis, and was called Scythopolis. To modern Arabs it is known as *Tell el Huṣn*, near modern *Beisān* (Beth-shan), which perpetuates the ancient name.

Ibleam. Today known as *Tell Bel’ameh*. It too was a heavily fortified town, being a part of a series of fortifications that extended from Beth-shan to the Mediterranean coast. It was situated about 13 mi. (21 km.) north-northeast of Samaria on the road to Megiddo. Along with Beth-shan it was probably given to Manasseh for defense purposes as well as to provide more living space.

Dor. A Mediterranean seaport in the inheritance of Asher, but given to Manasseh. It lay between the Carmel headland and the Caesarea of NT times.

En-dor. This town was to the north of the Hill Moreh, 3 3/4 mi. (6 km.) south of Mt. Tabor and 6 1/2 mi. (10.4 km.) southeast of Nazareth. The witch to whom Saul resorted lived at Endor (1 Sam. 28).

Taanach. A city commanding one of the passes to the plain of Esdraelon. It lay about 5 mi. (8 km.) southeast of Megiddo and was the site of a fortress on the road from Mt. Carmel to the main road running from Judea to Galilee. Its ruins are known today as *Tell Ta’annak*.

Megiddo. An important strategic city overlooking the plain of Esdraelon. Its ruins have been identified with the mound called *Tell el-Mutesellim*. There seems to have been

some military reason behind the turning over of these strategic cities to the tribe of Manasseh.

Three countries. Literally, “three of the heights.” The LXX reads, “and the third part of Mapheta, and its villages.” The Syriac has “three villages.” The RSV translates it “the third is Naphath.” A number of commentators take this expression to refer to the three cities formerly enumerated that lay on hills or three heights, namely, Endor, Taanach, and Megiddo—three mountain cities in distinction from the places on the plain.

12. Would dwell. This indicates the stubbornness of the Canaanites in refusing to be evicted from this territory. It also carries with it a reflection on the unbelief and cowardice of the Israelites. If they had put forth the requisite effort, God would have wrought with them to give them complete victory.

13. To tribute. The LXX reads, “made them obedient.” Covetousness probably led to this compromise. Money and power go a long way to ease many a conscience. Yet money without righteousness can never enrich a righteous cause. Many a man will stand condemned in the judgment because he loved riches more than God. God wants men with faith and courage who will not be bought or sold either by money, power, or honor.

14. One lot. Here Ephraim and Manasseh are regarded as one tribe, the tribe of Joseph. At least it was to their advantage to be considered so now. They probably recalled the promise and prophecy of Jacob (Gen. 48:22) in which the aged patriarch gave to Joseph one portion above his brethren. But, at the same time, they seemed conveniently to forget that their brethren had received a portion across the Jordan. A selfish, grasping spirit always forgets how much has already been received. Manasseh and Ephraim were probably comparing their portion with what Judah had received. Then, too, they may have reasoned that Joshua, being of the tribe of Ephraim, would show them special favor. But Joshua was too great a man to yield to so small and selfish a proposal as that of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh.

A great people. The attitude of the children of Joseph is duplicated by many today. Those who have an exalted opinion of self often think that their greatness ought to be recognized by God and men, and if it is not recognized, then they maintain that something is wrong with either God or men. In the case under consideration, if the descendants of Joseph were a great people because of the blessing of the Lord, then they should have continued to look to Him for continued blessings rather than unfairly to request of Joshua more than their share.

There is ever a danger that when men are blessed of God they will attribute this blessing to some merit of their own. This may be the reason why they do not receive more of Heaven’s benefits. They are prone to interpret these favors wrongly, and while giving credit to God with the lips, in their hearts they are all the while giving credit to self.

15. If thou be. Joshua was too wise to dispute the assumption of the Ephraimites and Manassites. He said to them, in effect, “If you are a great people through the blessing of God, then God will continue to bless you in conquering the land. You are well able to take care of yourself. Go up into the vast forests of central Palestine and take possession of them.” It is plain from these statements that a large portion of central Palestine was at that time a great forest and thinly populated. This fact helps to explain the strategy of the attack of Israel under Joshua upon the center of the country, so that the forces of the Canaanites were divided at the beginning of the campaign. Thus the Israelites could strike

with their whole force at the southern armies, and having defeated them, turn upon the armies of the north.

Perizzites. See on ch. 3:10.

Giants. Heb. *repha'im* (see on ch. 12:4).

16. Not enough. Literally, “not found,” that is, “does not exist,” or, “is not acquired.” The mountain, these tribes claimed, was not for them. It would be too difficult to clear and prepare for agriculture. They wanted the valley, but that was controlled by the Canaanites who possessed powerful weapons.

Chariots of iron. Not chariots with frames of iron, but chariots with iron plating. Some have denied the existence of objects of iron at this time; however, iron objects found in King Tutankhamen’s tomb come from the same century and prove the existence and use of iron at that time (see also on Gen. 4:22). These weapons were formidable instruments of war, but the children of Joseph should have remembered that their God was greater than even the “chariots of iron.”

17. One lot only. These tribes were not to designate their inheritance as one lot only, because actually it was sufficiently large if only they would possess the whole. By going up into the woods and clearing it they would be able to double their territory. Evidently a large section of their territory was wooded in those days (see on Deut. 8:7).

18. Outgoings of it. If they would clear away the wood and occupy the mountain, they would be able to command all the valleys. Possessing all the defiles of the country, they would be able to drive out the Canaanites, despite their formidable chariots of iron.

Thou shalt drive out. This was the final command to the cowardly tribes. A similar command comes also to those who are harboring besetting sins. Not a single defilement is to be tolerated. All corrupting vice should be driven from the heart. Any pretense of tolerance or compromise is sure to bring ruin. Frequently we may look at our sins as Israel did at the chariots of iron and feel we cannot overcome them. So we ease our conscience by putting them to “tribute” and permit them to remain. The ultimate result is certain defeat. Fear and lack of faith and courage are Satan’s allies. But the command of God rings down through the ages, “Thou shalt drive them out.” See also on ch. 16:10.

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CHAPTER 18

4

1 *The tabernacle is set up at Shiloh.* 2 *The remainder of the land is described, and divided into seven parts.* 10 *Joshua divideth it by lot.* 11 *The lot and border of Benjamin.* 21 *Their cities.*

1. Shiloh. Meaning “place of rest.” This name was probably given to the site because the tabernacle of the Lord was now, at last, at rest after wandering for more than 40 years. It would seem that Shechem might have been chosen, a place in the neighborhood of Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, which had already, in a sense, been consecrated to God. But evidently Shiloh was the place chosen by God, at least temporarily, to place His dwelling

⁴Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Jos 11:2). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

(Deut. 12:5, 11, 14). Three reasons have been given for the suitability of this site: (1) it was central, (2) it was protected and isolated, (3) it was in the tribe of Ephraim, of which Joshua was a member. Thus, he as the leader of the nation would have ready access to the sanctuary whenever he would need to consult the God of Israel. Excavations have verified the statement found in Judges 21:19 giving its location as “on the north side of Beth-el, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Beth-el to Schechem.” It is known as *Seilûn* today, and is situated on a saddle between two low hills east of the main road running from Jerusalem to Shechem at a place 9 1/2 mi. (15 km.) north of Bethel and 3 mi. (5 km.) southeast of Lebonah. It was the most central location to all the tribes, and here the ark remained for about 300 years until it was taken by the Philistines in the time of Eli (1 Sam. 4:1–11; PP 514).

Land was subdued. The surrounding area being subdued and the three tribes, Judah, Ephraim, and Manasseh (chs. 15 to 17) having taken possession, there was nothing to hinder the tabernacle from being moved from its protected place at Gilgal to this central location. This was done, even before the division of the remainder of the land between the remaining tribes.

3. Are ye slack? Because the Israelites had long followed a nomadic life they were reluctant to make a change. They had been enriched with the plunder of the Canaanites and were living in plenty. They seemed to be more intent on present ease and indulgence than upon obtaining their inheritance. Like the Babel builders of old, they were pleased with their present condition of living in a body together. They apparently had no mind to be scattered abroad and break good company. From the very beginning it had been God’s plan for man to scatter upon the face of the earth rather than to colonize together in one place. As soon as men lost their spiritual vision they showed a tendency to congregate together, and to seek the protection of man rather than to trust in the protection of God.

There is a lesson in this for us. After we have been truly converted to God and have received our title to eternal life, our great concern should be to labor to enter into possession of that eternal inheritance. But too often, like the seven tribes, we become content with the spoils of this life and feel no urge to pursue our possessions. To us comes the apostle’s admonition, “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life” (1 Tim. 6:12).

4. Three men. It is uncertain whether this meant 3 men from each of the 12 tribes or 3 men from the remaining 7 tribes; probably the latter, since these 7 tribes were the ones concerned. The others had already received their inheritances. This would make 21 in all.

Describe it. Literally, “shall write it.” The men apparently were to describe it, naming the cities, size of the cities, value of various districts for farming, stock raising, etc., so that the value of these properties might properly be assessed. Having this knowledge the delegation was afterward to divide the whole territory into seven portions. These ideas are in harmony with Josephus’ account of the incident (*Antiquities* v. 1. 21). Regarding Joshua’s charge, he says, “He also gave them a charge to estimate the measure of that part of the land that was most fruitful, and what was not so good.” Also further, “Joshua thought the land for the tribes should be divided by estimation of its goodness, rather than the largeness of its measure, it often happening that one acre of some sorts of land was equivalent to a thousand other acres.”

6. Seven parts. A written report of the land divided into seven equal parts according to its fairly estimated value was to be brought to Joshua so that he might cast lots for the tribes before the Lord.

Cast lots. See on chs. 7:14; 14:2. The several tribes were not permitted to choose their own portions. The land was to be fairly divided. The directions were, "To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance. ... Notwithstanding the land shall be divided by lot" (Num. 26:54, 55). These words imply that there must have been unequal portions of territory for larger and smaller tribes, but that the particular position of each tribe must be settled by the lot, so that "the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord" (Prov. 16:33). We are not told how this rule was carried out in the case of Judah, Ephraim, and Manasseh, who received their inheritance first. Possibly a sufficient extent of territory was surveyed at first to provide three large allotments. The three tribes might then have cast lots, first between Judah and Joseph for the northern or southern portions, and then between Ephraim and Manasseh for the two sections of the northern territory. Such a method would carry out the instructions of Num. 26.

9. In a book. Besides the written description of the leading features of the country, the men probably drew sketches of the territory on maps. The statement implies that a geographical survey according to the cities was made and recorded. This is perhaps the earliest instance of land surveying on record. The art may have been learned from the Egyptians, who are known to have been good surveyors.

10. Divided the land. According to v. 9, the land was marked off by cities into seven parts. Then Joshua cast lots for these seven parts to decide which part should go to each tribe. After this he divided the land according to the size of the tribe to which any particular group of cities had fallen by lot. A small tribe would have its lot made smaller, and a more numerous tribe would have its lot increased by lands taken from the tribe of fewer people. This would be according to the law of division that God gave through Moses (Num. 33:54).

11. Benjamin came up. Evidently the providence of God so ordered it that the children of Benjamin should have the first lot of these seven, next to the tribe of Joseph. Joseph and Benjamin were brothers, the only sons of Rachel, Jacob's beloved wife. Benjamin later furnished the first king of Israel, Saul. The important city of Jerusalem fell in her territory. The city seems for a time to have been the joint possession of Judah and Benjamin, according to Judges 1:8, 21, and 1 Chron. 8:28, 32. Later Jerusalem became the royal city of the kings of the house of Judah.

Their border. Inasmuch as Benjamin's inheritance lay between the north border of Judah and the south border of Ephraim, the places mentioned on these borders have already been commented on in chs. 15 and 16.

14. Corner of the sea. Literally, "side of the sea," that is, the border continued on the western side. In Hebrew the word for "sea" is often used for "west" from the point of view of the Mediterranean lying to the west (see Ex. 27:12; 38:12). With this literal interpretation the LXX and Syriac both agree.

