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***STUDIES IN
JOSHUA
JUDGES
RUTH***

by

Willard W. Winter

College Press, Joplin, Missouri

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DEDICATION

To the Students of
The Cincinnati Bible Seminary

Past and present with whom the author has
spent many pleasant hours drinking deeply
from the Well of Life, the Word of God.

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PREFACE

Joshua, Judges, and Ruth form a unit of three books linking the history of the Pentateuch with the history of the monarchy. The period covered by the books was transitional. All the exhilaration of a new adventure pervaded the lives of the people of Israel, and this excitement is reflected in the historical record preserved for modern readers.

In this volume, *Studies in Joshua, Judges, and Ruth*, acknowledgement is made of the material used by J. W. McGarvey in his *Classnotes in Sacred History*. Many gospel preachers have been blessed by the questions which form the bulk of the syllabus used in his classroom, and many of these notes are reflected in the questions used in this volume to stimulate the study of the reader. As is evident, the number of questions in *Studies in Joshua, Judges and Ruth* is larger than number used by McGarvey in the notes preserved from his classroom lectures.

The King James Version of the Bible has been followed, but notation is made where the American Standard Version provides insight into an understanding of the verses. In each chapter the questions are based on specific verses, and with each question the verses most pertinent are listed. Since the Bible is its own best commentary, constant reference is made to the Bible passages which are most helpful in understanding the text under consideration.

It is the hope of the author that the students will first read the Bible text itself. Next consideration should be given to the general outline of each chapter. The "Lessons for Learning" are provided with the thought of their being used for teaching lessons or preaching sermons from each individual chapter. Specific and detailed points of interest are brought out in the questions and answers. At the close of each chapter ten review questions are provided. Through the use of these various devices as aids for study, it is hoped

that the volume in hand may be used in many different kinds of study groups with profit for all.

May each one who opens the Bible study to show himself "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA

The book of Joshua opens the section of the Bible commonly called the history books. The history books are twelve in number when we divide the Old Testament into sections of law, history, poetry, major prophets, and minor prophets.

Joshua is a part of that section of the Old Testament called the Former Prophets when we distinguish the former prophets from the latter prophets. The history in the book begins the story of Israel as a nation. It is, therefore, quite properly called the first book of the history of Israel.

NAME

The book of Joshua derives its name from the principal character in the book. His name is a Hebrew name meaning "the Lord saves." The Hebrew word is transliterated into the Greek language to form the name given to Jesus. The similarity between the names can be seen even in the English forms—Joshua and Jesus.

DATE

The book continues the story of the people of Israel from the point where the Pentateuch leaves it. It begins immediately after the death of Moses. The people of Israel mourned for thirty days after Moses' death. When this period of mourning was over, God gave the command to Joshua to move the people of Israel across the Jordan River from the east side to the west side. This was their entrance into the Promised Land.

The book closes with the death and burial of Joshua and his contemporary, the high priest, Eleazar (Joshua 24:29-33). The book, therefore, covers the lifetime of God's great captain and Moses' successor. The exact span of his life cannot be accurately determined. It is a fair assumption, however, that he was about the same age as

Caleb. Joshua and Caleb were the two faithful spies sent out by Moses (Numbers 13). Joshua and Caleb were the only two men over twenty years of age when they left Egypt to arrive in the land flowing with milk and honey. Caleb tells us that he was eighty-five years old when he asked permission of Joshua to go down to Hebron and settle the land there (Joshua 14:10). He said that he was forty years old when he was sent out as a spy.

The Bible also tells us that Joshua was 110 years old when he died (Joshua 24:29).

If Joshua were the same age as Caleb, then the book covers a span of some thirty years. Forty of the forty-five years between the spying out of the land and the settling of it were spent in wandering. Five years were spent in subduing it by such campaigns as the battle with the five kings in the South and the kings under Jabin in the North. There would then be twenty-five years of peaceful administration in Palestine for the man described as Moses' minister (Joshua 1:1).

The date of the exodus can be rather firmly established as 1447. Forty years were spent in wandering, meaning that the people of Israel came to Palestine about 1407. If Joshua died some thirty years later, the book would cover the span between 1407 and 1377.

Josephus says that Joshua was eighty-five when he succeeded Moses (*Antiquities*, V, i, 29). Those who hold to an earlier date for the exodus (for example around 1491 B.C.) would then date the events in Joshua correspondingly earlier and have them conclude sometime around 1425 B.C. Those critics who argue for a later date and place the exodus in the nineteenth dynasty of Egypt under Rameses, would place the events of Joshua somewhere near the close of the thirteenth century or 1200 B.C. It seems impossible to hold to either of these dates in light of the statement of I Kings 6:1 that the Temple was begun 480

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years after the exodus. We can be fairly sure that Solomon's temple was erected in 967 B.C., thus placing the exodus around 1447. The dates for Joshua would thus best be set between 1407 and 1377 B.C.

AUTHORSHIP

In the Talmud (*Baba Bathra*, 15 a) the Jewish tradition ascribes the authorship of the book to Joshua. The translators of the Greek version entitled the book with the Greek form of Joshua's name, thus indicating their belief that Joshua was the chief actor and author. Dr. Edward J. Young said that the author of the book in its present form could not be Joshua because it records events that were after him. He cited as examples such events as the conquest of Hebron by Caleb, Debir by Othniel, and Lashem by the Danites.

The last chapter records the death of Joshua and also the death of Eleazar. If this last paragraph were penned by a later author, there is really hardly any reason why Joshua could not have written the body of the work. Throughout the book we find statements such as "unto this day," indicating the passage of some time, but two or three decades are a considerable number of years. There is evidence that the book was written by one who had been an eyewitness to the events. Joshua 5:1 carries the statement, "We crossed over."

When Rahab was saved, she took her place in the midst of the Israelites. When the book was written, she was still alive. Joshua 6:25 says: "But Rahab the harlot and her father's household and all that she had did Joshua save alive, and she dwelt in the midst of Israel unto this day."

Since the book was evidently written by one who was contemporary with the events, there is hardly any reason

for denying that Joshua wrote the book. Those events which are also recorded in the book of Judges are evidently "flash-backs." The record in Judges is a recapitulation of some of the things which had happened in the times of Joshua (Judges 2:10; Joshua 15:13-19; and Judges 1:12-15)

PURPOSE

The book of Joshua is not intended merely as a continuation of the history of Israel from the death of Moses to the death of Joshua. It does fulfill this immediate purpose. Neither should it be called only a description of the acts of Joshua. The real purpose is to show how the faithful covenant-God fulfilled His promise to Abraham (Genesis 15:18; cf. Joshua 1:2-6).

This book also presents a typical entrance of God's faithful people into the blessings of His promises. The history of Joshua is used in this fashion by the apostle Paul in Hebrews, chapter 4. The similarity between the entrance of God's people into Canaan and the final triumph of God's people in the new Jerusalem is so striking that the King James Version gives this rendering of Hebrews 4:8: "For if Jesus had given them rest He would not have spoken afterward on another day." Jesus is the Anglicized form of the Greek name given to the only begotten son of God. The Hebrew form would have been translated *Joshua*. The reference of the apostle Paul in Hebrews 4:8 is evidently to the work of Joshua, as he led God's people into a promised rest. If that were the only rest God had prepared for His people, there would have been no mention of it in the Psalms of David (Hebrews 4:3, 4, 7; cf. Psalms 95:7-11).

We can hardly read the story of Joshua without realizing how God's people will one day be led into the glories of Heaven by their Saviour, Jesus Christ.

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PLAN

The book is a straightforward historical narrative. Some of the passages are mingled history and exhortation, but the book is divided very neatly into two equal historical parts. The first part describes the conquest of the land; the second part describes the settlement of the land. The history is closed with a record of the great valedictory address by Joshua, Moses' minister and God's man for the hour. His ringing cry: "Choose you this day whom you will serve" (Joshua 24:15), is one of the best-known passages of the Old Testament. It logically concludes a history.

OUTLINE

Many outlines are given for this first of the twelve books of history. Most of them recognize a division which comes at chapter 13. The first twelve chapters describe the battles which Joshua fought in conquering the land. The last twelve chapters describe his efforts to see God's people comfortably settled in their new homes. The following outline is sufficient to bring the major events quickly to the attention of the reader.

It can be seen readily that the two parts, or halves, of the book correspond exactly to one another both in form and in content. The events described in 1:1—5:12 are preparatory to the conquest of Canaan. The conferences held by Joshua after the distribution of the land by lot (23:1—24:28) had no other object than to establish the covenant people firmly in the inheritance bestowed upon them by God. He exhorted them to be faithful to the Lord.

As chapter 12 rounds off the first part as something of an appendix which completes the history of the conquest of the land, so chapter 22 is obviously an appendix to the distribution of the land among the tribes of Israel.

STUDIES IN JOSHUA-JUDGES-RUTH

God, the ultimate author of the Bible, is a God of order. Those who have been moved by the Holy Spirit have demonstrated an orderliness in the writings which have been preserved for us. This book of history is an outstanding example of this kind of document. It is an essential part of the Word of God.

AN OUTLINE OF JOSHUA

Introduction: Joshua Commissioned (1:1-9)

I. The Land Conquered (1:10—12:24)

A. Preparation made to cross Jordan (1:10—2:24)

B. The Jordan crossed (3:1—4:24)

C. Israel circumcised at Gilgal (5:1-15)

D. Jericho and Ai taken (6:1—8:29)

1. An altar erected on Mount Ebal (8:30-35)

2. The Gibeonites received (9:1-27)

E. Southern Canaan conquered (10:1-43)

F. Northern Canaan conquered (11:1-15)

G. The conquest summarized (11:16—12:24)

II. The Land Divided (13:1—22:34)

A. Joshua divinely instructed (13:1-7)

B. The eastern tribes assigned (13:8-33)

C. The western tribes assigned (14:1—19:51)

D. Cities of refuge provided (20:1-9)

E. Levitical towns allotted (21:1-45)

F. The eastern tribes sent home (22:1-34)

III. Joshua's Farewell Address (23:1—24:29)

Conclusion: Death of Joshua and Eleazar (24:29-33)

THE WORK OF JOSHUA

The work of Joshua was of terrible severity. We read of his work throughout the book that bears his name. When he fought against Debir, "He took it, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof; and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed all the

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souls that were therein; he left none remaining: as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir, and to the king thereof; as he had done also to Libnah, and to her king. So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded" (Joshua 10:39, 40).

This campaign of extermination has been criticized through the centuries. Josephus was aware of this criticism against his people and their way of waging war. He gave answer to the critics in his work *Contra Apionem* (1, 34). The early Christian writers also felt compelled to answer the unbelieving critics who found fault with the way in which Joshua and others waged war. In his work *Contra Celsum* (III, V), Origen came to grips with this problem. Cyril also in his *Contra Julian* (VI) dealt with this problem.

Such bloody battles are so much against the nature of some people that they lose their faith when they read about these campaigns. They have gone so far as to say that the God of the Old Testament must have been different from the God of the New Testament. Some have even characterized God as "a dirty bully."

To find fault with the campaigns of Joshua is to find fault with God Himself. Joshua was acting under the orders given to him by God: "When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee" (Deuteronomy 20:10, 11). These instructions were given to the people of Israel as they drew nigh to the Promised Land. The specifications applied to cities which were not in Canaan itself. Such kings as Sihon, king of

the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, were treated in this way.

Israel was not to spare those who lived far away if they were hostile. "If it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it: And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword: But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies which the Lord thy God hath given thee" (Deuteronomy 20:12-14).

Different orders were given with regard to the people who lived in Canaan. Of these people God said, "Thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee" (Deuteronomy 20:17). His orders were epitomized in this way, "Thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth" (Deuteronomy 20:16). This exact phrase is used to describe the campaigns of Joshua, "he left none remaining" (Joshua 10:39). He destroyed all—all males, all females, all children.

The conquest of Palestine is informally represented throughout the Scripture as an act of righteous judgment against the inhabitants of the land. Their abominations called to high heaven for vengeance. The idolatrous rite which they practiced was intended to defile the people. The pollutions of their society were a disgrace to the human race. Their moral degeneracy reached a point finding no parallel in history. Ewald in his *History of Israel* (Vol. 2, p. 237) says that it is an eternal necessity that a nation such as the majority of the Canaanites then were, sinking deeper and deeper into a slough of discord and moral perversity, must fall before a people roused to a higher life

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by a newly awakened energy of unanimous trust in divine power. Such people were the people of Israel. God had commanded them not to defile themselves in any of the practices which were common in Canaan. On the other hand, they were to keep His ordinances that they might not commit any of the abominable customs (Leviticus 18:24, 25, 30). The fact that the Israelites had spent an entire generation alone with God in the desert of Sinai after having been delivered out of the pagan society of Egypt before they entered into the defiled society of Canaan made them aware of the strict differences between right and wrong, and good and evil. They hated sin with a passion. They were conducting a holy war at the behest of God.

The flaming vengeance which fell upon Canaan did not come without warning. The history of these people would contain references to the utter destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:1-24). The presence and example of Melchizedek and Abraham should have warned them against their ungodly practices (Genesis 15:16; cf. Luke 19:44).

The inhabitants of Canaan were granted repeated signs of the approach of the armies of Israel. They had heard of God's vengeance on Egypt (Joshua 2:10, 11). Still nobody repented of sins except Rahab. The people of Canaan were not at all like the people of Nineveh in the days of Jonah.

Not only had the people heard of God's vengeance on Egypt, but the Israelites had entered into an initial skirmish with the Canaanites forty years earlier when they sent spies out from Kadesh-Barnea. The eastern part of the land had been overthrown (Deuteronomy 3:5, 6). They saw the Jordan parted before a single arrow was shot, a spear thrown, or a stone slung. Even after the fall of Jericho, the first city attacked by Israel, there was none

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save the Gibeonites who sued for peace. Arnold in his book of *Sermons* said that the Israelites' sword in its bloodiest executions wrought a work of mercy for all the countries of the earth to the very end of the world. Wilberforce in his *Heroes of Hebrew History* put forth the opinion that if the worship of Chemosh had superseded the worship of Jehovah all the grand designs of redemption would have been frustrated in their development.

The people of Canaan were responsible for their sins. They had sinned excessively and they were annihilated completely. It was Joshua's task to serve as God's messenger of judgment. The God of love is also ultimately a God of justice.

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OUTLINE OF JOSHUA

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 2. Mission of the spies 2: 1-24
 - a. The spies sent 2: 1-7
 - b. The spies received 2: 8-21
 - c. The spies returning 2:22-24
 - B. Passage of the Jordan 3: 1— 5:15
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 - a. Preparation of Joshua 3: 1-13
 - b. Jordan turned back 3:14-17
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 - a. Circumcision renewed 5: 1-9
 - b. The Passover kept 5:10-12
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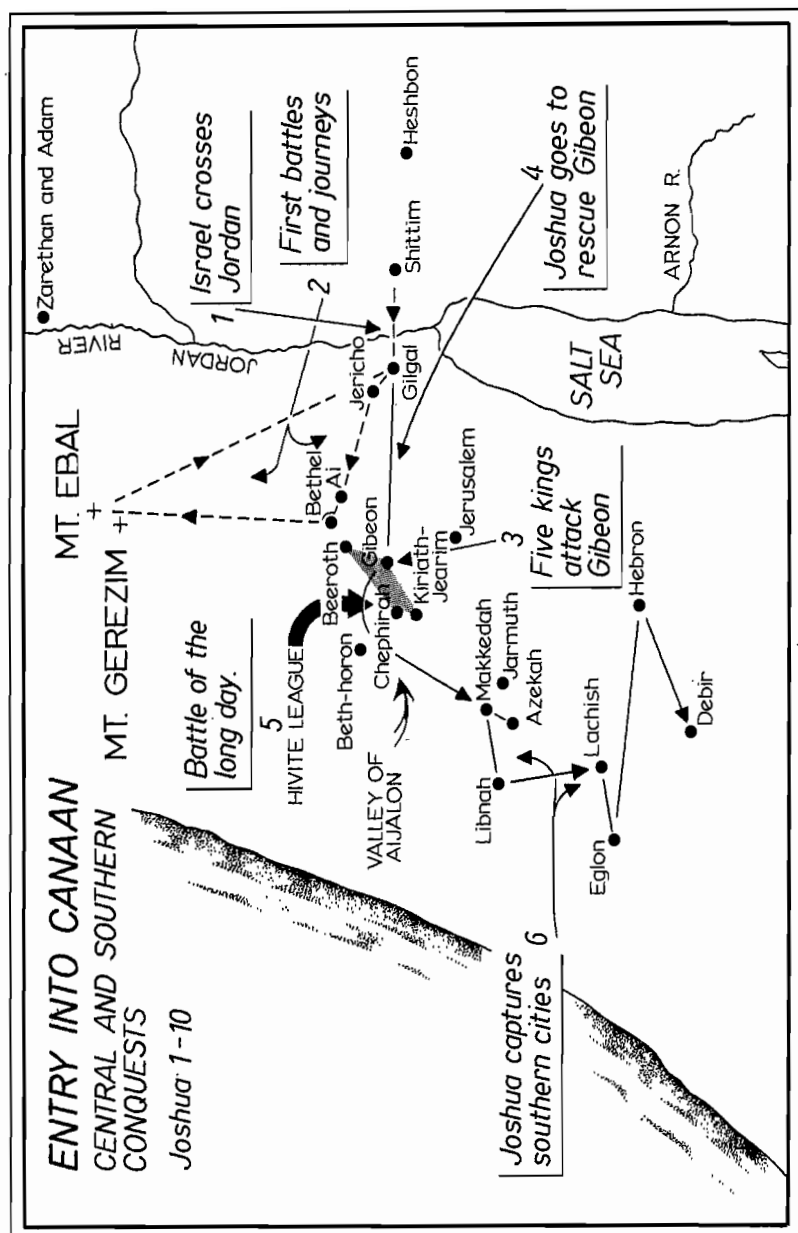
- b. Provision for
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- d. Possessions of
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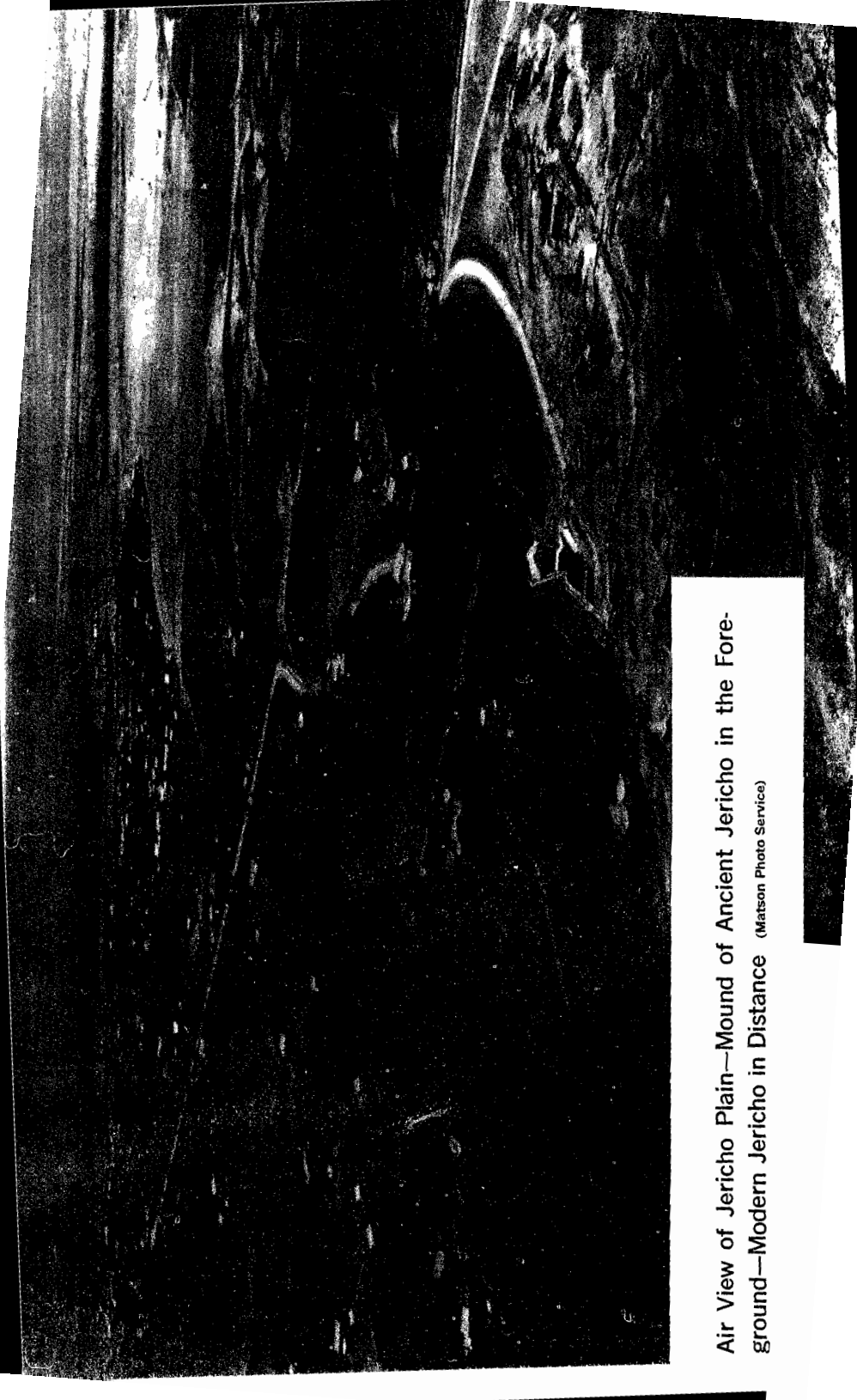
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- f. Possession of the tribe of Asher 19:24-31
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- C. Joshua's Farewell at Shechem 24: 1-28
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Air View of Jericho Plain—Mound of Ancient Jericho in the Fore-
ground—Modern Jericho in Distance (Matson Photo Service)

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 1

Vv. 1- 9 *God's promise to Joshua.* After the death of Moses, God renewed His promise to be with Joshua and exhorted Joshua to make a fearless attack on the nations of Canaan. Joshua was especially instructed to follow the commandments written in the Law of Moses. This is a substantiation of the fact that the Law was written by Moses and was available for Joshua's study.

Vv. 10-18 *Joshua's instruction to the people.* Joshua immediately gave directions to the people to prepare them for crossing the Jordan River. He reminded the eastern tribes of the conditions under which they were to take possession of the land east of the Jordan. The tribes then renewed their pledges of loyalty to Moses' successor.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Great dangers call for great courage.* The land of Canaan had presented great challenges to the people of Israel. Ten of the spies who had gone through it were afraid to attack the people. Only Joshua and Caleb thought that God would see them through to victory. The death of Moses was a sad event for the people, and the faint of heart may have been afraid to launch the attack. God encouraged Joshua, and he courageously led the people.
2. *A light for the path.* The Psalmist said: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalms 119:105). God told Joshua to do everything according to the Law, which Moses, His servant, had commanded

him. He said, "Turn not to the right hand or to the left" (verse 7). He also declared, "This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein" (verse 8). The instructions which God gave to Joshua are good for Christian soldiers to follow today.

3. *God's leaders command respect.* God has never left His people without proper leadership. After Moses died, He raised up Joshua to be their captain. After the days of Joshua, He raised up judges until the time of the kings. In these last days He has turned our eyes toward His Son, and He has provided leaders in the church—elders and deacons. God's people prosper when they have good leadership and when they give the proper respect to their duly appointed leaders.

CHAPTER ONE

God's Promise to Joshua 1:1-9

Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,

2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them.

7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written herein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

1. How long after Moses' death did God wait to instruct Joshua? 1:1

God gave specific instructions to Joshua after the death of Moses. When Moses died, no man knew where he was buried. The children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab for thirty days (Deuteronomy 34:8). A thirty-day period of mourning was customary among people of Joshua's time. When Jacob died in Egypt, Joseph commanded that his father be embalmed according to all the arts of the physicians of Egypt. This process took forty days. The people then mourned for an additional thirty days so that the entire period of mourning was "threescore ten days" (Genesis 50:3). When Joseph died, he was also embalmed. We would expect that a similar period of mourning would follow for Joseph (Genesis 50:26). When Aaron died, the children of Israel mourned for thirty days for him (Numbers 20:29). It is reasonable to expect that the people of Israel would have done very

little in the way of preparing to enter Canaan until after the period of mourning for Moses was ended. At the time God began to give specific instructions to Joshua. Joshua turned to the people to give them directions concerning their crossing the Jordan and entering the Promised Land.

2. *What is the difference between the titles of Moses and Joshua?* 1:1

Moses is called the "... servant of Jehovah." Joshua is called "... Moses' minister." Moses' title is a standing epithet applied to Moses as an honorable title (cf. Numbers 12:7, 8; Deuteronomy 34:6; I Kings 8:56; II Kings 18:12, etc.). Joshua's title is also used in Exodus 17:9 and Numbers 13:16. The Hebrew root, *sharath*, is a verb meaning to *minister, serve*. Joshua was not Moses' minister in the sense in which this word is used in modern church circles. He must have enjoyed a position similar to the one occupied by John Mark, who was called a "minister" of Barnabas and Saul (Acts 13:5). Joshua was an assistant or aide to Moses. As all Christians are servants of God, so was Moses. In a special way, however, Moses did God's bidding.

3. *Did this command come by the use of the Urim and Thummim?* 1:2

When Joshua was first called to his work, he was told that the high priest would bring him God's messages through the medium of the Urim and Thummim. On this occasion, the thing required was not merely that the will of God should be made known to him, but that he should be given the courage and the strength that he would need to carry out the will of God. Actually, this was something of a second calling (cf. Numbers 27:21; see Joshua 5:13). The kind of strength which Joshua needed to begin his conquest of Canaan could hardly come from knowledge which would be gained through the medium of the Urim and the

Thummim. The situation called for God's speaking directly to him.

4. *Why was this second address necessary?* 1:3-9

Even the bravest men hesitate when they come face to face with the great challenges of their lives. They may even step aside and shun to perform their duty for a moment. Joshua was a brave man, and God's assuring him of His abiding presence would give him additional courage. Moreover, the people needed to know that Joshua did not take action until God had given him complete instructions. This would make them much more inclined to follow him. For all these reasons the second address of God to Joshua was not at all superfluous. It only enhances the charge which Moses gave to Joshua as the Lord commanded (Numbers 27:18-23).

5. *How could they understand "this Lebanon"?* 1:4

Even from the place of encampment the mountain would be visible as it towered above the surrounding land. If reference were not made to the peak itself, the range would be visible. With a wave of the hand, a speaker could address the congregation and point to the horizon where the mountains met the sky and formed the northern boundary. The Lebanon range reached to the headwaters of the river Euphrates, which was also mentioned in the setting of the boundaries of the Promised Land. The Great Sea was the Mediterranean Sea and would be the western boundary "toward the going down of the sun."

6. *What promise did God make to Joshua?* 1:5

Especially significant is this promise, "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." This compares very favorably with the promise made in Deuteronomy 31:8. At that time Moses was giving his final address to the people of Israel. He had reminded them of the way in which God had given them victory over their enemies. He pled with them to be strong and of good courage. He especially

gave a parting exhortation to Joshua as he told him to be courageous inasmuch as he had the responsibility of going with the people into the land which the Lord had sworn to their fathers to give them. Moses knew that Joshua would have the privilege of causing them to inherit it. The greatest encouragement given to Joshua came through knowing God would be with him and not fail him nor forsake him. For this reason, Moses could tell Joshua not to fear nor to be dismayed. God Himself repeats this promise to Joshua.

7. *Was this an unconditional promise?* 1:6

Joshua had something to do. The following list of duties was his:

- a. To be firm and strong (Deuteronomy 31:6)
- b. To rely on God, as Moses had said (Deuteronomy 31:7, 23)
- c. To divide the land for an inheritance (Deuteronomy 1:38; 3:28)
- d. To observe carefully the Law (Deuteronomy 5:29; 28:14)

If Joshua did these things, then God would be with him. If Joshua failed to do these things, he had no promise of God's abiding presence.

8. *What is meant by the expression ". . . not to depart from thy mouth"?* 1:8

This was not to be a theoretical speculation, but a practical study on the part of Joshua. God's Word was to be hidden in his heart. He was to be thoroughly familiar with the Scriptures so that his speech would be flavored by the Word of God. He was to be conversant in the Scriptures so that he would feel at home when speaking to the priests, the prophets, and the elders of the people. Although he was primarily a military man and had the responsibility of government, his campaigns were to be waged in the light of God's instructions. His government

was to be the kind of government which could be blessed by God.

9. *Why did God ask the question, "Have I not commanded thee"?* 1:9

This is what is known as a rhetorical question. It was just another way of saying, "I have commanded thee." It is an assertion on the part of God which could be met only with obedience on the part of Joshua. It was an assurance given by God on Joshua's behalf, and Joshua would naturally be inclined to respond with ready action in the name of God. When Joshua would ask himself this question, the answer would be apparent to him. He knew what God had commanded him. If God had commanded him, he need have no fear of doing what he was expected to do. The question would also remind Joshua that he had no other alternative. If God had commanded him, he could not shun his responsibility. He was not serving man. He was God's servant.

10. *In what other circumstances had God said, "Be not afraid?"* 1:9b

The believer's mind turns reflectively to many such occasions. Adam and Eve had been afraid in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:10). Their fear came from their disobedience. The shepherds were afraid when the angelic host appeared to them. The angel said unto them, "Fear not" (Luke 2:9, 10). The disciples were afraid when Jesus came unto them walking on the sea. At that time He said, "It is I, be not afraid" (John 6:20). Mortal man is naturally afraid when he stands in the presence of immortal God. He feels his weakness and sinfulness; but when he is willing to yield his will to the will of God, the Heavenly Father speaks peace to the troubled heart. Joshua was not only made fearful by the message from God, but he was naturally afraid of the enemies whom he would face in the Promised Land. Moses had earlier en-

couraged him not to be afraid (Deuteronomy 31:6, 8), and now God speaks directly to encourage Joshua in his work.

Joshua's Instructions to the People 1:10-18

10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying,

11 Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it.

12 And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying,

13 Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, The Lord your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land.

14 Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valor, and help them;

15 Until the Lord have given your brethren rest, as he hath given you, and they also have possessed the land which the Lord your God giveth them: then ye shall return unto the land of your possessions, and enjoy it, which Moses the Lord's servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrising.

16 And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go.

17 According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the Lord thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses.

18 Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all

that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage.

11. *Who are the "officers"?* 1:10

These men were called in Hebrew the *shoterim*. Their duties were varied. At times they seemed to work first at one task and then at another. Their duties may be listed as follows:

- a. To keep family registers (providing for the levying of men at times of war, etc.)
- b. To circulate the commands of the leader
- c. To issue orders to the people

As Israel prepared to cross the Jordan River, these officers were to marshal the hosts of men, women, and children and direct them in the last leg of the march to Canaan.

12. *What were the "victuals (vittles)"?* 1:11

The people were fed by manna through the days of the wilderness wanderings, and this bountiful provision did not cease until after they had renewed the rite of circumcision in the camp at Gilgal (see Joshua 5:12). No doubt the "victuals" included the daily supply of manna, but it would include more than this. It included all the equipment which was necessary for making the journey (see Genesis 24:25).

13. *What action took place after three days?* 1:11

The people expected to move to a vantage point on the Jordan River from which they could cross over after this first three-day period. During this time the spies were to be on their way to Jericho and returning, a time which was lengthened by the necessity of their hiding for three days. The camp of the Israelites had been at Abel-shittim while they were in the plains of Moab. They planned to move from this point down to the Jordan River

during these three days; but when the spies were forced to extend their expedition, the Israelites probably remained in their camp all this time.

14. *How long was it before they crossed the Jordan?* 1:11

Since the spies were absent for three days, it was not until the morning after their return that the Israelites left Shittim and proceeded to the Jordan. At the bank of the Jordan they halted again. After this second pause for three days (see 3:1, 2) they went across the river.

Three days before leaving Shittim	3
(spies in hiding)	
A day going to the edge of Jordan	1
Three days before starting across	3
A day in crossing	1
	—
	8 days

Joshua, no doubt, intended to proceed to the Jordan and cross it within the three days. He probably sent spies to Jericho on the same day he issued the orders to the people. As the spies were forced to hide in the mountains for three days, Joshua could not remove with the people until after their return.

15. *Did all the eastern tribes go over Jordan?* 1:12

Only forty thousand men of war from the eastern tribes went over the Jordan River. There were 43,730 men of the tribe of Reuben who were twenty years of age and older. Gad had 40,500 men of this age. If the tribe of Manasseh were evenly divided, there would have been 26,350 men in the half tribe of Manasseh, since the total was 52,700 in this tribe. The total of this would be 110,580 men in the two and one-half tribes who wanted to live east of the Jordan. When Moses gave these people permission to settle east of the Jordan, they promised to arm themselves and to pass over the Jordan with the other

warriors of Israel. After the conquest was finished, they were to be allowed to return to their homes. The historian says about forty thousand of these men prepared for war passed over before the Lord unto the battle to the plains of Jericho (4:13). This would leave some seventy thousand men behind to care for the women and children who would not pass over to the western side of the river.

16. Why had Moses instructed these tribes? 1:13

When the men of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh first approached Moses about settling east of the Jordan, he thought they were like the ten spies who had been afraid to enter into the conquest of the land. The men of the two and one-half tribes assured Moses they were not afraid. They made request for this land because it was suited to their occupations. They found it to be a good land, and they desired to have this for their inheritance. At the time they assured Moses they would go over and fight. They promised they would not return to their houses until all of the children of Israel had inherited their place in the Promised Land. When Moses received this assurance, he granted their request and told them they might build cities for their little ones and folds for their sheep (Numbers 32:24). The land which they inherited was the territory which had formerly been the kingdom of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og, king of Bashan (Numbers 32:33).