Kirjath-baal. The Israelites changed the name to Kirjath-jearim, "city of forests," to blot out the remembrance of Baal (see Joshua 15:9; Num. 32:38). The west boundary of Benjamin extended to this city on the border of Judah. From there it turned eastward and touched the northern boundary of Judah, as described in ch. 15:5-9. Somewhere along

the borders of Benjamin lay the hallowed spot where Rachel was buried (Gen. 35:16, 19), but the exact site of her tomb is unknown (see Additional Note to 1 Sam. 1).

17. *Geliloth*. Meaning “circles.” Evidently the same place as Gilgal in ch. 15:7.

21. *Cities of the tribe*. These were divided into 2 groups, the first containing 12 cities in the eastern section, and the second 14 in the western section. Some of them have already been noticed in the description of their borders.

***Jericho*.** That is, the site of Jericho. Under the curse of ch. 6:26 the city was not to be rebuilt (see on ch. 6:26).

***Valley of Keziz*.** Since the writer is giving a list of cities, it seems more probable that this phrase should be given as a proper name, “Emek-keziz.” There is a *Wadi el-Keziz* east of Jerusalem, but the site of the town is unknown.

22. *Beth-arabah*. See on ch. 15:6.

***Zemaraim*.** This place has been identified with the ruins called *Rasez-Zeimara*, northeast of the *Wadi el-Keziz*, near the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. The Zemarites are mentioned in Gen. 10:18 as a Canaanite tribe.

***Beth-el*.** See on Gen. 28:19. This city passed into the hands of Ephraim when the tribe of Benjamin was all but exterminated (Judges 20). In the division of the kingdom, under Rehoboam, though the tribe of Benjamin joined with Judah, Bethel was regarded as part of the northern kingdom of Israel in Jeroboam’s southern boundary. It was here that Jeroboam set up one of the golden calves (1 Kings 12:19–33).

23. *Avim*. Since, in the enumeration, Avim follows directly after Bethel, and Ai, which stood near Bethel, is not mentioned, it has been assumed by some commentators that Avim is identical with Ai (see on ch. 7:2). However, the site remains unidentified.

***Parah*.** Perhaps *Khirbet t-Fârah* on the *Wadi Fârah* to the west of Jericho, about halfway to Jerusalem.

***Ophrah*.** Perhaps the same as the Ophrah in 1 Sam. 13:17, and the Ephraim in 1 Chron. 13:19 (Ephraim, John 11:54), and now identified with *et-Taiyibeh*. It must not be confused with the Ophrah of Judges 6:11, which was probably in Manasseh.

24. *Chephar-haammonai, and Ophni*. Both towns mentioned only here, and both unknown.

***Gaba*.** Signifying “hill.” Not the same as Gibeah of Saul. Gaba and Gibeah were no doubt not far apart, since both are near to Ramah (see Ezra 2:26; Neh. 7:30; Isa. 10:29).

25. *Gibeon*. Signifying “a hill,” it lay nearly 6 mi. (9 km.) northwest of Jerusalem on the road to Joppa. It was the chief city of the Hivites, whose inhabitants deceitfully made a league with Joshua and Israel as recorded in ch. 9. It is the modern *el-Jīb*.

***Ramah*.** Meaning “height.” Ramah was on what later became the border between Judah and Israel according to 1 Kings 15:17, 21, 22, a short distance from Bethel. Whether it is to be identified with the Ramah of Samuel is not certain (see Additional Note to 1 Sam. 1).

***Beeroth*.** A plural form meaning “wells.” It was situated about 10 mi. (16 km.) north of Jerusalem. The modern town of *el-Bîreh* is believed to be near its site.

26. *Mizpeh*. Meaning “watchtower.” Modern archeologists are divided as to the location of Mizpeh (Mizpah) of Benjamin. Robinson (1856) supported the location of

Mizpeh at *Nebī-Samwīl*, an elevation of 2,904 ft. (885 m.) overlooking Jerusalem, and 4 3/8 mi. (7 km.) southwest of *Tell en-Naşbeh*. On the other hand, William F. Badé and his associates hold *Tell en-Naşbeh*, which they excavated, to be Mizpeh. *Tell en-Naşbeh* is 7 1/2 mi. (12 km.) north of Jerusalem on the main highway to Samaria and Galilee. It is north of Ramah and Gibeah and south of Beeroth.

Chephirah. Like Beeroth, one of the four cities depending upon Gibeon (ch. 9:17), situated in the neighborhood of Gibeon, northwest of Jerusalem.

27. Rekem, and Irpeel, and Taralah. The location of none of these, including Mozah (v. 26), is known unless Rekem is *el-Burg*.

28. Zelah. Mentioned in 2 Sam. 21:14 as containing the sepulcher of Kish, where the remains of Saul and Jonathan were ultimately buried (see Additional Note to 1 Sam. 1).

Eleph. Location unknown.

Jebusi. Jerusalem. See on v. 11.

Gibeath. This is probably the Gibeah of Saul (1 Sam. 10:26; 2 Sam. 21:6), the first political center of the kingdom of Israel. It has been identified as the site known today as *Tell el-Fûl*, “hill of beans,” about 3 1/2 mi. (5.6 km.) north of Jerusalem on the main road leading to Samaria. In Saul’s day the Jebusites still held Jerusalem. Gibeah, being Saul’s headquarters, served as a military watchpost over Jerusalem. It was near Gibeah that Jonathan made his attack upon the Philistines (1 Sam. 14). Two excavation campaigns carried on at this site have thrown an abundance of light on the Biblical history of Saul’s ancient capital.

Kirjath. Identified by some with Kirjath-jearim of v. 14 and ch. 15:60, which belonged to Judah. Otherwise the location of Kirjath is uncertain, unless it may be *Kerteh*, west of Jerusalem.

Thee inheritance. When compared with the inheritance of the other tribes that of Benjamin was one of the smallest with respect to area. However, according to Josephus, its soil was the richest. The territory occupied a highly strategic position, and the names of many of its towns indicate by their meaning that they were situated on heights, and hence were easily defended. It was doubtless because of this defensive strength that the tribe of Benjamin at one time was able to resist successfully the combined arms of Israel until Israel resorted to strategy (Judges 20).

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CHAPTER 19

1 *The lot of Simeon, 10 of Zebulun, 17 of Issachar, 24 of Asher, 32 of Naphtali, 40 of Dan.*
49 *The children of Israel give an inheritance to Joshua.*

1. Within the inheritance. Joshua had ordered the remaining part of the land, after Judah and the children of Joseph had received their inheritance, to be divided into seven portions (ch. 18:4–6). However, it may have been that the land was not sufficient for seven parts so as to give every tribe a fair portion. Probably also the contour of the land was not such as to be conveniently divided into seven. Inasmuch as Judah had received such a large share, it was probably suggested that Judah share its territory with one of the tribes. When the lot was cast the portion fell to Simeon. Perhaps, at the beginning, the

Israelites had supposed the land to be large enough to give Judah a large share. In fact, if the people had possessed all the land that God originally intended “from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates” (Gen. 15:18; cf. Deut. 11:24), Judah would have been able to retain her full allotment. But Israel had become negligent and content. Now the boundaries had to be adjusted according to their faith. Similarly with us—we too could have much more from the Lord if we possessed the faith to attempt great things for Him. These things are “written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Cor. 10:11).

In the lot of Simeon it can be seen how explicitly God guided in the selection of the inheritances. Because of the massacre of the people of Shechem by Simeon and Levi (Gen. 34), Jacob, in his dying prophecy, had prophesied that he would divide these two tribes in Jacob and scatter them in Israel (Gen. 49:7). Levi, as has already been noted, was not to have any inheritance of his own, but was to have cities in the various tribes, and now Simeon was to have his portion inside the inheritance of Judah. Simeon was still further isolated, so that at the time of the division of Judah and Israel in the reign of Rehoboam (1 Kings 12), the tribe of Simeon, though adhering to the kingdom of the 10 tribes, was separated from the territory of that kingdom by the kingdom of Judah. Thus they were divided in Jacob. Nothing much is said in Scripture concerning the tribe of Simeon. It gave to the nation neither judge, prophet, nor any other illustrious person. We may suppose, therefore, that this tribe became absorbed in that of Judah, and its individual identity was probably, to a large extent, lost (see on Gen. 49:7).

2. In their inheritance. The writer enumerates 17 cities that were given to Simeon, 13 of which were chiefly in the Negeb, and four largely in the Shephelah, although the dividing line between the Negeb and the Shephelah cannot be too distinctly drawn. He does not specify any boundary for this tribe, since Simeon did not receive so much a definite portion of territory, but rather certain cities with their surrounding lands, and these within the limits originally allotted to Judah. Many of these cities were occupied conjointly with Judah, and hence ascribed sometimes to one tribe and sometimes to the other.

Beer-sheba, and Sheba. Literally, “Beer-sheba and [or, even] Sheba.” It seems to be clear that these are one and the same city; otherwise there would have been 14 cities instead of 13. Furthermore, in 1 Chron. 4:28, where Simeon’s cities are enumerated, the name Sheba is omitted. Abraham’s Beer-sheba (“well of the oath”) lay in the present city of Beer-sheba, approximately 27 mi. (43.6 km.) southwest of Hebron. Later, during the Hebrew monarchy, the town of Beer-sheba was about 3 mi. (5 km.) east, at *Tell es-Seba*, 24 3/4 mi. (39.7 km.) from Hebron.

Of the 13 cities (vs. 2–6), and 4 cities (v. 7), the site of only 1, Beersheba, is definitely known.

5. Ziklag. Possibly identified with *Tell el-Khuweilfeh*, which is southeast of Gaza, between Beersheba and Debir. Although given to Simeon, it was either not taken by this tribe, or, later lost, because it was given to David, at the time of his banishment by Saul, by the Philistine ruler, Achish (1 Sam. 27:6).

Beth-marcaboth, and Hazar-susah. These two towns, the latter possibly *Sbalat Abū Sûsein*, were probably located near the north-south highway to Egypt. Their names suggest that they may have been the place where the Hyksos, and possibly later Solomon,

kept their chariots and horses (1 Kings 10:26). The former name signifies “the house of chariots,” and the latter, “the village of horses.”

6. *Sharuhen*. This was a town on the main route between Palestine and Egypt. It has been identified with *Tell el-Fâr‘ah*, which shows impressive evidence of ancient Hyksos, Egyptian, and Roman fortifications. It lies about 15 mi. (24 km.) south of Gaza.

9. *Too much for them*. For the present it was too much, but had they by faith looked to the future, it would not have been more than, under the blessing of God, they would need. But the Israelites by this time had begun to lose their vision of God’s plan for them, and were content to receive only enough for their present need. God temporarily permitted the readjustment, but even under the adapted program it was Israel’s privilege to grow and to expand her territories until eventually she would again have need of every part. How narrow and often selfish grows our own vision when we lose sight of God’s plan for us. We accomplish little because we attempt little, and we attempt so little because we are so prone to count our strength by the arm of flesh rather than by the mighty arm of God.

10. *The third lot*. Either the tribes were called up in the order designated by God in His prediction through Jacob, according to their pre-eminence, or the lot was drawn in this order. Though Zebulun was younger than Issachar, yet, in both the prophetic blessing of Jacob (Gen. 49) and that of Moses (Deut. 33) Zebulun came before him. Now again the precedence is shown in the allotment of the inheritance. According to the prediction of Jacob, the lot of Zebulun was to “dwell at the haven of the sea,” and Zebulun was to be a “haven of ships” (Gen. 49:13). Josephus (*Antiquities* vi. i. 22) held that their possession extended from the Sea of Chinnereth to Carmel and the sea. But from the description of the territory in the book of Joshua it is doubtful whether their boundary actually extended to the sea.

If the land of the Manassites touched upon that of the tribe of Asher (see Joshua 17:10), the land of Zebulun, unless in some detached way, could not have extended continuously to the Mediterranean. Perhaps Zebulun had access to the sea through Asher, or by a corridor that might have included the bay area north of the base of Mt. Carmel. The prediction was that Zebulun was to be a people dwelling at the haven of the sea, and this was probably accomplished by some arrangement with Asher whereby the children of Zebulun had easy access to harbors and thus were in convenient reach of rich markets. It has also been noted that their country was traversed by the ancient international highway known as “the way of the sea.”

***Unto Sarid*.** The LXX (Codex Alexandrinus) agrees with this reading, but the Codex Vaticanus has *Esedek Gola*. The Syriac has “Ashdod.” But this cannot be the Ashdod of the Philistines. Some MSS read “Shadud,” which means “ruins.” There is a *Tell Shadûd*, an extensive ruin, on the northern side of the plain of Esdraelon, 4 1/2 mi. (7.2 km.) southwest of Nazareth.

11. *Toward the sea*. That is, “westward.” The expression denotes this direction.

***Maralah*.** Neither Maralah nor Dabbasheth can be definitely identified.

12. *Chisloth-tabor*. Literally, “the flanks of Tabor.” Now believed to be *Iksâl*, a rocky height to the west of the base of Tabor, which is one of the most conspicuous mountains of Palestine. Some have supposed Tabor to have been the later mount of transfiguration.

Japhia. Believed to be the same as *Yâfâ*. It lies about 13 3/4 mi. (2.8 km.) southwest of Nazareth.

13. Gittah-hepher. The same as Gath-hepher, “wine press of Hopher,” the birthplace of Jonah (2 Kings 14:25). It is supposed to be *Khirbet ez-Zurrâ‘*, near which a tomb claimed to be that of Jonah is shown. The place is 2 3/4 mi. (4.4 km.) north by east of Nazareth on the road to Tiberias.

Remmon-methoar to Neah. Or, “Remmon, which extends to Neah,” which some hold to be the same as the present *Rummâneh*, north of Nazareth, but the location seems too far west.

14. Compasseth it. The border bent around it (Neah) on the north side to Hannathon. The description of the northern border begins at Neah.

Jiphthah-el. This valley has been identified with the *Wadi el-Melek*, near Bethlehem in Galilee. Here the northern boundary ended.

15. Kattath. It is not clearly stated whether Kattath and the other cities mentioned belonged to Zebulun or are merely noted here as border cities. Kattath is possibly *Khirbet Qoteina*, northwest of Megiddo. Nahallal is possibly *Tell en-Nahl*, a place near the Kishon brook. Shimron was a principal city whose king was conquered by Joshua (ch. 12:20). Bethlehem is not Bethlehem-ephraim of Judah, but a place 7 mi. (11.2 km.) northwest of Nazareth, and now called *Beit Lahm*.

Twelve cities. The 5 cities just mentioned are 7 short of the 12. If all the cities named in connection with the borders of Zebulun are counted, there are more than 12. It may be that some of these cities were merely border cities that did not belong to Zebulun. Some of the names may not have represented cities at all, so that the actual cities would have made up the number 12. From the following verse it would seem that the 12 cities had been enumerated in the preceding list, but which they are is difficult to determine. That all the cities belonging to Zebulun are not set down is clear from ch. 21:34, 35, where Kartah and Dimnah are mentioned as being given to the Levites.

18. Jezreel. Literally, “God sows.” This is a town on the south edge of the valley by the same name. The valley is triangular in shape with its base, about 15 mi. (24 km.) in length, facing the Jordan valley. The north side is bounded by the mountains of Nazareth, including Mt. Tabor, and its south side is formed by the hills of Samaria, including the Gilboa Mts. Its apex is a narrow pass through which the brook Kishon makes its way to the Bay of Acre, formerly Accho. The town of Jezreel, now called *Zer‘în*, is on a northwest spur of the Gilboa Mts. overlooking the plain and commanding a view of the Jordan pass.

Chesulloth. Thought to be the same as Chisloth-tabor of v. 12.

Shunem. The modern *Sôlem*, just east of the main north-south road running from Nazareth to Jerusalem. It was about 3 1/2 mi. (5.6 km.) north of Jezreel, the two cities being on either side of the Valley of Jezreel at its western extremity.

19. Haphraim. The writer does not describe the borders on all sides of Issachar, but seems only to set down some of the principal cities, the reason obviously being that its border would be quite sufficiently known, seeing it lay between Manasseh and Zebulun. Most of the cities are unknown.

21. En-gannim. Literally, “fountain of gardens.” Probably the “garden house” to which Jehu pursued the fleeing Ahaziah (2 Kings 9:27). It is possibly the modern *Jenîn*, which stands at the lower end of the plain, about 6 mi. (9.6 km.) from the slopes of Mt. Gilboa, on the main road from Megiddo through Samaria to Jerusalem.

22. The coast. Rather “the boundary.” The Hebrew has the same word that is usually translated “boundary,” or “border.” From the places mentioned, the reference is probably to the northern boundary.

Tabor. The city probably received its name from Mt. Tabor, on whose plateau it is thought to have been situated. It is identified, probably correctly, with the village of *Debûriyeh*, west of the mountain, on the ridge leading to Nazareth.

Shahazimah. The site of Shahazimah is not definitely known, but it was probably, like this Beth-shemesh, on the north border of Issachar toward the Jordan, perhaps a little to the northeast.

Beth-shemesh. “House of the sun,” not to be confused with a town of the same name in Judah (ch. 15:10) and one in Naphtali (ch. 19:38). It has been identified with *el-‘Abeidiyeh*. The number of cities by this name shows the prevalence of sun worship.

Sixteen cities. Including Tabor. Otherwise there would be only 15, which shows that Tabor should be considered as a city rather than a mountain. Their total inheritance was not large, but it contained some of the richest soil of the country. Issachar was quite powerful. When counted at Sinai, the adult males numbered 54,400 (Num. 1:28, 29), and later, on the plains of Shittim, they had increased to 64,300 (Num. 26:25), being exceeded only by Judah and Dan.

24. Asher. This tribe received the fertile region along the Mediterranean coast west and north of Zebulun. It is a little uncertain whether the author, in the description of Asher’s inheritance, proceeds to enumerate the border or merely mentions various leading cities, inasmuch as most of the towns mentioned are unknown. However, it would seem that the boundary begins from a point approximately in the center of the territory on the coast and then goes south to the border, turns east to Zebulun, then through a series of towns and valleys on the eastern sector until it comes north to Sidon; then it turns south again, terminating where it began.

25. Helkath. A city given later to the Levites (ch. 21:31). Perhaps the modern *Tell el-Harbaj*, 11 1/2 mi. (18.4 km.) south of Acre.

Achshaph. Referred to in chs. 11:1 and 12:20. Its location is unknown, but was probably in the vicinity of Helkath.

26. Alammelech. This name may be preserved in the modern *Wadi el-Melek*, which empties into the Kishon from the northeast.

Carmel. This site, being definitely known, enables us to fix the southern extent of Asher’s territory.

Shihor-libnath. Some have interpreted this name as a city, others as a promontory, and still others as a river (see on ch. 13:3). The modern stream, called the *Nahr ez-Zerka*, which flows into the sea south of Carmel, probably answers best to this description because of the direction in which the author is enumerating the places listed (see also ch. 17:10). This stream empties into the sea a short distance south of Dor.

Others take Shihor-libnath to be a town in this area. Still others consider it a town on Mt. Carmel.

27. Beth-dagon. From Shihor-libnath the border turned east to Beth-dagon. The site of Beth-dagon is unknown, but the name indicates the widespread worship of Dagon, the god of the Philistines, an ancient Canaanite deity.

Jiphthah-el. See on v. 14.

Cabul on the left hand. This is understood by some translators as “north to Cabul”; by others as “Cabul on the north.” This is the town of Cabul; it is not to be confused with the land of Cabul (1 Kings 9:11–13), which Solomon gave to Hiram. If the verse is describing the east border, Cabul would form the northeast corner, from where the boundary would turn in the direction of Sidon (see Joshua 19:28). Josephus speaks of a *Choboulo* in his day as being by the seaside, and near to Ptolemaïs (*War* iii. c. 4).

28. Hammon. This is thought by some to be the present *Umm el-‘Awāmîd*, 7 mi. north of Achzib, which is the modern *ez-Zîb*, on the seacoast 5 mi. (8 km.) above Acre. Others take Hammon to be a village 3/4 mi. from *Umm el-‘Awāmîd*.

Kanah. This is thought to be a town southeast of Tyre, probably the modern *Qânah*.

29. The coast turneth. Rather, “the boundary turneth.”

Ramah. The site of Ramah is unknown, but has been thought by some to be the present Rameh, 25 mi. (40.3 km.) southeast by south from Tyre.

The strong city Tyre. Literally, “the city of the fortified rock.” The famous city on the rock was not built until about 200 years later. Therefore the reference must be either to mainland Tyre or some other fortified rock in Asher.

Coast to Achzib. Literally, “district of Achzib.” The sentence means that the boundary just described ends at the sea in the district or region that belonged to Achzib. Achzib has been identified with the modern city of *ez-Zîb*, 8 3/4 mi. (14 km.) above Acre.

30. Aphek. See on ch. 13:4. A town in the north border area.

Twenty and two cities. Not counting Carmel (a mountain) and Jiphthah-el (a valley), 24 places are named. Therefore, at least two of the names were probably border towns, not belonging to Asher.

32. Children of Naphtali. The younger son of Bilhah, the handmaid of Rachel, is preferred before the elder, who was Dan (Gen. 30:6–8), as Zebulun was before Issachar. God values men, not according to *who* they are but *what* they are.

33. Heleph. The first part of this verse reads literally, “their boundary was from Heleph, from the oak in Zaanannim.” Heleph is unknown, but Judges 4:11 mentions the “plain” (oak) of Zaanannim as near Kedesh, although the exact site remains unknown. It was at this place that Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, slew Sisera (Judges 4:21). The name Zaanannim is derived from the Hebrew verb *ša’an*, which means “to wander.” This definition indicates a place where the tents of wanderers, nomads, were pitched. Heber was probably such a nomadic herdsman.

Adami, Nekeb. Probably a compound name, Adami-Nekeb.

Jordan. The description of the border begins at the upper Jordan valley above the former Lake Huleh. The eastern boundary was the Jordan, including Lake Huleh and the Sea of Chinnereth. The description is next of the southern boundary.

34. Aznoth-tabor. Literally, “ears of Tabor.” The site has been identified with *Umm Jebeil*, in the vicinity of Mt. Tabor. Beyond Mt. Tabor, Zebulun and Asher would form the southern and western boundaries.

Judah upon Jordan. The inheritance of Judah was not anywhere near the border of Naphtali. How, then, could the border of Naphtali extend to Judah upon Jordan to the east? One explanation notes that on the eastern side of the Jordan, as it leaves the Sea of Chinnereth, were a number of villages of tents called Havoth-jair (Judges 10:3–5). This Jair was a grandson of Hezron, the father of Caleb, by a later wife of the tribe of Manasseh, but the grandfather was of Judah (see 1 Chron. 2:21–23). According to the law of Moses, every one of the children of Israel kept himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers, and thus the possessions of Jair were reckoned as belonging, not to the tribe of Manasseh, but to that of Judah, and this may explain how the territory of Naphtali, which was opposite Havoth-jair, is said to extend “to Judah upon Jordan toward the sunrising.”

Perhaps a more plausible explanation would be to have the territory of Issachar extending down the west side of the Jordan to the territory of Benjamin and Judah. Issachar would thus have the west valley of the Jordan as Gad had the east valley (ch. 13:27).

35. Fenced cities. Of these 16 fortified cities named in vs. 35–39, Zer, Adamah, Edrei, and Horem have not been definitely identified.

Ziddim. Signifying “the sides.” The Kefar Hattya, “the village of the Hittites,” mentioned in the Talmud, now called *Hattîn*. It is situated on the plain 5 1/2 mi. (8.8 km.) northwest of Tiberias.