17. Why did the eastern tribes reassure Joshua? 1:16

After Moses had settled the question about inheriting the land with these eastern tribes, he gave express commandment to Eleazar, the priest, and to Joshua, the son of Nun, as well as to the chief fathers of the tribes of Israel. He made it clear to them that if the children of Gad, the children of Reuben, and the children of Manasseh kept their part of the agreement then they were to inherit Gilead. The pledge of allegiance of these three eastern

tribes had been made to Moses. Since Moses was dead, it was proper for the men of these tribes to give their pledge of allegiance to Joshua. They were willing to go over the Jordan and fight before they received their inheritance. They assured Joshua they would put to death any man among them who proved to be disloyal to Joshua. Their only prayer was for the Lord God to be with Joshua as He had been with Moses (1:17).

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 1

1. What was the normal period of mourning for a deceased person?
2. What was Moses' title in Scripture?
3. What was Joshua's title in Scripture?
4. Was Joshua given an unconditional promise of God's blessings?
5. Did Joshua have any of the written Word of God to guide him?
6. Did Joshua have any subordinate officers to help him?
7. Were the people still receiving manna from heaven when Joshua became their leader?
8. Who were the "eastern" tribes?
9. What kings had formerly dominated the land east of Jordan?
10. Who was Israel's high priest when Joshua was made leader of the people?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 2

- Vv. 1-7 *Rahab hides the spies.* The two spies sent out by Joshua found the house of Rahab to be a place where they could learn about the activities of the community. Although they must have taken every precaution to conceal their true identity, the king of the city learned of

their presence in his city and questioned Rahab about them. At the risk of her life, she hid the men on the flat roof of her house.

Vv. 8-21 *A covenant made with Rahab.* Rahab showed a remarkable insight into the signs of the times. She also made a noble confession of faith in the nature of God. The spies, therefore, hearkened to her request for protection. A sign by which she could identify her house was arranged, and the spies were let down over the city wall and sent on their way back to the camp of Israel.

Vv. 22-24 *The spies return to Joshua.* After hiding three days in the mountains around Jericho, the men made their way safely back east across the Jordan River to the spot where the waiting armies of Israel were poised under Joshua's command anticipating the first battle in the Promised Land. These two spies brought back an encouraging report, in contrast to the report brought back by ten of the twelve spies sent out by Moses forty years earlier.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The Lord, He is God.* Such was the confession of faith made by Rahab, the Canaanite harlot. One would hardly expect to find such faith in the heart of such a person. She recited how the inhabitants of the land had heard about the miracle at the Red Sea. They had also heard about the victories won by the armies of Israel as they fought against Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites who ruled on the east side of the Jordan. Surely sinners today can see the hand of God in the

affairs of men everywhere, and they should be willing to make this same good confession. Even more, they should accept Jesus Christ as God's Son and Savior.

2. *Our life for yours.* The spies had been saved by Rahab. As a result, they were willing to enter into an agreement whereby she could identify her house and spare the destruction of herself and her family when the battle was fought against Jericho. At the same time, they could not jeopardize the lives of their fellow soldiers. If Rahab betrayed them, they would not be bound by their agreement. Surely they were in a situation which was fraught with peril. It was a life-and-death matter. Christian workers are engaged in similar important activities every day. They have given their lives in the service of Christ as they seek to save the souls of those with whom they come in contact. No more important business can ever be conducted.
3. *God keeps His promises.* When the two spies returned to Joshua, they said, "Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land" (v. 24). More than forty years before this time, six hundred thousand men of Israel had started on the journey to the Promised Land. Some lost faith along the way and died in the wilderness, but God never wavered. He brought the faithful into the land flowing with milk and honey. He will always be as steadfast to all who trust Him.

CHAPTER TWO

Rahab Hides the Spies 2:1-7

And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into a harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there.

2 And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither tonight of the children of Israel to search out the country.

3 And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country.

4 And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were:

5 And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them.

6 But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof.

7 And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone, they shut the gate.

1. Why were the spies sent out secretly? 2:1

This was naturally done to prevent the Canaanites from hearing about it. Partly it was done for the sake of Israel. If the reports should prove unfavorable, the people of Israel might have been thrown into despair as they had been before in the time of Moses. When Moses sent the twelve spies out from Kadesh-Barnea, the people had come to him with the suggestion that they send spies. Moses had inquired of the Lord concerning the advisability of this procedure, and with the Lord's blessings he had sent one man from each tribe to spy out Canaan (Deuteronomy 1:22 and Numbers 13:1 ff.). Since the people knew Moses had sent the spies out they were expecting to get a

report when they returned. Joshua's action would prevent this kind of anxious anticipation on the part of the people.

2. *What kind of city was ancient Jericho?* 2:1b

Jericho was a city within the borders of Canaan, lying something more than an hour's journey to the west of the Jordan. Its location was seven miles north of the Dead Sea, and about ten miles northwest of the mouth of the Jordan where it enters the Dead Sea. It was situated in the plain which was formerly very fertile and celebrated for its palm trees and balsam shrubs. It is now quite desolate and barren. The town lay eight hundred feet below sea level, making it some two thousand feet below the summit of Mount Olivet to the west. The Dead Sea, however, is twelve hundred and ninety feet below sea level, making Jericho to be situated on a hill that stood out above the plains surrounding the site. The town controlled the trade routes from the east as well as the road stretching up to the west to Jerusalem. Another road through the ancient site of Bethel and Shechem lay nearby, and a road to the south led down to Hebron. Its overthrow would naturally greatly alarm the Canaanites, and Joshua singled the town out of all the Canaanite tribes when he recounted Israel's victories (24:11).

3. *Who was Rahab?* 2:1c

Rahab is called a *zonah*, that is, a harlot, not an inn-keeper, as Josephus, the Chaldee version, and the Rabbins interpret the word. The spies' entering the house of such a person would not excite suspicion. Moreover, the situation of her house against or upon the town wall was one which facilitated escape. The Lord so guided the course of the spies that they found in this sinner the very person who was the most suitable for their purpose. The tidings of the miracles wrought by the living God on behalf of Israel had made a deep impression on her. She informed the spies of the despondency of the Canaanites. With

believing trust in the power of the God of Israel, she concealed the spies from all the inquiries of her countrymen, though at great risk to herself.

4. *Who was the king of Jericho?* 2:2

Many of the principal cities of the Canaanites were governed by a king who would also take responsibility for some of the surrounding territory. Five of these kings formed a coalition against the Israelites and fought Joshua after the Gibeonites made peace with Israel. Another group of kings in the northern part of Palestine also banded together to oppose the conquest of the men under Joshua. There were at least five leading kings in this northern group as well. A summary of the kings who were overthrown by Joshua is given in chapter 12, where thirty-one different kings are named. Their principalities would be comparable to the city-states of ancient Greece. Their office would make them equal to the lords of the Philistines, who are mentioned frequently in the days of the judges. This important and powerful man sent to the home of Rahab demanding information about the spies who had come into her house.

5. *How had the king learned of the spies' mission?* 2:3

A report had been given to the king, but Joshua does not tell us who made the report. Although the coming of two strange men to the house of Rahab would not be sufficient grounds to arouse a lot of suspicion, the strange conduct of the men might have been the reason for someone's surmising that they were Israelite spies. They evidently did not enter Rahab's house for any immoral purpose. Even though she is called a harlot, she may have also provided a place of lodging for strangers. In modern society it is not unusual for women of immoral nature to ply their nefarious business in or about a perfectly legitimate lodging place. Such may have been Rahab's

arrangement. If the men of Israel were distinct by their speech, their dress, and their conduct, they may have aroused enough suspicion to cause someone to go to the king with the report that spies were in Rahab's house.

6. *Was she justified in lying?* 2:4

Rahab sought not only to divert all suspicion from herself, but to prevent any further search for them in her house. She wanted to frustrate the attempt to arrest them. Her deceit is not to be justified as a lie of necessity told for a good purpose. Neither can we avoid the problem by saying that before the preaching of the gospel a salutary lie was not regarded as a fault even by good men. Such cannot be shown to be "allowable," or even "praiseworthy," simply because the writer mentions the fact without expressing any subjective opinion. Even though Rahab was convinced of the truth of the miracles which God had wrought for His people and acted in firm faith that the true God would give the land of Canaan to the Israelites, she still is culpable in affirming an untruth, for a lie is always a sin.

7. *Why did she have flax on the roof?* 2:6

Flax is a herb-like plant which has been cultivated from the beginning of history. It is a herbaceous plant and grows to a height of some three feet, having blue flowers and very fibrous stalks. The tough fibers of the stalk after the decay and removal of the softer woody and gummy material made the crude flax. From the flax linen was made, and linen was in the earliest historic times a favorite material for clothes. The Jewish priestly garments were made of pure linen. The Egyptian mummies were wrapped in linen. Linseed oil, and oil cake were also useful products from the same plant. Since the roofs of the Palestinian houses were flat, the area was used for many different purposes. Roof tops made excellent places to spread out farm products for drying, and this was evidently

the reason why there were stalks of flax on the roof of Rahab's house.

8. *What gates were shut?* 2:7

Some have called Jericho the oldest city in the world. Numerous archaeological excavations have been made in and around the city. These have revealed an area covering some four or five acres surrounded by a double wall. Some of the walls even in the ruins are twenty-eight feet high. The walls themselves are at places in three sections with a base of clay, gravel, and small stones. Above this is a rubble wall and finally on top is a brick wall sometimes between six and eight feet in thickness. Not even Meggido, a famous military center of the ancient world, reveals workmanship of this kind. Those who built Jericho must have been masters in stonework and masonry. It is taken as a triumph of engineering skill which modern builders under the same circumstances could scarcely improve. Since the city was excellently fortified it would be necessary to have gates which could be opened and closed. Their practice evidently called for the closing of the gates at sundown in order for the city to be safe from attacks by night.

The Covenant Made With Rahab 2:8-21

8 And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof;

9 And she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

10 For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.

11 And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did here remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

12 Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord, since I have showed you kindness, that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:

13 And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.

14 And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the Lord hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.

15 Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall.

16 And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way.

17 And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear.

18 Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee.

19 And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him.

20 And if thou utter this our business then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear.

21 And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window.

9. What was Rahab's view of God? 2:9

Her confession of faith remained far behind the faith which Moses at that time demanded of Israel. She discerned in Jehovah a deity in heaven and upon earth. Although she had not yet thrown off her polytheism altogether, she had come close to a true and full confession of the Lord. She knew that all evidence pointed towards the victorious conquest of the land on the part of the Israelites. Although she could hardly have known of the promise given to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3), she had witnessed how terror had fallen upon the members of her community as reports reached them of Israel's exodus from Egypt. The people of Canaan had fallen into great fear.

10. How much of Israel's history was known to Rahab? 2:10

Jacob and his descendants had gone out of Canaan four hundred years before the time of Joshua. Rahab demonstrates very little knowledge of the early history of Israel when she specifically mentioned how the people of Israel crossed the Red Sea on dry land. She also knew of the victorious campaigns they had waged against the kings east of the Jordan. She called Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, by name. These were kings whom the Israelites had conquered just shortly before the time of the death of Moses.

11. How did Rahab describe God? 2:11

Rahab said, "The Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and in earth beneath." Rahab's confession of faith is very close to the cry made by the people of Israel on

Mount Carmel after God had sent fire from heaven to devour Elijah's sacrifice and altar. At that time the people of Israel cried out, "The Lord, He is the God; the Lord, He is the God" (I Kings 18:39). Even without the benefit of a great heritage among God-fearing people, Rahab came to the conclusion that the God of Israel was the God of the whole earth.

12. *What request did Rahab make of the spies?* 2:12, 13

Rahab was pleading for her life. She asked that the people of Israel save alive her father and mother, her brothers, her sisters, all that they had, and herself. When she asked them to give her "a true token," she was asking them to appoint some kind of sign which would assure her that they were favorably inclined towards her, or that she be allowed to give them some pledge of her allegiance.

13. *What kind of men were the spies?* 2:14

The men whom Joshua had sent to spy out Canaan were courageous, God-fearing, and appreciative men of war. They were honest and dependable. They were not sinful, covetous, or treacherous. They knew Rahab had spared their lives, and they were willing to make an agreement. They had a knowledge of God which led them to believe this God-fearing woman, though a sinner, would be accepted into the household of Israel if she believed on the Lord. They had not entered Rahab's house for any evil reason; and when they saw an opportunity to help a pagan to have faith in the true God, they were ready to act.

14. *What further actions did Rahab take?* 2:14-16

The covenant into which Rahab entered with the spies was a matter of life and death. Since she had spared their lives, they were willing to spare her life. If she tricked them later and caused them to be harmed, then they would harm her. If she failed to meet the conditions which they laid down to her, they were not to be bound

in any way to spare her or her family. When the covenant was completed, she let the men down over the city wall by a cord dropped out of the window of her house. Her house was on the town wall. She also instructed the men to hide in the mountain rather than to make an attempt to get back across the fords of the Jordan and to reach Joshua's camp immediately. In some way, she believed three days would be sufficient time for them to remain in hiding, evidently knowing the habits of expeditionary forces which went out from the city on such missions.

15. *What conditions did Rahab agree to meet?* 2:18-21

She was to do the following things:

- (1) When the town was taken, Rahab was to make her house known to the Israelites by binding the "cord of this crimson thread"
- (2) When the town was taken, Rahab was to collect together her parents, her brothers, and her sisters into her own house
- (3) She was to agree to all the propositions made to her, especially not to disclose the mission of Israel

The rope by which the spies had escaped out of Rahab's house was made of crimson threads. It was this kind of cord which she was to hang from her window. There could be no mistaking the unusual and significant sign. The Israelites were furthermore disavowing any responsibilities for any of her family who might be scattered throughout the town. This would prevent someone from falsely identifying himself as a member of Rahab's house. Naturally, she was not to make any mention of the spies' visit or in any way jeopardize their safe return. Rahab readily agreed to all of these propositions and was thus spared.

The Spies Return to Joshua 2:22-24

22 And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned: and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, but found them not.

23 So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all things that befell them:

24 And they said unto Joshua, Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us.

16. *What kind of report did the spies make to Joshua?*
2:22-24

The report of the two spies to Joshua was quite different from the report which the ten spies had made to Moses forty years earlier. At the earlier time the ten spies said the land was one which ate up its inhabitants. They described themselves as being like grasshoppers in the sight of the men who lived on the land. They also affirmed they felt insignificant in the presence of the people who populated the territory. Joshua's two spies, however, came back with a glowing account of how they had entered into the city of Jericho and had been spared by the kindness of Rahab. Much of what they said was a report of what Rahab told them. They used the same expression in describing how the inhabitants of the country were fainting because of fear of them. All of this convinced the spies that the Lord would surely deliver all the land into the hands of the Israelites. Such a report must have given great courage to Joshua and the warriors of Israel. Although they had been forced to wait an extra three days for the return of the spies, they would certainly be enthusiastic about their mission as they made

final preparations to cross the Jordan River into the Promised Land.

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 2

1. How many men did Joshua send to spy out the land?
2. What was the name of the harlot into whose house they entered?
3. What kind of a ruler was over Jericho?
4. In the midst of what kind of farm produce did the spies hide?
5. What was the name of the king of the Amorites whom the Israelites had conquered?
6. What was the name of the king of Bashan whom Israel had conquered?
7. By what means did the spies escape from the harlot's house?
8. How long did the spies hide in the mountains?
9. By what sign was the harlot to identify her house?
10. What was the harlot's statement of faith in God?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 3

- Vv. 1- 8 *God's instructions to Joshua.* Joshua and the people of Israel moved from their camp at Shittim to the banks of the Jordan. Just before they crossed over into Canaan, God spoke again to Joshua and gave him final instructions about the passage. A thrill of excitement must have run through the entire camp as they came to this thrilling moment.
- Vv. 9-13 *Joshua's instructions to the people.* Joshua ordered the Levites which carried the Ark of the Covenant to go before the people but to stop at the edge of the river. Joshua also

commanded the people to take twelve men from among them, one man from every tribe. These men were to select stones to carry out of the Jordan and use in the construction of a memorial.

Vv. 14-17 *The parting of the Jordan.* Although the river was in flood stage at the time, God wrought a mighty miracle as He caused the waters which ran down from the north to stop, and also prevented the waters from the south from flowing back into the river bed. Dry land was exposed, and the people of Israel were allowed to march across on dry ground. The priests who bore the Ark of the Covenant stood firm on dry ground where the water had been until all the people of Israel had passed over into Canaan.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God makes known His will to man.* God does not leave man alone in darkness to grope in an effort to find out the will of God. God had made known His will in an unmistakably clear way. He gave explicit instructions to Joshua as the people of Israel prepared to cross over into the Promised Land. He has given all mankind His will as they seek to know what is expected of them in their effort to reach an upper and better kingdom.
2. *God's people march in faith.* The people of Israel must have been sorely tried as Joshua ordered them to march forward toward the banks of the swollen Jordan River. The priests themselves led the way, and their faith must have been sorely tried as they were ordered to step down into the water and march forward as if they were to

attempt to walk across the flooded stream. Such is often the case of the believer as he is asked to do something for which he cannot see a reason. It is at this point where the Christian walks by faith.

3. *Obedience to God brings victory.* God does not always work in the same way. When the people of Israel crossed the Red Sea, Moses held up his staff over the water. The people of Israel may have been expecting Joshua to do something similar, but Joshua himself was in the background as they crossed the Jordan River. The priests took the lead. As they obeyed, God parted the waters of the Jordan. The people who had come to this point in faith and obedience were then enabled to cross the raging river on dry ground. In the spiritual realm such experiences are repeated day by day by those who trust and obey. They march forward to victory as they obey God.

CHAPTER THREE

God's Instructions to Joshua 3:1-8

And Joshua rose early in the morning and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over.

2 And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host;

3 And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it.

4 Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore.

5 And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.

6 And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people.

7 And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.

8 And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan.

1. *Where was Shittim?* 3:1

Shittim was Israel's last camping place east of Jordan before entering Palestine. The camp is described as being in the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan by Jericho (Numbers 22:1). Here Israel stayed, and the people were ensnared. They began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab. As they called to them to sacrifice to their gods, the people ate of the abominable sacrifices and bowed down to their gods (Numbers 25:1, 2). The camp itself must have been quite extensive, for it is described as being by the Jordan from Beth-jesimoth even to Abel-shittim in the plains of Moab (Numbers 33:49). The word Shittim is an abbreviation of Abel-shittim. It has been identified as Tell el-shamman in the plains of Moab opposite Jericho. Trees still fringe the upper terraces of the Jordan with a green border. It was near Mount Peor, and the heathen god which was worshiped here was known as Baal-peor (Numbers 25:3). As soon as the spies who had been sent out from Shittim returned to the camp, Joshua lost no time in making the final preparations to cross Jordan. He rose early on the next morning and commanded the

Israelites to move to the banks of the Jordan. At this point they paused before they passed over into Canaan.

2. Why did the Israelites stay three days at the side of Jordan? 3:2

In the first place, Israel was preparing to pass into an enemy's country. They not only had an army to prepare, but there were all the people (including wives and children) and all their possessions to move. The river had first of all to be crossed. Hence, it must have been necessary to make many preparations. This would easily occupy two or three days. Moreover, at this time Jordan was high and was seen to overflow its banks, so it was impossible to cross the fords. They were obliged to wait until this obstruction was removed. These three days were in addition to the three days which they had spent in waiting for the return of the spies.

3. Who were the priests, the Levites? 3:3

We are not to understand these as ordinary Levites, but the Levitical priests who were entrusted with the Ark. According to Numbers 4:4, the Kohathites were appointed to carry the holy vessels, which included the Ark of the Covenant, on the journey through the desert. It was the priests, however, and not the Levites who were the true bearers and guardians of the holy things. We may see this from the fact that the priests had first of all to wrap up these holy things in a careful manner before they handed them over to the Kohathites. Thus, they might not touch the holy things and die. On solemn occasions, when the Ark was to be brought out in all its full significance and glory, it was not the Levites but the priests who bore the Ark of the Covenant. All priests were Levites but not all Levites were priests. Priests were the direct descendants of Aaron. Aaron was the son of Kohath, who was one of three sons of Levi. The Levites were descendants of Levi and might have been from the

family of Gershon or Merari as well as the family of Kohath. To identify these Levites as being full priests would be a mistake. We might call them priestly Levites inasmuch as they had the responsibility to carry the holy vessels which were under the direct care of the priests. The distance between the people and the Ark was set at two thousand cubits. Two thousand cubits would be equivalent to three thousand feet, making the distance something like three-fifths of a mile. During the wilderness wandering it was customary for the standard of the tribe of Judah to be carried at the forefront of the band. Those who marched with him were in this first group and then followed along the sons of Gershon and Merari who carried the curtains, boards, and other parts of the Tabernacle itself. Behind these Levites came the standard of Reuben and with him were those who marched in his contingent. It was only at this point that the Kohathites moved forward bearing the vessels of the sanctuary. They in turn were followed by the standard of the camp of Ephraim and those with him. In the final group in the normal order of march were those associated with the camp of Dan. This crossing of the Jordan was an unusual march, and the Ark was set far in the forefront.

4. *Why did the Ark go before the people?* 3:4

The Ark was carried at a distance before the people not so much to show them the road as to make a road for them. In dividing the Jordan, God was leading them to Canaan by a way which they had never traversed before, i.e. by a miraculous way. The Ark was kept in the sanctuary, the Tabernacle, their holy meeting place. The chamber housing the Ark was called the Holy of Holies. The Ark itself was the holiest of all the holy furniture in the holy place. As such, it signified the very focal point of God's meeting place with the people of Israel. When

it led them in crossing Jordan, it was thought God Himself was going before them.

5. *Of what did the people's sanctification consist?* 3:5

This sanctification did not consist in their washing their clothing, for there was not time for this. Neither did it consist in merely changing their clothes, which might be a substitute for washing (Genesis 35:2). This consecration was more than the abstinence from connubial intercourse (Exodus 19:15), for this was only the outward side of sanctification. It consisted in spiritual purification also. This was turning the heart to God, in faith and trust in His promise, and in willing obedience to His commandments. Only in such a frame of heart and mind would Israel be prepared for God's leading them into the land of promise.

6. *How was God to magnify Joshua?* 3:7

Joshua was to be glorified before Israel. The miraculous guidance of the people through the Jordan was only the beginning of the whole series of miracles by which the Lord put His people in possession of the Promised Land and glorified Joshua in the sight of Israel in the fulfillment of his office as He had glorified Moses before. Moses was accredited in the sight of the people as the servant of the Lord in whom they could trust by the miraculous division of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:31). Joshua was accredited as the leader of Israel, whom the Almighty God acknowledged as He had His servant Moses, by the similar miracle, the division of the waters of Jordan.

7. *What was the Ark?* 3:8

The Ark of the Covenant is described by several different titles. Some of these are listed here as follows:

1. "Ark of God" (I Samuel 3:3)
2. "Ark of the Testimony" (Exodus 25:22)
3. "Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah your God" (3:3)

It was something like a chest. The dimensions were given as follows in Exodus 25:10:

1. $2\frac{1}{2}$ cubits long
2. $1\frac{1}{2}$ cubits high
3. $1\frac{1}{2}$ cubits broad

Converting the cubit into feet and inches, we would find the Ark was three feet and nine inches long, two feet and three inches high, and two feet and three inches wide. The chest was constructed of acacia wood which was a fine grained, light and wear-resistant wood found in the Sinaitic area. All of it was overlaid with gold, and it was provided with rings at the four corners through which staves could be thrust enabling carriers to pick up the Ark and move it very handily. Across the top of the Ark was a mercy seat, evidently something like a lid since the dimensions given are the same as the width and length of the Ark. *Above the mercy seat were two angelic forms whose wings reached out over the mercy seat and touched in the middle. This central piece of furniture of the Tabernacle symbolized the abiding presence of God among His people. As it was carried before the armies of Israel, it signified their God was leading them when they crossed over into Canaan.

8. *Where were the priests to stop with the Ark?* 3:8

When the priests came to the bank of the Jordan, they were to stand still. They were to form a dam as it were against the force of the water which was miraculously arrested in its course and piled upon a heap. It took a great deal of faith for these men to step into the swirling waters of the flooded river, but their faith was rewarded by a miraculous intervention on the part of the triune God. As these priests stood there while the thousands of Israelites swarmed across the river, they stood as a symbol of God's abiding presence with His people. Only after men, women and children, flocks and herds had crossed over into

Canaan were the priests themselves to come up out of the Jordan into the Promised Land.

9. *What significance was there in the use of the Ark?* 3:8

Moses had divided the Red Sea by stretching over it his rod; Joshua was to do the same to the Jordan with the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark had been the appointed symbol and vehicle symbolizing the presence of the Almighty God since the conclusion of the covenant. Whenever the ordinary means of grace are at hand, God attaches the operations of His grace to them; for He is a God of order, who does not act in an arbitrary manner in the selection of His means.

Joshua's Instructions to the People 3:9-13

9 And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the Lord your God.

10 And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites.

11 Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan.

12 Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man.

13 And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon a heap.

10. *Why call Jehovah a "living God"?* 3:10

Jehovah is called a "living God," in contrast with the dead gods of the heathen. God proved Himself to be liv-

ing and watchful on behalf of His people. His being in the midst of the people did not denote a naked presence but was to a striking degree manifested in extraordinary operations. His presence was seen in the manifestations of peculiar care. The God of Israel would now manifest Himself as a living God by the extermination of the Canaanites, seven tribes of whom are enumerated, as in Deuteronomy 7:1.

11. *Who were the peoples mentioned?* 3:10b

The Canaanites were, in general, the descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham, the son of Noah (Genesis 10:1, 6). The word *Canaan* was used to describe all the land west of the Jordan. The Hittites were the descendants of Heth. The word *Hittite* is the equivalent of "son of Heth" (see Genesis 23:5; cf. 25:9). They enter into the narrative of Israel's history at various times, such as these:

a. Abraham's day (Genesis 15:20)

b. Spies' day (Numbers 13:29)

Some think the Hivites were villagers and that the term *Hivite* is a general term meaning "villager." At times they are confused with the Horites. No name resembling the Hivite term has yet been found in the Egyptian and Babylonian inscriptions. Of them we learn they dwelt in Shechem (Genesis 34:2), at Gibeon (Joshua 9:7), and at the foot of Hermon (Joshua 11:3). They were peaceful and commercial (see II Samuel 24:7; cf. Judges 3:3; Genesis 34:10, 23, 28, 29).

The word *Perizzite* also signified "a villager," and so corresponds with the Egyptian *fellah*. Hence the Perizzite is not included among the sons of Canaan in Genesis 10:15-19.

The Gergashites, in the Septuagint called *Gergesaios*, are also mentioned in Genesis 15:21, Deuteronomy 7:1, and Joshua 24:11; but their dwelling place is unknown.

The reading *Gergesenoï* in Matthew 8:28 is critically suspicious, although this fits them best of all.

The Amorites were inhabitants of the mountain or heights, though the derivation from *'akmin*, *summit*, is not established. They were a branch of the Canaanites, descended from Emor (Amor), who were spread far and wide over the mountains of Judah and beyond the Jordan in the time of Moses, so that in Genesis 15:16; 48:22, all the Canaanites are comprehended by the name. They were west of the Dead Sea to Hebron (Genesis 13:18; 14:13, cf. Numbers 21:13).

The Jebusites were inhabitants of Jebus, afterwards called Jerusalem.

The listing of these names on various occasions emphasizes the fact of God's judgment which was to come upon each and every one of these people. None was to be spared. All were to be dispossessed.

12. *Was the Ark considered as having authority over all the earth?* 3:11

The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord is not called the ruler of the whole earth. The description of Jehovah as "Lord of all the earth" is very appropriately chosen for the purpose of strengthening confidence in the omnipotence of God. Here His government over all the elements of the world is exhibited. The Israelites had no doubt. The seas and rivers were under His control. The waters though liquid by nature became stable at His nod.

13. *Why did Joshua ask the tribes to take men from among themselves?* 3:12

The purpose for the selection of these men is made clear from the events described in chapter four. Each man was to be from a different tribe. Each of the twelve tribes was to have a man from among themselves to stand ready for Joshua's special orders. They were to select stones from the midst of the river bed and carry them out to the other

side. Since each tribe had selected a man from among themselves, each had a part in the memorial which was to be erected. These twelve men stood as representatives of the different tribes, and their participating in the endeavor together symbolized the unity which bound the Israelites in their effort to conquer Palestine.

14. By what power were the waters to be stopped? 3:13

The priests themselves had no power. The fact that they were standing in the water would not be sufficient reason for the waters to cease their flowing. They could not make a dam to hold back the waters. The Ark itself had no power to cause the waters to stop. It was the Lord of all the earth who performed the miracle. The fact that the priests stepped into the water demonstrated their faith in God. God chose their standing there as a symbol of the unconquerable faith through which miracles are granted.

The Parting of the Jordan 3:14-17

14 And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people;

15 And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,)

16 That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon a heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho.

17 And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.

15. *What is striking about the mention of the overflow of waters?* 3:15

Every attempt to explain the miracle by a natural occurrence is thereby prevented. Often a radical critic pronounces the clause a gloss, and endeavors to get rid of it altogether. The text enjoys integrity, and the statement is a matter of historical record. The fact that the Jordan was overflowing would explain why a miracle was necessary in order for the people of Israel to cross at this time. When the Jordan is flowing naturally, it is a very small stream. When the winter rains have raised the head waters, the Jordan flows through a wide extent of territory stretching from the hill country of Judea to the hill country of Perea. It actually forms a sea of water through which no group of people could cross without divine assistance.

16. *Where was the town called Adam?* 3:16

This city is not mentioned anywhere else. It is not, moreover, to be confounded with Adamah, in the tribe of Naphtali. The town of Zarethan, by the side of which Adam was situated, has also vanished. These towns were evidently located some distance upstream from the point at which Israel entered the Jordan River. It is useless to speculate that they were located at a point where the bluffs of Perea are close to the mountains of Ephraim, thus making a rather narrow passageway for the Jordan's waters. Some who would deny a miracle at this point suggest a rock slide may have dammed up the Jordan River from the north, thus enabling the Israelites to cross on dry ground. Even if God did use an earthquake or a rock slide to dam up the waters at this time, it was a miracle that the waters were stopped at the very moment when the priests stepped into the water. Such an occurrence would be a miracle of timing, but the narrative points to more than a miracle of timing. It was a miracle of

divine intervention into the affairs of man. It was performed by the prerogative and at the insistence of the Maker of heaven and earth.

17. How long would it take this multitude of people to cross Jordan? 3:17

It is said that the priests stood in the midst of Jordan in the bed of the river. All Israel went over upon dry ground. This could easily have been accomplished in half a day, if the people formed a procession of a mile or more in breadth. The people evidently did not pass across in single file or two abreast. They must have literally swarmed across the river in great exuberance as they saw what the hand of God was doing for them. Their anxiety about the coming campaign must have been relieved as they saw how God led them even in this initial stage of their attack on Canaan.

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 3

1. Where was Israel's camp before they crossed the Jordan?
2. How long did the people of Israel wait at the edge of the Jordan?
3. How much space was between the people of Israel and the Ark?
4. List three of the seven names by which groups of the inhabitants of Canaan were identified.
5. How many men were the people of Israel to select for Joshua's special task?
6. What time of year was it when the people crossed Jordan?
7. Near what city on the north were the waters stopped?
2. By what two names was the Dead Sea identified?
9. What town in Canaan was directly opposite the point where they crossed?

JOSHUA

10. What article of tabernacle furniture was to go before the people?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 4

- Vv. 1- 9 *The memorials of the crossing.* The purpose for the selecting of twelve men from among the tribes of Israel was finally demonstrated as each man took a stone out of the midst of the Jordan River and carried it to the western shore. Joshua himself set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan in the place where the feet of the priests who bore the Ark of the Covenant had stood.
- Vv. 10-18 *The crossing completed.* Joshua was shown to be God's appointed leader as the crossing was successfully completed. After all the people had crossed the Jordan, the priests themselves came up out of the Jordan. When the priests came up out of the Jordan River valley, the water returned to its place and flowed over all its banks as it had done before.
- Vv. 19-24 *The purpose of the memorial.* God did not perform a miracle simply to make the expedition of the Israelites an easy matter for them. What He did was accomplished in order that the Israelites might fear God and all the people of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is mighty (v. 24).

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The fathers are teachers.* God had commanded Joshua to select twelve men from among the tribes of Israel to bear stones up out of the Jordan valley. These were

to be set up as a memorial of the crossing of the Jordan River. God foresaw the day when their children would say, "What mean ye by these stones?" (v. 6). The ancestors of the Israelites would be able to remind them that this was a memorial of God's great miracle in allowing Israel to cross the Jordan on dry ground.

2. *God honors His leaders.* When Joshua did what God had commanded him to do, the Lord magnified him in the sight of all Israel. As a result of this honoring of Joshua, the people of Israel feared him as they had feared Moses all the days of his life. If Joshua had not kept God's commandment, he would not have had this honor. Similar honor will be given to all of God's servants as they live lives of faithfulness for Him.
3. *All men should know about God.* The memorial which the people of Israel erected near Gilgal on the west bank of the Jordan reminded Israel of how God had blessed them. It also stood as a testimony to all the people in the earth that the hand of the Lord is mighty (v. 24).

CHAPTER FOUR

The Memorials of the Crossing 4:1-9

And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying,

2 Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man,

3 And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night.

4 Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man:

5 And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of Jordan, and take ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel:

6 That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones?

7 Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.

8 And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the Lord spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there.

9 And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day.

1. How long did Israel take to cross the Jordan? 4:1

The Scripture does not tell us how many hours were consumed in crossing the last natural barrier which stood between the people of Israel and the land God had promised to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—and their descendants. Since the people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the month and observed the Passover at the regular time—the fourteenth day of the first month, the month Abib—and some six days were evidently spent in waiting, the people must have moved across rapidly. The priests stood throughout the time, and we are led to believe the hundreds of thousands of Israelites were moved

across the river in a period of no more than several hours. Certainly they did not take a number of days to make this last journey.

2. *Who were the men Joshua commanded the people to take?* 4:2

The men mentioned here are evidently the men referred to in 3:12. Joshua gave the people some time to select the men from each of the tribes. At the time the initial order was given, he did not indicate the reason for their being selected. After they had crossed Jordan, the reason was made clear. They were to carry stones from the bed of the Jordan River to a point on the west bank where a memorial of Israel's miraculous crossing of the river was to be erected.

3. *How is the importance of the taking of twelve stones exemplified?* 4:3

The main point of the story of their crossing the Jordan is their taking twelve stones with them from the bed of the river to the opposite side to serve as a memorial. To set forth the importance of this fact as a divine appointment, the command of God to Joshua is mentioned first of all (verses 2, 3); then the repetition of this command by Joshua to the men appointed for the work (verses 4-7); and lastly, the carrying out of the instructions (verse 8). The people were not to erect a memorial to remind them of the greatness of one of their own leaders, but they were to be reminded of God's great miraculous blessing upon them.

4. *What other stones served as monuments in Bible history?*

Stones were quite often used as monuments. Some of the more famous ones are these:

1. Jacob (Genesis 28:18) going to Haran
2. Jacob (Genesis 35:14) returning from Haran

3. Jacob and Laban (Genesis 31:45-47) as they parted

4. Samuel at Ebenezer (I Samuel 7:12) when the Philistines were defeated

They were sometimes consecrated with oil (Genesis 28:18). At other times, they seem merely to be set up with very little ceremony.

5. *When was the commandment given to the men?* 4:5

Although the twelve men had been selected earlier it is apparent that the commandment for them to pick up the stones was not given to them until the waters of the Jordan were stopped and the people had crossed on dry land. They must have stood about in amazement wondering what their assignment was to be as the crossing proceeded and there was nothing for them to do. When the commandment was finally given, they each must have eagerly selected a choice stone. One can imagine how they carried the stones with alacrity when they moved out to the western side of the Jordan River.

6. *What was the purpose of the memorial?* 4:7

The memorial served a didactic purpose. God was looking into future ages and making preparation for later generations. The Israelite fathers were responsible for the training and education of their children. The memorial stones would be a visible reminder of God's great guidance of Israel. The inquisitive nature of children would incline them to ask about these stones whenever they saw them. The fathers were to be prepared to recount what happened at the Jordan as the people crossed over the dry river bed.

7. *Did Joshua set up a second memorial?* 4:9

In addition to the twelve stones set up by the twelve men, Joshua set up twelve stones for a memorial on the spot where the feet of the priests had stood as they bore the Ark of the Covenant. There is nothing to warrant our calling this statement in question. We cannot set it aside as a gloss, either because nothing is said about any

divine command to set up these stones, or because of the opinion that such a memorial would have failed to achieve its object. Some say it could not possibly have remained, but would very speedily have been washed away by the stream. The water would reach where the priests stood only in flood times, and for the rest of the year this memorial would be high on dry ground. It would appear from 4:9 that two sets of stones were set up. Joshua, following the spirit of the Divine direction, caused a second set to be erected in the middle of the river on the spot where the priests had stood. Water would reach the spot only at flood times, and the memorial would thus be enabled to stand for a number of years. Some have supposed the verse to be an interpolation of later date; but, as it occurs in all manuscripts and as it is expressly stated in the Septuagint and Vulgate that this was a different transaction from the other, we must accept it as such.

The Crossing Completed 4:10-18

10 For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until every thing was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua: and the people hastened and passed over.

11 And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over, the ark of the Lord passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people.

12 And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spake unto them:

13 About forty thousand prepared for war passed over before the Lord unto battle, to the plains of Jericho.

14 And that day the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life.

15 And the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying,

16 Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of Jordan.

17 Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, Come ye up out of Jordan.

18 And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up onto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before.

8. *In what way was Joshua commanded by Moses?* 4:10

These words do not refer to any special instructions which Moses had given to Joshua with reference to the crossing, for no such instructions are to be found in the Pentateuch. Such directives cannot be inferred from Numbers 27:23; Deuteronomy 3:28; or Deuteronomy 31:23. The words simply affirm that Joshua carried out all the commands which the Lord had given him, in accordance with the charge which he received from Moses at the time when he was first called. Of course, Moses himself was not present for the crossing of the Jordan, but all of Joshua's work was done in fulfillment of Moses' appointment of Joshua as his successor. It was Moses' wish for Joshua to succeed him as the leader of God's people. God had sealed this appointment by his marvelous encouragement to Joshua. The fact that Joshua was walking in faithfulness which was typified by Moses had been demonstrated and verified by the miracle of the stopping of the Jordan's waters.

9. *Why is reference made to both the Ark and the priests?*
4:11

The priests were subordinate to the Ark, because, it was through the medium of the Ark of the Lord that the miracle of drying up the river had been effected. It was not by the priests but by Jehovah, the Almighty God, who was enthroned upon the Ark, that the waters were commanded to stand still. The Ark did not move by its own power. It was carried by the priests, and so both the priests and the Ark are mentioned as passing over the Jordan River.

10. *In what way did the eastern tribes pass over as Moses spoke to them?* 4:12

Once again the reader of the Scripture is not to be confused by the mentioning of Moses' speaking to the eastern tribes. He was not present when the crossing occurred, but he had given specific instructions to the three tribes who wanted to settle east of the Jordan River. His conversation with them is recorded in Numbers 32:20, 27, 28. They had agreed to go over with the other tribes and engage in the battles of conquest. When the conquest had been completed they were granted permission to return to Gilead and to settle there.

11. *Did all the armed men of the eastern tribes cross the Jordan River?* 4:13

Only about one-third of the armed men of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh crossed over to the plains of Jericho. The remaining seventy thousand men who were twenty years of age or older stayed behind to take care of the women and children who were not required to cross over into the western part of Canaan. The total of men in these three tribes can be calculated from the census which was recorded in the twenty-sixth chapter of the book of Numbers.

12. *In what way did the people fear Joshua?* 4:14

The people of Israel were not afraid of Joshua. They had not been afraid of Moses. They had respected him. Josephus says when Moses died the people wept bitterly. The old men knew what a great leader he had been, and they knew that they would miss his helpful leadership. The younger people wept because they were to be deprived of the privilege of being closely associated with a great leader. The people had this same kind of respect for Joshua as God magnified him by directing the crossing in such a magnificent way.

13. *Was Joshua in charge of the priests?* 4:16

When Moses selected Joshua to be his successor, God told Moses that Joshua would stand before Eleazar, the priest, who would ask counsel for him after the judgment of the Urim before the Lord. God said that Joshua would go out and come in at the word of the high priest. Moses himself had never been required to make such inquiries of Aaron, his brother. Joshua was in this way subordinate to Eleazar, the son of Aaron. The specific command for the priests to come out of the Jordan, however, was an unusual request and Joshua was so ordered by God.

14. *How far did the flood waters reach?* 4:18

The Jordan flows through a bed known as the Ghor. It would be eight miles wide at some points. This region is normally covered with trees and reeds, and the greenery presents a striking contrast to the sandy slopes which bound it on both sides. In many places this strip of vegetation occupies a deeper portion of the lower valley. As a result, one might distinguish three different banks—the upper or outer banks which form the first slope of the great valley, the lower of middle banks embracing the strip of land which is covered with vegetation, and the true banks of the river's bed. The floods seldom reach beyond

the lower line which is covered with vegetation. On some occasions the flood may reach out beyond this line of vegetation. One traveler did find the river so swollen when he visited it that it filled the bed to the very brim and covered all the ground where the bushes grew. The rise of water takes place at the time of harvest in April and at the close of the rainy season after the snow has been melted upon Mount Hermon. These melting snows fill the Sea of Galilee until it reaches its greatest height and then the excess water flows off into the Jordan to make it a full stream as it plunges down to the Dead Sea. At such a time, the river can not be waded even at its shallowest fords; whereas this is possible in the dry season when the water is low. Only by swimming could one cross it, and then hardly at all. The spies may have crossed the Jordan and returned in this manner, but the thousands of Israelites with their women and children could not cross in this fashion. For this reason, God cut off the water and allowed them to cross over on the rocky, dry river bed. After the people crossed, He allowed the water to flow out over its usual normal banks, out across the green Ghor and perhaps even to the farthest extents of the sandy slopes which may have been eight miles in width in places.

The Purpose of the Memorial 4:19-24

19 And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho.

20 And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal.

21 And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones?

22 Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land.

23 For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over:

24 That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever.

15. On what day did the people cross the Jordan? 4:19

The month Abib was the first month of the Jewish calendar. In latter times this month was called Nisan. It was in this month that the Passover fell as God had given directions for its institution (Exodus 12:18). This first month of the Jewish calendar corresponds to the March and April of the Julian calendar, being the latter part of the month of March and the first part of the month of April. The crossing occurred at the end of the forty years of wilderness wandering and would thus be in the forty-first year after the people left Egypt.

16. Where was Gilgal? 4:19

Gilgal was the first camp established by the Israelites on the west side of the Jordan River in the land of Canaan. The place received its name from the events which are recorded in chapter 5 of Joshua. The spot must not have been far from Jericho, and it is called by the name of Geliloth in Joshua 18:17. This was one of the points on Samuel's circuit as he moved about when he judged Israel (I Samuel 7:16). It was here that Agag, the king of the Amalekites, was slain (I Samuel 15:33). At least two other places in Israel bear this same name. One was some four miles from Bethel and Shiloh (II Kings 2:1, 2; 4:38). Another is often referred to as a regal Gilgal since a king lived there. This one is mentioned in Joshua 12:23.

17. What was the chief end of the miracle? 4:22

The miracle effectually confirmed the authority of Joshua in the eyes of Israel. The people feared him all the days of his life as they had feared Moses. The immediate end of the miracle, however, was to enable the people to cross the Jordan quickly and easily. The indirect benefit was that the government of Joshua was established. Another benefit also revealed to the Canaanites the omnipotence of the God of Israel. The miracle also would serve as an impulse to the Israelites to fear the Lord their God always (Exodus 14:4, 18; 6:6; see also Exodus 3:19; 6:1; 14:31).

18. What was the purpose of the memorial? 4:24

The twelve stones were to be a sign in Israel. They were to serve as a memorial of the miraculous crossing of the Jordan to all succeeding generations.

The purpose of the memorial was really twofold:

1. That the people of the earth might know God
2. That Israel might fear God and know these truths:
 - a. The Lord's power is unlimited
 - b. The Lord's power would be used for them
 - c. Their leader, Joshua, was working under God

Although Israel was not commissioned as a nation of evangelists, they were to be concerned for foreign people; and this memorial not only was to remind the Israelites of God's power but also to help other nations to know God.

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 4

1. How many men did Joshua select to carry the memorial stones?
2. What were the names of the three eastern tribes who crossed over Jordan with the main force of Israel?

3. What day of the month was it when they crossed Jordan?
4. In what month was the day of the crossing?
5. What was the name of the place where Israel first camped west of Jordan?
6. What was the purpose of the memorial for all people?
7. What was the purpose of the memorial for Israel?
8. Did Joshua put up a second memorial?
9. How many stones did Joshua put in the memorial which he erected where the priests stood?
10. Where did the men who carried stones out of the Jordan set up their memorial?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 5

Vv. 1- 9 *The covenant of circumcision.* The generation of Israelites who crossed over into Canaan had not been circumcised on the eighth day after their births in the wilderness. As a result of this neglect, it was necessary for them to keep this perpetual covenant with God as they entered into a new phase of their lives under His leadership. This was done at the camp, and the place was named Gilgal signifying the rolling away of the reproach of Egypt from them.

Vv. 10-12 *The keeping of the Passover.* On the fourth day after they crossed the Jordan, the people kept the first Passover to be observed in the Promised Land. It must have been a glorious occasion as the people renewed their vows to God. After the people were situated in the land, the manna which had come to them each day during their wilderness wandering was discontinued.

Vv. 13-15 *The appearance of the captain of the Lord's host.* God manifested himself to Joshua in an unusual way as their experience in Canaan began. A man stood before him with a sword drawn. When Joshua asked him for his identity he identified himself as "the captain of the Lord's host" (v. 15).

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *No excuse can be given for disobedience.* The people may have excused themselves in various ways as they failed to keep the covenant of circumcision. They may have felt that they did not have time to perform this rite since they were perpetually wandering in the wilderness. Whatever their reason may have been it was not valid. God expected them to observe this rite, and it was necessary for them to do this before they expected God's continuing guidance upon them. Christians must realize that they too stand in an inexcusable position when they disobey God's plain commandments.
2. *Daily bread comes from God.* Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). God gave the people of Israel manna every day. He will give daily bread to the Christian. Those who want to eat must work; but when they have done their best, they should not be anxious. God feeds the birds of the air, and He knows His children's needs.
3. *God fights for His people.* God's presence with Joshua was symbolized in the form of a man with a drawn sword. God and Satan are at war. When man fights with God, victory is assured. The Christian soldier is given adequate armor (Ephesians 6), and God's Son is the captain of the Christian army (Hebrews 2:10).

CHAPTER FIVE

The Covenant of Circumcision 5:1-9

And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel.

2 At that time the Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time.

3 And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins.

4 And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt.

5 Now all the people that came out were circumcised; but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised.

6 For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord: unto whom the Lord sware that he would not show them the land, which the Lord sware unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

7 And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way.

8 And it came to pass, when they had done circum-

cising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole.

9 And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.

1. *Who were the kings of the Amorites? 5:1*

The kings of the Amorites were the lords of the various cities located west of the Jordan River. The word Amorite means specifically "the high one," and it is generally supposed that the Amorites were highlanders (Numbers 13:29; Deuteronomy 1:7, 20; Joshua 10:6). Many of the cities of the Canaanites were located in high places, and this is probably a reference to the kings who ruled in the hill country. They were undoubtedly those kings which joined together in the southern coalition as they went out to fight against Joshua.

2. *What light is thrown on the question of authorship by this reference? 5:1b*

Both the King James Version and the American Standard Version translate the phrase, "until we were passed over." Some variations of meanings are found which would cause the translation to be, "until they were passed over." The majority of texts point to the first person plural form of the verb, and this is an indication that the book was written by an Israelite who was among the multitude who crossed over into the land of Canaan. Joshua would certainly fit this description, and this is substantiated evidence of his being the author of the book.

3. *Why was it necessary to stop for the circumcision of the people? 5:2*

When the people came out of Egypt, all of them had been circumcised, as distinctly affirmed in verse five. During their journey through the wilderness, circumcision

had been neglected. Since a new generation had arisen, the nation was no longer circumcised, and therefore it was necessary that circumcision should be performed upon all the men who had been born in the wilderness. This was an inviolable commandment; and if Joshua were to keep the Law perfectly, it was an act which had to be performed. It was necessary for the people to be circumcised before they could eat of the Passover. This was especially specified, as Moses gave the directives about the first Passover (Exodus 12:48).

4. *Why had circumcision been neglected in the wilderness?* 5:4

As the covenant of the Lord with the fathers was broken, the sons of the rejected generation were not to receive the covenant sign of circumcision. Nevertheless, this abrogation of the covenant with the generation which had been condemned was not a complete dissolution of the covenant relation, so far as the nation as a whole was concerned. The whole nation had not been rejected, but only the generation of men who were capable of bearing arms when they came out of Egypt. The younger generation who had grown up in the desert were to be delivered from the ban. Some students of the Scriptures have suggested that the people did not have time to perform the rite of circumcision since the people were constantly on the march through the wilderness. A close study of their journey will reveal they were at some forty-one different places and they wandered for nearly forty years. They had an average of almost a year to spend in each place. They surely had time to take care of this important matter if they had been so inclined. They must have felt that since they had disobeyed God and were doomed to die in the wilderness it would be a mockery for them to keep this sign of the covenant.

5. *How many were circumcised?* 5:5

The number of persons to be circumcised is estimated, by some, at a million. According to the general laws of population, the whole of the male population of Israel, which contained only 601,730 of twenty years of age and upwards, besides 23,000 Levites of a month old and upwards, when the census was taken a short time before in the steppes of Moab, could not amount to more than three million in all. Of these between birth and sixty years of age perhaps one half were thirty-eight years old. They would have been born before the sentence was pronounced upon the nation at Kadesh, and for the most part before the exodus from Egypt. These had already been circumcised. Consequently, the proportion between the circumcised and the uncircumcised was one to two. The operation could, therefore, be completed without any difficulty in the course of a single day.

6. *How could Canaan be a land of milk and honey?* 5:6

Their food was produced where grass and flowers abound. These provided nectar for the bees. It was well-watered and good for grazing cattle, sheep, and goats (Exodus 3:8, 17; 13:5; Leviticus 20:24; Numbers 13:27; Deuteronomy 6:3; Deuteronomy 32:14; Judges 14:8; Matthew 3:4). These animals would produce milk, and thus it could be said that the land literally flowed with milk and honey. The expression is a quaint way of saying that it was a highly productive land.

7. *How long did the men remain in the camp?* 5:8

The Scripture says the men stayed in their camp "till they were whole." This was probably at least a period of three days since we learn from other records that the rite of circumcision left the men sore for at least this long a period of time (Genesis 34:25). Such was the case in the days of Jacob and his sons when the men of Shechem submitted to the ordinance. The time they stayed in their

camp would have hardly been much longer than this inasmuch as they did participate in the Passover which fell on the fourteenth day of the first month. The people crossed the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and there would thus be only a four-day period between these two events.

8. *What was the "reproach of Egypt"?* 5:9

Two unsatisfactory suggestions have been made, as follows:

- a. As slaves (Genesis 34:14; I Samuel 17:26)
- b. As taunted (Exodus 32:12; Numbers 14:13-16; Deuteronomy 9:28)

The reproach probably was the sentence which rested on Israel as the nation was condemned to wander restlessly about and to die in the wilderness. The reproach was involved in the thoughts and sayings of those who would believe that the Lord had brought the Israelites out of Egypt to destroy them in the desert (Exodus 32:12; Numbers 14:13, 16; Deuteronomy 28). This was constantly on the mind of Moses, and he made reference to it as apparent failure repeatedly faced the nation he was leading. After they had crossed over into the Promised Land, there was no more danger of this happening; and so the reproach was rolled away from them.

9. *Where was Gilgal?* 5:9b

The word *Gilgal* means "rolling." The name was given to the place as a means of recalling what had transpired at that point. The place was also known as "the hill of the foreskins" (Joshua 5:3) or Gibeath-haaraloth. The place must not have been far from Jericho, for it was here that the Israelites first encamped after they crossed the Jordan. It was here that they set up the twelve stones as a memorial, and it was here that they made preparations to attack Jericho. Two other places in the Promised Land bear the name; one is known as the Gilgal of Elijah and

Elisha (II Kings 2:1, 2; 4:38). This was a locality some four miles away from Bethel and Shiloh in the hill country of Ephraim. There is another spot known as regal Gilgal in the American Standard Version (12:23). This reference speaks of the king of Goiim in Gilgal, and it is believed that the Goiim probably means the nomadic nations who had been driven away by Joshua and settled in a particular unknown spot in Canaan.

The Keeping of the Passover 5:10-12

10 And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.

11 And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day.

12 And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

10. Could the Passover be kept on the fourteenth day of that month? 5:10

The circumcision of the people was performed on the day after the crossing of the Jordan. According to 4:19, the crossing was the tenth day of the first month. Now, as the Passover was kept on the fourteenth (v. 10), the two accounts are said to be irreconcilable. The account of the circumcision is said to have been set down as a later and unhistorical legend. Several objections are made to the historical credibility of this account. One is that the suffering consequent upon circumcision made a person ill for several days, and according to Genesis 34:25 was worst on the third day, so that the people could not have kept

the Passover on that day (see Leviticus 15:1 ff.). Genesis 34:25 by no means proves that the pain was worst on the third day. Even if this were the case, it would not prevent the keeping of the Passover. The lambs could have been killed and prepared by the thousands of men who had been circumcised as children in Egypt. Those who were still unwell could join in the meal, since it was only Levitical uncleanness and not disease or pain which formed a legal obstacle to this (Numbers 9:10 ff.).

11. *What day was the "morrow after the Passover"?* 5:11

In Numbers 33:3, this phrase refers to the fifteenth of Nisan. Here it must be understood as signifying the sixteenth. The produce of the land, of which they ate not only on that day but according to verse 12 throughout that year, was both the corn of the previous year, and the produce of that same year. This would be new corn, and they were not allowed to eat any of that until it had been sanctified to the Lord by the presentation of the wave sheaf on the second day of the Passover (Leviticus 23:11). The fact that both the old corn and the parched corn are mentioned in the same verse throws some light on the abundant crops which grew in the land. The Israelites were able not only to eat of the produce of the present year, but there was produce left over from the previous year. It was a good land which God had promised to them.

12. *When did the manna cease?* 5:12

Special prominence is given to the words, "in the self-same day," because not only did the eating of the new corn commence on that day, but from that day forward "the children of Israel had manna no more." This statement is evidently related to Exodus 16:35 and must be understood according to that passage as signifying that on this day the gift of the manna entirely ceased (Exodus 16:14-36; Psalms 78:25; John 6:31, 49, 58; Revelation 2:17). God had

abundantly provided for His people all during the days of the wilderness wanderings. Each day they had a supply of manna to form the mainstay of their diet. On the day before the Sabbath they gathered a double portion. It did not spoil as they kept it over the Sabbath day. Whenever they tried to become greedy and gathered a double supply during the week, the manna spoiled and would not keep for them. This was a miraculous provision God had made. When they got to the land of promise, there was no need for this special providence.

The Appearance of the Captain of the Lord's Host 5:13-15

13 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?

14 And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?

15 And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.

13. Who was the captain of the host of the Lord? 5:14

The person who appeared neither belonged to the Israelites nor to their enemies. He was the captain of the army of the Lord, i.e., of the angels. "The Lord's host" does not mean the people of Israel, who were just at the commencement of their warlike enterprise. Although the hosts of Israel who came out of Egypt are called "the hosts of the Lord" in Exodus 12:41, the Israelites are never called the host or army of the Lord (in the singular).

"The host of the Lord" is synonymous with "the host of heaven" (I Kings 22:19; and signified the angels, as in Psalms 148:2 and 103:21). Some students of the Bible believe this "captain" was the second person of the trinity, the Son of God, who is called the Captain of the salvation of the believers (Hebrews 2:10). It seems better, however, to view this "captain" as the Angel of the Lord, who appeared first to Hagar when she fled from Sarah. This angel was recognized as a manifestation of God in one aspect of His being.

14. *Did Joshua recognize this Angel as God? 5:14b*

Joshua fell down upon the ground and "did worship." He recognized him at once as the Angel of the Lord, who was a special manifestation of God. This is more than the giving of reverence upon the part of a dependent to a superior or king (e.g. II Samuel 9:6; 14:33). He recognized him as something more than man, a superior being. The angel accepted his adoration, something the angel would not receive from John on Patmos (Revelation 22:9). Such reception of worship would have caused Joshua to know immediately that before him was standing a divine being. Joshua was facing a severe test as the people of Israel were approaching the strongly fortified city of Jericho. He would need to know that they who were for Israel were greater than they who were against them (II Kings 6:16).

15. *What was the purpose of this appearance? 5:14c*

The object of the divine appearance was indicated by the drawn sword in the hand (cf. Numbers 22:31) by which He manifested himself as a heavenly warrior. The drawn sword contained in itself a practical explanation. God was saying that He had a heavenly army to make war upon the Canaanites and to assist Joshua and his people. Such a theophany would give great encouragement to Joshua.

16. *Was this a vision?* 5:15

It was not in a vision that this appearance took place. It was an actual occurrence belonging to the external world verified by Joshua's senses. He saw the man with the drawn sword at a certain distance from himself. He went up to him to address him, an act that would be perfectly incompatible with an inward vision. He entered into conversation with the man. He heard him reply to his questions.

17. *What are the interesting details of this appearance?*
5:13-15

The following details of this occurrence are worthy of noting:

- a. A man—Genesis 12:7; 18:2; cf. Exodus 3:2, 6; John 1:18
- b. A sword—cf. Genesis 3:24; Numbers 22:31
- c. Prince of the host of the Lord—Jeremiah 5:14; 15:16; Isaiah 6:3; Psalms 24:10; 80:7, 19. (see also I Samuel 1:3; I Kings 22:19)
- d. Joshua's attitude was like others:
 1. Abraham—Genesis 17:3
 2. Moses—Exodus 3:6
 3. Manoah—Judges 13:22

We also read later that this Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim with a message for Israel (Judges 2:1).

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 5

1. What two names were given to the inhabitants of the Promised Land?
2. What instruments were used in performing the rite of circumcision?
3. What name was given to the place where the people of Israel were circumcised?

4. On what day of the month was the Passover held?
5. When did God stop giving manna to the people?
6. What instrument of war did the man who appeared to Joshua have in his hand?
7. What title did the man give to himself?
8. How did Joshua act in the presence of the man?
9. What military title is given to the man?
10. What article of clothing was Joshua told to remove from himself?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 6

- Vv. 1-11 *Instructions for attacking Jericho.* God gave explicit instructions to Joshua as he attacked Jericho. The men who bore the Ark of the Covenant were to go before the people along with priests who were to blow their trumpets. An advanced guard of soldiers was to lead the way, but the host was to proceed noiselessly until they were given the order to shout.
- Vv. 12-21 *The city destroyed.* The strategy for the campaign was not one which men would devise. The circling of the city for seven days was God's plan, and He blessed the obedience of the people with complete victory.
- Vv. 22-27 *The sparing of Rahab.* Joshua did not forget the promise which the two spies had made to Rahab. He ordered them to go into her house and to bring out all that were with her. Only the vessels of brass and iron, the silver and the gold were spared and put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. When the campaign was completed, Joshua pronounced a curse upon anyone who would rebuild Jericho.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God's ways are not man's ways.* Joshua must have thought it strange that he was not given directions for drawing up his army in groups of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. God did not tell him how to position his archers or to station his lancers. Instead he received directions for lining up the people and ordering them to march around the city.
2. *Firstfruits belong to the Lord.* A standing order in Israel provided for the people giving back to God the first crops which they raised in a field. They also were to give God the first beasts born to their cattle. Their firstborn sons were to be redeemed at great cost to themselves. God had ordered them to take nothing of the spoils of Jericho. The first city they conquered belonged to God. Everything in it was dedicated to Him. Such sacrificial giving ought to be the earmark of a Christian. He should give God the first and best part of everything—time, talent, and treasure.
3. *God-fearing men are honest.* The spies had made a promise to Rahab. Joshua arranged for them to keep this promise. A Christian man's word should be as good as his bond. By such honest activities God's people gain a good reputation in the communities where they live. Lives of this nature enable Christian people to fill the role of cities set on hills and candles placed on candlesticks. Thus Christ's followers obey His command to let their lights so shine that others may see their good works and glorify their Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:15, 16).

CHAPTER SIX

Instructions for Attacking Jericho 6:1-11

Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.

2 And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor.

3 And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.

4 And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.

5 And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.

6 And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord.

7 And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the Lord.

8 And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the Lord, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the Lord followed them.

9 And the armed men went before the priests that

blew with the trumpets, and the rearward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

10 And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.

11 So the ark of the Lord compassed the city, going about it once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp.

1. *Why was Jericho "straitly shut up"? 6:1*

The strongly fortified city of Jericho was shut up tightly because of the fear of the Israelite people which gripped the inhabitants. When all the kings of the Amorites who were on the side of the Jordan westward and all the kings of the Canaanites which were by the sea heard how the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, their hearts melted. There was no spirit in them any more because of the children of Israel (Joshua 5:1). These pagan people knew the Israelites were blessed by God himself. The actual Hebrew text says Jericho "did shut and was shut up," an emphatic way of saying it was tightly closed against anyone going out or anyone coming into the city. The inhabitants were expecting an attack, and they were trying to prevent any infiltration of the enemy by securely locking up the city. They were also preventing any of the inhabitants giving aid to the Israelites or surrendering to them.

2. *What was the angel's commission? 6:2*

All the Israelite men of war were to go around the town once a day for six days. As they marched in this manner around the city, seven priests were to carry seven jubilee trumpets before the Ark. This implies that the Ark itself was to be carried around the city in solemn procession. On the seventh day they were to march around the town

seven times, and the priests were to blow the trumpets. When there was a blast on the jubilee horn, the people were to raise a great cry. Then the wall of the town would fall down.

3. *What were the seven trumpets?* 6:4

The "trumpets of rams' horns" are the same as the "rams' horn" in verse five. They were not the silver trumpets of the priests (Numbers 10:1 ff.), but large horns, or instruments in the shape of a horn, which gave a loud far-sounding tone (see Leviticus 23:24; 25:11). These horns were not the trumpets which were blown to signal the beginning of a march. They were the horns which were sounded as feast days were announced. The use of these horns for this predominantly military engagement would give a religious significance to the conquest of Jericho.

4. *In what order were the people to march?* 6:7-10

The Ark, with the priests in front carrying the trumpets of rams' horns, was to form the center of the procession. One portion of the fighting men was to go in front of it; the rest, to follow after. The priests were to blow the trumpets every time they marched around during the seven days. It was not until the seventh time of going around, on the seventh day that the people were to raise the war cry at the command of Joshua. Then the walls of the town were to fall.

5. *Why were the people to keep silent until the horns were blown?* 6:10

The people were not to depend upon themselves at all for the conquest of the city until God had wrought His mighty act of deliverance. The sound of the trumpets of rams' horns was to serve as a signal for the raising of the great war cry by the people of Israel. The blowing of a trumpet is frequently introduced into the writings of the prophets. The trumpet signaled the manifestation

of the Lord in great judgments. The blowing of the trumpets and the raising of the war cry of Israel would encourage her soldiers to rise and fight. It would also throw terror into the hearts of the enemies.

The City Destroyed 6:12-21

12 And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord

13 And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord went on continually, and blew with the trumpets; and the armed men went before them; but the rearward came after the ark of the Lord, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

14 And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.

15 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times.

16 And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city.

17 And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the Lord: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

18 And ye, in all wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.

19 But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord: they shall come into the treasury of the Lord.

20 So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard

the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

21 And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.

6. *Why did they rise early on the seventh day?* 6:15

The people of Israel were to march around the city of Jericho seven times on the seventh day. The city itself was about a quarter of a mile long and about an eighth of a mile wide. The circumference of the city would thus be almost three quarters of a mile. Since the people would need to stay far enough away from the city walls to prevent their being struck by stones and arrows, the circle that they would use in their march around the city would be considerably longer. This would mean that the distance they traveled would be quite extensive, and it would be necessary for them to start at the dawning of the day in order to encompass the city seven times in one day.

7. *Was anything to be saved?* 6:17

Because the Lord had given Jericho into the hands of the Israelites, they were to consecrate it to Him as a ban—that is, a holy thing belonging to Jehovah. It was not to be touched by man, as being the first-fruits of Canaan (see Leviticus 27:28, 29). Rahab, alone, was excepted from this ban, along with all who belonged to her, because she had hidden the spies. The inhabitants of an idolatrous town laid under the ban were to be put to death, together with their cattle. All the property in the town was to be burned, as Moses himself had enjoined on the basis of the law in Leviticus 27:29. The only exceptions were metals—gold and silver and the vessels of brass and iron. These were to be brought into the treasury of the Lord—the

treasury of the Tabernacle—as being holy to the Lord (v. 19; cf. Numbers 31:54).

8. *Why was Jericho delivered miraculously?* 6:20

Jericho was the first and largest of the Canaanite cities. If the Israelites went out and conquered this city on their own and then conquered the remaining towns on their own, they would be led to believe they had wrought the deliverance by themselves. Now that the Red Sea had been crossed under the leadership of Moses and the Jordan River had been crossed under the leadership of Joshua, there could be no question after the fall of Jericho but that God was leading them in strange paths and over seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

9. *Is there a natural explanation for Jericho's fall?* 6:20b

Different attempts have been made to explain the miraculous overthrow of the walls of Jericho as a natural occurrence. Some suggest it was done by an earthquake, by mining, or by sudden storming. They suggest that the inhabitants had been thrown into a false security by the strange procession repeated day after day for several days and so were quite unprepared. Such humanistic explanations really deserve no serious refutation. All of them are arbitrarily forced upon the text. The destruction of Jericho was a miracle wrought by the hand of God. There is no natural explanation sufficient to account for all the aspects of the great victory won by Israel at Jericho.

10. *Why were Jericho's inhabitants and possessions utterly destroyed?* 6:21

This first town was offered as a sacrifice unto Jehovah. In some of the other towns, the cattle were taken as booty. This town, however, was the first, and it was completely destroyed as an offering unto Jehovah. Since Jericho was devoted to the Lord completely, it was treated as something which a man would devote to God. The rules for handling these materials were laid down in the Law. No devout

thing that a man devoted to God could be sold or redeemed. It was treated as the tithe of the land which belonged completely to God. Man had nothing to do with it after it was devoted to God. For this reason nothing in Jericho was to be saved and used by the people.