Hammath. Signifying “warm.” Believed to have been a village with warm baths a little south of Tiberias. It is probably the present *Ḥammâm Ṭabarîyeh*.

Rakkath. Perhaps from the verb “to pound out.” Thought by some to have been 1 1/2 mi. (2.4 km.) north of the later Tiberias. Its name would suit the site. At least, it was somewhere in that area.

Chinnereth. Signifying “a lyre,” in KJV “a harp.” A fortified city on the northwest shore of the Sea of Chinnereth (Galilee). It gave its name to the harp-shaped lake known later as Gennesaret, or Galilee.

36. Hazor. See on ch. 11:1.

37. Kedesh. Generally called Kedesh-naphtali to distinguish it from the other cities by the same name. It is about 4 mi. (7 km.) northwest of the former Lake Huleh. It was the home of Barak (Judges 4:6, 9), and the place where he and Deborah assembled their troops to fight with Sisera.

38. Migdal-el. Signifying “tower of God.” Situated west of the Lake Huleh district, possibly Khirbet Mejdol, near Kedesh.

Beth-shemesh. Another of the many cities by the name which signifies “house of the sun,” showing the extent of sun worship among the earlier inhabitants of Canaan. The city was situated in the northern part of Naphtali.

40. Dan. The most numerous of the tribes, next to Judah, in each census taken during the Exodus (see Num. 1 and 26). Though holding the important position of commander of the rear guard during the march from Egypt, Dan was the last to receive his inheritance.

His lot fell in the southern part of Canaan between Judah on the east and the land of the Philistines on the west, bordered by Ephraim on the north and Simeon on the south.

The author does not describe the lot of Dan by its borders, but mentions only the cities that were in it. Some of these cities were at first given to Judah, but Judah's share being too large, some were given to the Danites as others were to the Simeonites.

41. Zorah. A town probably in the *Wadi eš-Šarar* about 14.7 mi. (23.6 km.) west of Jerusalem. It was the home of Samson's father, Manoah (Judges 13:2, 25). Here Samson was born, and between Zorah and Eshtaol he was buried (Judges 16:31). Both Zorah and Eshtaol, and probably the Irshemesh mentioned in this verse, were, at first, given to the tribe of Judah (chs. 15:10, 33). Ir-shemesh and Beth-shemesh may have been the same, since they both have the same signification. The first means "the city of the sun," and the second, "the house of the sun."

42. Shaalabbin. Called Shaalbim in Judges 1:35. Perhaps the modern *Selbît*, a town of central Palestine, between Jerusalem and Lydda. The place was, for a time, held by the Amorites, who would not permit the Danites to occupy it. Later the Hebrews took it (1 Kings 4:9).

Ajalon. A city, probably in the Valley of Ajalon, which the Amorites refused to yield. The valley runs from Jerusalem toward the Mediterranean, cutting across the hills of the Shephelah toward Lydda.

43. Thimnathah. A city first given to Judah (ch. 15:57). Evidently the same as the Timnath of Judges 14:1–5, where Samson took his wife. The city was under the control of the Philistines, at least for some time, and it is doubtful whether the Danites ever took it. The place is most likely *Tell el-Batashi*, 4 1/2 mi. (7.2 km.) west-northwest of Beth-shemesh, bordering Judah's territory.

Ekron. This was the northernmost of the five important cities belonging to the Philistines. It was about halfway between the Mediterranean and the highlands of Judea (see on ch. 13:3). It is thought to be several miles from 'Akir, which preserves the ancient name.

44. Gibbethon. Signifying "mound," or "height." It is identified with *Tell el-Melât*, 7 mi. (11.5 km.) south by east from Japho (Jaffa). The Danites do not seem to have gained possession of it, or if so, the Philistines took it (1 Kings 15:27; 16:15). It was a Levitical city (Joshua 21:23).

45. Gath-rimmon. A Levitical city (Joshua 21:24; 1 Chron. 6:69), possibly to be identified with *Tell-ej-Jerîsheh*, 4 1/2 mi. (7 km.) northeast of Japho.

46. Japho. Signifying "beauty." The principal port town in all Judea, later called Joppa. The modern name is Jaffa, which is contiguous with the modern Jewish harbor of Tel-Aviv. It is not definitely stated that Japho was a part of the territory of Dan. The statement seems to imply that the border came up before the city but did not include it.

47. Too little for them. Literally, "the territory of the children of Dan went out from them." That is, it slipped away from them because their powerful neighbors, the Amorites, forced them into the mountains, not permitting them to dwell in the valley (Judges 1:34). This put them into such straits that they had to find different territory where there was not such fierce opposition. Thus the children of Dan refused to occupy the territory assigned them of God, who would have given them complete victory over

their enemies if they had cooperated with His plan. Instead, they occupied a territory of their own choosing. It has been suggested that this attitude on the part of Dan accounts for the omission of this tribe from the list of the tribes given in Rev. 7.

Leshem. A town not far from the sources of the river Jordan at the foot of Mt. Lebanon, and called Laish in the book of Judges, before it was taken by the Danites. The town was discovered by five spies whom the Danites had dispatched to spy out the north country. These five spies reported back that the land was very good and that the city was quiet and secure, having no dealings with other cities, being a long distance from Sidon. Immediately 600 armed men set out and took the city and changed its name to Dan (see Judges 18).

Because the conquest of Leshem took place some time after the death of Joshua, some have argued that the book of Joshua was not written by him, but at a much later period. However, this short account of the taking of Leshem was evidently inserted later by some other person, writing under divine guidance, so as to complete the account of the Danites' possessions.

49. Inheritance to Joshua. Joshua was the last to receive his inheritance. We see in this sequence the magnanimity of this great leader. He was not striving to reap all the benefits by virtue of his office, which he could readily have done. He shunned the temptation to which leaders are constantly exposed, namely, to enhance their own coffers with little consideration for those in less favorable positions. Joshua was last served, though the eldest and greatest man in Israel. He sought the good of his country above any private interests of his own. He is a great example to all who serve in public places whether in civil or church leadership. It is further noted that he did not take the inheritance to himself without the people's consent and approbation. The record says that the children of Israel gave it to him. They loved their leader. No wonder the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua (Joshua 24:31; Judges 2:7). Such unselfish service begets love, which, in turn, prompts obedience. No one really has a right to leadership until he has learned to serve unselfishly. Christ, who pleased not Himself (Rom. 15:3), is the great exemplar of unselfish service.

50. Timnath-serah. Literally, "the remaining portion." Joshua did not choose the best place in all the country, but a convenient place in his own tribe not far from Shiloh, the location of the tabernacle.

51. Door of the tabernacle. The work of division was done in the presence of God and by His direction. It was done publicly, so that all might know that the distribution was not the result of the caprice of men. Such a knowledge would have its influence in curbing any murmuring, but in spite of this there was some discontent (ch. 17:14–18). The lesson is also for us. Every important problem of life should be brought to the "door of the tabernacle" in recognition of God's authority in every phase of life.

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CHAPTER 20

1 *God commandeth, 7 and the children of Israel appoint the six cities of refuge.*

2. Cities of refuge. The word "refuge" comes from the Heb. *qalat*, which means "to contract," "to draw," "to take in," "to receive." Hence, the idea "asylum," or "refuge." The Hebrew has the article before "refuge," as do also the LXX and the Syriac, thus

making the statement more definite in referring back to what God had said before. The law of the cities of refuge is given in full in Num. 35 and Deut. 19. The sacredness of human life is one of the great principles of the Christian religion, which is generally not recognized in pagan and atheistic concepts. Very early God sought to impress upon His people that to put an end to a man's life under any circumstances was a serious matter. The seriousness of it rests in the fact that man was made in the divine likeness and was thus in kinship with God. After the Flood, God emphatically declared that "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man" (Gen. 9:6; see also Ex. 21:12, 14). God had promised a place where the unintentional manslayer might flee (Ex. 21:13), but no such provision was made for the murderer. God sought to regulate the ancient custom of private vengeance, whereby the punishment of the murderer devolved upon the nearest relative or the next heir of the one who had been murdered. Israel stood alone among the nations in the value set upon human life, and now God was to teach them still further concerning the justice as well as the mercy of God. God leads men only as rapidly as they are able to comprehend divine truth. This principle was characteristic of the Hebrew legislation, given by God through Moses. It adapted itself to the condition of men, but always tended toward a perfection that the people were not at first capable of realizing. Thus slavery, polygamy, free divorce, were for a time tolerated, and laws were enacted regulating these practices, though these practices were neither ordained nor approved by God.

The feeling was deeply rooted in the Hebrew mind that the nearest of kin was the guardian of his brother's life, and for this reason he was bound to avenge his death. Instead of crossing this feeling, or seeking wholly to uproot it, God placed this emotion under temporary, salutary checks, which would prevent it from inflicting great injustice where no crime had really been committed.

Whereof I spake. Spoken by Moses and recorded by him, so that Joshua might have access to the information (Ex. 21:13; Num. 35:9–34; Deut. 19:1–13). Thus the Pentateuch was probably in existence in somewhat the same form as it is today when the book of Joshua was written.

3. Unawares and unwittingly. Literally, "by mistake in not knowing." Num. 35:22–25 and Deut. 19:4, 5, supply illustrations of what is meant here. These terms stand in general for unpremeditated acts that resulted in the death of an individual. The willful murderer, even if he should seek protection in one of these cities, was, after examination, to be promptly punished. God had declared that such should be taken even from His altar, that they might be executed (Ex. 21:14).

Avenger of blood. In the KJV whenever this word *go'el*, "avenger," in its participial form, as here, appears with the word "blood," it is translated "avenger," or "revenger," but in all other cases it is translated "redeemer," "kinsman," "near kinsman," "next kinsman," "kinsfolk." This word occurs in such texts as Job 19:25; Isa. 47:4; 48:17; 54:5, in reference to the Lord. To the Hebrew mind such a designation of God would call attention to the work of the kinsman in his right of redemption (see on Num. 35:12). To what extent the figure is to be transferred to Christ is not made clear. The cities of refuge themselves were a symbol of the refuge provided in Christ (PP 516).

4. Doth flee. The slayer was to flee with all haste. Every provision possible was made so that he might not be delayed in his flight. The roads leading to these cities were always to be kept in good repair. Wherever there were crossroads, road signs were to be posted

pointing toward the city of refuge. Should the avenger of blood overtake him, the avenger was at liberty to take the slayer's life. Upon the fleer rested the responsibility of reaching the city of refuge in time. None of these cities was more than a half day's journey from any part of the land (see PP 515–517).

The ancient plan concerning the cities of refuge presents striking illustrations in the Christian life. The sinner must flee to the refuge Christ Jesus (Heb. 6:18) without delay. Those who know the way are to place signposts along the path. A great responsibility rests upon these guides, and carelessness may result in a sign pointing in the wrong direction and misleading a fleeing sinner.

Gate of the city. It was customary for the judges, or elders, of the city to sit at the entering of the gate to transact all legal business (see Ruth 4:1; 2 Sam. 15:2).

Take him into the city. Literally, “gather him into the city.” Having heard the fugitive's story and being satisfied that at least his case demanded a fair trial, the elders were to perform the next act, that of gathering him in under their protection. Later on there would be a more extensive hearing which would decide the case.

6. Congregation. Probably the congregation of his own city rather than that of the city of refuge (see Num. 35:24, 25). If found guilty, the slayer would be delivered up to the avenger of blood; but if he was found innocent of willful murder, the congregation would restore him to the city of refuge, where he would remain until the death of the high priest.

Death of the high priest. As the services for sin centered in the sanctuary and the priest, so, probably, the fugitive's length of exile was made dependent upon circumstances connected with the ritual service. It was necessary to have some event of distinction to mark the termination of the asylum so that the avenger might know, beyond question, when his legal right to vengeance ceased.