The Sparing of Rahab 6:22-27

22 But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her.

23 And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel.

24 And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord.

25 And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

26 And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.

27 So the Lord was with Joshua; and his fame was noised throughout all the country.

11. Why was Rahab left without the camp? 6:23

After the walls of Jericho fell down flat and the people went up into the city every man straight before him to take the city, Joshua sent the two men who had

spied out the country to rescue Rahab. They had entered into a covenant with her promising to spare her if she would gather everything she had into her house and identify her house by displaying the cord of scarlet thread by which she had helped them to escape. These men thought Rahab had kept her part of the agreement. She had brought her father, mother, and brethren to her house. Everything she had was there. They brought all these people and their possessions out of the city before they burned the city with fire. Rahab was left outside the camp of Israel since she was not yet integrated into the community as a member of a particular tribe. Her mother, father, and brethren would also need to accept the laws of Israel before they could be taken into the community. Leaving them outside the camp was a precaution which they took out of the necessity of the case.

12. *What was the treasury of the house of the Lord?* 6:24

The people of Israel were told to bring out their first-fruits, tithes, and offerings to the house of the Lord. This was the means of providing for the livelihood of the priests and Levites. When they had a special need for materials in the days of Moses, they brought such an abundance that Moses had to ask them to desist (Exodus 36:5-7). It was in this same spirit that the people set apart all the silver, the gold, and the vessels of brass and iron for the use of the priests and Levites at the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle is called the "House of the Lord."

13. *How long did Rahab live among the Israelites?* 6:25

Rahab lived among the people of Israel until the time of the writing of the book of Joshua. The statement that she "dwelleth in Israel even unto this day" can only be a reference to the fact that she was alive at the time of the writing of the book. Since Rahab is presented as an adult at the time when she hid the spies this verse must have been written within the adult lifetime of Rahab herself.

Such a statement prevents our supposing that this book was written at a much later date. If the book was written by a contemporary of Rahab, there is no one in a better position than Joshua to do the writing himself. This is another indication of the fact that Joshua wrote this book.

14. Why did Joshua announce a curse to prevent rebuilding Jericho? 6:26

Jericho had been filled with people who were the Lord's enemies. Although their hearts melted in them, they were so hardhearted that they did not repent. The city itself was placed under the ban and was completely destroyed. To prevent a similar civilization from arising on the site, Joshua announced that the man who rebuilt the city would be cursed of God. Some feel that anyone who attempted to rebuild the city would celebrate the laying of the foundation by offering his firstborn son as a human sacrifice. He would then celebrate the completion of the project and the setting up of the gates of the city by offering his youngest son as a human sacrifice. It is better to view this as a prediction that God would smite the heirs of such an irreverent man until his heirs would be cut off—the firstborn as well as the youngest.

15. Was the curse on Jericho ever executed? 6:26b

It was not until Ahab's time that Hiel, the Bethelite, attempted to rebuild Jericho (I Kings 16:34). The curse included the loss of all the sons of the man who tried to remake Jericho into a fortified city. The curse was to be upon one who would lay the foundation of a wall, build the wall, and set up the gates of the wall. As the Scripture says, he laid the foundation "in Abiram his firstborn" and set up the gates "in his youngest son Segub." This was "according to the word of the Lord."

16. How did Joshua's fame become known? 6:27

God said to Joshua, "I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (1:5). God kept His promise.

The Lord was with Joshua. He enabled Israel to cross the Jordan River on dry ground at Joshua's order. He caused the walls of Jericho to fall down when Joshua obeyed His commandments. Such great acts of power as these were to be talked about in all the cities of Canaan. Reports of these events had caused the hearts of the people to melt. Rahab said the people had heard how the Lord had dried up the water of the Red Sea when the people of Israel came out of Egypt. They had heard about the conquests on the east side of the Jordan as Israel defeated Sihon, king of Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan. Travelers going from village to village would carry the news of the latest victories. The things which God was doing through His people were known by all the Canaanites. Joshua's name was on the lips of all the people. His victories had made him famous, and the people of the land were afraid of him.

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 6

1. How many times were the Israelites to circle Jericho on each of the first six days?
2. How many priests were to go before the Ark?
3. On what instrument were they to blow?
4. What article of Tabernacle furniture were the priests to carry with them?
5. How many times were the Israelites to circle Jericho on the seventh day?
6. How many times did they circle the city altogether?
7. How many people were spared when Jericho was destroyed?
8. What materials were spared from the destruction of Jericho?
9. What was done with the material which was spared?
10. What loss would be suffered by anyone who rebuilt the city?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 7

- Vv. 1- 5 *The Israelites beaten.* Achan, a man of Judah, took some of the material which was placed under the ban; and the anger of the Lord was kindled against His people. As a consequence, when they went up to fight against Ai, the men of Ai defeated the men of Israel. This was a severe blow to the morale of the people. They had crossed Jordan in high spirits, and they had overthrown Jericho completely. Any feeling of strength was drained from them as they were driven away from Ai.
- Vv. 6-15 *Joshua's complaint and the Lord's answer.* Joshua fell on his face before the Ark of the Covenant and cried to the Lord. He was distressed by the defeat which they had suffered. God told him that the defeat had come because there was sin in the midst of the people of Israel. They could not march to victory under God's leadership until they had removed the sin from among them.
- Vv. 16-21 *Achan's confession of sin.* God pointed out the sinner, and the man was confronted by his accusers. He confessed that he had coveted the Babylonish garment, shekels of silver, and the wedge of gold. He had taken them and had hidden them in the midst of his tent.
- Vv. 22-26 *The sin purged from Israel.* The men of Israel took the spoils from the tent of Achan and "laid them out before the Lord" (verse 23). The people then took Achan and stoned him to death. A great heap of stones was raised

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over the place and the spot was called the Valley of Achor — meaning the valley of trouble.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Sin is a reproach to any people* (Proverbs 15:34b). Even the victorious armies of Israel could not continue to win their battles when sin came among them. Israel had gone against Ai in great confidence. They felt they would be able to take the city without throwing all their forces against it. They had ordered only two or three thousand men to go up and smite the city. When they were utterly defeated, they learned they could not sin and walk with God. The same thing is true with nations and individuals today.
2. *Covetousness is idolatry*. Achan said he had coveted the Babylonish garment, the two hundred shekels of silver, and the wedge of gold. Covetousness is an overwhelming desire to possess something. Achan's desire to have these spoils of war led him to disobey the plain prohibition of God which stipulated nothing was to be taken as spoils of war by the people of Israel. Even today many people make shipwreck of the faith as they are lured into sin by covetousness, "which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5b).
3. *The wages of sin is death* (Romans 6:23a). In these days of spiraling inflation when one round of price increase brings a round of wage increase and a round of wage increase brings a round of price increase, there is still one man whose wage is the same. That man's name is sinner, and his wage is death. Achan was stoned to death because of his sin of stealing the spoils which belonged to God.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Israelites Beaten 7:1-5

But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel.

2 And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.

3 And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labor thither; for they are but few.

4 So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai.

5 And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

1. Who was Achan? 7:1

Achan is described as the son of Carmi. The head of his family was Zabdi, who was an heir of Zerah, a leading man in the tribe of Judah. Achan is called Achar in I Chronicles 2:7, and Zabdi is called Zimri in I Chronicles 2:6. These names are very similar and are evidently forms of the same names. By this one sinful act, Achan fell into disgraceful infamy. His name became synonymous with covetousness and sin. It was especially shameful for the man to be of the tribe of Judah, the leading tribe among the people of Israel, and set this bad example. Judah led in the order of march. If Achan were a soldier and

marching in the forefront of the host of Israel, he would have access to the spoils of war before many others would reach them. Hence, as a leader, he had greater temptation. Although the value of the materials which he took were not great, the fact that his sin was committed after God had granted wonderful victories to the people and promised them full use of the land of Canaan makes it especially despicable.

2. *Where was Ai?* 7:2

This town was situated east of Bethel. Bethel was originally called *Luz* (Genesis 28:19), a place on the border of Ephraim and Benjamin (16:2; 18:13). It is frequently mentioned and was well known at a later time as the city in which Jeroboam established the worship of calves. The site was inhabited again after the captivity. Ai has been preserved in the very extensive mound called *et-Tell*, about one and one-half miles from Bethel, and on the east of the road which leads from Jerusalem to Sichem (Nabulus).

We may say this of Ai:

1. It dominated the road to Jerusalem
2. It commanded the approaches to the country
3. It involved the fate of Bethel

Of the name we may say Ai means "the heap." "An everlasting tounge," says Wycliffe; in Hebrew, "*Tel*," always appears with the article, *the Tel*, or *the Heap*. For a long time modern archaeologists sought in vain for the site of Ai. A likely location was excavated in 1933 by Mme. Judith Marquet-Krause, and most recently Dr. Joseph Callaway of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. After two seasons of excavations at *Khirbet et-Tell*, a height near Deir Dibwan, Israel, Dr. Callaway reported it is now possible to dismiss speculation about locating Ai at a site other than this one ("Evidence on the Conquest of Ai," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Volume LXXXVII, Part III, September, 1968, p. 315).

3. *Where was Bethel?* 7:2b

Bethel was ancient Luz (see Genesis 28:19; cf. Genesis 12:8; 13:3, 4; 35:7). It was named by Jacob (see Genesis 28:19; 35:14, 15). This was the name used after the conquest (Joshua 16:1, 2; Judges 1:22-26). Bethel lay about one and one half miles west of Ai. The location was about twelve miles north of Jerusalem. Near here Abraham had camped (Genesis 12:8; 13:3). The name means "house of God." Bethel belonged to the Benjamites as they settled in the land, but its history was dominated by the people of Ephraim. The area is dominated by ruins now called Beitin, excavated in 1934 by a joint expedition of the Pittsburgh Zenia Theological Seminary and the American Schools of Oriental Research under the direction of William Albright.

4. *Why did the spies suggest sending only a few warriors?*
7:3

Once again Joshua had used the usual military strategy in spying out the city to be attacked. These men had gone up and looked over the situation at Ai. When they came back, they suggested it would be unnecessary to send all six hundred thousand soldiers of Israel against the city. It was their recommendation that only two or three thousand soldiers would be a sufficient force to take Ai. The basis of their suggestion was the fact that there were only a few people in the city. They were also flushed with victory at Jericho and must have felt invincible.

5. *What was the result of the attack?* 7:5

Following the advice of the spies, Joshua sent about three thousand men to attack Ai. They fled from before the people, and the men of Ai smote about thirty-six of them. They chased them away from the city and attacked them all the way down from the heights to which they had ascended. The hearts of the people of Israel now

melted and became as water even as before the hearts of the Canaanites had melted for fear of the approaching invaders.

6. *Where was Shebarim?* 7:5b

Shebarim was the name of the place where the Israelites were beaten by the men of Ai. The name comes from the root which means "to break to pieces" or "destroy." The area has not been definitely located in modern times, but it must have been somewhere near Ai on the slope which went down to the east from the height on which Ai was located.

Joshua's Complaint and the Lord's Answer 7:6-15

6 And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.

7 And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!

8 O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!

9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?

10 And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?

11 Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.

12 Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

13 Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow: for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.

14 In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, that the tribe which the Lord taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the Lord shall take shall come by households; and the household which the Lord shall take shall come man by man.

15 And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel.

7. *Did Joshua murmur against God?* 7:6-9

Joshua and the elders of the people were affected because Israel, who was invincible with the help of the Lord, had been beaten; and therefore the Lord must have withdrawn His help. In the deepest grief, with their clothes rent (Leviticus 10:6) and ashes upon their heads, they fell down before the Ark of the Lord (Numbers 20:6) until the evening. Joshua's prayer contains a complaint (verse 7) and a question addressed to God (verses 8, 9). The complaint almost amounts to murmuring and sounds very much like the complaint which the murmuring people brought against Moses and Aaron in the desert (Numbers 14:2, 3). It is very different from the murmuring of the people on that occasion, however, for it by no

means arose from unbelief. Joshua was simply asking God why Israel had been beaten.

8. *What answer did God give to Joshua?* 7:10

God told Joshua to get up off the ground. He asked him why he was lying in that way on his face before the Ark (verse 6). The time was not a time for prayer; it was a time for action. The sin had to be purged from the midst of the people. Although Joshua did not know it, the sin of Achan was the cause of Israel's defeat. When God revealed this to him, He gave him instructions about how to proceed in getting rid of this sin from the midst of the people. When this sin was removed, Israel would be strong again.

9. *What was Israel's sin?* 7:11

The whole nation was cursed because one man had sinned. For that reason God said the nation had sinned. The specific sin was Achan's taking the material which had been placed under the ban. Things which had been devoted to God to be put into the treasury of the house of the Lord had been taken by one of the men of Israel. They had stolen. Worse than this, they had stolen from God. Achan had practiced deception. The first three clauses describing this deed—their sinning, their transgressing, and their taking of the cursed thing—depict the sin which had been committed against God. The latter three statements—they had stolen, they had dissembled, and they had put the spoil in their own stuff—described the sin they had committed in the eyes of society. It was indeed a grievous crime.

10. *What was the result of their sin?* 7:12

Because they had sinned so grievously, Israel was not able to withstand the attacks of their enemies. They turned their backs before the men of Ai. All of this occurred because God had forsaken them. A spirit of defeat and terror had evidently come upon them as they fled from

before the Canaanites. What had given promise of being an easy victory was turned into an utter rout for the people of Israel. Such a surprising turn of events makes it clear that a nation needs more than munitions in order to win a victory. They must have the knowledge that they are waging a *Bellum Justum*, and they must have the will to win. Even a small number of people with this conviction and will on the field of battle can bring total victory out of a situation which would otherwise be total defeat. When God forsakes a people, they are forsaken indeed. God had forsaken Israel on account of their sin. For this reason they were chased by the men of Ai.

11. How were the people to sanctify themselves? 7:13

As the people of Israel stood before Mount Sinai, they were told to sanctify themselves. At that time Moses told them to wash their clothes and to interrupt their normal way of life (Exodus 19:10-15). As Joshua prepared the people for crossing the Jordan, he commanded them to sanctify themselves. On that occasion they were told to prepare victuals for the journey (Joshua 1:11). The sanctification after the defeat of Ai was something more than any of these former periods of sanctification. Israel had sinned, and it was necessary for the cursed thing to be taken from among them. The sinners had to be punished. All of this would be implied in the sanctification of the people.

12. Into what groups were the people divided? 7:14

The tribes, families, households, and men formed the four classes into which the people were organized. As the tribes were divided into families, so these again were subdivided into houses, commonly called fathers' houses, and the fathers' houses again into men, i.e., fathers of families. Each of these was represented by its natural head. We picture the affair as conducted in the following manner: in order to discover the tribe, the twelve princes came

before the Lord; and in order to discover the family, the family heads had to be taken; and so on through the household until the individual was selected.

Achan's Confession of Sin 7:16-21

16 So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken:

17 And he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarahites: and he brought the family of the Zarahites man by man; and Zabdi was taken:

18 And he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

19 And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.

20 And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:

21 When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

13. How were the selections made? 7:16-18

In what manner the selections were made we do not know. In all probability, little tablets or potsherds were used. The names may have been written upon them, and these drawn out of an urn. This may be inferred from a comparison of Joshua 18:11 and 19:1 with 18:6, 10. Some commentators feel it was not proper for the man to be selected by lottery, but the sacred lot involved no

chance. It was under the special direction of God. This is made clear by the statement that he was the one "which the Lord shall take" (7:14).

14. *What is the meaning of the expression "give glory to God?"* 7:19

This is a solemn formula of adjuration by which a person was commanded to confess the truth before God (see John 19:24). Joshua said also, "And give him praise." His meaning was not that he should make confession, but that he should actually give praise to God by his admission of guilt. Through his confession of the truth, Achan was to render to God, the righteous Judge of all the earth, the praise and honor which were due His name.

15. *What were the materials which Achan had taken?* 7:21

Achan had taken a garment that had been in Babylon. He had also taken silver of two hundred shekels weight and a wedge of gold. The fact that the garment was of Babylonian style indicates the exchange of commerce between Canaan and the land to the east. The fact that it was a foreign garment would also make it more valuable. Silver was the common form of medium of exchange along with the more precious ingots of gold. Abraham had bought the field and cave of Machpelah from Ephron, the Hittite, for two hundred shekels of silver (Genesis 23:15), giving us some idea of the things which Achan could buy with the fifty shekels of gold and the two hundred shekels of silver which he had stolen. His prize was of some value, but nothing to be compared with the shame which he brought upon himself and his people.

The Sin Purged from Israel 7:22-26

22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it.

23 And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the Lord.

24 And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.

25 And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.

26 And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.

16. *In what way were the spoils laid out "before the Lord"?*
7:23

The messengers which were sent by Joshua ran to Achan's tent and found the items in the place where he had buried them. They brought these out and put them on public display. In this way they were said to be laid out "before the Lord." They were in plain sight of all. Since these items were to have been dedicated to God and put in the treasury of the Lord, this open displaying of the items would indicate they were now to be directed towards their proper use. Since God was directing the purging of the sin from Israel, it was indeed "before the Lord" that this was done.

17. *Where was the valley of Achor?* 7:24b

The valley of Achor is located southwest of Jericho and identified with Wady Deber and Wady Mukelik. The name was given to the area on account of the sin and subsequent punishment of Achan. The word means

"trouble," and the term "valley of Achor" has become proverbial for describing a situation of distress. This expression is used by Hosea (2:15) and in this setting describes the good results which comes from discipline.

18. *Was only Achan stoned?* 7:25

The singular pronoun is used to designate Achan alone as being the principal person concerned. It is obvious enough, however, that his children and cattle were stoned from what follows in the very same verse. It is true that in Deuteronomy 24:16 the Mosaic law expressly forbids the putting to death of children for their fathers' sins; and many have imagined, therefore, that Achan's sons and daughters were simply taken into the valley to be spectators of the punishment inflicted upon the father so that it might be a warning to them. But for what reason then, were Achan's cattle (oxen, sheep, and asses) taken out along with him? Certainly for no other purpose than to be stoned at the same time as he. The law in question only referred to the punishment of ordinary criminals and therefore was not applicable at all to the present special case in which the punishment was commanded by the Lord himself.

19. *Could Achan's family have participated in the crime?*
7:24-26

Achan had fallen under the ban by laying hands upon what had been banned and consequently was exposed to the same punishment as a town which had fallen away to idolatry (Deuteronomy 13:16, 17). The law of the ban was founded upon the assumption that the conduct for which a man was to be punished was not a crime of which the individual alone was guilty, but one in which the whole family of the leading sinner and everything connected with him participated. Thus, in the case before us, the things themselves had been stolen from the booty by Achan alone; but he had hidden them in his tent, buried

STUDIES IN JOSHUA-JUDGES-RUTH

them in the earth, which could hardly have been done so secretly that his sons and daughters knew nothing of it. By doing this he had made his family participators in his theft. They, therefore, fell under the ban along with him, together with his tent, his cattle, and the rest of his property, which were all involved in the consequences of his crime.

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 7

1. What town did Israel attack after destroying Jericho?
2. What was the name of the man who sinned?
3. Of what tribe was the man who sinned?
4. How many men had Joshua sent against Ai?
5. How many men of Israel were smitten in the battle?
6. What items had been stolen from the spoils?
7. Where had these stolen items been hidden?
8. What name was given to the place where the sinner was punished?
9. Were the sinner's wife and family destroyed with him?
10. Were the sinner's oxen, sheep, asses, and tent destroyed with him?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 8

Vv. 1- 8 *Plans for attacking Ai again.* After God encouraged Joshua, he laid plans for attacking Ai a second time. On this occasion he decided to use ambushes behind the city. The main attacking force was instructed to retire from before the city expecting that the men of Ai would come out to chase them. When the men of Ai were out of the city, those who had been set in ambush would be able to go in and take the city.

JOSHUA

Vv. 9-29 *The conquest of Ai.* Joshua's strategy worked very effectively. He set a second ambush to make sure that there would be a sufficient force to take the city after the main attacking force had withdrawn. In this way the city was completely destroyed.

Vv. 30-35 *The altar erected on Mount Ebal.* In keeping with the instructions Moses had given, the people of Israel went to the center of Canaan and erected an altar. Joshua served the Lord. He led the people to worship God in an acceptable way.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Trust and obey.* The song which is sung so often in church by this title carries a lot of meaning with it. There is no other way to be happy with God but to trust and obey. Joshua found this out as he made his second expedition against Ai. When the people had failed to obey God, they were defeated. When they purged the sin from the camp, God said to Joshua, "Fear not, neither be thou dismayed . . . I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land" (8:1). When Joshua obeyed God, he was able to capture the city.
2. *To fight against God is to lose.* This lesson was learned by the men of Ai and Bethel as they went out to fight against the armies of Israel. They did not even take the precaution of leaving a guard in the city. We read, "There was not a man left in Ai or Bethel . . . : and they left the city open, and pursued after Israel" (8:17). Since they had won the first battle, they thought ultimate victory would surely be theirs. This is true in

the spiritual realm as well as in the area of military engagements. Gamaliel had the wisdom to advise his colleagues to be careful, "lest haply ye be found even to fight against God" (Acts 5:39).

3. *To God belongs the glory.* After the people had successfully attacked Ai, Joshua led them to Mount Ebal where they built an altar, wrote on it the Law of Moses, offered thereon burnt offerings unto the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings. Moses had commanded them to do this before he died, and Joshua kept faith with Moses. It was the natural thing for them to do after God had given them such complete victories at Jericho and Ai. Every Christian ought to give God thanks whenever a victory is won in the name of Christ.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Plans for Attacking Ai Again 8:1-8

And the Lord said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land:

2 And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king: only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves: lay thee an ambush for the city behind it.

3 So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai: and Joshua chose out thirty thousand mighty men of valor, and sent them away by night.

4 And he commanded them, saying, Behold, ye shall lie in wait against the city, even behind the city: go not very far from the city, but be ye all ready:

5 And I, and all the people that are with me, will approach unto the city: and it shall come to pass, when

they come out against us, as at the first, that we will flee before them,

6 (For they will come out after us) till we have drawn them from the city; for they will say, They flee before us, as at the first: therefore we will flee before them.

7 Then ye shall rise up from the ambush, and seize upon the city: for the Lord your God will deliver it into your hand.

8 And it shall be, when ye have taken the city, that ye shall set the city on fire: according to the commandment of the Lord shall ye do. See, I have commanded you.

1. Why did God reassure Joshua? 8:1, 2

God had given encouragement to Joshua when he first commissioned him soon after the death of Moses. He had also given him instructions and encouragement as Israel made the first attack against Jericho. Since they had entered into an ill-fated campaign against Ai at first and were utterly routed, Joshua might have fallen into deep discouragement. As a matter of fact, we know he fell to the earth upon his face and rent his clothes in deep sorrow over the defeat which Israel had suffered. It was, therefore, good for God to encourage Joshua to make this second attack.

2. Why were the people of Israel allowed to take spoil from Ai? 8:2

God had prohibited them from taking any spoils of war from the city of Jericho. When they made the attack against Ai, He said, "Only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves" (verse 2). The firstfruits of the land belonged to the Lord. The firstborn of man and beast belonged to God. It appears that God took the spoils of war from the first city, Jericho; but He allowed the Israelites to keep the spoils from the other cities for themselves.

3. *How many men went out against Ai the second time?* 8:3

Probably some two hundred thousand men were sent against Ai in the second campaign. As only one third of the two and one-half tribes crossed Jordan, probably about one third of the other men were required to go out to battle. From these Joshua selected thirty thousand brave men and sent them forth in the night with instructions to station themselves as an ambush behind the town and not far from it. Since the distance from Gilgal to Ai was about fifteen miles and the road runs almost straight in a northwesterly direction from Jericho through Wady Faran, the detachment sent out might easily accomplish the distance in a night and arrive on the western side of Ai before the break of day.

4. *Where were the thirty thousand men to hide?* 8:3

In a very specific way God directed the campaign against Ai. He told Joshua, "Lay thee an ambush for the city behind it" (verse 2). The spot for hiding the men must have been on the west side of the city. This would have been behind the city from the location of Joshua's camp to the east. The road that goes by Ai and leads to Bethel dips out of sight just west of Ai. The roadway is hidden from view by a ridge of broken rocks. The rocks would enable an ambush to conceal itself and yet it would not be very far from the city. If these men were hidden at the spot, they would be at an excellent position to rush into the city after the main force fled toward the Jordan Valley, and were pursued by the soldiers of Bethel and Ai.

5. *How many people did Joshua take with him?* 8:5

Joshua evidently stayed with the main force of the Israelite army. If he sent some thirty thousand for the major ambush and then later sent another five thousand (verse 12), he probably took some one hundred and sixty-five thousand men with him. This calculation is based

on the supposition that he did not demand more than a third of the total number of men available to him to take part in the campaign. This would leave four hundred thousand men to handle the military provisions and to care for the women and children.

6. *In what way was burning the city according to the commandment of God?* 8:8

God had strictly warned the people against leaving any of the idolatrous objects of worship in the land of Canaan. The people were instructed to tear down their high places, break up the images, and destroy the altars of these people. Their campaign was to be one of utter destruction. For that reason, Joshua could say that they were to set the city on fire according to the commandment of the Lord. Furthermore, God had carefully instructed them on this occasion to set an ambush behind the city. His directions with regard to the attack on Ai were quite specific, and Joshua very properly referred to his instructions for their razing the city as being according to the commandment of the Lord.

The Conquest of Ai 8:9-29

9 Joshua therefore sent them forth: and they went to lie in ambush, and abode behind Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai: but Joshua lodged that night among the people.

10 And Joshua rose up early in the morning, and numbered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai.

11 And all the people, even the people of war that were with him, went up, and drew nigh, and came before the city, and pitched on the north side of Ai: now there was a valley between them and Ai.

12 And he took about five thousand men, and set them to lie in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city.

13 And when they had set the people, even all the host that was on the north of the city, and their liers in wait on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley.

14 And it came to pass, when the king of Ai saw it, that they hasted and rose up early, and the men of the city went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at a time appointed, before the plain; but he wist not that there were liers in ambush against him behind the city.

15 And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness.

16 And all the people that were in Ai were called together to pursue after them: and they pursued after Joshua, and were drawn away from the city.

17 And there was not a man left in Ai or Bethel, that went not out after Israel: and they left the city open, and pursued after Israel.

18 And the Lord said unto Joshua, Stretch out the spear that is in thy hand toward Ai; for I will give it into thine hand. And Joshua stretched out the spear that he had in his hand toward the city.

19 And the ambush arose quickly out of their place, and they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand: and they entered into the city, and took it, and hasted and set the city on fire.

20 And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and, behold, the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven, and they had no power to flee this way or that way: and the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon the pursuers.

21 And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city, and that the smoke of the city ascended, then they turned again, and slew the men of Ai.

22 And the other issued out of the city against them; so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, and

some on that side: and they smote them, so that they let none of them remain or escape.

23 And the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua.

24 And it came to pass, when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness wherein they chased them, and when they were all fallen on the edge of the sword, until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned unto Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword.

25 And so it was, that all that fell that day, both of men and women, were twelve thousand, even all the men of Ai.

26 For Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.

27 Only the cattle and the spoil of that city Israel took for a prey unto themselves, according unto the word of the Lord which he commanded Joshua.

28 And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it a heap for ever, even a desolation unto this day.

29 And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide: and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcass down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, that remaineth unto this day.

7. Why did Joshua number the people? 8:10

After Joshua had sent forth the thirty thousand men to lie in ambush on the west side of Ai, he stayed with the main army himself through the night. Early in the morning he rose up and prepared his soldiers for battle. In this preparation he numbered them and evidently set them in groups and battalions so that they might wage an orderly

battle. At this time Joshua must have decided how many men he would take with him in the main force. The others would be left behind to protect the women, children, and supplies of the Israelites.

8. *Who were the elders of the people?* 8:10

The elders of Israel are not military tribunes who were called elders because of their superiority in military affairs; but, as in every other case, the heads of the people who accompanied Joshua as counselors. Neither were these elders to be compared with the officers of the New Testament church. They were the people who had reached an age in life where their experience and wisdom fitted them for places of leadership. It was to these that the younger men looked for their guidance and counsel.

9. *Was a second ambush sent out?* 8:12

Joshua evidently sent out two different groups to besiege the city and take it by surprise. After he had placed the troops on the northwest to come in behind the city opposite the direction of the attack of the main body of the Israelite army, he evidently foresaw a need for another group to cut off any possible assistance from Bethel and sent them to take up their positions southwest of Ai. Some commentators believe that a scribal error has been made here, but without sufficient grounds.

10. *Did the men of Bethel help the men of Ai?* 8:12

It is evident from verse twelve and other references that the inhabitants of Bethel, which was a very short journey from Ai, took part in the battle. Probably this was in consequence of a treaty which the king of Ai had made with them in the expectation of a renewed and still stronger attack on the part of the Israelites. Later on the kings in the South banded together in what has been called the southern coalition. At least five kings were in this league. Still later the kings in the North grouped themselves together under the leadership of Jabin, king of

Hazor. Once again several kings entered into this league. It is not unusual to find these kinds of coalitions, and it was a very natural thing for Bethel and Ai to enter in to this kind of an agreement.

11. Where did Joshua station himself? 8:13

Joshua evidently exposed his army in a valley which lay to the east of Ai. He must have placed himself on some promontory where his signal could be seen by those who were in the ambush. It is quite possible that he had stationed other lookouts who could pass along the signal; but wherever the army was, it must have been in a place which encouraged the king of Ai to attack.

12. Why did the Israelites flee? 8:15

The king of Ai was anxious to enter into the second battle with Israel. Their position was not strategically advantageous to them, and so the king felt he could win another victory. Moreover, he had defeated these men in the first skirmish, and he was not at all hesitant to join battle with them again. Joshua and the Israelites pretended they were being beaten again. They fled back toward the Jordan Valley and the wilderness from which they had come.

13. Why did the Canaanites leave Ai unprotected? 8:17

The first battle between the men of Ai and the Israelites had been won by the Canaanites. In the second engagement it appeared the victory was also going to be won by the king of Ai. For that reason, he mustered all his men to pursue after them. He wanted the second victory to be complete. In doing this he drew out all his men both from Ai and from Bethel. There was not a single soldier left to guard the city.

14. How could the ambush see Joshua? 8:19

The raising of the javelin would probably be visible at considerable distance. It may have been provided with a small flag, as both earlier and later commentators assume.

Joshua himself would hardly be in the midst of the flying Israelites, but would take his station as commander upon some height on one side. The men in ambush would have scouts posted to watch for the signal, which had certainly been arranged beforehand. They would relay the information to the others.

15. *Why were the men of Ai without power?* 8:20

The original language used the word "hands" for "power." When the ambush went into Ai and set it on fire, the sight of the city burning left the men of Ai without strength. They were so surprised and shocked that they were thrown into confusion. They did not know which way to turn. There were Israelites behind them and Israelites in front of them. Others were probably guarding the routes of escape on either side. The victory was complete for the Israelites. The sight of the city burning had a different effect upon the men of Israel. This was a signal to them to begin the slaughter of the Canaanites. As a result, the Israelites did not let any of the men of Ai escape.

16. *What was done with the king of Ai?* 8:23

The king of Ai was taken alive as a prisoner of war. The soldiers brought him to Joshua. Joshua was in the midst of the engagement and did not want to take time to give an order with regard to the disposition of the king at that time. Later on we read that the king of Ai was hanged (verse 29). His body was left there until evening. It was then taken down and buried. The law had been given in Deuteronomy 21:22, 23 with regard to such matters. The king of Ai was hanged upon a tree and then his body may have been suspended on a stake (see Numbers 25:4) until the evening. At sunset Joshua had him taken down and thrown at the entrance of the town gate. A heap of stones was piled upon him.

17. *How many men of Ai were killed?* 8:25

The total casualty list of the men of Ai numbered twelve thousand both of men and of women. These were all the inhabitants of the city. Joshua's campaign was a campaign of total annihilation, and he followed the commandment of the Lord completely. There is never any evidence that he enjoyed the bloody conquest which he waged, but it was the only way to eradicate this festering sore from the face of the earth. The cup of iniquity of the Canaanites was full, and God's vengeance fell upon them.

The Altar Erected on Mount Ebal 8:30-35

30 Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in mount Ebal,

31 As Moses the servant of the Lord commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings.

32 And he wrote thereupon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel.

33 And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel.

34 And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law.

35 There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them.

18. *When had Joshua been commanded to build the altar at Ebal?* 8:31

Joshua was instructed of Moses in Deuteronomy 27, that, after the crossing of the Jordan, he was to build an altar upon Mount Ebal for establishing the covenant. The fulfillment of these instructions came in this solemn act. The symbolical setting up of the law of the Lord to be the invariable rule of life to the people of Israel in the land of Canaan was a practical expression of thanksgiving on the part of the nation for its entrance into this land through the almighty assistance of God. It was also a practical acknowledgement that in the overthrow of the Canaanites thus far the nation had received a strong pledge of the conquest of the foes that still remained. The capture of the whole of the Promised Land would follow if they persevered in faithfulness to the Lord.

19. *What is the meaning of "... he wrote in the presence"?* 8:32

The law was probably written on or in the plaster with which these pillars were coated. This could easily be done, and such writing was common in ancient times. Archaeologists have seen numerous specimens of it certainly more than two thousand years old. Some are still as distinct as when they were first inscribed on the plaster. The investigation of the Egyptian monuments has shown that it was an ancient Egyptian custom first to plaster the stone walls of buildings, and also monumental stones that were to be painted with figures and hieroglyphics with a plaster of lime and gypsum into which the figures were worked. Thus it was possible in Egypt to engrave on the walls the

most extensive pieces of writing. In this manner Deuteronomy 27:4-8 must be understood, and in this manner it was accomplished by Joshua.

20. *How were the people arranged?* 8:33

We read that Joshua arranged "half of them over against mount Gerizim." These were those who had sprung from the lawful wives of Jacob—Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin (Deuteronomy 27:12). He also stationed "half of them over against mount Ebal." These were Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali (Deuteronomy 27:13). Five of these had sprung from the handmaids of Leah and Rachel, to whom Reuben is added, probably on account of his great sin (Genesis 35:22, cf. Genesis 49:3, 4).

21. *What were ". . . blessings and cursings"?* 8:34

In Deuteronomy 27 a list of curses were brought out by Moses. They were these:

- a. Idolatry (Deuteronomy 27:15)
- b. Contempt of parents (v. 16)
- c. Removing a neighbor's landmark (v. 17)
- d. Inhumanity towards the blind, strangers, orphans, widows (vs. 18,19)
- e. Incest and unnatural crimes (vs. 20-23)
- f. Murder (vs. 24, 25)
- g. In general, against the transgression of the Law (v. 26)

There were also the following blessings in Deuteronomy 28

- a. In the city and on the field (Deuteronomy v. 3)
- b. On all births (v. 4)
- c. On the basket and on the kneading-trough (v. 5)
- d. On going out and coming in (v. 6)
- e. On the arms of Israel in contest with their enemies (v. 7)
- f. On their position among the nations (v. 9-14)

As Joshua read the words of the Law, the people had a

visual presentation of the way in which some of them would keep the commandments of God and be blessed while others would disobey God's laws and be cursed. Not everyone who begins the Christian life will be faithful unto death and be saved. Many are called, but few are chosen. Some go in the broad way to destruction, but only a few go in the narrow gate to life. So was it in the camp of Israel. Some stood to represent the blessed; others, the cursed.

22. *Could all the people bear?* 8:35

It is impossible to conceive a spot more admirably adapted for the purpose than this one. It was in the very center of the newly acquired land. None could more exactly fulfill all the required conditions. Imagine the chiefs and the priests gathered in the center of the valley. The tribes were stretching out as they stood in compact masses. The men of war and the heads of families, half on the north and half on the south, were crowding the slopes on either side. The mixed multitude was also there with the women and the children extending along in front until they spread into the plain beyond. There is no difficulty, much less impossibility, in the problem. A single voice could be heard by many thousands, the sound being shut in and conveyed up and down by the enclosing hills. People in such mountainous countries are able, from long practice, to pitch their voices so as to be heard distinctly at distances almost incredible. They talk with persons across enormous wadies, and give the most minute directions, which are perfectly understood. In doing this they seem to speak very little louder than their usual tone of conversation.

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 8

1. Was Israel allowed to take spoil of war from Ai?
2. How many men did Joshua put in the first ambush?

JOSHUA

3. How many men did Joshua put in the second ambush?
4. From what city did soldiers come to help the men of Ai?
5. What weapon of war did Joshua hold in his hand as a signal?
6. How many people of Ai fell in the battle?
7. By what means was the king of Ai killed?
8. Where did Joshua lead the people to erect an altar?
9. What did Joshua write on the stones of the altar?
10. Before what other mountain did half the people stand?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 9

Vv. 1-2 *The league of kings against Israel.* Moses had led the people in fighting against the kings east of the Jordan. Joshua had successfully fought against the king of Jericho and the kings of Ai and Bethel. The rest of the kings who were west of the Jordan gathered themselves together to form a league to fight against Joshua and Israel.

Vv. 3-15 *Deceit of the Gibeonites.* One group of the Hivites, the Gibeonites, knew the only hope they had for survival was to make peace with Joshua. These people and Rahab are the only ones we find throughout the entire length and breadth of the land who made an effort to save themselves from the destruction which was coming upon them. Although these men deceived Joshua and the leaders of Israel, they are commended inasmuch as they realized the futility of opposing the wrath of God. Joshua and the elders acted very ill-advisedly in not asking the Lord's will in the matter. They were impressed with the false evidence which

STUDIES IN JOSHUA-JUDGES-RUTH

the Gibeonites presented as proof of their having come from a great distance and failed to ask about God's will in the matter.

- Vv. 16-27 *The servitude of the Gibeonites.* Although the men of Israel might honorably have broken the covenant which they made with the Gibeonites since it was entered into under false pretenses, they chose to honor the agreement. They did not put the Gibeonites to death, but they did make them to serve in a very humble capacity. They were made to be "hewers of wood and drawers of water" (verse 27).

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Ask God first.* The opening statement of the Bible can mean more than a plain historical statement of fact to those who know God. God was "in the beginning." "In the beginning" was the Word (John 1:1). God should be in the beginning of every person's life. He should accept God's way while a child. God should be at the beginning of every day. He should be taken into confidences whenever we enter into a project. Joshua failed to do this. The Scripture says he, "asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord" (verse 14). As a result he entered into an ill-advised league.
2. *Things are not always what they seem.* Man is able to concoct many disguises. Satan himself may be transformed into an angel of light (II Corinthians 11:14). Man is utterly fooled when he believes things which appear are framed from what we see. As Paul said, "Things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:3). A Christian is more concerned with what a man is than what he has. He is

more interested in a man's character than in his reputation. We must dig beneath the surface to find the true realities.

3. *Dishonesty never pays.* Although the Gibeonites were spared from execution at the time they made a covenant with Joshua, they were made to do servile work. They brought upon themselves and all their descendants the stigma of being servants around the Tabernacle. They were made to cut the wood and provide the water for the people as they worshipped at the altar of the Lord.

CHAPTER NINE

The League of Kings Against Israel 9:1, 2

And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the Great Sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof;

2 That they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord.

1. What divisions of Canaan are mentioned? 9:1

Canaan was a land made up of hills which formed the center of the country. The Jordan River formed a valley which ran the entire length of the land. This river was on the east side of the country, and on the west side was the Mediterranean Sea. This land area is described as "all the coasts of the great sea." There were mountainous areas, and the main range was the Lebanon Mountains which were on the north of the country. By mentioning all these areas the author is giving us the impression that the league took in kings from all over the country. These were leaders of the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. All of them were Canaanite people.

2. *Were these kings usually in league with one another?*

9:2

When the twelve spies came back from looking over the land they said it was a country which "eateth up the inhabitants thereof" (Numbers 13:32). This may be a reference to the fact that these kings were constantly at war with each other. Certainly they were often attacked from the east and the south as kings from Mesopotamia and the Nile regions vied with each other for control of the land. Probably these kings were not normally united; but when they had a common foe, they forgot their usual differences and entered into a pact against Joshua and the Israelites.

Deceit of the Gibeonites 9:3-15

3 And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai,

4 They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up;

5 And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy.

6 And they went to Joshua unto the camp of Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us.

7 And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you?

8 And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? and from whence come ye?

9 And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the Lord

thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt,

10 And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth.

11 Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us.

12 This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy:

13 And these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new; and, behold, they be rent: and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey.

14 And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord.

15 And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.

3. *Where was Gibeon?* 9:3

According to Josephus, it was 40-50 stadia from Jerusalem; and judging from its name, it was built upon a hill. It is to be found in the modern *el Jib*, about six miles to the northwest of Jerusalem. A village of moderate size, on a long chalk hill now overlooks a very fertile, well cultivated plain, or rather a basin, consisting of broad valleys and plains. The hill rises like a vineyard in the form of separate terraces. The remains of large massive buildings of great antiquity are still to be seen there. There are also some fountains and two large subterranean reservoirs. The Gibeonites lived in a city which was the head of four towns occupied by the Hivites—Gibeon, Chephirah, Bee-

roth, and Kirjath-jearim (verse 17). It was something of an independent republic (1) with elders (verse 11), (2) with no king—since none is mentioned, (3) and with a name as a royal city (10:2). It was situated at the head of the pass of Beth-horon and commanded the main route from Jerusalem and the lower Jordan Valley to Joppa and the seacoast. The town was inhabited by a numerous and brave population. Gibeon was therefore one of the most important cities of southern Canaan. A team of archaeologists from the University of Pennsylvania Museum made excavations in 1960 which attest the fact of the existence of the city of Gibeon. These citizens made famous in the Bible spent a great portion of their funds to build defenses against attack. Dr. James B. Pritchard, director of the museum in the Biblical Archaeology section, reported these findings after five years of excavations at the Arab village of *El Jib*, Jordan, the site of the ancient Gibeon. The excavations were conducted in cooperation with the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem. The director of the museum, Dr. Froelich Rainey said that the team of archaeologists uncovered the existence of an elaborate system of civil defense which was designed to enable Gibeon to withstand indefinite siege. Also near the town was a cemetery dating some two thousand years before Christ. This cemetery contained thirty-six rock-cut tombs which illustrated burial customs and shed light on the details of the Gibeonites' daily life, several hundred years before they made peace with the Israelites. According to the report the civil defense system involved construction of two walls which encircled Gibeon. There was also a camouflaged tunnel leading from inside the inner wall to a nearby spring which insured adequate water supply. The outer wall probably was built prior to the time when the Gibeonites made peace with Joshua. The large inner walls erected in the days of the early Israelite kings were prob-

ably erected after Gibeon was conquered by King Seshonk or Shishak in Egypt around 945 B.C. From all appearances the city of Gibeon was able to resist attacks until about 586 B.C. when the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar laid waste the city while on his victorious march to Jerusalem.

4. *Who were the Gibeonites?* 9:4

They were inhabitants of a republic which included not only Gibeon, the capital, but the towns of Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim. Gibeon was larger than Ai, being one of the royal cities (see 10:2), and was inhabited by Hivites, who were a brave people (10:7; 11:19). It was afterwards allotted to the tribe of Benjamin and set apart as a Levitical town (18:25; 21:17). After the destruction of Nob by Saul, the Tabernacle was removed thither; and there it remained until the building of Solomon's temple (I Chronicles 16:39; 21:29; I Kings 3:4, 5; II Chronicles 1:3 ff.). They are called Hivites in verse seven, but they were all of Canaanite background and origin.

5. *What means did the Gibeonites use to deceive Israel?*
9:5

They had old sacks upon their asses. These were large bags, usually of hair, in which the Orientals pack their supplies for convenient transport on the backs of animals. In these were all the baggage and commodities required for the journey. Beds, boxes, provisions, pots, packages of goods, all are carried in such bags, slung over the back of the animal, one hanging at each side. Being knocked about and exposed to the weather, these saddlebags, as one might call them but for their size, suffer damage in a long journey; and hence the Gibeonites took old bags to convey the impression that a long journey had been made. They also had wine bottles, i.e., skin bottles, of which classical antiquity has afforded many representations. In

the East the wine was preserved not in casks but in earthen jars and leather bottles made of the skins of goats, oxen, buffaloes. These were turned inside out, washed, and rubbed over with warm mineral tar or naphtha. The wine would be drawn out at one of the feet by opening and closing the cord with which it was tied. This explains how the bottles could be "old," "rent," and "bound up." It also explains the caution of our Lord against pouring new wine into old bottles, lest they should be burst by the wine (Mark 2:22). The Gibeonites wore old shoes—"sandals" made of hide or palm-leaves and papyrus stalks (cf. Mark 6:9). They were "clouted," sewed with patches. The men also wore "old garments." Ambassadors usually appear in clean and decent, if not in splendid, raiment. These men broke custom to put forward their deceit. Their bread was "dry and mouldy." The Hebrew word translated "mouldy" is the same which is rendered by "cracknels" in I Kings 14:3. It denotes a kind of crisp cake. The ordinary bread, baked in thin cakes, was not made to keep more than a day or two, a fresh supply being baked daily. If kept longer it dried up and became excessively hard. It was this kind of bread which the Gibeonites produced and they indicated its hardness—hard as biscuits—in evidence of the length of the journey.

6. *Did the people of Israel go back to Gilgal by Jericho?*
9:6

We assume that after the setting up of the Law on Gerizim and Ebal, Joshua did not conduct the people with their wives and children back again to the camp which they had left in the Jordan valley on the east side of Jericho. He must have chosen the Gilgal which was situated upon the mountains and only seven hours' journey to the south of Shechem as the future place of encampment. He probably made this the central point of all his further military operations (see II Kings 4:38; Hosea 4:15; 9:15;

12:11; Amos 4:4; 5:5; cf. I Samuel 7:16; 10:8; 11:14, 15; 13:7-9). This is a spot alluded to in Deuteronomy 11:30, "beside the plains of Moreh," and near the site of Abraham's first altar (Genesis 12:6, 7). There is a spot called Jilgiliah, a few miles from Bethel.

7. *Why did the Israelites question the Gibeonites?* 9:7

God had told the Israelites to destroy completely all the people of the land of Canaan. They were given permission to make peace with nations which lived far off from the Promised Land, but they were not to make any leagues with those who lived within the borders of the country. Nothing about the costume of the Gibeonites would have caused the Israelites to suspect that they lived among them, but they were being careful as they interrogated the ambassadors. When the Gibeonites stoutly affirmed they were from a land which was quite distant, the Israelites were fooled and entered into the league with them.

8. *What was the motive of the Gibeonites?* 9:9, 10

The Gibeonites were afraid they would be destroyed. They openly affirmed this in verse twenty-four. They also vowed that they were impressed because of what God had done in destroying the kings east of the Jordan. They had heard "the fame of him and all that he did in Egypt" (v. 9b). Some commentaries feel the Gibeonites very wisely made no mention of the crossing of the Jordan River or the destruction of Jericho. If they had been from a very far country, they might not have heard of these most recent events.

9. *What was the Ashtaroth?* 9:10

Ashtaroth was an ancient city of Asia and lay east of the Jordan (Deuteronomy 1:4; Joshua 12:4; 13:12, 31). The location was in the land given to the half-tribe of Manasseh when they settled in Gilead. The town was the center of crude worship offered in adoration of Astarte

and was the capital city of Og, king of Bashan. The site of the ancient city has been identified with Tell Ashtarrah and lies twenty-one miles east of the Sea of Galilee on a hill which is surrounded by a well watered plain. By calling attention to this place in particular, the Gibeonites may have been suggesting their country was in a locale beyond this point and an area which would be outside the border of the Promised Land.

10. *What is the meaning of "took of their victuals"? 9:14*

A marginal reading in the King James Version is as follows: "They received the men by reason of their victuals." There is no evidence that the men of Israel tasted of the wine or partook of the mouldy bread. The author is simply saying Joshua and his leaders were impressed by the evidence which was presented to them. They did not take time then to ask counsel of God in the matter. This was a grave mistake and led them into an unholy alliance which caused grief both to the Gibeonites and to the Israelites in later times.

The Servitude of the Gibeonites 9:16-27

16 And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbors, and that they dwelt among them.

17 And the children of Israel journeyed and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjathjearim.

18 And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes.

19 But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them.

20 This we will do to them; we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we swore unto them.

21 And the princes said unto them, Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation; as the princes had promised them.

22 And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, We are very far from you; when ye dwell among us?

23 Now therefore ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God.

24 And they answered Joshua, and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the Lord thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing.

25 And now, behold, we are in thine hand: as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do.

26 And so did he unto them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not.

27 And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose.

11. How far away was Gibeon? 9:16

Depending upon the exact location of the camp of Israel, the city of Gibeon could not have been more than a few hours' journey away from the spot where they met Joshua. If Joshua and the Israelites were encamped at the Gilgal which was in the country of Ephraim, they were indeed very close to Gibeon. Even if Joshua led the people

back to the Gilgal which was near Jericho, the Gibeonites did not have to travel more than a few hours to reach the camp of Israel. They were indeed neighbors to Israel. The Israelites came to the cities of Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim on the third day after they broke camp. When the Israelites got there, they honored their covenant and let the Gibeonites live.

12. *Could the Israelites have broken their oath with justice?* 9:18

No doubt from the standpoint of strict justice the Israelite rulers would be under no obligation to observe the treaty which they had made with the Gibeonites in full faith in the truth of their word. But the princes of Israel shrank back from breaking the oath, which, as is emphatically stated in verse nineteen, they had sworn by Jehovah the God of Israel. They were afraid of bringing the name of the God of Israel into contempt among the Canaanites, which they would have done if they had broken the oath which they had sworn by their God. Some of the Israelites must have wanted to break the covenant, for we read later that Joshua restrained the people and delivered the Gibeonites out of the hand of the children of Israel so that they did not slay them.

13. *What disposition was made of the Gibeonites?* 9:21

Although the rulers of Israel let the Gibeonites live, they did not let them go unpunished. They made them to be "hewers of wood and drawers of water" for all the congregation of Israel. Such a phrase indicates that they were forced to do the most servile kind of labor. Their service was evidently largely connected with the offering of sacrifices at the Tabernacle. These sacrifices would demand a great deal of wood for the fire on the altar. They also called for a large quantity of water for the sanitation necessary to the offering of animal sacrifices.

14. *Did the Gibeonites cause them any trouble?* 9:22

As soon as they discovered their error, the princes were bound to do all in their power to ward off from the congregation the danger which might arise from their being drawn away to idolatry. This was the very thing which the Lord had intended to avert by commanding all the Canaanites to be destroyed. They warded off trouble by making the Gibeonites slaves of the sanctuary. Their conduct is never blamed either by the historian or by the history, inasmuch as it is not stated anywhere that the Gibeonites, after being made into temple slaves, held out any inducement to the Israelites to join in idolatrous worship. At a future time God Himself reckoned the attempt of Saul to destroy the Gibeonites as an act of bloodguiltiness (II Samuel 21:1 ff.). This latter incident is the only record we have of their bringing any grief to Israel.

15. *What prophecy was thus fulfilled?* 9:23

The Gibeonites were to perform for the congregation the slave's labor of hewing wood and drawing water for the worship of the sanctuary. This was a duty which was performed, according to Deuteronomy 29:11, by the lowest classes of the people. In this way the curse of Noah upon Canaan (Genesis 9:25) was literally fulfilled upon the Hivites of the Gibeonite republic. Their servitude was only a token of the punishment meted out to all the heirs of Canaan. God was indeed fulfilling the promise made through Noah. No word of God is void of power.

16. *How did the Gibeonites know of God's promise to Moses?* 9:24

God had made the promise to give Canaan to Abraham's seed when Abraham first left Ur of Chaldees. The promise was repeated to Jacob as he fled from Esau. The

promise must have been common knowledge not only among the Israelites, but also among the Canaanites themselves. Moses had led the people to the southern border of Canaan forty years earlier. People living in Canaan may have learned of God's promise to give the land to the Israelites at that time. More recently, Moses had led Israel in the conquest of the kingdoms of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan. The Canaanites would certainly see God was giving the land to Israel. Even if the Canaanites did not know of the exact wording of the promise, they would be able to interpret events of history and come to the conclusion that the Israelites were destined to possess the land. Their reference to the fact that it was told to them leads us to believe that they must have heard of the covenant itself.

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 9

1. Name the six groups of Canaanites who came together against Joshua and Israel.
2. List five exhibits presented by the Gibeonites to prove their story.
3. Where was the camp of Israel when the Gibeonites came to them?
4. By what other name were the Gibeonites called?
5. What city in Bashan did the Gibeonites mention?
6. What other cities were associated with Gibeon?
7. What positions of servitude were the Gibeonites made to occupy?
8. Where was this service performed?
9. Were the Gibeonites performing this service when the book of Joshua was written?
10. What king of Israel broke this covenant?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 10

- Vv. 1-14 *The southern coalition.* Five kings of the Amorites banded themselves together to punish the inhabitants of Gibeon because they had made peace with the Israelites. They did not attack Israel, but vented their rage on the Canaanites who inhabited the Hivite towns under the direction of Gibeon. These kings were utterly defeated by Joshua near Beth-horon in the battle where God miraculously interfered by causing the sun to stand still for a whole day.
- Vv. 15-27 *The death of the five kings.* After the battle was over; Joshua made sure that none escaped, not even the kings. He did not make the same mistake as that made by Saul when he saved Agag, the king of the Amalekites, and some of the best of the spoils, even though he had been commanded to destroy them utterly.
- Vv. 28-43 *The summary of the conquest.* Different towns were listed as those completely subjugated by Joshua as he led the Israelites in their victorious battles. The land which they subdued was that which stretched from Kadesh-Barnea in the south to Gibeon in the north. Joshua returned to his camp in Gilgal after the southern coalition was defeated.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Politics make strange bed-fellows.* The combination of the five kings of the Amorites who banded themselves

to punish the inhabitants of Gibeon indicates the way in which these Canaanites would ordinarily fight against themselves. The kings did not attack the Israelites directly; but they went out to punish one of their own cities, because the people there had made a league with the invading Israelites. Probably the king of Hebron and the king of Jebus would not ordinarily get along together at all. When they faced a common enemy, however, they were willing to drop their differences and go out in a unified campaign.

2. *He put the stars in place.* The miracle of the sun standing still has drawn a lot of attention. Many different explanations have been given as to how the phenomenon could have occurred. Some suggest that gases bent the sun's rays so that it was light for a long time on the earth. Others have suggested that it only seemed that the day was long because the Israelites were so busy in fighting that they forgot to notice the time. All these explanations cannot explain the plain historical statement of fact that the sun stood still. God fought for Israel. He who put the sun, moon, and stars in place in the beginning (Genesis 1:14) caused them to stop in their places while Israel won this battle.
3. *Victory belongs to the faithful.* Joshua learned his lesson after Jericho. He knew it was not enough to come close to doing what God asked him to do. He did not spare any of the kings who had fought against God's people. All of them were executed according to the commandments of the law. After these campaigns were waged, he was able to return in peace to his camp at Gilgal. Christians have the same hope of eventual victory and the Sabbath rest in heaven.

CHAPTER TEN

The Southern Coalition 10:1-14

Now it came to pass, when Adonizedek king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them;

2 That they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all the men thereof were mighty.

3 Wherefore Adonizedek king of Jerusalem sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying,

4 Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon: for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel.

5 Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together, and went up, they and their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it.

6 And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us.

7 So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor.

8 And the Lord said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee.

9 Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, and went up from Gilgal all night.

10 And the Lord discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah.

11 And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.

12 Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel,

Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon;

and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.

And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed,
until the people had avenged themselves

upon their enemies.

Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.

14 And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the Lord fought for Israel.

1. *Who was Adoni-zedek?* 10:1

The name means "lord of righteousness." It is almost synonymous with Melchizedek which means "king of righteousness." This may have been a title of the Jebusite kings, as Pharaoh was the Egyptian rulers and Caesar was later of the Roman. Adoni-zedek does not appear to have any of the righteous inclinations which belong to Melchizedek, the high priest to whom Abraham paid the tithe. Instead

of being a friend of God's people and the descendants of Abraham, he was an enemy with a burning desire to resist the wrath of God.

2. *Where was Jerusalem?* 10:1b

This word means "the foundling or possession of peace." It was called Salem in the time of Abraham (Genesis 14:18). It was the proper name of the town which was also frequently called Jebus (Judges 19:10, 11; I Chronicles 11:4), or "city of the Jebusites" (Judges 19:11). During the division of the land it was allotted to the tribe of Benjamin (18:28); but being situated upon the border of Judah (15:8), it was conquered and burned by the sons of Judah after the death of Joshua (Judges 1:8). It was very soon taken again by the Jebusites whom the sons of Judah were not able to destroy (Joshua 15:63, Judges 19:12); so both Benjaminites and Judahites lived there along with the Jebusites (Judges 1:21; Joshua 15:63). The upper town, especially upon the summit of Mt. Zion, remained a fortification in the possession of the Jebusites until David conquered it (II Samuel 5:6 ff.). He made it the capital of his kingdom and called it by his own name, "the city of David," after which the old name of Jebus fell into disuse.

3. *Why were the Jebusites afraid?* 10:2

The Jebusites were afraid not only because they had heard what the Israelites had done at Jericho and Ai but also because one of their cities had made a league with them. They might have believed the Gibeonites would assist the Israelites and make war against the rest of the Canaanites. Indeed the Hivites who lived in Gibeon would be bound by their treaty to assist the Israelites in whatever way they were directed. In addition, the other Canaanites must have felt a sense of reproach and shame that one of their own cities had signed a treaty with the enemy. This

revealed internal weakness, and they decided to attack immediately.

4. *Where was Hebron?* 10:3a

Hebron, the town of Arba the Anakite (Joshua 15:13; cf. Genesis 23:2), was about twenty miles south of Jerusalem. It lay in a deep and narrow valley upon the mountains of Judah and was a town of the greatest antiquity (Numbers 13:22). It is now called *el Kbalil*, i.e., "the field" (of God), with reference to Abraham's sojourn there. The ruins include an ancient colossal mosque which contains, according to the Mohammedan tradition, the burial-place of the patriarchs (See Genesis 23:17).

5. *Where was Jarmuth?* 10:3b

Jarmuth was in the lowlands of Judah (Joshua 15:35; Nehemiah 11:29). A hamlet, Jermucha, is on the road to Jerusalem, and is identified as the modern Jarmuk. This village is on a lofty hill and has remains of walls and cisterns of a very ancient date. The name is called Tell 'Armuth by the Arabs.

6. *Where was Lachish?* 10:3c

Lachish was in the lowlands of Judah (15:39) and was fortified by Rehoboam (II Chronicles 11:9). It was besieged by Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar (II Kings 18:17; 19:8; Jeremiah 34:7) but was still inhabited by Jews after the return from captivity (Nehemiah 11:30). It is probably to be found in *Um Lakis*, an old place upon a low round hill. The site is covered with heaps of small round stones thrown together in great confusion containing relics of marble columns.

7. *Where was Eglon?* 10:3d

Eglon was in the lowlands of Judah (15:39). The present name is Ajlan, a heap of ruins. It lies to the east of *Um Lakis*. Eglon was very closely associated with the affairs of the Philistines and was the city most remote from the center of the land. The king must have been

able to contribute something to the campaign led by Adonizedek, and these people joined with their fellow Canaanites in waging a campaign against the Hivites who had made peace with Israel.

8. *Why did the Gibeonites appeal to Joshua?* 10:6

When the men of Gibeon saw that the other Canaanites were attacking them, they sent to Joshua for help. Since the two peoples had entered into a league with each other, the Israelites were honor bound to assist the Gibeonites. Consequently, Joshua left his camp at Gilgal and took with him his full complement of soldiers led by his mighty men of valor.

9. *What was the ascent of Beth-horon?* 10:10

This was the ascent to Upper Beth-horon (*Beit Ur, el Foka*), which was nearest to Gibeon, only a short way distant on the northwest. It lay on a lofty promontory between two valleys, one on the north, the other on the south, and was separated from Lower Beth-horon, which lay further west, by a long steep pass. The ascent to Upper Beth-horon is very steep and rocky, though the rock has been cut away in many places and a path made by means of steps. This pass between the two places leads downwards from Gibeon towards the western plain and was called sometimes the ascent, or going up to Beth-horon, and sometimes the descent, or going down from it (v. 11) Frequent references to this passageway are found both in Biblical and extra-Biblical sources.

10. *Where was Makkedah?* 10:10b

This site is believed to be found in Summeil, a considerable village on an eminence in the plain. It has a large public well 110' deep and 11' in diameter, with strongly built walls of hewn stones. There is also part of an old wall which to all appearances must have belonged to a large square castle built of uncemented stones.

11. *Where was Azekah?* 10:11

Both Azekah and Makkedah are in the lowland on the west of Canaan. Azekah is in the hill-country between the mountains and the plain (15:35); Makkedah, in the plain itself (15:41). Azekah was fortified by Rehoboam (II Chronicles 11:9) and was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 34:7) but still inhabited after the captivity (Nehemiah 11:30). It was not far from Socoh, according to Joshua 15:35.

12. *What were the hailstones?* 10:11

The large stones which the Lord threw upon the flying foe at the slope of Beth-horon were hailstones (see Isaiah 30:30). It was not stone-hail or a shower of stones, but a terrible hailstorm, in which hail fell upon the foe in pieces as large as stones. There was no evidence that Israel was equipped well enough with slingers in order to hail stones upon the army. The author is not trying to express this, but is rather telling the reader that God interfered in the affairs of men. From the heavens which are controlled by the Creator of the heavens poured forth those hailstones which would normally come in less quantity and with less severity. On this occasion, God interfered with what we call the laws of nature and caused such a storm to come upon the Canaanites that they were routed by Israel.

13. *Are there valid objections to the miracle of the sun standing still?* 10:13

Several objections are raised. First, it is said, "No annals of other nations contain such an account." For that matter, annals of many nations do not go back to this period. Second, it is urged that the motion of the stars is unchangeable. These so-called "laws," however, are nothing more than phenomena, or forms of manifestation, of those divine creative powers, the true character of which no mortal has ever fathomed. Third, it is objected that

such a sudden stoppage of the revolution of the earth upon its axis would have dashed to pieces all the works of human hands which were to be found upon its surface and hurled the earth itself with its satellite, the moon, out of their orbits. This leaves out of sight the fact that the omnipotent hand of God, which not only created the stars but gave them the power to revolve with regularity in their orbits as long as this universe endures, is not too short to guard against such disastrous consequences. There can be no valid objections to the view that this was a miracle worked by God Himself.

The Death of the Five Kings 10:15-27

15 And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp of Gilgal.

16 But these five kings fled, and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah.

17 And it was told Joshua, saying, The five kings are found hid in a cave at Makkedah.

18 And Joshua said, Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave, and set men by it for to keep them:

19 And stay ye not, but pursue after your enemies, and smite the hindmost of them; suffer them not to enter into their cities: for the Lord your God hath delivered them into your hand.

20 And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed, that the rest which remained of them entered into fenced cities.

21 And all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace: none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.

22 Then said Joshua, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings unto me out of the cave.

23 And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon.

24 And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them.

25 And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight.

26 And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening.

27 And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun, that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave's mouth, which remain until this very day.

14. *Where was the cave of Makkedah?* 10:15

The place has been identified with *el-Mugbar*, a spot southwest of Ekron. The name, *el-Mugbar*, means "the caves." The area is very far away from where the battle was fought, and the location is really not certain. Makkedah is best known only for this fact recorded here. The kings hid there, and nothing else of importance to Bible history occurred there. The place was later assigned to the tribe of Judah as part of their inheritance (Joshua 15:41).

15. *Where were the fenced cities?* 10:20

The fenced cities were scattered throughout the land. Only cities which were of substantial size and importance

would have these walls around them. There were enough of them that they provided hiding places to all who escaped from the war between Israel and the five kings of the South. Israel was not in a position to begin its total campaign against the Canaanites at the end of the battle with the kings associated with Adoni-zedek. There were still strong forces in the North which had to be subdued before the armies of Israel could lay siege against the fenced cities to force out those who had escaped from the battles fought in the open field. Eventually this task was to be performed by those tribes who settled in the area where the fenced cities were located.

16. *Why did the men put their feet on the necks of the kings?* 10:24

This action was symbolic of the fact that the kings were utterly beaten. The inscription at Behistan shows clearly a picture of Cyrus with a group of vassal kings prostrate on the ground before him. He has his foot on the neck of one of the kings symbolizing the fact that he has completely overthrown his enemies. Israel was told not to leave the dead people hanging after sundown. These kings had been incarcerated in caves until the battle was finished; but when it was over, they were brought out and promptly executed. Their bodies were then thrown back into the caves and great stones were rolled across the doors making rock-hewn tombs for these beaten enemies of the armies of God.

The Summary of the Conquest 10:28-43

28 And that day Joshua took Makkedah, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof he utterly destroyed, them, and all the souls that were therein; he let none remain: and he did to the king of Makkedah as he did unto the king of Jericho.

29 Then Joshua passed from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, unto Libnah, and fought against Libnah:

30 And the Lord delivered it also, and the king thereof, into the hand of Israel; and he smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein; he let none remain in it; but did unto the king thereof as he did unto the king of Jericho.

31 And Joshua passed from Libnah, and all Israel with him, unto Lachish, and encamped against it, and fought against it:

32 And the Lord delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, which took it on the second day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein, according to all that he had done to Libnah.

33 Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish; and Joshua smote him and his people, until he had left him none remaining.

34 And from Lachish Joshua passed unto Eglon, and all Israel with him; and they encamped against it, and fought against it:

35 And they took it on that day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein he utterly destroyed that day, according to all that he had done to Lachish.

36 And Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, unto Hebron; and they fought against it:

37 And they took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof, and all the souls that were therein; he left none remaining, according to all that he had done to Eglon; but destroyed it utterly, and all the souls that were therein.

38 And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to Debir; and fought against it:

39 And he took it, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof; and they smote them with the edge of the

sword, and utterly destroyed all the souls that were therein; he left none remaining: as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir, and to the king thereof; as he had done also to Libnah, and to her king.

40 So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded.

41 And Joshua smote them from Kadesh-barnea even unto Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even unto Gibeon.

42 And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel.

43 And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.

17. *Where was Libnah?* 10:29

Libnah was one of the towns of the plain of the hill-country of Judah. It was allotted to the priests (21:13). The people revolted from Judah in the reign of Joram (II Kings 8:22). Later, it was besieged by Sennacherib (Isaiah 37:8). It is in the South, but on the northeast of Lachish.