7. They appointed. Literally, “they sanctified,” that is, they set these cities apart for a sacred use. They were all cities of the Levites in which these ministers of God lived, since they carried out the service of the Lord in courses. These circumstances afforded the fleer the opportunity of study, and communication with the Levites, who were trained in the things of God. Hence, the place of refuge could become at the same time a source of real blessing to the slayer as the priests and Levites taught him the way of Jehovah (see Deut. 17:8–13; 21:5; 33:9, 10).

The cities of refuge were all upon the level plain or in valleys, in well-known areas. They were at convenient distances from one another, for the benefit of all the tribes. Three were west of the Jordan and three were east, one in the north, one in the central area, and one in the south. An anxious, fleeing man, escaping for his life, must have every advantage. He must have no weary mountain to climb in the last stretch of his flight, when he perhaps would be almost exhausted. The roads leading to these centers must be good, and the cities well known. Mothers of Israel may have taught their little children the names of these six cities by heart, so that in years to come, if it became necessary for these children to flee, they would know exactly where to go.

There is a lesson in this for us. There is a place of refuge for guilty sinners today. That refuge is Jesus. The road is always open, there are signposts all along the way and access to the city is easy. “The Lord is nigh unto them who are of broken heart” (Ps. 34:18; cf. Ps. 85:9; 145:18). In this refuge we must continue to abide until the indignation is past.

Kedesh. The name comes from the Heb. *qadash*, “to be holy,” which in its strengthened form means “to sanctify.” From this the noun, *qodesh*, meaning “holiness,” is also derived. For the location of this city see on ch. 19:37.

Shechem. Heb. *shekem*, “the shoulder,” thence it has the metaphorical meaning of “government.” “The government shall be upon his shoulder [*shekem*]” (Isa. 9:6). Schechem was in the tribe of Ephraim between the two mounts Ebal and Gerizim. Its site is now known as *Tell Balâtah*, 30.5 mi. (48.8 km.) north by east of Jerusalem.

Hebron. This name comes from the verb *chabar*, meaning “to join,” “to associate,” “to unite.” Hence *chebron*, meaning “fellowship,” “alliance.” For the location see on ch. 14:15.

8. Bezer. This name is derived from the verb *bašar*, “to restrain,” “to enclose,” hence, “to fortify.” The noun indicates “a fortified place,” that is, “a fortress.” The location of Bezer is not definitely known. Some have identified it with the modern *Umm el-‘Amad*, northwest of Medebah.

Ramoth. From *ra’am*, “to be high or exalted.” *Ra’moth* is the plural noun, meaning “heights,” figuratively meaning “sublime or unattainable things.” For the probable location see on ch. 13:26 (*Ramoth-mizpeh*).

Golan. from *gôlan*, “circuit.” Its location thought to be somewhat east of the Sea of Chinnereth (Galilee); possibly *Saḥen el-Jôlân*.

9. For the stranger. God made provision for the stranger to share in the spiritual benefits of Israel. When the Israelites came out of Egypt a mixed multitude was permitted to accompany them. When the Gibeonites sought peace Israel made peace with them. When Rahab expressed her faith God accepted her. Thus it has been all through the ages. God is no respecter of persons. All who come to Him He will in no wise cast out (John 6:37). There is a gate that stands ajar, open for all who will come in humility and penitence.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-9PP 515-517

CHAPTER 21

¹ *Eight and forty cities given by lot, out of the other tribes, unto the Levites. 43 God gave the land, and rest unto the Israelites, according to his promise.*

1. Heads of the fathers. Chief persons descended from the three branches of the tribe of Levi, that is, from the family of Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, the three sons of Levi.

Levites. This tribe waited to receive its share until all the other tribes had received their inheritance. The delay until the land was divided was necessary so that the Levites might be scattered in Israel, receiving cities from the various tribes. Their request was not arbitrary, for the God of Israel had commanded that the Levites should be well provided for (Num. 35:1, 2).

In like manner God has made arrangements that the ministry of the Christian church shall be adequately supported. “Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach

the gospel should live of the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14). God perpetuated the system of tithes and offerings for the support of those who today carry forward His work.

Eleazar. He is mentioned first in the list of those to whom the Levites came with their request. God had instructed Joshua to seek counsel from the priest (Num. 27:21), who, in turn, would receive counsel from God. Thus the direct representative of God stood first. The whole history of this period shows how closely Joshua worked together with the priest. Unfortunately, at times Joshua too erred from this plan as in the case of the Gibeonites (Joshua 9).

2. Suburbs. From the Hebrew root *garash*, which means “to drive,” “to chase.” Followed by the expression “for our cattle,” the word indicates an area where the cattle could be driven, in other words, “pastureland” adjacent to the city (see on ch. 14:4).

3. Children of Israel gave. The Levites’ petition was apparently cheerfully granted. Each tribe gave cities according to the extent and value of its inheritance, for God had directed (Num. 35:8) that the tribe that had many cities should give many and the tribe that had few should give few. The method tested the generosity of the people. By the cities that were given it would seem that at least a large number of them were among the best in the land.

In the distribution the people bore in mind God’s plan that the Levites were to be scattered in Israel in every part of the land. In this way the Levites were to be in the midst of the people to instruct them in the ways of the Lord both by word and by example, and thus be a restraint to Israel against idolatry.

4. The lot came. It is probable that when the 48 cities were designated by the various tribes, they were divided into 4 lots. Then it was determined to which of the four families of the tribe of Levi these portions would be assigned. Kohath, in this instance, was considered as two families, namely, the Kohathites in the line of Aaron, who were priests, and the remainder who were not priests. The family of Aaron, from which came the priests, had for its share the 13 cities that were given by the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. God, in wisdom, planned that the cities that fell to the priests were those that lay next to Jerusalem, because that was to be, in the process of time, the Holy City, where the Temple would be and where the services of the priests would be needed.

The order in which distribution was made was similar to the order of march in the wilderness. The priests, with Moses and Aaron, who pitched on the east by the entrance of the tabernacle came first; the Kohathites were on the south, and in march carried the sacred vessels; the Gershonites were on the west, and followed the Kohathites carrying the curtains and various fabrics of the tent and tabernacle; the Merarites were pitched on the north, and in line of march came last, carrying the bars and boards.

From the instruction given in Lev. 25:32–34, as well as the record of Biblical history, it is evident that these cities were not exclusively inhabited by the Levites. In view of the purpose of the distribution of the Levites, this would hardly be God’s plan. God intended the Levites to be in the midst of Israel and not to be isolated from the people whom they were to instruct and guide. Hence the cities of the Levites were also inhabited by Israelites from other tribes. Gibeah of Benjamin, here given to the Levites (Joshua 21:17), was also peopled by the Benjamites, as appears from the history of the Levite whose wife was so horribly abused by them (Judges 19). Saul dwelt there also. David and his court spent years at Hebron, another city of the Levites. The Levites probably were merely given the right to as many houses as they needed for living quarters in these cities. If they

should sell, which they seemingly had a right to do (Lev. 25:32–34), they would perpetually have the right to redeem the property. The rest of the dwellings were occupied by the members of the tribe to which the country belonged. Outside the city was the pastureland for their cattle, extending up to 2,000 cu. beyond the city limits. This land was theirs for use but not for selling. It was permanently considered the Lord's property.

There is record later of priests and Levites living in other cities, as for instance in Nob (1 Sam. 21:1). Evidently, in the course of time, there was a modification of the original plan.

Thirteen cities. This may seem like a large number for the children of Aaron, but it must be borne in mind that these cities were probably not inhabited exclusively by the priests, and that all the cities enumerated were not as yet taken from the Canaanites.

5. Children of Kohath. That is, those that were not of the family of Aaron. These were given cities in the tribes of Ephraim, Dan, and Manasseh. The territory of these tribes was near the territory of the tribes in which the family of Aaron had received its inheritance. Thus the Kohathites were not far separated from one another.

6. Children of Gershon. Gershon was the eldest son of Levi (Ex. 6:16; Num. 3:17), but the inheritance of the children of Kohath was assigned first, likely because the priests were descended from Kohath. The Gershonites received 13 cities; the Kohathites, more in number, received 23.

7. Children of Merari. Merari was the youngest son of Levi and was the last to receive his cities. His descendants were the smallest in number, so he received only 12 cities, 8 of these being east of the Jordan.

8. Gave by lot. Interestingly, in the Hebrew and the LXX the word translated “by lot” comes at the end of the sentence, and from position gives the appearance that it modifies the verb “commanded.” This, quite evidently, is not its intended function, however, and the KJV has properly adjusted its position so as to make it modify “gave.” The idea is that the Lord commanded Moses that disposition of the cities should be by lot.

9. Of Judah, and ... of Simeon. It is interesting to notice that, with the exception of Ain (v. 16), all the priestly cities were so arranged as to fall ultimately within the kingdom of Judah (1 Kings 12), of which the capital was Jerusalem, the city the Lord had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel to put His name there. Though the Levites of the northern kingdom left their cities and their suburbs in the time of Jeroboam's rebellion (2 Chron. 11:14), and came over to Judah, the fact that all the priests, with the insignificant exception noted in the foregoing, were already settled there, represented a great advantage.

These cities. The catalog of the Levitical cities is given in this chapter, and, with some variations and omissions, in 1 Chron. 6:54–81. Many years had elapsed and some of the cities were probably called by different names. Some adjustments may also have been made in the interval, owing to changing political situations.

11. Arba. See on ch. 14:15.

12. Fields. Literally, “field.” This evidently refers to the country that lay beyond the 2,000 cu. expressed in Num. 35:5. The directions were apparently not specific for Hebron alone, but merely an example of the general rule with regard to all the cities.

13. Libnah. See on ch. 10:29.

15. Debir. See on ch. 10:38.

16. Beth-shemesh. See on ch. 15:10.

17. Gibeon. See on ch. 9:3.

Geba. See on ch. 18:24.

18. Anathoth. Famous later as the birthplace of Jeremiah (Jer. 1:1; 11:21). The modern name of the site is *Râs el-Kharrûbeh*, which is 1 1/4 mi. (2 km.) northeast from Mt. Scopus, Jerusalem, and a little southeast of Gibeah. In Jeremiah's day it was still a priestly city (Jer. 1:1). It was also the home of Abiathar and the place to which he was banished for participation in the revolt of Adonijah (1 Kings 2:26).

21. Shechem. See on ch. 20:7.

Gezer. See on ch. 10:33.

22. Beth-horon. See on ch. 10:10.

23. Gibbethon. See on ch. 19:44.

24. Aijalon. See on chs. 10:12 and 19:42.

25. Tanach. See on chs. 12:21 and 17:11.

29. Jarmuth. See on ch. 10:3.

En-gannim. See on ch. 19:21.

32. Kedesh. See on chs. 12:22 and 19:37.

34. Jokneam. See on chs. 12:22 and 19:11.

35. Nahalal. See on ch. 19:15.

36. Bezer. See on ch. 20:8.

38. Ramoth. See on ch. 20:8.

Mahanaim. See on ch. 13:26.

39. Heshbon. The capital of Sihon, the king of the Amorites who fought the Israelites as they came up east of the Dead Sea from Egypt and lost his kingdom to them. The name survives in *Tell Hesbân*, about 15 1/4 mi. (25.5 km.) east-northeast of the mouth of the Jordan River, and 12 3/4 mi. (20.5 km.) southwest of Rabbath-ammon (Amman).

Jazer. See on ch. 13:25.

41. Forty and eight cities. In the census of Israel recorded in Num. 26:62 the tribe of Levi is numbered at 23,000. It has been thought that proportionately they received more than any other tribe. However, it should be remembered that all the cities of the other tribes were probably not named in the lists under each tribe, whereas the Levites were restricted to these 48 cities and a few hundred acres of pastureland around each. The rest had large territories belonging to their cities.

It has been suggested that each of the four divisions of the house of Levi became a bond to cement 3 of the 12 tribes together. In the case of the Gershonites the two sides of Jordan are bound together, two on the west of Jordan united to one on the east. The Merarites were used to connect two tribes on the east of Jordan with one tribe on the west, and the southeast of the Israelitish territory with the north. Thus they were all knit together that they might grow up together in God. The Levites were divided in Israel, but in their division they became a bond of union, bringing the tribes of Israel together and joining all of them to their God.

When not engaged in performing the religious duties which were apportioned among them, the Levites were the teachers of the young; the readers, transcribers, and expounders of the law; the annalists and chroniclers who preserved the memory of great events and distinguished personages. They were to bring religion into everyday life, mutually helping one another and their neighbors to realize the unseen, and to attain God's standard.

42. *These cities.* Following v. 42, and before v. 43, the LXX adds the following: “And Joshua ceased dividing the land by their borders: and the children of Israel gave a portion to Joshua because of the commandment of the Lord: they gave him the city which he asked: they gave him Thamnasachar in mount Ephraim; and Joshua built the city, and dwelt in it: and Joshua took the knives of stone, wherewith he circumcised the children of Israel that were born in the desert by the way, and put them in Thamnasachar.”

43. *All the land.* The declaration of this verse may seem like a contradiction, since Israel did not possess all the land until the time of David and Solomon, and even then it is doubtful that it included all that God originally intended that they should possess. However, the statement merely says “the Lord gave unto Israel all the land.” The gift was theirs despite the presence of the Canaanites in a part of the territory. It was in the plan of God not to drive these inhabitants out all at once, but only little by little (Ex. 23:30), to prevent the beasts and brambles from taking over until Israel, in process of time, should become numerous enough to occupy these areas.

44. *Rest round about.* The Hebrew reads, “rest from round about,” that is, from the surrounding nations. However, God had in mind more than mere physical rest from warfare. The settlement in Canaan was preliminary to a great missionary program that God was planning to accomplish through Israel. Such a program could be carried forward only by individuals who in their own lives were representatives of that plan. The writer of the book of Hebrews was referring to the attainment of this spiritual objective in the soul and the accomplishment of the missionary objective in the world when he said, “For if Jesus [Joshua] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day” (Heb. 4:8). When Israel miserably failed to fulfill her high destiny and enter into her “rest,” God called upon the Christian church to fulfill the divine purpose. Therefore we should “fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should come short of it” (Heb. 4:1).

CHAPTER 22

1 The two tribes and half with a blessing are sent home. 10 They build the altar of testimony in their journey. 11 The Israelites are offended thereat. 21 They give them good satisfaction.

1. *Then.* Heb. *’az*, indicating that the development began at a certain time, growing out of a situation just described; that is, immediately after the donation of the cities to Levi, as recorded in ch. 21. The construction seems to imply that it was not at the end of the war when the 2 1/2 tribes were sent home, as some have thought, but rather after the distribution of the land to the 12 tribes, and of the cities to the Levites.

2. *Ye have kept all.* The words of vs. 2 and 3 recall the promise of ch. 1:16, and Joshua’s charge in v. 5 recalls that which he himself had at first received (ch. 1:7), and finds a further parallel in what he said to Israel before his death as recorded in chs. 23 and 24.

3. *These many days.* See on ch. 11:18. About six or seven years were occupied in subduing the land. Thus these tribes had been absent from their homes and families for a long period of time while fulfilling their obligation to their brethren (ch. 1:12–16). They had given of their best to be a blessing to their brethren.

It is noteworthy that during all the long years of conquest, with the exception of the request of the tribe of Joseph (ch. 17), no sound of complaint is recorded. This is in contrast to the constant murmuring during the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.

While the Israelites were in the midst of conquest and success and in activity, they were content. So today, when the church is active and carrying forward a progressive program with all of its members participating, there is usually remarkable freedom from criticisms, complaints, and murmurings.

4. *Your tents.* Perhaps by this time the people were already living in the houses they had inherited or had built (Num. 32:17), but the writer calls them tents because this was the word they were accustomed to use in the wilderness for their dwelling places. It continued in their vocabulary even to a much later date.

5. *But take diligent heed.* Literally, “only watch you exceedingly.” The statements in this verse are very similar in content to the statements found in Deut. 6:5; 10:12; 11:13, 22; 30:6, 16, 20; etc., indicating that these words were already recorded, so that Joshua had access to them. He had become so familiar with them that when he spoke he was using almost the same words as his predecessor, Moses. Joshua dismissed the two and a half tribes with words of spiritual counsel and warning. In strict obedience to all the commandments of God lay their only safety.

Cleave unto him. The Hebrew word here translated “cleave” is rendered “stuck” in Ps. 119:31. It carries with it the idea of firmness, that is, “to stick firmly.”

7. *Tribe of Manasseh.* We are not to understand from this verse that Joshua addressed himself again separately to the half tribe of Manasseh. The statement is rather a repetition, which is a marked characteristic of the OT writers in general, and in particular of Joshua. A modern writer would refer back to what he has already written elsewhere, but the Jewish historian repeats in each instance as much as is necessary to make his account intelligible by itself. As an example of such repetition by our author, four times he repeats that the Levites were not to share in the distribution of the land (chs. 13:14, 33; 14:3; 18:7), and four times he repeats that the tribe of Manasseh was divided into two parts on either side of the Jordan (chs. 13:7, 8; 14:3; 18:7; and here).

8. *Divide the spoil.* These who had stayed in eastern Palestine to guard the stuff and rebuild the cities and care for the flocks and families were to share in the spoil taken. This was as God had earlier ordained (Num. 31:27), and as David later instructed the people (1 Sam. 30:24).

9. *Out of Shiloh.* This verse indicates very clearly that the two and a half tribes were not sent to their homes until after the headquarters of Israel had been moved to Shiloh, which move was after some of the tribes had received their inheritance. If they were not to remain until after the distribution of the land, they would likely have been dismissed from Gilgal. The fact that they were not dismissed from there is strong evidence that they stayed until the distribution was finished.

10. *Borders of Jordan.* Literally, “circuits of Jordan,” or, “districts of Jordan.” Some have taken the expression to refer to the fertile districts east of the upper Jordan, possibly the fertile meadow areas within the windings of the Jordan River. The river flows about 200 mi. (320 km.) in its windings back and forth in the 65 mi. (104 km.) between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. However, this identification does not seem to fit the specifications of the narrative. The LXX and the Syriac have the proper name “Gilgal” instead of “borders.” This would be the most natural place for the tribes to cross the Jordan. The road past Gilgal led to the border of both Reuben and Gad. Had the tribes journeyed north by the upper Jordan, they would have gone approximately 100 mi. out of their way. Another possible crossing place would have been at Adamah, but this was also

an indirect way for Gad and Reuben to return, as well as an unknown way. Thus it is only logical to believe that the tribes returned by way of Gilgal (see PP 518). Having arrived in the “borders” of the Jordan, they built an altar on the height near the stones that Joshua had erected, although, perhaps, on the other side of the river (see on v. 11).

Land of Canaan. Suggesting that the place may have been on the west side of the Jordan, although this is by no means certain.

To see to. Better, “for appearance.” The expression indicates a large altar high enough to be seen at a great distance. This word may also convey the meaning that the altar was built for appearance only and not for any other use, such as for sacrifices. Yet it was patterned after the altar of burnt offering at the tabernacle (v. 28), which would make it an effective memorial of the fact that the eastern tribes were a part of the Israel of God.

11. An altar. Literally, “the altar.” According to v. 28, it was modeled after the altar of Jehovah, a copy of the one altar that God had given to Israel on which to offer their sacrifices; hence the article in the Hebrew, indicating the one altar.

Over against. Literally, “to the forefront.” The Heb. *mul* means “front,” and is so translated in most places. From the standpoint of directions, “front” may mean east as “right” means south, and “left,” north. If such is the usage of the word here, then the phrase would refer to the entrance to the land of Canaan from the east, or to the eastern shore itself.

In the borders. This is the same expression as in v. 10, and again the LXX and the Syriac read, “Gilgal.”

At the passage. Heb. *’el ’eber*, literally, “unto over.” *Eber* also means “ford,” or “passage,” which seems to confirm what was suggested (see on v. 10) as the most probable place of crossing. The word, however, also has the sense of “across,” so again, it cannot be definitely determined on which side of the Jordan the altar was built. It was probably to the east of the river (see PP 519).

12. To war against them. Here is striking proof of Israel’s strict obedience to the law and their veneration for it in the days of Joshua. A single deviation from it (Lev. 17:8, 9; Deut. 12:5–7; 13:12–15) was sufficient to arouse the loyalty of the nine and a half tribes and cause them to go to war even against their brethren. When they heard of the erection of an altar in addition to the one at Shiloh, they were ready to take immediate action lest the worship of Jehovah be defiled. It was not Joshua who summoned the tribes; they came together voluntarily. But probably he, together with Eleazar, counseled them to defer action until an embassy had been sent to the two and a half tribes to verify the rumor.

13. Phinehas. The son of the high priest, and well fitted for this task. He was the one who, in a critical moment, had risen up to resist the evil of Baal-peor (Num. 25:7, 8). All were aware of his earnestness, and, perhaps, no better person could have headed the delegation.

14. Ten princes. All the tribes west of the Jordan were represented, together with Phinehas from the tribe of Levi. Everyone who accompanied him was the chief of his father’s house, and probably the actual head of the tribe. A deputation of this kind would probably represent the highest court in the land. To Israel the supposed transgression committed by the two and a half tribes was considered a serious breach of divine law, and the personnel constituting the delegation indicated with what gravity they regarded the act.

16. *What trespass.* This expression means, literally, “what treachery.” The matter concerned not only the two and a half tribes but all Israel. Past experiences had shown that transgressions of groups or individuals might be visited upon the people as a whole. To these occasions Phinehas and his companions called attention, fearful that if those who had erected the altar should go unpunished, God might punish all Israel as partners in the guilt. The accusation of the nine and a half tribes was based only on a rumor which ought first to have been investigated. It is easy to put a false construction upon the acts of others. The western tribes were at fault, but so were the eastern tribes, who should have informed their brethren of the plan to erect this memorial. Perhaps they did not anticipate that a false rumor would originate. It is always wise to avoid the possibility, but on the other hand, it is never safe to pass judgment based merely on appearance.

17. *Iniquity of Peor.* See Num. 25:1–9; Deut. 4:3. The original of the word here translated “iniquity” is ‘*awon*, which often conveys the idea of the “guilt” of wrongdoing. It is thought to come from the word ‘*awah*, meaning “to bow down,” “to be perverse.” The English word “wrong,” that is, that which is wrought out of course, gives a similar idea of evil, and is found as the translation of ‘*awah* in Esther 1:16. Hence ‘*awon* is that which is out of line with right and propriety, which involves both guilt and punishment.

Not cleansed. Literally, “not cleansed from us.” Just what circumstance the author referred to by this statement cannot be definitely known, but the shame, the disgrace, the infamy of the iniquity of Peor must have still remained, and perhaps some tokens of the divine displeasure still continued to linger among the congregation. Twenty-four thousand are reported to have died on that occasion, and it is possible some of the children of those unholy unions were in the camp. No doubt many of the relatives still felt keenly the loss of those 24,000, and broken homes and fatherless children were evidence of the disaster. It may also imply that some measure of that corrupt leaven still remained among them, that the infection was not wholly cured, and that though suppressed for the present, it was still secretly working and was likely to break out again with fresh violence, as is intimated in the words of ch. 24:14, 23. Sin leaves its marks both upon the individual who sins and upon those who are influenced by his sin.

19. *Unclean.* That is, ceremonially unclean, because the tabernacle was not in the land of these tribes. An opinion was generally prevalent among the ancients that those countries in which there was no place set apart for the worship of God were unhallowed and unclean. If the two and a half tribes entertained such an idea, then it were better by far to abandon the land and dwell with the other tribes in the possession of the Lord. This indicated a very generous and unselfish spirit, a willingness to make sacrifices in order to preserve purity, and consequently peace. In other words, Phinehas and his companions were both willing and anxious to make first things first. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33). It shows that the western tribes did not contemplate war as an absolute necessity, even if their brethren had sinned, but only if they should prove obdurate.