18. *Where was Gezer?* 10:33

Gezer was on the southern boundary of Ephraim (16:3) and was given up by that tribe to the Levites (16:9, 10; 21:20, 21). David pursued the Philistines to Gezer after they had been defeated at Gibeon (II Samuel 5:25; I Chronicles 14:16). At a later period it was conquered by Pharaoh and presented to his daughter who was married to Solomon. Solomon built, i.e., fortified, it (I Kings 9:16, 17). The site has been excavated in modern times and has yielded many striking examples of artifacts in burial customs. Gates and walls dating from the time

of Solomon have been uncovered, and the massive fortifications found there attest the strategic military importance of this site which overlooks the maritime plain of the Mediterranean and guards the ascent to the hill country of Judah.

19. *Where was Debir?* 10:38, 39

This town was formerly called Kirjath-sepher, i.e., "book town" (Judges 1:11), and Kirjath-sannah, i.e., in all probability "the city of palm branches" (15:49). It was given up by Judah to the Levites (21:15). It stood upon the mountains of Judah (15:49), to the south of Hebron, but has not been certainly discovered.

20. *Where was Goshen?* 10:41

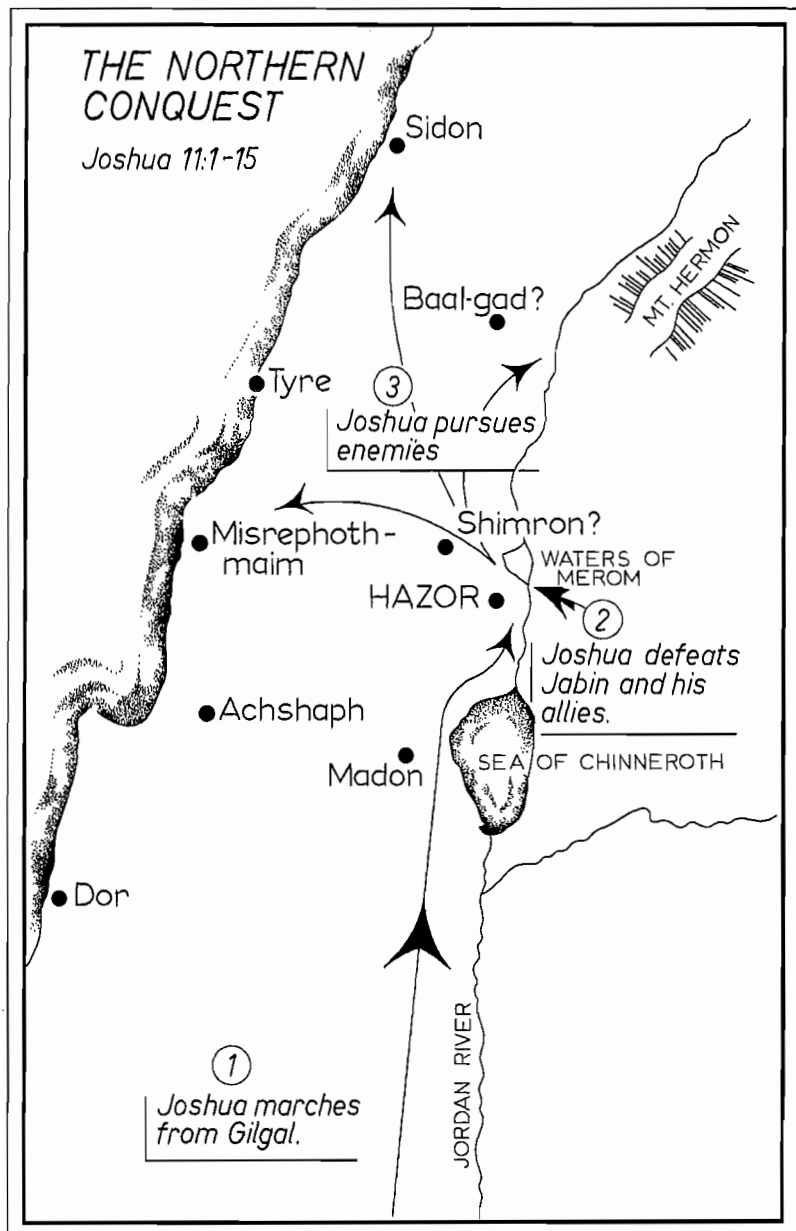
This is a different place from the Goshen of Egypt, deriving its name in all probability from the town of Goshen on the southern portion of the mountains (Joshua 15:51). As the line "from Kadesh-barnea to Gaza" defines the extent of the conquered country from south to north on the western side, so the parallel clause, "all the country of Goshen, even unto Gibeon," probably defines the extent from south to north on the eastern side. Therefore, we should look for Goshen in the South near the Dead Sea.

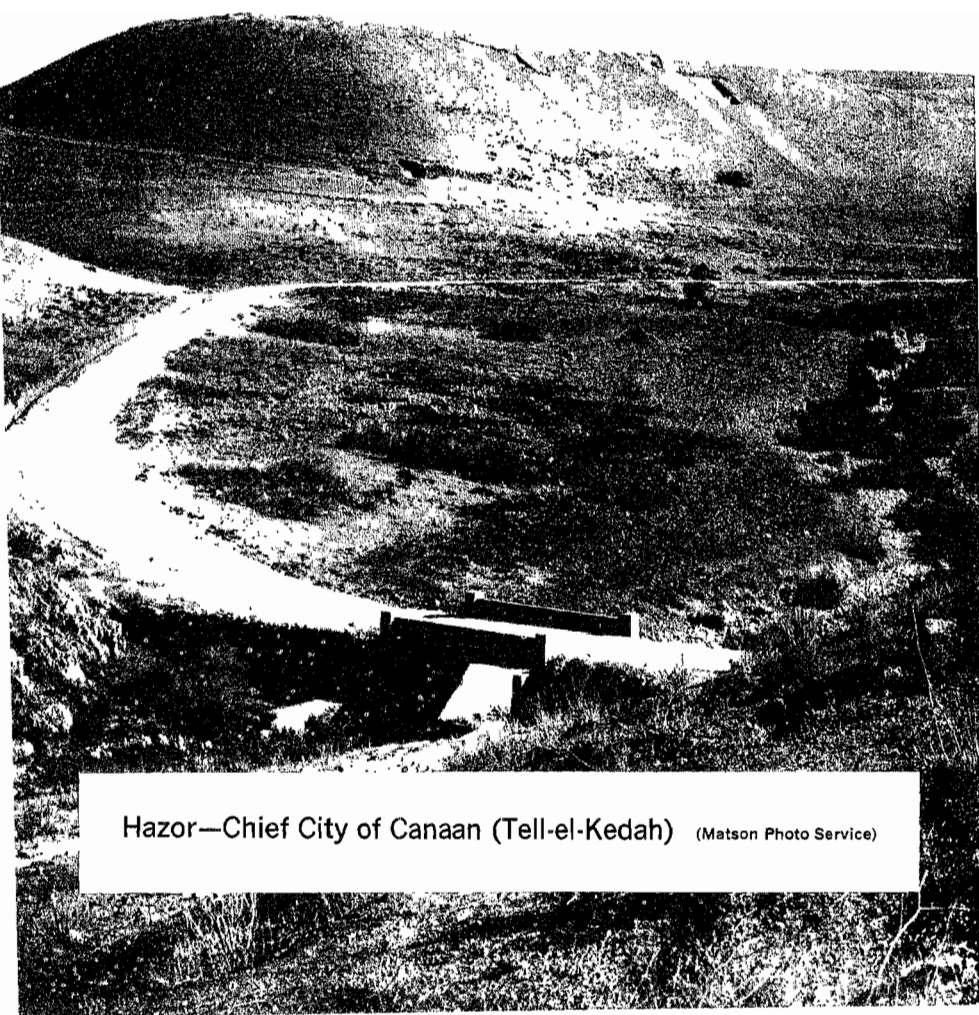
TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 10

1. What was the name of the king who led in the forming of the southern coalition?
2. Of what city was he the ruler?
3. What five other cities joined in the coalition?
4. What city in Canaan did these kings attack?
5. Where was the camp of Israel at the time?
6. Along the way to what city did Israel chase the Canaanites?
7. Over what valley was the moon standing while the battle was fought?

THE NORTHERN CONQUEST

Joshua 11:1-15





Hazor—Chief City of Canaan (Tell-el-Kedah) (Matson Photo Service)

JOSHUA

8. Over what city was the sun standing while the battle was fought?
9. What territory on the South is listed as the southern border of the conquered territory?
10. What city is listed as being on the northern border of the conquered territory?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 11

- Vv. 1-9 *The defeat of Jabin.* Jabin was the king of Hazor. He formed an alliance with the kings in his area, and they attempted to hold the northern part of Canaan against the on-rushing Israelites. Joshua attacked them near the waters of Merom and completely routed them.
- Vv. 10-15 *The destruction of Hazor.* Joshua was careful to follow the commandments of the Lord explicitly. He completely destroyed the city of Hazor and burned it with fire. He also wiped out the inhabitants so that there would be no remaining cesspool of sin in the land. As for the other kings, he completely overthrew them; but he did not destroy their cities which were walled. The people of Israel were allowed to take spoils in this northern campaign, but they did utterly annihilate the wicked inhabitants.
- Vv. 16-23 *A summary of Joshua's campaigns.* Joshua took all of the land. Every division is mentioned—the hills, the *negeb*, the Jordan River Valley, the Mediterranean plains, and the mountain ranges. In all these areas there was not a single city which sued for peace except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. All the rest were destroyed.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *It is foolish to fight God.* The kings of the North should have been able to see that it was foolish to fight against the Israelites. All their neighbors to the south—the king of Jebus, the king of Hebron and the king of Jericho—had been utterly overthrown. A man blinded by sin, however, cannot see what is happening around him. He moves blindly on to his own destruction. Such was the case of the kings of the North.
2. *Righteousness will triumph.* Joshua was fighting a just war. He was wielding the sword of God's wrath because he was involved in fulfilling the Lord's promise to give land to the Israelites. Joshua was invincible. Such will be the ultimate triumph of truth. Jesus said that the gates of Hades could not prevail against His church (Matthew 16:18-20).
3. *No enemy is strong enough to overcome God's people.* Joshua overcame the kings of the South and the kings of the North. There were some very unusual enemies, the Anakims, who lived in the mountains. These people have sometimes been understood to be giants. Even these people fell before the terrible, swift sword of Joshua and the Israelites. It is amazing to see what God's people can do when they are following His leading.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Defeat of Jabin 11:1-9

And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor had heard those things, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph,

2 And to the kings that were on the north of the mountains, and of the plains south of Chinneroth, and in the valley, and in the borders of Dor on the west,

3 And to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and to the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and to the Hivite under Hermon in the land of Mizpeh.

4 And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that is upon the sea-shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many.

5 And when all these kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel.

6 And the Lord said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them: for tomorrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.

7 So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly; and they fell upon them.

8 And the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon, and unto Misrephoth-maim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward; and they smote them, until they left them none remaining.

9 And Joshua did unto them as the Lord bade him: he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire.

1. Who originated the alliance in the North? 11:1

Jabin, king of Hazor, formed an alliance with the kings of Madon, Shimron, and Achshaph, as well as other kings of the North, to make a common attack upon the Israelites. Hazor was formerly the head of all the kingdoms of northern Canaan (see v. 10). Although Hazor was burned to the ground, it was afterwards restored and

became a capital again. It was fortified by Solomon (I Kings 9:15) and was taken by Tiglath-Pileser (II Kings 15:29). It belonged to tribe of Naphtali. According to Josephus (*Antiquities* V, v., 1), it was above Lake Huleh. Recent archaeological excavations in the area are some of the most interesting of all Palestine.

2. *Where was Chinneroth?* 11:2

Chinneroth was another name for the Sea of Galilee. In New Testament times this Sea was also called the Sea of Tiberias after it was renamed by Tiberius Caesar. The same body of water was also known as Lake Genesseret. The alliance which Jabin formed reached out to include kings as far south as the central part of Canaan.

3. *Where was Dor?* 11:2b

The town of Dor was built by Phoenicians who settled there on account of an abundance of purple mussels. It was allotted to the Manassites but was in the territory of Asher (17:11, cf. 19:26), and taken possession by the children of Joseph (I Chronicles 7:29). The city itself was situated on the Mediterranean Sea, below the promontory of Carmel, and was nine miles north of Caesarea.

4. *Where was Mount Hermon?* 11:3

Mount Hermon is the dominating feature of the landscape of northern Palestine. The mountain lies north and east of the waters of Merom. From its heights one can see without the aid of field glasses all the way to Damascus farther north and to Mount Tabor to the south. Snow lies on the peaks of Mount Hermon during most of the year, and the melting snow provides enough moisture to nourish vegetation. The village which lies at the foot of the mountain is some 2000 feet above sea level and the peak lies some 7000 feet higher. It is not a rocky mountain although there are some bold and majestic masses of naked rock to be seen at various points. Most of the surface is covered with soil and shepherds through the years drove

their flocks almost to its summit in search of good pasture. The territory where it was located was called the land of Mizpeh, a name given to it by Jacob as he parted from Laban (Genesis 31:49).

5. *Where did Jabin get chariots?* 11:4

The fact that the northern Canaanites came to fight with horses and chariots is an indication of the advanced civilization which was found in the North. This was the land of the Hittites, a branch of the Canaanites who were very highly developed in artistic skills. No record is made of the Israelites having such equipment for war. They seemed to fight with bows and arrows, spears, swords, and javelins. It is possible that the northern Canaanites had received their chariots from Egypt (I Kings 10:28, 29).

6. *Where was Merom?* 11:5

These peoples who came out to war were as numerous as the sand by the seashore; and they had very many horses and chariots. All these kings agreed together concerning the war and the place of battle, and they encamped at Merom to fight against Israel. The name *Merom* is like *Meirom*, a village whose name is also found as *Meirum*. It is a celebrated place of pilgrimage among the Jews, because Hillel, Shammai, Simeon ben Jochai, and other noted Rabbis are said to be buried there. About two hours' journey northwest of Safed, upon a rocky mountain, there is a spring which forms a small brook and flows away through the valley below Safed. This stream, which is said to reach the Lake of Tiberias in the neighborhood of Bethsaida, is in all probability to be regarded as the "waters of Merom," according to Josephus (*Antiquities* V, i, 18). These kings encamped at Beeroth, a city of Upper Galilee, not far from Kedesh.

7. *Why did God tell Joshua to "hough ther horses"?* 11:6

God told Joshua to make the horses incapable of running fast and pulling the chariots. To hough a horse

was to break the tendons in its lower legs so that it could not run fast. It would still be capable of pulling plows and doing all kinds of domestic work. In this way the horses were spared but were made unfit for military action. The fact that the chariots could be burned indicates that they were made mostly from wood, but they were doubtlessly covered with metal to shield them from spears and javelins.

8. *Why is Sidon called "Sidon the Great"? 11:8*

Sidon is called "the great" (see 19:28), because at that time it was the metropolis of Phoenicia. By the time of David it had lost its ancient splendor and was outstripped by its daughter city of Tyre. It is still to be seen in the town of Saida, a town of five or six thousand inhabitants with many large and well-built houses. The fact that Joshua chased the Canaanites to the far distant point on the Mediterranean Seacoast and to Misrephoth-maim on the east indicates that the campaign was completely successful for the Israelites. Misrephoth-maim was a place with a name which indicated there were slime pits and salt pits in the area. The entire region was flat and marshy. Flat land enabled the northern Canaanites to use their chariots well in their campaigns, but even this advantage in armament did not overcome the men who were doing the will of God.

The Destruction of Hazor 11:10-15

10 And Joshua at that time turned back, and took Hazor, and smote the king thereof with the sword: for Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms.

11 And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them; there was not any left to breathe: and he burnt Hazor with fire.

12 And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did Joshua take, and smote them with the edge of the sword, and he utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the Lord commanded.

13 But as for the cities that stood still in their strength, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only; that did Joshua burn.

14 And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe.

15 As the Lord commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses.

9. Why was Hazor utterly razed? 11:11

Hazor was burned with fire because it was the most important city of the North. Here Jabin had his headquarters. The city had been the rallying point of the Northern Canaanites. When it was destroyed, they would have very little courage to continue their resistance. To burn Hazor was to burn their capital, and its utter destruction symbolized the complete defeat which the northern Canaanites suffered.

10. Why were some cities spared? 11:13

The cities which were spared were described as those which stood still in their strength. This may be an indication of the fact that they had not entered into the coalition and had remained at home. The original text, however, indicates that they were cities which were on heights which rose above the plain where the battle was fought. These were probably walled cities and therefore very difficult to take. Joshua did not have time in his campaign to destroy completely all of the cities. This was to be the task of the Israelites who settled the land. It was enough

for Joshua and the men whom he was leading to break the backbone of resistance and to make it possible for the thousands to come in, finish up the conquest, and settle in the Promised Land.

A Summary of Joshua's Campaigns 11:16-23

16 So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same;

17 Even from the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even unto Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon under mount Hermon: and all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them.

18 Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.

19 There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle.

20 For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favor, but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses.

21 And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities.

22 There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained.

23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.

11. *Where was Mount Halak?* 11:17

The name of the mountain indicates it was a smooth mountain. Doubtless this is a reference to an area called the Ascent Akrabbim and mentioned in Numbers 34:3, 4 and Joshua 15:2, 3. The area is somewhat north-northeast of Abdah, an area near Wadi el-Marra. Baal-gad, the point farthest north in the notice of the extent of the conquest, was near Mount Hermon. The mention of these two places gives an idea of how extensive the conquest had been. This point is also called Baal-Hermon (Judges 3:3, I Chronicles 5:23). The exact location of the settlement has not been determined.

12. *How long did Joshua wage war?* 11:18

The exact time of the beginning and ending of the conquest is not known. If Moses died about 1407 and Joshua were 80 years old at the time, the entire lifespan of Joshua would reach only to 1377 B.C. We know that Joshua died when he was 110 years of age. Perhaps only about half of his lifetime was spent in his military action, leaving him the latter half of his life for the allotment of the territory to the tribes. Perhaps the conquest took ten or fifteen years. This would indeed be a long war.

13. *Why did the Canaanites not ask for peace?* 11:19

Not a single leader among the Canaanites asked for any mercy except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. All the rest of the kings went to war against Joshua. It was the opinion of the writer, as he was moved with divine inspiration to write, that the Lord had hardened their hearts (v. 20). Looking at the situation from the perspective of modern historians, we can agree that it was the Lord's will that these people should be annihilated. They had sinned exceedingly. They were completely reprobate. The freedom of their will was not destroyed, but God had brought them to the place where they had to make a

decision for or against Him. They had been given repeated opportunities to make such decisions, and each time they chose to turn their backs on God. This repeated confrontation contributed to the hardening of their hearts. As we see God doing this, we can say God hardened their hearts. In the final analysis, however, they hardened their own hearts.

14. Who were the Anakim? 11:21

The Anakim were descendants of Anak, one of the original inhabitants of the land of Canaan. The children of Israel first met them when the spies went into the land (Numbers 13:22, 33). In the latter reference the statement is made that these sons of Anak came "of the giants." Elsewhere the giants are called Nephilim (see American Standard Translation here and at Genesis 6:4). In the reference to the "giants" in Genesis 6:4 it is said that these were "mighty men which were of old, men of renown." Whether they were large in stature or great in reputation and ability is a question hard to determine. The fact that the spies said they felt like grasshoppers in their sight and that these men looked upon them in the same way does not give the full answer. The ten spies brought up an evil report. It was quite evidently exaggerated. Nevertheless, these people were to be dealt with, and Joshua went against them without hesitation. They centered their activities in the South near Hebron, Debir, and Anab, points in the mountains of Judah and Israel. Joshua utterly destroyed these people leaving only a few in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod. These latter points were in the plain which was later known as the Philistine Plain. They would not be hard to deal with in the open territory of the sea-coast of the Mediterranean Sea, and Joshua evidently felt that it was sufficient to drive them out of the center of the territory.

15. *Why are Judah and Israel mentioned separately?* 11:21

The fact that Judah and Israel are mentioned separately does not indicate the book was written after the kingdom was divided in the days of Rehoboam. Judah always had a unique place among the sons of Jacob. Jacob gave him the *barak* and *bekorah*, his blessing and birthright (Genesis 49:8-12). When the children of Israel marched through the wilderness of Sinai on the route to Caanan, Judah marched first. When they began to make their conquest, it was Judah who went up first to battle (Judges 1:1 ff.). Joshua saw that the land was settled before he died, and the entire southern section of the land was given to Judah. His northern border was on a line which stretched west from the north end of the Dead Sea. His southern border went to the extreme limits of the land given to the children of Israel. All of this southern section was given to him. All the rest of the tribes of Israel settled north of Judah and east of the Jordan. In this way Judah was again separated from the rest of the people and it was natural for Joshua to make a reference to the mountains of Judah and the mountains of Israel.

16. *Where were Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod?* 11:22

Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod were leading cities among the Philistines who lived along the plain on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The lords of these towns were especially active during the period of the judges. Samson went down from the hill country of Dan and carried away the posts of the gate of the city of Gaza (Judges 16:1 ff.). Goliath was the famous Philistine from Gath (I Samuel 17:4). When the Ark was captured by the Philistines, it was taken down to the house of Dagon in Ashdod (I Samuel 5:1). Gaza was the southernmost of the towns and quite close to the sea. Gath was the point nearest the center of the land, and Ashdod was the northernmost

and another city near the sea. All of these points were west of the main part of the Promised Land.

17. *Were all the Canaanite towns conquered?* 11:23

The taking of the whole land does not imply that all the towns and villages to the very last had been conquered, or that all the Canaanites were rooted out from every corner of the land. The conquest was of such character that the power of the Canaanites was broken, their dominion overthrown, and their whole land thoroughly given into the hands of the Israelites. Those who still remained were crushed into powerless fugitives. Moreover, Israel had received the strongest pledge, in the powerful help which it had received from the Lord in the conquests thus far obtained, that the faithful covenant-God would continue His help in the conflicts which still remained. He would secure for Israel a complete victory and the full possession of the Promised Land.

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 11

1. What king led in the northern coalition?
2. What was the capital of the leader of the northern coalition?
3. What unusual equipment of war did the Canaanites in the north use against the Israelites?
4. Near what body of water was the battle fought in the North?
5. How far west did Joshua chase the defeated Canaanites?
6. How far east did Joshua chase the enemy?
7. What city did Joshua burn with fire?
8. What mountain on the south marked the extent of Joshua's conquest?
9. What mountain on the north marked the extent of Joshua's conquest?
10. What mighty men did Joshua drive out of the mountains of Judah and Israel?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 12

- Vv. 1- 6 *Summary of Moses' conquest.* Moses led the people in battle with Sihon, king of the Amorites, and against Og, king of Bashan. These conquests are mentioned in a succinct fashion before more detailed consideration is given to a summary of the conquest of the people of Israel under the leadership of Joshua. The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh settled in the land taken in the conquest led by Moses.
- Vv. 7- 8 *A general outline of Joshua's conquered territory.* The land which Joshua captured for the people of Israel is described in a general way as lying west of the Jordan River. It extended from the Lebanon Mountains in the north to the smooth mountain, Mt. Halak, near the territory of Edom in the south. Topographically it was mountains, valleys, plains, springs, wilderness, and the south country.
- Vv. 9-24 *A list of the kings defeated by Joshua.* Thirty-one kings were defeated by the children of Israel under the leadership of Joshua. The first one mentioned whom they attacked was the king of Jericho. The last one named was the king of Tirzah, evidently one of the kings who had taken part in the northern coalition.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Christian life is a warfare.* The Bible is replete with references which place God-fearing people in the role of fighters. This is true not only of the New Testament, but of the Old Testament as well. Moses was primarily the great law-giver, but it was also his lot

STUDIES IN JOSHUA-JUDGES-RUTH

to lead Israel in their first battles. Although some may not be engaged in polemics in Christian living and teaching as much as others, all must "fight the good fight of faith" (I Timothy 6:12).

2. *God keeps His word.* When God called Abraham out of the Ur of Chaldees, He said He would make of him a great nation. Later he told him He would give him the land of Canaan as his possession, displacing the nations who dwelt in the land at the time (Genesis 15:18). This promise was repeated to Jacob as he lay on the ground at Bethel (Genesis 28:13). Abraham and Jacob did not see the fulfillment of these promises, but God kept His word. The promise was fulfilled in the days of Joshua as they drove the Canaanites from the Promised Land. God is just as faithful to His promises of special blessings to those who trust Him today. He never fails.
3. *None can withstand God.* Thirty-one different kings are listed among those who hardened their hearts and resisted the onrush of the people of God. The last verses of this chapter are like a casualty list of those who threw away their lives and reaped punishment as a result. Christians today should be very careful lest they should make the same mistake and eventually find their names are not in the book of life, but are rather listed with those who have attempted to resist God.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Summary of Moses' Conquest 12:1-6

Now these are the kings of the land, which the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land on the other side Jordan toward the rising of the sun, from the river Arnon unto mount Hermon, and all the plain on the east:

2 Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and ruled from Aroer, which is upon the bank of the river Arnon, and from the middle of the river, and from half Gilead, even unto the river Jabbok, which is the border of the children of Ammon;

3 And from the plain to the Sea of Chinneroth on the east, and unto the sea of the plain, even the Salt Sea on the east, the way to Beth-jeshimoth; and from the south, under Ashdoth-pisgah;

4 And the coast of Og king of Bashan, which was of the remnant of the giants, that dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei,

5 And reigned in mount Hermon, and in Salcah, and in all Bashan, unto the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and half Gilead, the border of Sihon king of Heshbon.

6 Them did Moses the servant of the Lord and the children of Israel smite: and Moses the servant of the Lord gave it for a possession unto the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

1. What is the "other side" of Jordan? 12:1

The reference to "the other side of Jordan towards the rising of the sun" is a phrase which reveals the point of view of the writer. Joshua wrote the book after he had crossed into the Promised Land. On occasions when the writer is east of the Jordan, he refers to the land of the Jordan as "the other side of Jordan." This area was sometimes called Perea, or Gilead. The main part of the land was west of the Jordan. That part which was east was called "the other side."

2. Where were the Arnon, the Jabbok and Gilead? 12:2

The Arnon was a river which flowed from the highlands east of the Dead Sea into the middle of that sea. The mouth was about one half the distance between the

northern and southern ends of the Salt Sea on the east side of the Sea. The Jabbok was a river which rose in the heights on the east of the Jordan River and flowed into the Jordan River about half-way between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. Gilead was a term given to the territory which lay east of the Jordan River between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. Sihon had ruled this area, and his people were known as the Amorites, the highlanders. His capital was in Heshbon, and his kingdom extended as far south as the town Aroer, sometimes called the "Beersheba of the east." Heshbon is almost due east of the point where the Jordan river enters the Dead Sea.

3. *Who were the children of Ammon?* 12:2b

The children of Ammon were descendants of Lot through his younger daughter. When the younger daughter bore her first child, she called his name Ben-Ammi. From him the children of Ammon were descended, and they occupied the territory which lay east of the country ruled by Sihon. Moses had not fought against the Amorites but had passed by and left them unmolested.

4. *What was "the plain"?* 12:3

The plain is sometimes called the Arabah. The term is applied to the great valley between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba in most contexts, but here it is used as the name of the valley lying between Mt. Hermon and the Dead Sea. From the Sea of Galilee to the south end of the Dead Sea, the Arabs call it the Ghor, or depression. Some geographers feel that an exact point of division may be made between the Ghor and the Arabah along a line of white cliffs which crosses the valley at an angle between the flat marsh land to the south of the Dead Sea. From that point to the gulf of Aqaba it is thus known as the Arabah, but that which lies north to the Sea of Galilee

is better known as the Ghor. The Sea of Chinneroth is the Sea of Galilee, and the Sea of the Plain is identified as the Dead Sea. Beth-jeshimoth is an Anglicized form of the word which means "the house or place of deserts." It was a town in Moab not far east of the mouth of the Jordan River. Ashdoth-pisgah is a word pointing to the springs of Pisgah, the mountain where Moses was buried. It lay to the south of the north end of the Dead Sea. All these points were within the kingdom of Sihon.

5. *Was Og a giant?* 12:4

The conquest of Og is more fully described in Deuteronomy 3:1-13 and Numbers 21:33-35. The American Standard Version describes Og as being of the remnant of the Rephaim. His bedstead was preserved and was a matter of public interest (Deuteronomy 3:11). This does not mean necessarily that he was as large as his bed. A king would probably have a very impressive throne and bed. No doubt he was a mighty man and one of the men of renown. He may have been of large stature, but there is insufficient evidence to justify taking the view that he was of terribly unusual stature. Bashan, his territory, was east of the Sea of Galilee. His headquarters were at Ashtaroth and Edrei, two cities in his territory. Tell Ashtarath is located twenty-one miles east of the Sea of Galilee, and Edrei is now known as Ed-derah and is another twenty miles south and east of Ashtaroth. His territory embraced Mt. Hermon to the north. Salcah is the modern Salkhad and reached to the border of the Geshurites, a Syrian principality. The Maachathites were a small kingdom probably in the stony desert which lay east of Argob. Og thus ruled over half of Gilead, the half which lay north of the kingdom of Sihon. This land then became the possession of the men of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

A General Outline of Joshua's Conquered Territory 12:7, 8

7 And these are the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan on the west, from Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon even unto the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir; which Joshua gave unto the tribes of Israel for a possession according to their divisions;

8 In the mountains, and in the valleys, and in the plains, and in the springs, and in the wilderness, and in the south country; the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites:

6. To what points did the Promised Land reach? 12:7

The Promised Land extended from Baal-gad near Mount Hermon on the north to Mount Halak, a smooth mountain near the territory of Edom on the south. All the mountain ranges, including Mount Tabor, Mount Carmel, Mount Ebal, and Mount Gerizim were theirs to terrace and cultivate. The valleys, especially those of the Jordan River and Jezreel, belonged to them. The Maritime plains of Sharon and Philistia made up a part of this land God gave to Israel. The *South*, the Negeb, was Israel's to inhabit. From the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the Arabian Desert on the east, Palestine belonged to the sons of Jacob.

7. Why did Joshua repeat the names of the Canaanite tribes? 12:8b

Along with a listing of the various sections of the country which were possessed by the Israelites, Joshua listed the tribes of Canaanites who were dispossessed. These tribes were first listed when God predicted the fate of his descendants (Genesis 15:19-21). At that time, ten different tribes were listed; but in Joshua only six are given. All of them are embraced in the name, Canaanites. When different groups are placed under a general title, such as

Amorite, a smaller number is given than when such bands as Girgashites, Kadmonites, and Hittites are listed individually. None of the Canaanites escaped completely from the avenging sword of Joshua as it exacted God's punishment of those whose cup of iniquity was full and overflowing. All were driven out of Canaan; and the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their children was finally given to the people led by Joshua.

A List of the Kings Defeated by Joshua 12:9-24

9 The king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Beth-el, one;

10 The king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one;

11 The king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one;

12 The king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one;

13 The king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one;

14 The king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one;

15 The king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one;

16 The king of Makkedah, one; the king of Beth-el, one;

17 The king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hepher, one;

18 The king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one;

19 The king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one;

20 The king of Shimron-meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one;

21 The king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one;

22 The king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam of Carmel, one;

23 The king of Dor in the coast of Dor, one; the king of the nations of Gilgal, one;

24 The king of Tirzah, one: all the kings thirty and one.

8. *Why was the king of Bethel not mentioned?* 12:9

The men of Bethel joined with the men of Ai when they were ambushed by the Israelites. The town of Bethel was close to Ai, and there was apparently no separate battle fought against Bethel itself at this time. Ai was the main city known as a regal city; and when Ai fell, it also brought the downfall of Bethel. The "children of Joseph" later possessed the city, and the conquest of Bethel by these men of Ephraim is described in some detail in Judges 1:22-26.

9. *Who was the king of Jerusalem?* 12:10

Jerusalem was known as Jebus, and her king was Adonizedek. Adonizedek was the leader of the southern league of kings who tried to join themselves together to attack the Gibeonites after they made peace with Israel. The next kings in the list were those who were in this southern coalition. Jerusalem was ruled by a king as early as the days of Abraham; for when he came back from rescuing Lot, he was met by Melchizedek, the king of Salem (Genesis 14:18). It is easy to see how this city once called Jebus and again called Salem eventually became known as Jerusalem.

10. *Who was the king of Hazor?* 12:19

Jabin was the king of Hazor. It was he who led the league in the North as the kings in that area banded themselves together to fight against Israel. The next kings in the list were those who formed this northern coalition. None of these kings was successful in defending his city against the people of Israel. All of them fell, and their cities were destroyed. With the fall of the kings in the

northern and southern coalitions, the major part of the resistance of the Canaanites was destroyed.

11. *Who was the "king of the nations"?* 12:23

Some commentators view the Hebrew word for nations as a proper noun. They thus translate this passage like the others and talk about the king of the Goim. They thus make the word *Goim* a proper name both here and in Genesis 14:1 where Tidal is called the king of the nations. Some identify the location as that of Gitum; and inasmuch as all the other names are proper names of cities, it would seem better to describe this man as the king of Goim. Otherwise, we are left at a loss to know over what nations he ruled.

12. *How many kings were there in all?* 12:24

There were thirty-one kings who were overthrown by the Israelites as they swept into Canaan and took possession of the land which was promised to them. Most of these kings have been met in the account which precedes this summary and further study of the exact battles in which they were involved would lead to a review of the preceding text. These were kings of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites—nations whom God was driving out from before Israel.

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 12

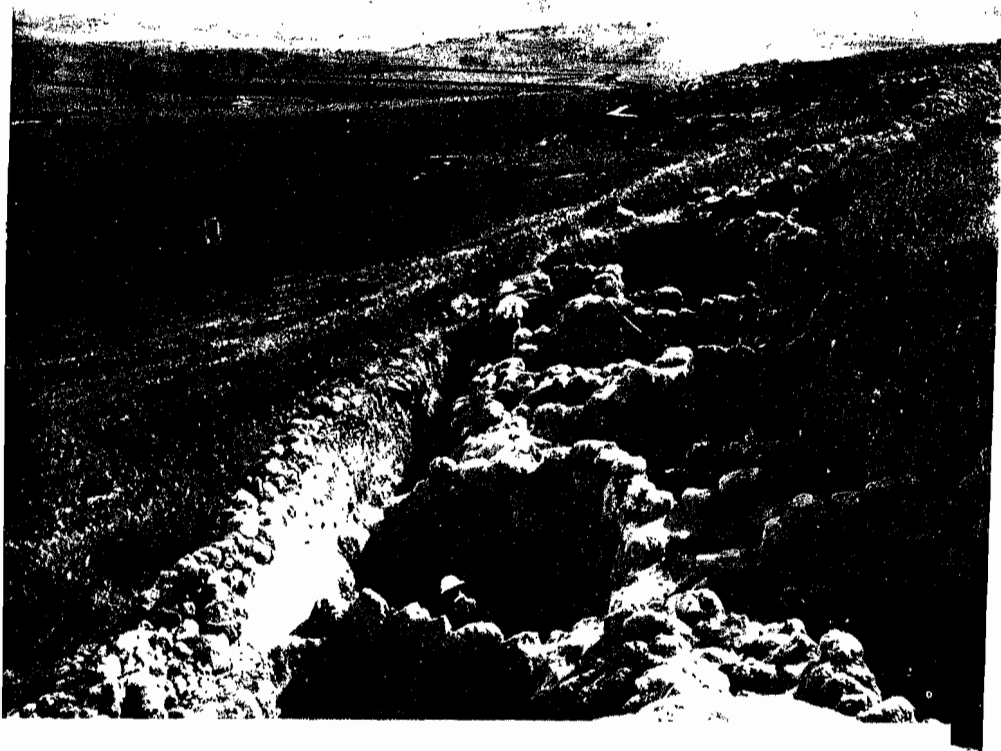
1. What two kings did Moses overthrow?
2. What three tribes settled in the land taken by Moses?
3. On which side of the Jordan River was the land taken by Moses?
4. What river formed the southern border of the land taken by Moses?
5. What mountain was on the northern border of the land taken by Moses?

THE TWELVE TRIBES

Joshua 13-24

☆ Cities of Refuge





Beth Shemesh—Section of the North Wall—Valley of Sorek on the left—Judean Hills in Distance (Matson Photo Service)

STUDIES IN JOSHUA-JUDGES-RUTH

6. What king is sometimes described as a descendant of giants?
7. What mountain is described as the northern border of the land taken by Joshua?
8. What mountain is given as the southern border of the land taken by Joshua?
9. How many kings in all did Joshua overthrow?
10. What six names are given to the Canaanite tribes whom Israel drove out?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 13

- Vv. 1- 6 *God's instructions to Joshua.* This chapter marks the turning point of the book of Joshua. The first twelve chapters were devoted to the narration of the conquest of the land. The final chapters are devoted to the recording of the process of dividing the land among the tribes. Some time may have passed after the battles were over before God gave these instructions to Joshua since it is said that at the time Joshua was "old and stricken in years" (verse 1).
- Vv. 7-14 *A description of the land east of Jordan.* The land east of the Jordan had been given to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. When God gave instructions to Joshua about dividing the land west of the Jordan, He reminded Joshua of the promises which Moses had already made to the eastern tribes. At the same time, there was a review of the general borders of the entire land east of the Jordan.
- Vv. 15-23 *The territory of Reuben.* Moses gave the southernmost part of the land east of the Jordan to the children of Reuben. Their territory was

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down around the Dead Sea on the east side of that large body of water. It lay north of the Arnon River which flowed into the eastern side of the Dead Sea about halfway up the east coast.

Vv. 24-28 *The territory of Gad.* The children of Gad were given the land which lay east of the Jordan River and north of the territory of Reuben. It was roughly one half of the territory sometimes called Gilead.

Vv. 29-33 *The territory of Manasseh.* Moses gave the northernmost part of the land east of the Jordan to the children of Manasseh. Not all of the children of Manasseh settled east of the Jordan, but roughly one half of the descendants of Manasseh lived in this area. Their territory lay north of the land given to Gad and east of the sea of Galilee. It was primarily the land which had been ruled by Og, king of Bashan.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The Lord is not slack.* When Jacob, the great patriarch of the children of Israel, lay on the land where Joshua was standing, God promised to give the territory to his descendants. This promise had been made half a millennium prior to the time when God actually gave directions to Joshua for distributing the land. It may seem to man that God works slowly; but as it has been said, the mills of the gods grind exceedingly slowly but they grind exceedingly fine. No promise of God has ever failed. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise" (II Peter 3:9).

2. *God's leaders are led by God.* Joshua had a position of responsibility, but he did not bear the responsibility alone. Although Joshua led the people, God led him. God gave specific directions to Joshua for distributing the land among the twelve tribes. In giving these directions to Joshua he reminded him that Moses had already made certain provisions for Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.
3. *God has something for all His children.* The tribe of Levi was not included in the giving out of the land itself. The tribe of Levi were God's own special people. They had been taken from among the children in lieu of the firstborn from among all the tribes. These sons of Levi did not receive any land as such. They were given forty-eight cities in which to dwell, with small surrounding suburbs for their use. Their inheritance was the sacrifices of the Lord. They lived from the tithes and offerings brought to God by God's people. This special provision for the tribe of Levi is indicative of the fact that God does provide for every need.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

God's Instructions to Joshua 13:1-6

Now Joshua was old and stricken in years; and the Lord said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.

2 This is the land that yet remaineth: all the borders of the Philistines, and all Geshuri,

3 From Sihor, which is before Egypt, even unto the borders of Ekron northward, which is counted to the Canaanite: five lords of the Philistines; the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites:

4 From the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that is beside the Sidonians, unto Aphek, to the borders of the Amorites:

5 And the land of the Giblites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrising, from Baal-gad under mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath.

6 All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon unto Misrephoth-maim, and all the Sidonians, them will I drive out from before the children of Israel: only divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance, as I have commanded thee.

1. How old was Joshua? 13:1

The statement is made that Joshua was "old and stricken in years." His exact age is not given, but we know that he died at the age of one hundred and ten years (24:29). He would of necessity have been at least sixty years old when he came into the Promised Land, since he was among those numbered at Sinai and also among those numbered in the steppes of Moab forty years later. Only Joshua and Caleb were among those counted in the first census and among those who were allowed to go into the Promised Land. If he were sixty when he came into the land and died when he was one hundred and ten, he would be allowed some fifty years for conquering the land and settling the tribes in it. It seems reasonable to suppose that he made this division of the land some years before he died. Nevertheless, he must have been approaching the last years of his life when God gave him these instructions.

2. How much land remained unconquered? 13:2-6

Part of the unconquered land lay towards the South, part toward the North. The cities still occupied by the Canaanites were left for capture by the tribes into whose allotment they might fall; but the land especially mentioned falls into the following districts: (1) The Shephelah

and the Maritime Plain, being described as “. . . the borders of the Philistines;” (2) Geshuri, the land of an ancient tribe, which lived in the desert between Arabia and Philistia (cf. I Samuel 27:8); (3) Pentapolis, the region of the five cities—Gaza, Ashdod, Eshkalon, Gath, and Ekron; (4) Hamath, the extreme northern boundary point of Palestine; (5) and the land stretching from the Lebanon Mountains to Misrephoth-maim, probably the place later known as Zarephath.

A Description of the Land East of Jordan 13:7-14

7 Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half tribe of Manasseh,

8 With whom the Reubenites and the Gadites have received their inheritance, which Moses gave them, beyond Jordan eastward, even as Moses the servant of the Lord gave them;

9 From Aroer, that is upon the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that is in the midst of the river, and all the plain of Medeba unto Dibon;

10 And all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon, unto the border of the children of Ammon;

11 And Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites and Maachathites, and all mount Hermon, and all Bashan unto Salcah;

12 All the kingdom of Og in Bashan, which reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei, who remained of the remnant of the giants: for these did Moses smite, and cast them out.

13 Nevertheless the children of Israel expelled not the Geshurites, nor the Maachathites: but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day.

14 Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave none inheritance; the sacrifices of the Lord God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance, as he said unto them.

3. *Why were there nine and a half tribes?* 13:7

Since Reuben, Gad, and part of the tribe of Manasseh received an inheritance east of the Jordan, there were nine and a half tribes left to receive land west of the Jordan. The western tribes were to receive the major part of the Promised Land. They received territory which lay west of the Jordan River and extended to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Since all of Simeon's territory lay within the boundaries of the land given to Judah, the Simeonites are not counted as a separate tribe. In reality, they were divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel (Genesis 49:7).

4. *What was the extent of the land east of the Jordan?*
13:8-14

The territory east of the Jordan had all been conquered in the days of Moses. It is apparent that there was less territory unconquered in those campaigns. At least no mention is made of land which had not been taken from its original inhabitants. The land east of the Jordan extended north from Aroer, a settlement on the north bank of the Arnon River. This river flowed into the Dead Sea about halfway up the east coast of that body of water. The territory extended through all of what was called Gilead and reached to the territory east of the Sea of Galilee. This northern part had been ruled by Og and was best described by the word "Bashan."

5. *Who were the giants?* 13:12

The American Standard Version translates the word from the original language with the English word *Rephaim*. The word is elsewhere translated as "dead things" (Job 26:5), and the word seems to be a derivative of the verb which means to "sink" or to "relax." It probably was a reference to the descendants of Rapha, and properly translated as a proper noun in the American Standard translation. Og did have a large bedstead, but he may have had

this as a symbol of his affluence as much as for the accommodation of his large body (Deuteronomy 3:11).

6 *How did these people live among the Israelites?* 13:13

Reference is made to the fact that the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwelt among the Israelites for a considerable length of time. If Joshua lived fifty years after he came into the Promised Land and perhaps even forty years after the original conquest was finished, sufficient time had elapsed to incline him to make mention of the fact that these people were still among the Israelites. Radical critics say this reference is an indication of the fact that the book was not written by Joshua, but the argument is not strong enough to overcome all the other indications of its having been written by Joshua.

7. *Why did the Levites receive no inheritance?* 13:14

In two different verses of this chapter mention is made of the fact that the Levites did not receive an inheritance. One is in this verse and the other is in the closing verse of the chapter. In the latter instance it is said that "the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance" (verse 33). At this point it is said that "the sacrifices of the Lord God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance." The descendants of Levi were given the responsibility of teaching the Law to the people of God. Out of their midst came the priestly family, the descendants of Aaron. They did not receive land which they could till, but they were given forty-eight cities in which they might live. Around these cities lay suburbs, or open ground which they could use for grazing animals or for other small crops, but it was not their privilege to have vineyards and fields of grain. They lived from the tithes and offerings made by the people of Israel. Certain portions of the sacrifices were designated for their consumption. This was God's way of taking care of these servants.

The Territory of Reuben 13:15-23

15 And Moses gave unto the tribe of the children of Reuben inheritance according to their families.

16 And their coast was from Aroer, that is on the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that is in the midst of the river, and all the plain by Medeba;

17 Heshbon, and all her cities that are in the plain; Dibon, and Bamoth-baal, and Beth-baalmeon,

18 And Jahazah, and Kedemoth, and Mephaath,

19 And Kirjathaim, and Sibmah, and Zareth-shahar in the mount of the valley,

20 And Beth-peor, and Ashdoth-pisgah, and Beth-jeshimoth,

21 And all the cities of the plain, and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses smote with the princes of Midian, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, which were dukes of Sihon, dwelling in the country.

22 Balaam also the son of Beor, the soothsayer, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them.

23 And the border of the children of Reuben was Jordan, and the border thereof. This was the inheritance of the children of Reuben after their families, the cities and the villages thereof.

8. *Where was the land of Reuben? 13:15-23*

In general terms, the borders of the land of the tribe of Reuben may be described as follows: on the west, the Dead Sea and the Jordan River; on the south, the land of Moab; on the east, the land of Ammon; and on the north, the Wady Nusariyat. Sihon, king of the Amorites, had ruled this land; and it had been taken from him by the children of Israel in the campaign led by Moses (Numbers 21:21-31).

9. *Who had ruled this land formerly?* 13:21

Sihon, king of the Amorites, had ruled over this land before the children of Israel conquered it. The conquest was made under the leadership of Moses (Numbers 21:24). His capital had been in Heshbon, the town which had originally belonged to the Moabites. Later it was made a Levitical city (Joshua 21:39). The present location is called Hesban and lies twenty miles east of the Jordan and stands some four thousand feet above the valley. An excellent spring is located at this point and thus it is an extremely pleasant location. Extensive ruins are still on the site. The king had several chiefs who assisted him in government, and Moses destroyed these along with their leader.

10. *Who was Balaam, the son of Beor?* 13:22

Balaam was the soothsayer from the east who had been summoned by Balak, king of the Moabites (Numbers 22:5). He had been warned of God to speak only those things which were revealed to him by God. His cupidity was so strong that he is described in the New Testament as the epitome of avarice (II Peter 2:15, 16; cf. Jude 11). When God revealed only blessings for Israel through Balaam, Balaam stayed among the Moabites and was slain when Israel was purged of the foreign seducers who had come in among them (Numbers 31:8).

The Territory of Gad 13:24-28

24 And Moses gave inheritance unto the tribe of Gad, even unto the children of Gad according to their families.

25 And their coast was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the children of Ammon, unto Aroer that is before Rabbah;

26 And from Heshbon unto Ramath-mizpeh, and Betonim: and from Mahanaim unto the border of Debir;

27 And in the valley, Beth-aram, and Beth-nimrah, and Succoth, and Baphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, Jordan and his border, even unto the edge of the Sea of Chinnereth on the other side Jordan eastward.

28 This is the inheritance of the children of Gad after their families, the cities, and their villages.

11. What were the borders of the tribe of Gad? 13:24-28

The men of Gad inhabited the center of the land east of the Jordan River. On the south, their border was Reuben; on the east, the Arabian desert, on the west, the Jordan River; and on the north, the land of the half-tribe of Manasseh. The territory is designated especially as centering around Mahanaim. Mahanaim itself figures into later Israelite history with a great deal of regularity and importance.

12. Where was the Sea of Chinnereth? 13:27

The Sea of Chinnereth is best known as the Sea of Galilee. It is also sometimes called the Sea of Tiberias, or Lake Gennesaret (Matthew 17:27; Luke 5:1; John 21:6). This body of water was very outstanding and important to those people who lived in Canaan. It made a good point for a boundary line, and the tribe of Gad evidently settled in the territory which had a border running from Mahanaim in a northwest direction to the south tip of the Sea of Galilee.

The Territory of Manasseh 13:29-33

29 And Moses gave inheritance unto the half tribe of Manasseh: and this was the possession of the half tribe of the children of Manasseh by their families.

30 And their coast was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair, which are in Bashan, threescore cities:

31 And half Gilead, and Ashtaroth, and Edrei, cities

of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, were pertaining unto the children of Machir the son of Manasseh, even to the one half of the children of Machir by their families.

32 These are the countries which Moses did distribute for inheritance in the plains of Moab, on the other side Jordan, by Jericho, eastward.

33 But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance: the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said unto them.

13. In what area did the half-tribe of Manasseh settle east of Jordan? 13:29-33

Children of Machir, a son of Manasseh, settled east of the Jordan. The rest of the descendants of Manasseh by his other children settled west of the Jordan. Thus, each of the two groups of the children of Manasseh became known as a half-tribe. The half-tribe which settled east of the Jordan inhabited the northernmost part of the land east of the Jordan. Their land was the former kingdom of Og, king of Bashan. In New Testament times it was the country known as Decapolis. On the west, it was bordered by the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River; on the south, by the land of Gad and especially Mahanaim; on the east, by the Arabian desert; and on the north, by the northernmost boundaries of the Promised Land, the land of Hamath.

14. Who was Jair? 13:30

Jair was the son of Segub, the descendant of Judah on his father's side (I Chronicles 2:22) and from Manasseh on his mother's side. Moses counted Jair among the children of Manasseh (Numbers 32:41; Deuteronomy 3:14), largely because of his conquest and settling of Gilead (I Chronicles 2:23). His descendants appeared to have settled in the southern part of the tribe of Manasseh, and some of the towns there are known as Havoth-Jair, or

villages of Jair (Numbers 32:41; Deuteronomy 3:14). They are variantly numbered as being twenty-three (I Chronicles 2:22), thirty (Judges 10:4), and sixty (I Chronicles 2:23; Joshua 13:30). It is thought that sixty may have been conquered by Jair and his brethren, with only twenty-three designated for him and seven others being added later.

15. *Who was Machir?* 13:31

Machir was the oldest son of Manasseh (17:1). He was old enough to have children before Joseph died in Egypt (Genesis 50:23). His grandson, Zelophehad, had only daughters; and a special decree was made about their inheritance (Numbers 27:1; 36:1; Joshua 17:3). It was his daughter who became the wife of Hezron and mother of Segub (I Chronicles 2:21). It was this line of the descendants of Manasseh who made special request for the land east of the Jordan, and their request was granted by Moses before he died. Joshua was fully informed about this as he began to make preparations for distributing the rest of the Promised Land to the other tribes.

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 13

1. How many tribes settled west of Jordan?
2. How many tribes settled east of Jordan?
3. Which tribe received no land as an inheritance?
4. Which tribe was southernmost in the land east of Jordan?
5. What Amorite king had formerly ruled this area?
6. Which tribe was in the center in the land east of Jordan?
7. Which tribe was northernmost in the territory east of Jordan?
8. What king had formerly ruled this land?
9. How many cities were in this area?
10. By what name was this northern area known?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 14

- Vv. 1-5 *The plan for dividing the land.* God told Joshua to divide the land by "lot" (v. 2). This plan had already been selected during the days of Moses (Numbers 26:55, 56; 33:54; 34:13). The sacred lot was often used to decide such matters, God showing His will through this instrument.
- Vv. 6-12 *Caleb's request.* Caleb had been the member of the tribe of Judah selected to go with eleven other men to spy out the land. Joshua had been the man selected from the tribe of Ephraim. These two men had gone out together under Moses' order (Numbers 13:6, 8, 17-20). The passage here clarifies the statement which God made about Caleb in the days of Moses (Numbers 14:23, 24). Caleb believed God and expected that His promise would be fulfilled.
- Vv. 13-15 *Caleb's inheritance.* Joshua knew full well the faithful service rendered by Caleb. He must have known also about the promise which was made concerning the land. For that reason He blessed Caleb and gave him Hebron, the city made dear to the Israelites by Abraham's dwelling there. Since the tribe of Judah received all the land south of the north end of the Dead Sea, Hebron lay in the very center of Judah's territory. It was an ideal place for the faithful leader to settle. Full details of his taking the land are given later in Joshua 15:13-19 and Judges 1:12-15.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God makes clear His will.* Sometimes the Bible seems repetitious to the reader. A statement may be repeated two or three times. The radical critics often charge that these repetitions indicate different authors who knew the same material and wrote it down. They further charge that the editors or redactors of the Scriptures put these different accounts together. On the other hand, it is apparent that the reason for repetitions in the Scripture is for emphasis. God made it crystal clear to Joshua that He wanted the land divided by lot. Joshua followed God's will.
2. *Blessed is the man who obeys God.* The psalmist says that the man who follows God will be like a tree planted by the river of water; his leaf will not wither; and whatsoever he does will prosper (Psalms 1). Caleb was this kind of a man. For eighty-five years God had given him strength.
3. *Men who follow God build fast friendships.* The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above. Joshua and Caleb had been sent out together with the spies (Numbers 13). They had been faithful to God's bidding and Joshua was happy to give Caleb the inheritance which God had indicated should be his.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Plan for Dividing the Land 14:1-5

And these are the countries which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for inheritance to them.

2 By lot was their inheritance, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes, and for the half tribe.

3 For Moses had given the inheritance of two tribes and a half tribe on the other side Jordan: but unto the Levites he gave none inheritance among them.

4 For the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim: therefore they gave no part unto the Levites in the land, save cities to dwell in, with their suburbs for their cattle and for their substance.

5 As the Lord commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did, and they divided the land.

1. Why was Eleazar involved in the allotting of the land?

14:1

Eleazar, the priest, was the son of Aaron who had been Israel's first high priest. Aaron was the brother of Moses and had died while the children of Israel were wandering in the desert. When Joshua was appointed successor to Moses, he was informed that he should go to the high priest for assistance (Numbers 27:18-23). The high priest would make inquiry of the Lord concerning His will in some matters. The Lord's will would then be made known to Joshua, the leader of the people. The allotting of the land was evidently of such importance that the high priest was asked to assist Joshua in making the assignments.

2. How did they cast lots? 14:2

The use of lots was especially characteristic of the ancient world. It was a standing custom of the Athenians to assign the land of conquered enemies to colonists by lot. How Joshua took the lot on this occasion we are not told. The Rabbins conjecture that there were two urns, in one had been placed little tablets with the names of the tribes and in the other similar tablets with the names of the dis-

tricts; and that one of each was drawn at the same time. The decision was made by lot to prevent all disputes with reference to their respective possessions. It was also to remove every ground of discontent and complaint. Each tribe might cheerfully and thankfully accept the share awarded to it as the inheritance intended for it by God. Calvin says that casting of lots is not regulated by opinion, caprice, or authority of men. It is true that it seems as though this might have been easily accomplished if Joshua or the high priest had been divinely inspired to give to every tribe its inheritance. But, men are never so ready to submit cheerfully to the decisions of another man, even though they may be the result of divine inspiration, as they are to a decision arrived at by lot over which the Lord presides; for this seems to raise the choice above human caprice.

3. *Why were Ephraim and Manasseh considered two tribes?*
14:4

Both Ephraim and Manasseh were children of Joseph. When Jacob had come into Egypt and found Joseph alive, he was so thankful for the preservation of his son's life that he adopted the two sons of Joseph as his own sons. He gave them special blessings before he blessed his own sons. By adopting these two sons in the place of Joseph, Jacob thus had thirteen sons, but the tribe of Levi was not considered with the other tribes. For these reasons we still speak of the twelve tribes of Israel—Reuben, Simeon, Issachar, Judah, Zebulun, Gad, Asher, Dan, Naphtail, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin. Ephraim and Manasseh received inheritance along with the sons of Jacob, and each was counted as a tribe in Israel. This fact was mentioned here, and it is explained that they received an inheritance along with the descendants of the eleven sons of Jacob.

Caleb's Request 14:6-12

6 Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenazite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea.

7 Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart.

8 Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the Lord my God.

9 And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God.

10 And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old.

11 As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in.

12 Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said.

4. *Why was Caleb called a Kenazite? 14:6*

The word 'Kenazite' is a title given to Caleb or to Jephunneh. This reference causes some to believe that Caleb descended from an Edomite named Kenaz. Kenaz was one of the sons of Eliphaz, the oldest son of Esau. He became the leader of one of the Edomite tribes (Genesis

36:11, 15). Caleb also had a brother, the father of Othniel by this same name (Joshua 15:17, Judges 1:13; 3:9, 11). Several descendants of Caleb, or names which may be compared with Edomite names are listed here:

- a. Shobal (I Chronicles 2:52, Genesis 36:29)
- b. Korah (I Chronicles 2:43; Genesis 36:14, 16, 18)
- c. Elah (I Chronicles 4:15, Genesis 36:41)

The Kenezites are mentioned in Genesis 15:19 along with the Kenites and the Kadmonites who were among the nations to be dispossessed by Israel. These nations evidently dwelt somewhere in the southern part of Canaan.

5. *How long had Israel been in Canaan when Caleb made his request?* 14:7, 10

Caleb said that he was forty years old when he went to spy out the land (v. 7). This was in the days of Moses and at the beginning of the wanderings (Numbers 13). When he made his request for land in Canaan he was eighty-five years old (v. 10). Forty-five years had elapsed between the time of Caleb's espionage and the time of his request of Joshua. Forty years of this had been spent in wandering before they entered into the Promised Land. This would indicate that the wars of conquest occupied only five years.

6. *Why did Caleb call the ten spies his brothers?* 14:8

Caleb said the other spies had made the hearts of the people to melt, but he wholly followed the Lord his God. Caleb had very little in common with the spies bringing the evil report, but they were related to him by their common ancestry in Jacob. The brotherhood was one of the flesh and not one of the spirit. The ten spies had come from the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Manasseh, and Benjamin. Joshua was of the tribe of Ephraim. Caleb was with the tribe of Judah. These two tribes were honored in having such able men as Joshua and Caleb.

7. *Is there a record of Moses' promise to Caleb?* 14:9

Moses said of Caleb that he would see the land and that God would give to him the land that he had trodden on (Deuteronomy 1:36). This appears to be something of a general promise because God said to Joshua: "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses" (1:3). It is also recorded that God said of Caleb he would be brought into the land and his seed would possess it (Numbers 14:24). All of this points to the promise as a rather general covenant made with Caleb. He probably was given the privilege of selecting whatever land he desired.

8. *What was the reason for Caleb's strength?* 14:11

Caleb said that he was as strong at eighty-five years of age as he had been when he was only forty. For this reason, some have called him a "cheerful old prevaricator." Such a title was given to him by an octogenarian who said that he knew he was not as strong at eighty as he had been at forty. Nevertheless, we find that the natural force of Moses was unabated when he died at one hundred twenty years of age. It was said of him that "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated" (Deuteronomy 34:7). Caleb had wholly followed the Lord, and God had given him unusual longevity and strength.

9. *What mountain did Caleb want?* 14:12

It is not apparent from the Scripture text that Joshua and Caleb were in the southern part of Canaan when Caleb made his request, yet his request was so definite that there was no misunderstanding about which mountain he wanted. His reference may have been in general to the hill country of Judah, a mountainous section of the land which formed the central part of Canaan. Further clarification of the land he desired was made by his continued description of the territory.

10. *Who were the Anakim?* 14:12b

The Anakim were descendants of Anak. Anak is identified as the son of Arba. The Anakim were a terror to the children of Israel (Numbers 13:22-28), but Caleb was not afraid of them. He said if the Lord were with him, he would be able to drive them out. He was resting on the promises of God. He had no fear, even though these people are sometimes described as giants since the name means "the long neck ones."

11. *What cities were in the area?* 14:12c

Caleb described the land as being a land in which the cities were "great and fenced." Hebron is mentioned as one of these cities. Another was Debir, a city which was also known as "the book city"—Kirjath-Sepher (15:15). These cities had been the capital cities for kings who had entered into the southern coalition to fight against Joshua. The kings had been defeated in battle, but their cities had not been razed. The land had not been occupied. This was Caleb's task.

Caleb's Inheritance 14:13-15

13 And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance.

14 Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel.

15 And the name of Hebron before was Kirjath-arba; which Arba was a great man among the Anakims. And the land had rest from war.

12. *What is known about Caleb's inheritance?* 14:13

Caleb's inheritance was within the borders of the tribe of Judah (15:13-19) and centered around the ancient city of Hebron, known from earlier times by the name of

Kirjath-arba, Arba being a great man among the Anakim whom the spies had encountered when they went through the land in the days of Moses. The author of the book of Judges gives a recapitulation of the giving of this land to Caleb in Judges 1:8-15. Caleb evidently gave the city itself to the Levites (21:11) and kept the surrounding territory for his own possession.

13. Where is Hebron? 14:13

Hebron was one of the important towns in the mountains of Judah. It stood between two thousand and twenty-eight hundred feet above sea level and lay between Beer-sheba and Jerusalem, being about equidistant from each other. In earlier times, it had been called Kirjath-Arba (Genesis 23:2), and Mamre (Genesis 13:18; 35:27). The modern name is *El-Khulil*. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had all lived here (Genesis 13:18; 35:27). Joshua had fought against the city (10:36), but Caleb finally occupied it. It was a city with a rich heritage and Caleb must have felt himself richly blessed to be allowed to settle here.

14. What evidence is given here for the date of the writing of Joshua? 14:14

It was noted by the author that Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb "unto this day." Such a reference would indicate the passage of some little time, but it is not sufficient evidence to warrant the assumption that the book was not written until many hundreds of years later. The fact that it is said it was the inheritance of Caleb would limit the time between the settlement and the date of writing to the lifetime of Caleb. Since the book was quite evidently written within the life span of Rahab, the harlot, who was allowed to live among the Israelites (6:25), it is apparent that the book was written sometime within that generation.

15. *What was the meaning of the old name of Hebron?*
14:15

Hebron had been known as Kirjath-Arba. This name indicated it had been the home of a man named Arba. He is described as a great man among the Anakim, who were the descendants of Anak. The word ARBA means "four" but it is hard to see any significance to this name for the man. Arba is the name given to the father of Anak (Genesis 35:27). It is significant to note that at this time "the land was at rest from war."

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 14

1. Who assisted Joshua in distributing the land to the tribes of Israel?
2. Which tribe received no inheritance of land?
3. How many tribes received land east of Jordan?
4. How many tribes were left to receive an inheritance?
5. Who were the children of Joseph?
6. How old was Caleb when he went to spy out Canaan?
7. How old was he when he asked for land to be given to him?
8. What city was given to Caleb as his inheritance?
9. What was the former name of the city?
10. Why was Caleb granted this special request?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 15

Vv. 1-12 *Borders of Judah.* The territory which was given to Judah was outlined with specific points mentioned on each of the borders. The southern border reached from the south tip of the Dead Sea to a point farther south at Kadesh-barnea. From Kadesh-barnea the southern border ran to the Mediterranean Sea. The Mediterranean Sea formed the west border.

STUDIES IN JOSHUA-JUDGES-RUTH

The north border was on a line from the northern end of the Dead Sea west to the Mediterranean Sea. The east border was, therefore, the Dead Sea itself.

Vv. 13-19 *Caleb's inheritance.* Caleb had asked Joshua for the territory of his choice. This was generally outlined in chapter 14, but the material in chapter 15 added some of the details of Caleb's inheritance. His daughter was given in marriage to Othniel, who helped Caleb to conquer the land.

Vv. 20-63 *Cities of Judah.* The territory of Judah included some of the outstanding cities of all the land of Canaan. Many of them figured prominently into later Jewish history. Special notice was made of the fact that the Jebusites continued to live in Jerusalem, and the children of Judah did not drive them out. The city of Jerusalem later became the capital of all Israel.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *It is good to be first in God's sight.* Judah was not the first son of Jacob. Three other sons were born to Jacob before Judah was born. Each of these had been of such character that Jacob by-passed them when he was bestowing his blessing and announcing the birth-right among his sons. When he came to Judah, Jacob said: "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise" (Genesis 49:8). It is significant that Judah was the first of the tribes to be settled in Canaan. Later on, Judah was the first to go up to battle to exterminate the remaining Canaanites (Judges 1:1-2).

2. *Children are like arrows.* The psalmist said: "As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them" (Psalms 127:4-5). Caleb was blessed with a daughter who was dear to his heart, and he arranged for her to be married to a valiant man in Israel. When he set out to conquer the land which had been allotted to him, he promised the hand of his daughter in marriage to the man who would go up and successfully capture Debir. Caleb, himself, was a valiant warrior and his son-in-law proved to be of the same mettle. One of the great blessings of service in the army of the Lord is to be associated with those of like courageous spirit.
3. *No city is like the Holy City.* More than one hundred cities are mentioned by name in the closing verses of chapter 15. Some of them were very important and figured prominently in the later history of Israel. None was as prominent as Jerusalem, and it was quite appropriate for special mention to be made of its status. Although the children of Israel did not drive the Jebusites out of Jerusalem, it was later captured by David and became "the City of the Great King." God used this city as a type of the Holy City which is to come down out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband (Revelation 21:2).

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Borders of Judah 15:1-12

This then was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah by their families; even to the border of Edom the wilderness of Zin southward was the uttermost part of the south coast.

2 And their south border was from the shore of the Salt Sea, from the bay that looketh southward:

3 And it went out to the south side to Maaleh-acrabbim, and passed along to Zin, and ascended up on the south side unto Kadesh-barnea, and passed along to Hezron, and went up to Adar, and fetched a compass to Karkaa:

4 From thence it passed toward Azmon, and went out unto the river of Egypt; and the goings out of that coast were at the sea: this shall be your south coast.

5 And the east border was the Salt Sea, even unto the end of Jordan. And their border in the north quarter was from the bay of the sea at the uttermost part of Jordan:

6 And the border went up to Beth-hogla, and passed along by the north of Beth-arabah; and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben:

7 And the border went up toward Debir from the valley of Achor, and so northward, looking toward Gilgal, that is before the going up to Adummim, which is on the south side of the river: and the border passed toward the waters of En-shemesh, and the goings out thereof were at En-rogel:

8 And the border went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom unto the south side of the Jebusite; the same is Jerusalem: and the border went up to the top of the mountain that lieth before the valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the valley of the giants northward:

9 And the border was drawn from the top of the hill unto the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, and went out to the cities of mount Ephron; and the border was drawn to Baalah, which is Kirjath-jearim:

10 And the border compassed from Baalah westward unto mount Seir, and passed along unto the side of mount Jearim, which is Chesalon, on the north side, and went down to Beth-shemesh, and passed on to Timnah:

11 And the border went out unto the side of Ekron northward; and the border was drawn to Shicron, and passed along to mount Baalah, and went out unto Jabneel; and the goings out of the border were at the sea.