But rebel not. God had given instructions and commandments for the guidance of His people, and any departure from those commandments, particularly in regard to the erection of altars to false gods, would be nothing short of rebellion against the God of heaven. God is the same today as yesterday (Heb. 13:8), inasmuch as the principles of

right never change. Though the punishment for departure from God's laws may be deferred, every transgression will ultimately receive its just recompense of reward.

20. *Perished not alone.* Achan's case was a demonstration of how one man's sin brought God's displeasure on the whole congregation. He and his whole family perished because of his sin, and so did all the men who fell slain by the army of the city of Ai. How much more would God's displeasure have rested on the congregation in this instance if they condoned this sin of rebellion in worship by having a second altar. The people were acting rightly to be concerned about the matter, but they were acting rather hastily in condemning the act before they had the details of the story.

21. *Answered.* One cannot help appreciating the mildness of the answer in view of the accusation made against them. In fact, there is much to admire in both sides. When the accusers found themselves mistaken, they did not shift their ground and condemn their brethren for imprudence, although they might rightfully have done this; also when the accused had evinced their innocence, they did not upbraid their accusers with hasty, rash, and unjust surmises. Surely here was a case where a "soft answer turneth away wrath" (Prov. 15:1). How many troubles of life could be avoided if all needed the lessons of this experience.

22. *The Lord God of gods.* The three designations, *'El*, *'Elohim*, and *Yahweh*, are repeated twice in the foregoing order. The phrase could also be translated, "God of gods, Jehovah," but in either case it was a strong adjuration suited to the greatness of the occasion. The two and a half tribes were shocked at the sin of which they had just been accused, and the multiplying of the titles of the Deity and the repetition of the phrase showed their zeal and earnestness in this matter.

23. *Require it.* The sentence may be translated, "Let Jehovah Himself look into it." Calling on God's triple name (see on v. 22) twice, the tribes were willing to leave the case in God's hands and to accept His demands of them even if it meant their lives. This positive testimony gave assurance to the members of the delegation as to the sincerity of the motives that prompted the building of the altar.

24. *Fear of this thing.* The word for "fear" is rather "anxious care," and literally the passage would read, "if not from anxious care from a word [thing]." The two and a half tribes proceeded to relate what was the cause of this fear or anxiety. In the process of time their posterity, being situated so far from the tabernacle, might be looked upon and treated as strangers to the commonwealth of Israel. As these tribes were on their way home the idea of this memorial probably suggested itself to their mind. Had they thought of the plan before, they probably would have informed Joshua. They were concerned lest their children should be looked upon by the other tribes as having no interest in the altar of God. True, for the time being, the eastern tribes were considered as brethren and were as welcome at the tabernacle as any other tribe, but what if their children after them should be disowned? Because of the distance, they could not make so frequent visits to the tabernacle as the others, and gradually they might be rejected as not members at all. This would lead to carelessness on the part of their children, and soon they would sink into a state of comparative irreligion. To forestall such a tendency and to be a constant witness of the fact that they were a part of Israel, the tribes decided to erect this large altar near the Jordan, so that it could be seen from both sides.

28. *The pattern.* The altar was an exact representation of the altar at Shiloh and would be a witness that its builders acknowledged and served the same God as those who

worshiped at the original altar. Probably the size was much larger, however, to render it conspicuous, but the construction and proportionate measurements were the same.

30. *It pleased them.* Literally, “it was good in their eyes.” They had gone on this mission for the glory of God and not for their own glory. Now that the guilt had been cleared, even though they themselves had been proved wrong, they were pleased. God is the true bond of brotherhood. If we are true brethren, our brother’s shame and pain will be ours also, and the re-established innocence of those suspected of guilt will work in us hearty and sincere gratitude. Had the men from the tribes west of Jordan been actuated by selfish motives, they would have been too proud to rejoice over the exposure of their false accusation, and would have endeavored to find some other ground for complaint. Sometimes Christian brethren are so proud of their own opinions that they desire victory over a supposed antagonist rather than the vindication of right. Those who live near to the Lord are ready and willing to admit their error and are more anxious for truth than to convince others that they are right.

31. *Now ye have delivered.* The Hebrew word *’az* here translated “now” lays stress on the fact that the action has really taken place. It is generally translated “then,” but here it could very well be translated “consequently.” It implies consequence of action, and the whole sentence could read, “Consequently, instead of bringing us heavy chastisement, which we had feared, you have acted in such a way as to deliver us from the punishment of which we were afraid.”

33. *Did not intend.* Literally, “said not.” In 2 Sam. 21:16 there is a similar use of the word “said,” in the sentence, “And Ishbi-benob ... thought to have slain David.” The Hebrew reads, “said to have slain,” that is, purposed or intended. So here. The people renounced the intention of “going up.” The statements of their delegates convinced them that there was no necessity for it, and accordingly they abandoned the idea entirely.

34. *Ed.* The Hebrew word for “witness.” However, this word is not found in the original, at least in the common copies, though some of the late MSS are said to contain it, but it occurs in the Arabic and Syriac versions. The LXX reads, “And Joshua gave a name to the altar of the children of Ruben and the children of Gad and of the half tribe of Manasse, and said, ‘It is a testimony in the midst of them that the Lord is their God.’” The translators of the KJV have properly supplied the word in italics since it is the word that the sense evidently requires.

Some important lessons may be learned from the incidents of this chapter: first, even the best intentions are often misunderstood and afford cause for suspicion, and therefore, as much as possible, every appearance of evil should be avoided; second, it is far better to be jealous over our brethren with a godly jealousy than to be indifferent to their salvation, even when we are mistaken in our fears; third, even when we are falsely accused, it is well to listen to the accusation calmly and then with the spirit of humility make a careful defense. Those who are in the right can always afford to be calm and considerate.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–34PP 517–520

8 PP 518

34 PP 519

CHAPTER 23

1 *Joshua’s exhortation before his death, 3 by former benefits, 5 by promises, 11 and by threatenings.*

1. A long time. See Introduction to the book of Joshua, p. 172, for a discussion of Joshua's age. It can be estimated that he was perhaps 83 years old when the Israelites entered Canaan. If he was 5 years older than Caleb, he was 90 at the end of the conquest of the land. According to ch. 24:29 he was 110 years old when he died. If our estimate is correct, and if the events of this chapter occurred during the last year of Joshua's life, 20 years must have passed since the Lord gave Israel rest (chs. 21:44; 22:4). This length of time permitted Joshua to observe that one of Israel's greatest dangers lay in being corrupted by intimacy with the Canaanites.

2. Their elders. Those summoned represented the four levels, or degrees, of civil distinction: the elders or princes of the tribes, the heads or chiefs of families, the judges who interpreted and made decisions according to the law, the officers or magistrates who executed the decisions of the judges. Eleazar the high priest was there, and Phinehas his son; doubtless Caleb was there in his ripe old age, and perhaps Othniel and many others.

The place of this meeting is not specified, but inasmuch as Shechem is mentioned in the next chapter (v. 1), as the place for the second meeting, it has been thought that the place for the first meeting was Timnath-serah, the home of Joshua. However, it may have been at Shechem, as well, or even some other place, like Shiloh.

I am old. Some years before, God reminded Joshua of his advancing age. "Thou art old and stricken in years," He had declared (ch. 13:1). Now Joshua himself felt the effect of age and the passing of time and himself declared, "I am old and stricken in age," literally, "I am old I have entered into the days." He was probably in his last year, that is, in his 110th year (ch. 24:29).

3. Because of you. Literally, "before your faces," that is, before the Israelites in battle. The Canaanites were slain as Israel marched forward in battle.

4. I have divided. Here, as in ch. 13:1-7, and afterward, in Judges 2:23, the preliminary and partial nature of the conquest achieved by Joshua is distinctly recognized. God gave Israel the land to possess and the assurance that He would go before them to drive out the remaining nations as they were able and sufficient to fill in and take their place.

5. Expel them. Joshua here uses the same word for "expel" as is found in Deut. 6:19 and 9:4, a somewhat unusual word used only 11 times in the OT. It may indicate that Joshua was quoting from Deuteronomy, and that the latter existed in written form in Joshua's day.

6. Courageous. Literally the admonition reads, "And ye shall be very strong." Courage comes from strength both physical and spiritual. Courage is essential to all Christian living. It takes courage to confess Christ both by example and word of mouth in the face of ridicule. It takes courage to resist temptation and do good in the midst of a hostile world. It takes courage to overcome selfishness. It takes courage to admit a fault. But the Lord says to us through Joshua, "Ye shall be very strong" to do the thing that is right.

All that is written. Observe the universality of the injunction, "all that is written in the book." There is to be no reservation or exception—no selection of favorite doctrines or of agreeable duties, but "all that is written" is to be read, believed, and obeyed.

7. Come not among these. Literally, "do not go in unto these nations." The Israelites, though living among these nations, were to have no intercourse with them. Any association, no matter how innocent it might appear, could lead to more intimate contacts

which would eventually lure the soul from God. A similar prohibition still obtains. The NT injunction is, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14). The baneful results of a willful disregard of this command are often seen in the lives of the young, who, despite counsel, enter into marriage relationships with unbelievers. Besides finding a home in which true harmony can never reign, they often find, too, a growing distaste for religion, which results sooner or later in complete separation from God. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3).

Neither make mention. For Moses' instruction on this see Ex. 23:13 and Deut. 12:3. The very names of these gods were not to be used, nor even remembered.

Nor cause to swear. To swear by any god was virtually to acknowledge him as a witness and avenger in the case of the violation of contracts, and so in effect a suitable object of religious worship. This would mean, then, that Israel could not make any covenant with idolaters, for the only way to make it binding would be for the idolater to swear by his own god, and that would mean an acknowledgment of this god by the Israelite.

10. One man. Again, in this verse, Joshua is using the words of Moses as found in his song, recorded in Deut. 32:30.

11. Take good heed. Literally, "take heed exceedingly to your souls." Perhaps the danger would be greater now, after the Israelites were settled at ease in the land, that their love for God might turn to something else. The scriptures in both the OT and NT emphasize the pre-eminence of love. Power may be pleasant, wisdom and beauty may be delightful, and riches may give a certain prestige and sense of security, but life is not in these. Love supersedes all. Obedience submits to the voice which cries, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3). But love responds, "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth" (Ps. 8:1). Obedience declines to take the name of the Lord in vain, whereas love exclaims, "The desire of our soul is to thy name" (Isa. 26:8). "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Obedience refuses to break the Sabbath, but love says, "Call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable" (Isa. 58:13). So it ought to be with all the divine commands. "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10).

12. Make marriages. Literally, "become related by marriage." It was a long time before Israel learned the lesson of how to live *in* the world without being *of* the world. It was not learned until after the Babylonish captivity, and when learned, it was soon distorted into a pharisaical exclusiveness.

13. Snares and traps. Probably, rather, "a net and a snare" (see Ex. 23:33; Num. 33:55). The implication is that the ultimate evil results are covered over so that they are not observed. Corrupt society is insidious in its attractions. The snares and traps are placed first, and not till the victim is secure do the scourges and the thorns come. Corrupt men lead away the pure by guile. They instinctively conceal their worst elements while they reveal their best, and thus they deceive their prey. The very virtues of the pure sometimes help in the work of destruction. "Charity ... thinketh no evil," and the innocent man is tempted to say of his seducers, "These men have been unfairly spoken of. They are better than the report circulated about them."

Scourges. These would be for driving the Israelites on in the way they would not want to go. But once in the trap they would be driven on as oxen under the yoke.

Thorns. These in the eyes would indicate blindness, since a thorn in the eye would blind the individual. Just so the enemy would put out the eyes of Israel's understanding through idolatry.

14. Way of all the earth. Rather, "in the way of all the earth." Joshua faces this unavoidable end of the road with calmness and confidence. It is not a strange ending, for all men of the past, save Enoch and Elijah, have come to that destination. The only exception in the future will be those who will be translated at the coming of Jesus (1 Cor. 15:51–54). Joshua was dying fully satisfied with God and with what God had done. He was dying with a spiritual interest in the survivors, and the greatness of his character lay in the fact that he himself was so much concealed behind the grandeur of his own exploits, and the God who led him in them. His great question was, "What will they think of my God when I am gone? They know Him now, but will they remember?"

16. When ye have transgressed. Literally "in your transgressing." The idea is, "whenever you transgress," or "if you transgress," and go and serve other gods. God assumes that His people will be faithful. He does not prove them before He blesses them. He gives to men abundantly in the present that He may prepare them to enjoy the still more abundant mercy of the future. Though God foresees coming unfaithfulness, He does not, on that account, withhold His good gifts. To be a recipient of God's mercy and wisdom and blessing is a most wonderful privilege, but it also carries with it a most definite responsibility. To turn from God and His truth, in the face of these gifts, is to incur judgment proportionate to the light received.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–16PP 521, 522

1–3, 5, 6PP 521

14–16PP 522

CHAPTER 24

1 *Joshua assembleth the tribes at Shechem.* 2 *A brief history of God's benefits from Terah.* 14 *He reneweth the covenant between them and God.* 26 *A stone the witness of the covenant.* 29 *Joshua's age, death, and burial.* 32 *Joseph's bones are buried.* 33 *Eleazar dieth.*

1. Joshua gathered. The gathering of ch. 23 had been an assembly of the leaders and people in which Joshua had pressed upon them their responsibility of driving out the enemy, and had warned them of the dangers of neglecting to carry out this command. He reminded them of the promise of God to be with them, and of their responsibility to carry out such a program. Now Joshua gathered the heads and representatives of the tribes to Shechem for a final appeal to them.

There was great appropriateness in the selection of Shechem. Here the covenant was first given to Abram (Gen. 12:6, 7); in the immediate neighborhood Jacob seems to have renewed it (Gen. 33:19, 20), and under an oak at Shechem he had "put away the strange gods" of his family (Gen 35:2–4), as Joshua now reminded the Israelites (Joshua 24:23); here also the covenant had been renewed after the fall of Ai (Joshua 8:30–35). There was no more fitting place than Shechem for Joshua's parting words and where the covenant of Israel with God might be renewed.

Presented themselves. These leaders of Israel, numbering perhaps several hundred, presented themselves before the Lord. The ark had been brought from Shiloh for the occasion (PP 523).

2. Thus saith the Lord. Joshua began his speech in the solemn form used by the prophets and introduced God Himself as speaking in His own person. It would seem from this that Joshua was a prophet as well as a ruler.

Flood. Heb. *nahar*, “river.” The reference is to the Euphrates River, by the waters of which lay Ur of the Chaldees.

Served other gods. Joshua bade the people remember that their forefathers had been idolaters such as the Israelites were now exterminating. It was only by the grace of God that the Israelites were now in such a favored state. There was great danger that they would forget the rock from whence they were hewn and lapse back into idolatry.

3. I took. The Syriac reads, “I led.” Throughout this verse, which relates Abraham’s experience, God is presented as the one who accomplished all the great acts in Abraham’s life. Abraham humbly submitted to the divine control. His life became an example of faith (Rom. 4:1–11; Gal. 3:6–9; cf. James 2:21–23). God was anxious to lead the descendants of Abraham into the same experience of faith.

5. Plagued. Literally, “smote,” but usually with the idea of a stroke from God.

7. Your eyes. More than half a century had passed since the exodus of their fathers from Egypt, and it is probable that a considerable number of those present had seen the things that God had done in Egypt and the overthrow of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. Not being 20 years old at the time of the rebellion at Kadesh, they were exempted from the dreadful sentence of destruction passed upon all above that age (Num. 14).

9. Warred against Israel. From the history recorded in Num. 23 and 24, and also from Judges 11:25, it would appear that Balak did not at any time actually engage in conflict with Israel. He is said, therefore, in this place to have “warred” against them because he intended to do it, laying the plans and preparation accordingly. God considers the intent the act. The state of mind that causes the perpetration of a willfully sinful act is the essence of the sin; the act itself is but the execution of the intent (Matt. 5:28).

10. Blessed you still. Rather, “blessed you emphatically.” The construction here is similar to the one in Gen. 2:17, “Thou shalt surely die.” The emphasis of such a construction is sometimes difficult to translate. The passage seems to mean that, contrary to all expectations and Balaam’s firm intention, God caused him to bless Israel emphatically.

11. Men of Jericho. Literally, “lords of Jericho.” The seven Canaanitish tribes that follow seem not to be identical with, but rather in addition to, the lords of Jericho. The word for “fought” is the same as the one translated “warred” (v. 9), and must here be considered in a similar sense. The people of Jericho did not fight actively. They confined themselves to defensive operations, which, of course, also, constitute war.

12. The hornet. Or, “the hornets,” or, “hornets.” In the Hebrew the form is identical with that found in Ex. 23:28 and Deut. 7:20, where God promised to send the hornets before His people to subdue the land. Now Joshua said that God had sent the hornets before His people and had driven out the two kings of the Amorites. The earlier record of this conquest states that these kings and their peoples had been smitten with the sword of Israel (Num. 21:24, 35). It seems clear that the signal victory over these kings was not due to the skill of the sword and bow, but rather to the special blessing of God. Hornets, then, seem to be figurative of the assistance God provided to give success to the armies of Israel. The figure is appropriate. As hornets would produce consternation and panic in a

camp, so the Lord would send fear, terror, quaking, and confusion into the camp of the nations to unnerve them for battle (see Deut. 2:25; Joshua 2:11).

Some see in these hornets the Egyptians whom the Lord used to weaken Canaanitish nations so as to make them as easy prey to the Israelites (see on Ex. 23:28).

14. Gods. The LXX and Syriac read, “foreign gods.” It was at Shechem, the very place where the tribes were now assembled, that Jacob had put away the strange gods that were in his family, and had buried them under an oak (Gen. 35:2, 4). The Israelites may have preserved some of the idols of the subdued Canaanites as curios or as souvenirs, and hence now stood in danger of regarding them with reverence. The tendency toward idolatry began to develop in Egypt (Eze. 20:6, 7). It continued to be a marked characteristic of the people in the wilderness (see Ex. 32; Amos 5:25, 26; Acts 7:39–43), as it had been in Egypt (Eze. 20:6, 7). Joshua knew that even now idolatry was secretly practiced by some of the Israelites even though outwardly they had only recently expressed great zeal against any appearance of it (Joshua 22). Many who today make high pretensions of Christianity, like the Israelites, cherish some secret idol in their hearts. Eventually such an idol, unless removed, will nullify the whole Christian life and prove ruinous to the soul.

15. Choose you this day. The command to serve the Lord does not preclude choice. Any service that is not voluntary is useless. God sets before men life and death and urges them to choose life, but He does not interfere with their contrary choice, nor does He protect them from its natural results.

My house. Those that are leaders in the cause of God must take special care that those under their charge, particularly those in their own home (1 Tim. 3:4, 5), follow in the way of righteousness. Joshua resolved that he and his house would serve the Lord despite what others did. Sometimes the choice to serve God becomes a singular act. But “thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil” (Ex. 23:2). Those who are bound for heaven must be willing, despite all opposition, to do as the *best* do and not as the *most* do. Joshua had been remarkably true to God all his life. He was resolved to remain faithful to the last. His last appeal was for the people to follow his example of consecration, and the dignity and simplicity of his life added powerfully to the weight of his words.

16. God forbid. Literally, “profanation be to us from serving,” that is, “if we should forsake Jehovah, may we be profaned or accursed.”

19. Ye cannot serve. Grammatically there is some difficulty in connecting the “if” of v. 20 with this statement, yet the sense is appropriate and was probably intended. The meaning then would be, “Surely we cannot serve Jehovah if we forsake Him and serve other gods. He is a jealous God, and cannot share with other gods His place or authority.”

On the other hand, the statement of v. 19 was probably intended to have a force of its own. The declaration, “Ye cannot serve the Lord,” may have reference to the moral inability of man of himself to render obedience to the divine commands. Joshua was not merely saying, “You cannot serve Jehovah with other gods.” He was also asserting, “You cannot serve Jehovah at all in your own strength.” In this acknowledgment Joshua, centuries before the apostle Paul, was setting forth the great principle of righteousness by faith. In the attainment of this righteousness both man and God have a part to act. God cannot do anything for us without our consent and cooperation. Likewise, we cannot do anything without the help of God. Faith and works are like the two oars of a boat which we must use equally. It is man’s part to choose the right way and then to set about to

accomplish it, in full recognition of his complete dependence on God. It is God's part to supply the enabling power. He stands ready at all times to fulfill His part of the contract. The question is, Will we fulfill ours? Will we *choose* to expel the wrong and adopt the right? Will we actively set about to make the objectives of our choice a reality?

20. *He will turn.* Affirming the possibility of falling from grace. Were there no such possibility, this verse would be without meaning.

23. *Put away.* See on v. 14.

24. *The people said.* Three times the people affirmed their allegiance to Jehovah, thus adding solemnity to their declaration and reconfirming their covenant (see on Ex. 19:8; 24:3, 7).

25. *Statute.* Derived from a word signifying "to cut," hence the meaning, "what is cut in," or, "what is graven." The word for "ordinance" is more generally translated "judgment." The engraving may have been on the rock that Joshua set up for a memorial.

26. *Joshua wrote.* That is, the words of the covenant, and the statute and judgment (v. 25). The account was placed with the book of the law in the side of the ark (PP 524).

This is the second "signature" among the sacred writers of the OT. The first is that of Moses, in Deut. 31:9. The next after Joshua's is that of Samuel (1 Sam. 10:25). These men did not think of themselves as writers of distinct books, but as authorized to add their part to the book already written, to write what was assigned to them "in the book of the law of God." The unity of Holy Scripture is thus seen to have been an essential feature of the Bible from the very first.

A great stone. See on v. 25.

Under an oak. This was possibly the oak under which Jacob buried the images (Gen. 35:4).

27. *A witness.* Stone is enduring. Engraving upon it remains indefinitely as a silent witness, after the engravers have died, to succeeding generations.

29. *An hundred and ten years old.* See on ch. 23:1. Joshua's name first appeared in history when he was at least 40 years of age (Ex. 17:9). Many eventful years had since passed, and now a great statesman was laying down his life. But eminent or obscure, every life must come to an end. Joshua appointed no successor. None of his family took his place. In fact, his posterity is never mentioned in history, and it may even be that he left no children to carry on his name. But a higher fame is his, a more enduring memorial than any earthly family could convey.

30. *Hill of Gaash.* Near Timnath-serah. For the location, see on Judges 2:9.

31. *Which had known.* Future generations neglected to review past history, and so forgot what God had done for their forefathers. Such knowledge would have helped them to realize God's willingness to do the same for His people in their day. So it is today. "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history" (LS 196).

32. *Bones of Joseph.* The act of burying Joseph's bones, though here related after the account of the death of Joshua, probably took place before it, at the time of the gathering at Shechem described in this chapter. There is nothing in the original to prevent the verb from being translated "had buried," thus implying that the burial had taken place some time before.

33. *Eleazar.* Probably he died about the same time as Joshua, or soon after.

Pertained to Phinehas. Literally, “hill of Phinehas.” As the cities assigned to the priests lay in the lots of Judah, Benjamin, and Simeon, this portion may have been given to the high priest in Mt. Ephraim voluntarily by the people for a place of residence at a convenient distance from Joshua and the tabernacle. The place may have been called the “hill of Phinehas,” because Phinehas possibly lived there longer than his father Eleazar.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–33PP 522–524

2 PP 125

10 SR 181

14 PP 523

14, 15 6T 141

15 DA 520; Ed 289; LS 292; MH 176; PP 523; SR 181, TM 63; 2T 565; 4T 351; 8T 120

16, 17 SR 182

16, 19, 21 PP 524

24, 26 SR 182

24–29, 31PP 524

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⁵Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Jos 18:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.