12 And the west border was to the Great Sea, and the coast thereof. This is the coast of the children of Judah round about according to their families.

1. Where was Edom? 15:1

Edom was the territory inhabited by the descendants of Esau. It lay south of the Dead Sea. This land was the southern border of the tribe of Judah. The wilderness of Zin was a part of the Sinaitic Peninsula. In this area Israel had wandered for forty years in the days of Moses. When Israel left Kadesh-barnea, their major camp site in the wilderness of Zin, they asked the king of Edom for permission to travel through his territory. He refused their request, and the Israelites were forced to go all the way back to the head of the Gulf of Aqaba at Ezion-geber in order to go around the land of Edom (Numbers 20:14-21).

2. Where was the wilderness of Zin? 15:1b

The wilderness of Zin was the section of the Sinaitic Peninsula where the children of Israel had wandered for forty years. They had arrived here soon after leaving Mount Sinai, and it was from Kadesh-barnea that Moses had sent twelve spies to search out the land. They returned to this point prior to the death of Aaron and then turned back into the wilderness during the final year of their wanderings. This wilderness also formed a part of the border of Edom, the nation of Esau's descendants, who lived in an area south of the Dead Sea.

3. Where was the Salt Sea? 15:2

The Salt Sea was the Dead Sea. The Salt Sea is the lowest spot on the face of the earth. It was the southern

extremity of the Jordan River. The waters of the Jordan flow into the sea, but there is no outlet from the sea. As a result, the water stagnates and is filled with all kinds of minerals derived from the evaporation of the waters. Plant life and marine life is killed by the saltiness of the sea. For this reason, it is known as both the Salt Sea and the Dead Sea. This body of water formed the east border of Judah, and a line drawn in a westerly direction from the south end of the Dead Sea formed Judah's southern boundary line.

4. *What points were on the southern border of Judah?* 15:2

The southern border of Judah was along a line drawn from the south end of the Dead Sea. This border followed a southwesterly course until it came to Kadesh-barnea. From this point, it turned back in a northwesterly direction and finally went to the shore of the River of Egypt. The boundary then stretched along the River of Egypt to the shore of the Mediterranean Sea.

5. *Where was the River of Egypt?* 15:4

Some commentators believe that the River of Egypt was the Nile River, but there is never any historical evidence of the children of Israel possessing all of the land between Canaan and the Nile River. Most maps will show a small river running in a northwesterly direction which empties into the Mediterranean Sea, a few miles south of Gaza. It was a stream which flowed rapidly in winter which was the rainy season, and it is now called Wady el-Arish.

6. *What was the east border of Judah?* 15:5

Judah's east border was the Dead Sea. The Scripture says that it was the "Salt Sea, even unto the end of Jordan." This was a reference to the fact that the eastern border ran from the junction with the south border at the southern end of the Dead Sea to the north end of the Dead Sea.

It was here at the north end of the Dead Sea that the Jordan emptied into the sea. This is the meaning of the phrase, "unto the end of Jordan." Of course, the Salt Sea is the Dead Sea.

7. *What was the north border of Judah? 15:5b-11*

Judah's north border was along a line which ran from the north end of the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. The border passed along by the south side of the city of Jerusalem and continued on westward. It ran along the north side of the famous Philistine city of Ekron before reaching the shore of the Mediterranean. Kirjath-jearim was another well-known site on the northern border, for here travelers coming to Jerusalem from the west caught their first view of Jerusalem. It was customary for them to stop at this point on the border between Judah and Benjamin, refresh themselves, take in the magnificent view, and then continue gratefully on their way.

8. *What was the west border of Judah? 15:12*

Judah's west border was the Mediterranean Sea. The Scripture reference calls it "the Great Sea." It was larger than the Dead Sea or the Sea of Galilee, and thus deserving of this title. The land of Judah thus included the rich maritime plain from a point near Joppa all the way to the point where the River of Egypt emptied into the Mediterranean Sea. The fertile hill country from Jerusalem to Kadesh-barnea was also a part of this great tribe's territory and included such prominent centers as Bethlehem, Hebron, and Beer-sheba.

Caleb's Inheritance 15:13-19

13 And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the Lord to Joshua, even the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron.

14 And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak.

15 And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before was Kirjath-sepher.

16 And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife.

17 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife.

18 And it came to pass, as she came unto him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wouldest thou?

19 Who answered, Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.

9. What is the meaning of the name Kirjath-sepher?
15:15

Kirjath-sepher is a name meaning "a book-city." As the Scripture makes clear, this was the old name of the city of Debir. The city was probably a location of book storage, and thus the name was given to the community. This city was the prize which Caleb offered to the courageous man who would conquer the town. Since Achsah was also to be the bride of this conqueror, it was an honor to be desired. Othniel, son of Kenaz, performed this feat and received the city as a prize for his valor.

10. What was Othniel's relationship to Caleb? 15:17

Othniel is described as the son of Kenaz. He is also known as Israel's first judge (Judges 3:9). Since Caleb is described as a Kenezite (14:6) some suppose that his ancestor was also Kenaz, but Caleb is definitely described as the son of Jephunneh. It would appear, therefore, that

Kenaz was Caleb's younger brother and that Othniel was the son of Caleb's brother. The Masoretes have decided against this and have concluded that Othniel was Caleb's younger brother. Still, it seems better to believe that Kenaz was Caleb's brother and that Othniel was Caleb's nephew. Such marriages were not uncommon in ancient times; for we notice that Abraham married his half sister, and Nahor, Abraham's brother, married his niece, the daughter of Haran (Genesis 11:29). The marriage of a man with his brother's daughter, however, was not forbidden in the Law.

11. For what field did Achsah ask? 15:19

The field for which Achsah asked was not the field which surrounded the town of Debir for this would naturally go with the town. Achsah asked for a specific field which could be cultivated and which was abundantly supplied with springs of water, both an upper and lower spring being mentioned. Caleb granted her request. Thus, Caleb, the faithful judge, who was chosen out of the tribe of Judah was comfortably settled with his family in the midst of the land which was given to Judah.

Cities of Judah 15:20-63

20 This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families.

21 And the uttermost cities of the tribe of the children of Judah toward the coast of Edom southward were Kabzeel, and Eder, and Jagur,

22 And Kinah, and Dimonah, and Adadah,

23 And Kedesh, and Hazor, and Ithnan,

24 Ziph, and Telem, and Bealoth,

25 And Hazor, Hadattah, and Kerioth, and Hezron, which is Hazor,

- 26 Amam, and Shema, and Moladah,
- 27 And Hazar-gaddah, and Heshmon, and Beth-palet,
- 28 And Hazar-shual, and Beer-sheba, and Bizjothjah,
- 29 Baalah, and Iim, and Azem,
- 30 And Eltolad, and Chesil, and Hormah,
- 31 And Ziklag, and Madmannah, and Sansannah,
- 32 And Lebaath, and Shilhim, and Ain, and Rimmon:
- all the cities are twenty and nine, with their villages:
- 32 And in the valley, Eshtaol, and Zoreah, and Ashnah,
- 34 And Zanoah, and En-gannim, Tappuah, and Enam,
- 35 Jarmuth, and Adullam, Socoh, and Azekah,
- 36 And Sharaim, and Adithaim, and Gederah, and Gederothaim; fourteen cities with their villages:
- 37 Zenan, and Hadashah, and Migdal-gad,
- 38 And Dilean, and Mizpeh, and Joktheel,
- 39 Lachish, and Bozkath, and Eglon,
- 40 And Cabbon, and Lahmam, and Kithlish,
- 41 And Gederoth, Beth-dagon, and Naamah, and Makkedah; sixteen cities with their villages:
- 42 Libnah, and Ether, and Ashan,
- 43 And Jiphtah, and Ashnah, and Nezib,
- 44 And Keilah, and Achzib, and Mareshah; nine cities with their villages:
- 45 Ekron, with her towns and her villages:
- 46 From Ekron even unto the sea, all that lay near Ashdod, with their villages:
- 47 Ashdod with her towns and her villages, Gaza with her towns and her villages, unto the river of Egypt, and the Great Sea, and the border thereof:
- 48 And in the mountains, Shamir, and Jattir, and Socoh,
- 49 And Dannah, and Kirjath-sannah, which is Debir,
- 50 And Anab, and Eshtemoh, and Anim,
- 51 And Goshen, and Holon, and Giloh; eleven cities with their villages:

- 52 Arab, and Dumah, and Eshean,
53 And Janum, and Beth-tappuah, and Aphekah,
54 And Humtah, and Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron,
and Zior; nine cities with their villages:
55 Maon, Carmel, and Ziph, and Juttah,
56 And Jezreel, and Joddeam and Zanoah,
57 Cain, Gibeah, and Timnah; ten cities with their
villages:
58 Halhul, Beth-zur, and Gedor,
59 And Maarath, and Beth-anoth, and Eltekon; six
cities with their villages:
60 Kirjath-baal, which is Kirjath-jearim, and Rabbah;
two cities with their villages:
61 In the wilderness, Beth-arabah, Middin, and Se-
cacah,
62 And Nibshan, and the city of Salt, and En-gedi;
six cities with their villages.
63 As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the
Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem
unto this day.

12. How are the towns of Judah listed? 15:21-63

The towns contained in the land of Judah were listed in four different districts. The land was naturally divided according to the richness of the soil with the southland or Negeb listed first. Following these towns were the towns in the lowland, or Shephelah, on the Mediterranean sea-coast. The third listing was of the cities in the hill country or mountain area. Last of all, a list of the cities in the barren land of Judah was given. Much of the land between Hebron and the Dead Sea was barren as was the land east of Jerusalem.

13. *How many towns were in the Negeb?* 15:21-32

The total is given in verse 32. Here it is said that there were twenty-nine cities in all. It is also said that there were some villages with these cities. By counting the total number of proper names, we arrive at the number thirty-seven. There were evidently twenty-nine important cities and some rather unimportant villages. All of these were grouped according to their general location. The first group was one of nine places (vv. 21-23). The second group (vv. 24-25) was a list of six places. The third group (vv. 26-28) was one of nine towns. The last group (vv. 29-32) was one of thirteen towns in the western portion of the Negeb.

14. *How many towns were in the Shephelah?* 15:33-47

Some fifty towns were in the hilly region or slopes on the western side of the territory of Judah. Fourteen of these towns were in the northern part of this area, while sixteen towns were listed in the actual plain in its full extent from north to south. The third group of towns, all in the southern half of the hilly region, comprised a total of nine towns. The fourth group, with eleven points mentioned, was a section later given to the tribe of Dan.

15. *How many towns were in the mountains?* 15:48-60

The towns in the mountains were divided into six different groups. The mountains in Judah rise sharply from the southern area and reach some three thousand feet above sea level in the area around Hebron. This mountainous region then runs north to a broad valley just north of Jerusalem. The range is one of limestone mountains with some jagged peaks, but the sides are often covered with vegetation. The whole area is crisscrossed by many fertile valleys. Likely these towns were located in these valleys, but the whole area was thickly dotted by the towns.

16. *How many towns were in the wilderness?* 15:61-62

Only six cities and their villages were in the land sometimes called the "Desert of Judah." This area ran along the Dead Sea from the northern border of Judah to Wady Fikreh on the south. For the most part, this area was uninhabited, but these six cities were located there. En-gedi is the best known of the six. A perennial spring supplies an ample abundance of water and even today the area is a welcome oasis in an otherwise extremely barren territory.

17. *What was the status of Jerusalem?* 15:63

Adoni-zedek, the king of the Jebusites, had been killed by Joshua. His city had been pillaged and sacked, but the Israelites had not inhabited it. As a result, the Jebusites had come back to live there. The children of Judah left them alone, and they dwelt for a long time in the midst of Israel. Technically, the city was in the territory given to the people of the tribe of Benjamin; but David captured it and established his capital there (II Samuel 5:6-10).

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 15

1. What country was on the southern border of Judah?
2. What wilderness was along this same southern border?
3. By what name was the Dead Sea called in this passage?
4. What was the best-known point along this south border?
5. What sea formed the east border of Judah?
6. What famous city was on the north border of Judah?
7. What was the west border of Judah?
8. What did Caleb offer to the man who captured Kirjath-sepher?
9. Who took the town?
10. Did the people of Judah occupy Jerusalem?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 16

- Vv. 1- 4 *The territory of the children of Joseph.* Joseph was one of the twelve sons of Jacob, but no tribe bore his name. Instead, two tribes were formed from the descendants of the two sons of Joseph—Ephraim and Manasseh. The land given to these two sons was outlined in general at the beginning of this chapter. The land lay between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea and was in the very heart of the territory.
- Vv. 5- 8 *The boundaries of Ephraim.* Ephraim was the younger son of Joseph's children, but he was given the first choice of the land allotted to the sons of Joseph. His territory lay south of the territory given to Manasseh and his border was shared with Dan and Benjamin on the south.
- Vv. 9-10 *The later history of Ephraim.* The children of Ephraim settled in some cities which were outside the boundaries of their territory. These cities were in Manasseh, their brethren to the north. On the other hand, the children of Ephraim did not drive all the Canaanites from their cities. The city of Gezer, in particular, was occupied by the Canaanites who were made subject to task work.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *All things work together for good.* The entire story of Joseph is an exposition of the central theme of the eighth chapter of the book of Romans. The Apostle Paul wrote, "And we know that all things work together

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for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). The descendants of Joseph must have reveled in the history of their ancestor. They must have known of his suffering in prison. They must have thanked God many times for his deliverance and his exaltation to the rank of second man in the great kingdom of Egypt. As God fulfilled His promise to Joseph, so He fulfilled His promise to His children. They were given a bountiful inheritance in the Promised Land.

2. *Joseph was a fruitful bough.* When Jacob blessed his twelve sons, he said of Joseph, "Joseph is a fruitful bough" (Genesis 49:22). Jacob went on to describe him as being like a fruitful tree which was planted by a well where the roots could run deep and find water. He depicted Joseph as a tree whose branches ran over the wall. Such was certainly the case of Ephraim as we read that he not only fathered the children who inherited the Promised Land but that his children inherited some of the finest land of Canaan. In addition, Ephraim had separate cities which were among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh (verse 9). All God's children should strive to be like the descendants of Joseph through Ephraim and Manasseh. With the blessing of God upon them, they would indeed be as "fruitful boughs."
3. *There is bad in the best of us.* The children of Joseph failed to drive out the Canaanites (verse 10). These Canaanites dwelt in Gezer. The Ephraimites did make them to become servile and placed them under tribute. Nonetheless, their instructions were to drive out these people. Since they failed to do this, we read that they were like thorns in their sides and pricks in their eyes (Judges 2:3).

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Territory of the Children of Joseph 16:1-4

And the lot of the children of Joseph fell from Jordan by Jericho, unto the water of Jericho on the east, to the wilderness that goeth up from Jericho throughout mount Beth-el,

2 And goeth out from Beth-el to Luz, and passeth along unto the borders of Archi to Ataroth,

3 And goeth down westward to the coast of Japhleti, unto the coast of Beth-horon the nether, and to Gezer: and the goings out thereof are at the sea.

4 So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance.

1. Who were the "children of Joseph"? 16:1

Joseph had two children—Manasseh, the first-born; and Ephraim, his younger brother. In Joshua's day, the members of the two tribes are described as the "children of Joseph." These two sons were born to Joseph while he was in Egypt. Joseph married Asenath, who was the daughter of the high priest of On (Genesis 41:45). On is called Heliopolis by the Greeks, and it was the "city of the sun." Since the god who was symbolized by the sun to the Egyptians would be the chief god, it is believed that this was one of the chief religious cities of Egypt in Joseph's day. When his sons were born, Joseph called his first-born Manasseh, a word that signifies "forgetting." His reason for this was that God had made him forget all his toil and all his father's house. He wanted to forget his father's house because his brothers had sold him as a slave. Ephraim was named "fruitful." Joseph named his boy this because he said God had made him to be fruitful in the land of his affliction.

2. *What was the southern border of the inheritance of Ephraim and Manasseh?* 16:2

The border on the south went from the Jordan River near Jericho up into the hill country around Beth-el and moved on west to the old site of Luz. From there, it dropped down into Joppa and out to the seacoast. This was also the northern border of the tribe of Benjamin and Dan. These tribes then were the southern neighbors of Ephraim. Dan was on the west and Benjamin on the east along the lower border of the "children of Joseph." Beth-el was one of the most prominent points on the south border of Ephraim. This town was twelve miles from Jerusalem and on the right of the road between Jerusalem and Shechem. Ruins at this point bear the name Beitin. Luz was the old name of Beth-el, and the southern border of Ephraim ran along past the old town to Ataroth-adar. The border then went down to the territory possessed by the Japhletites, an ancient tribe who dwelt on the hills in the west part of Ephraim's territory. Beth-horon lay on the boundary between Benjamin and Ephraim and was settled by the Kohathites. The upper village is some four miles from Gibeon, and marks the descent down into the Philistine plains. The border of the territory assigned to the children of Joseph finally reached to Gezer, a town that figured prominently in later Israelite history, and the site of which has recently been excavated by a number of capable archaeologists, including Professor Reuben Bul-lard of the Bible College of The Cincinnati Bible Seminary. Finally, the southern border reached to the Mediterranean Sea.

3. *Who were the Archites?* 16:2b

The Archites are a family of people otherwise unknown except for this reference here. They evidently lived on the south border of Ephraim between Beth-el and Ataroth. Hushai, the beloved counselor of David, was an

Archite (II Samuel 15:32; 16:16; 17:5, 14). Any village which belonged to them is not known, their settlement having been lost in the passage of time.

4. *Where is Gezer?* 16:3

Gezer stands right on the edge of the northern promontory of Japhleti and overlooks all of the plain of Sharon and on out to the Mediterranean Sea. It is about one half of the distance between Joppa and Jerusalem and was a very important outpost in the defenses of the land of Canaan. The site was excavated in modern times by Dr. MacAlester, and later by a team under the auspices of Hebrew Union College. Gates built in the time of Solomon have been discovered, and a worship area dating back into the third millenium before Christ is also in evidence.

5. *What was the western border of the "children of Joseph"?* 16:3b

The western border of the territory of the "children of Joseph" was the Mediterranean Sea. The scripture says, "the goings out thereof are at the sea" (16:3b). No western border is given in so many words, but it goes without saying that the Mediterranean Sea was the western border of both Ephraim and Manasseh. The southern border was given since this divided the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh from the territory of all the other tribes to the south. In giving the border of the children of Ephraim, the author makes it clear that the territory was divided between the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. The northern border of the tribe of Manasseh is given in the next chapter.

6. *Why did Manasseh and Ephraim receive their inheritance together?* 16:4

Since both Ephraim and Manasseh were sons of Joseph, they were given a single portion of land. This portion was then divided between them. In addition, Manasseh also

was divided with part of his descendants living east of the Jordan while others lived west of the Jordan. In receiving this double portion of land, Joseph indeed became "a fruitful bough by a fountain; his branches ran over the wall" (Genesis 49:22).

The Boundaries of Ephraim 16:5-8

5 And the border of the children of Ephraim according to their families was thus: even the border of their inheritance on the east side was Ataroth-addar, unto Beth-horon the upper;

6 And the border went out toward the sea to Michmethah on the north side; and the border went about eastward unto Taanath-shiloh, and passed by it on the east to Janohah;

7 And it went down from Janohah to Ataroth, and to Naarath, and came to Jericho, and went out at Jordan.

8 The border went out from Tappuah westward unto the river Kanah; and the goings out thereof were at the sea. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim by their families.

7. What border of Ephraim was given first? 16:5

A brief description of the southern boundary was repeated in verse five. A more minute description of this boundary was given in verses one through three. Upper Beth-horon was mentioned in verse five instead of Lower Beth-horon, but the two places stood quite close together. No difficulty is created by this difference. Since the border on the south was shared by two other tribes, Dan and Benjamin, it is given more careful attention. Manasseh and Ephraim were both sons of Joseph and had much in common. The border between them is not as carefully defined or given as much attention.

8. *Where was the border between Manasseh and Ephraim?*
16:6

The border of the children of Ephraim was defined by a line drawn from the area near Shechem, first to the west and then to the east. Shechem and its territory were central in the land. The people of Israel had gathered on Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim for the readings of the blessings and the curses when they first entered the land of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua. Ephraim's border was first described by pointing out the boundary which ran west from this central spot in the mountains to the Mediterranean Seacoast on the west. The boundary line was next described as it stretched from this central location to the Jordan River.

9. *What points were on the northeastern boundary of Ephraim?* 16:6-8

The northern boundary of Ephraim was given in two sections. A central point was selected and then the border as it extended to the east was described in detail. It stretched from Michmethah to Taanath-shiloh and then went along to the east of Janohah. Michmethah was near Shechem, and Taanath-shiloh was in the direction one would take in going to the Jordan River. It is thought to be the present Tana, a heap of ruins southeast of Nablus. Janohah is to be found in the ruins of Janun. The Ataroth is a different place from Ataroth-addar mentioned in verses two and five. This spot must have been on the eastern slope of the mountains which stretched down to the Jordan Valley. Naarath was found some six miles northeast of Jericho. Ephraim's boundary then went down to the territory of Jericho, but probably did not reach to the city itself since Jericho was given to the tribe of Benjamin. At this point, Ephraim's northern border coincided with her southern border and stretched out to the Jordan River along the boundary of the tribe of Benjamin.

10. *Did Jericho belong to Ephraim?* 16:7

The border of Ephraim is described as coming "to Jericho" (verse 7). From other scriptures (Joshua 18:21), it is evident that Jericho belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. The border finally reached the Jordan River on the east. A prominent feature of the west border was a small stream which flowed across the Philistine plain to the Mediterranean Sea. This River Kanah figured prominently in establishing the border between Ephraim and Manasseh. It was customary for those laying out borderlines to use prominent physical features of the land, such as this river, to determine boundaries. The river itself was not important for commerce, but it did afford a water supply, especially in the rainy season. Its primary importance, however, was in establishing this border for Ephraim and Manasseh.

11. *What was the east border of the children of Ephraim?* 16:7

The east border of the children of Ephraim was the Jordan River. The western border was the Mediterranean Sea. The land thus stretched all the way from the river to the sea and was some of the finest land of Canaan. Many future events in Israel's history occurred in the highlands which belonged to Ephraim. The capital of the northern kingdom was established in this territory. Several centuries later, the prophets worked in this area with great zeal since the false worship established by Jeroboam permeated the land. Ephraim was of great importance in the later history of Israel, and her land became filled with historical sites.

12. *What points were in the western half of Ephraim's northern border?* 16:8

The narrator returned to the point from which he departed in giving the eastern half of the northern border and described the western half of the northern border of Ephraim. This border went west from the central point

to Tappuah. This point was west of Shechem and has not yet been discovered. Ephraim's northern border then ran to the brook Kanah and followed it out to the Mediterranean Sea.

13. *In what way was the inheritance "by their families"?*
16:8

When Moses took the census of the children of Israel as they lay encamped in the steppes of Moab, he found that there were 32,500 men in Ephraim who were twenty years of age and over. At that time, he also listed the following men as heads of families: Shuthelah, Becher, and Tahan. He also listed one of the sons of Shuthelah who was named Eran. These men made up the families of the Shuthalhites, Bachrites, Tahanites, and Eranites (Numbers 26:35, 36). The tribe of Ephraim with these many thousands of people was subdivided into these family groups. Each one would be given enough land to meet the needs of its members. Ample provision was made for each tribe to have the territory which it needed.

The Later History of Ephraim 16:9, 10

9 And the separate cities for the children of Ephraim were among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages.

10 And they drove not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer: but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, and serve under tribute.

14. *What were "the separate cities"?* 16:9

The children of Ephraim evidently conquered, occupied, and possessed cities which were outside their borders. They did not settle cities in many of the other tribes, but it is specified that they did have such cities in the land which was given to the children of Manasseh. Since both

Ephraim and Manasseh were sons of Joseph, they had a common heritage. This would make it easy for them to dwell together in harmony. The fact that they did occupy these cities must have led to a rather indefinite boundary line being maintained between these two tribes. Various reasons have been put forth as answers to the question about Ephraim settling scattered towns and villages in the territory of the tribe of Manasseh. Most commentators believe that after the boundaries had been fixed there was an evident disproportion in the amount of land given to the very numerous children of Ephraim. Since they were so numerous it was felt that they had received too small a possession and that therefore they settled cities in Manasseh in order to accommodate their many people. This is quite possibly the major reason for this extension of Ephraim's territory, but there may have been other reasons which were not recorded in the historical narrative.

15. *What Canaanites remained in the land of Ephraim?*
16:10

The Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer were not driven out by the Ephraimites. They continued to dwell among the Israelites, although they were reduced to a state of servitude. God had directed His people to annihilate the Canaanites, but many of the tribes failed to comply completely with God's demand. As a result, these Canaanites lived among them and seduced many of them to commit idolatry and other abominable practices. These foreign peoples living among them were like "pricks in their eyes and thorns in their sides" (Numbers 33:55). Gezer was such an impregnable fortress that it was evidently very difficult for the Ephraimites to drive out the Canaanites who occupied the site. Fortifications which have been found there in recent years under the expeditions led by MacAlester, and in later times under Dr. Nelson Glueck, have uncovered ruins of massive walls which ran the

entire length of the last mountain height on the northern end of Shephelah. This site would be almost impossible to take from the north. It would likewise be inaccessible from the lowlands of the Philistine plain on the west. Since valleys surrounded on the south and east, it was similarly hard to attack from any of these points. The Ephraimites could have taken the city with God's help, but they were dilatory in their duties. When the book of Joshua was written, the Canaanites were still there. The author says that they were there "unto this day."

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 16

1. What two tribes are called "children of Joseph"?
2. What river was on the east border of these tribes?
3. What sea was on their west border?
4. Near what town did the southern border of the children of Joseph begin on the east?
5. Was Beth-el along the southern border of the children of Joseph?
6. Along what river did the northern border of Ephraim run out to the sea?
7. Did Jericho belong to Ephraim?
8. In what tribe's territory did Ephraim inhabit separate cities?
9. From what town did Ephraim fail to drive out the Canaanites?
10. Were these Canaanites made to serve under tribute?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 17

- Vv. 1-13 *Inheritance of Manasseh west.* One half of the tribe of Manasseh received land east of the Jordan; but the other half was to have territory which was north of Ephraim, lying between

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the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. Manasseh was the elder of Joseph's two sons, but he did not receive the preeminence. Ephraim was preferred above the older Manasseh when Jacob crossed his hands and gave his right-hand blessing to Ephraim and his left-hand blessing to Manasseh (Genesis 48).

Vv. 14-18 *The complaint of the children of Joseph.* The descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh complained, saying they were a large and prosperous group of people and needed more land than was given to them. Joshua heard their complaint and offered a very suitable solution. He suggested that they develop to the fullest the land in which they were living before they asked for more. Since they had not yet fully conquered the territory, this was a challenge to the children of Joseph to set an example for the rest of the tribes by reaching the fullness of their potential.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Neither male nor female.* In Christ there is no bond or free; neither is there male or female (Galatians 3:28). Each has a role to play by nature, and a woman's soul is just as precious in the sight of God as the soul of a man. The same was ultimately true under the Old Testament dispensation. The Bible teaches that man has the preeminence, but woman's place as a help meet for him has always been respected in the eyes of God. This truth was borne out in the provisions made for men who had no sons. In such cases, their daughters inherited their land and goods.

2. *It is good for brothers to dwell together.* How pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity (Psalms 133:1). This was the cry of the psalmist, and such a condition is exemplified by the associations of Ephraim and Manasseh. They were brethren. They were both sons of Joseph. Jacob had placed his hands on both of them and adopted them as his own sons. When the inheritances of the people of Israel were assigned, Ephraim and Manasseh had lots which were next to each other. Brethren in Christ should dwell together in such peace and pleasantness as well.
3. *"Stir what you have."* During World War II, sugar was rationed in the United States. A preacher told about asking for a little more sugar for his coffee as he ate lunch in a restaurant. The waitress' curt reply was, "Stir what you have." This is what Joseph told Ephraim and Manasseh to do. They were complaining that they needed more land. Joshua told them to make better use of what they had. Christians should use their talents to the fullest of their ability instead of complaining because they do not have more talents.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Inheritance of Manasseh West 17:1-13

There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh; for he was the first-born of Joseph; to wit, for Machir the first-born of Manasseh, the father of Gilead: because he was a man of war, therefore he had Gilead and Bashan.

2 There was also a lot for the rest of the children of Manasseh by their families; for the children of Abiezer, and for the children of Helek, and for the children of Asriel, and for the children of Shechem, and for the children of Hephher, and for the children of Shemida: these were the

male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph by their families.

3 But Zelophehad, the son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters: and these are the names of his daughters, Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

4 And they came near before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes, saying, The Lord commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren. Therefore according to the commandment of the Lord he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their father.

5 And there fell ten portions to Manasseh, beside the land of Gilead and Bashan, which were on the other side Jordan;

6 Because the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons: and the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead.

7 And the coast of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethah, that lieth before Shechem; and the border went along on the right hand unto the inhabitants of En-tappuah.

8 Now Manasseh had the land of Tappuah: but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh belonged to the children of Ephraim;

9 And the coast descended unto the river Kanah, southward of the river: these cities of Ephraim are among the cities of Manasseh: the coast of Manasseh also was on the north side of the river, and the outgoings of it were at the sea:

10 Southward it was Ephraim's, and northward it was Manasseh's, and the sea is his border; and they met together in Asher on the north, and in Issachar on the east.

11 And Manasseh had in Issachar and in Asher Bethshean and her towns, and Ibleam and her towns, and

the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, and the inhabitants of En-dor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Taanach and her towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns, even three countries.

12 Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land.

13 Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute; but did not utterly drive them out.

1. *Who was Machir?* 17:1

Machir was the eldest son of Manasseh. This inheritance had already been given to him (Numbers 32:39-42). His people had led in conquering Bashan, and his descendants were given the territory as an inheritance. This land lay east of the Sea of Galilee and was the north end of the territory east of Jordan. Their fierce warring had earned for Machir the title of "a man of war." Their land had formerly been the kingdom of Og, king of Bashan.

2. *How many sons did Manasseh have?* 17:2

Six other sons of Manasseh were listed in addition to Machir. The men listed were not the men who settled the land but the sons of Manasseh from whom those Israelites of Joshua's day were descendants. The total of these men was 52,700 as they were numbered before crossing the Jordan into Canaan (Numbers 26:34).

3. *Who was Zelophehad?* 17:3

Zelophehad was a descendant of Manasseh who had no sons to inherit his land. His daughters petitioned Moses in this respect. Moses and the elders decided that it was proper for them to inherit as long as they married men who were members of their own tribe (Numbers 36). This became a statute in Israel. Such a provision prevented the woman's inheriting land in her tribe and her husband's

inheriting land in another tribe. At the same time, it gave recognition to the woman as an heiress. The five daughters were given by name here and in Numbers 36.

4. *Did the territory of Manasseh include Shechem?* 17:7

Some confusion exists in the minds of some commentators who study these statements about the land, but it seems apparent from the text that the land of Manasseh stopped at Michmethah which lay "before Shechem." Other passages of Scripture bear out the fact that Ephraim possessed Shechem. Manasseh's territory lay north of Shechem. Shechem was an important site. Abraham first stopped there when he entered Canaan (Genesis 12:6). Jacob bought land there when he returned from Haran (Genesis 33:19). In the present time, it is the center of bustling activity; and it has always been an important site in Palestine.

5. *Who possessed Tappuah?* 17:8

The city of Tappuah belonged to Ephraim. Men of Ephraim possessed it. At the same time it is clear that it lay on the border of Ephraim and Manasseh. The men of Manasseh probably possessed the fields around Tappuah on the north, but the town itself was inhabited by the Ephraimites. Many important border towns enjoyed this kind of situation. Although legally belonging to one tribe, some of these cities fell largely under the commercial and social influence of a neighboring tribe.

6. *Where was the river Kanah?* 17:9

The river Kanah rose in the hill country of Ephraim and made its way westward to the Mediterranean Sea. It was a natural boundary between Ephraim and Manasseh. Manasseh had the land lying on the north and Ephraim possessed the land on the south of the river. The stream was not navigable; but it did provide water, especially in the rainy season. Its chief importance, however, was in its being a landmark which served as a boundary.

7. *What sea was Manasseh's west border?* 17:10a

The Mediterranean Sea formed the west border of Manasseh. The maritime plain was theirs for the taking. The sloping hills which rose up from the sea were also available to the men of Manasseh. This gave the people an outlet to the sea and its commerce as well as access to the rich marine life which was in the sea. Since both Ephraim and Manasseh failed to drive out the Philistines who lived along the seacoast, neither of these Israelite tribes became great seafaring people.

8. *What were the northern and eastern borders of Manasseh?* 17:10b

On the north, Manasseh reached to the territory of the tribe of Asher. On the east, these people reached to the territory of the tribe of Issachar. In actuality, his east border reached to the Jordan River, but the southern border of Issachar ran in a diagonal line from the northwest to the southwest and thus formed much of Manasseh's northeastern border.

9. *Why did Manasseh possess cities in Issachar?* 17:11

Beth-shean, Ibleam, Dor, En-dor, and Megiddo, with their towns, were listed as cities which were in Issachar but possessed by the people of Manasseh. Natural borders, such as the Kishon River, apparently made it practical for Manasseh to possess these rather than Issachar, since they lay south of the river and across the river from the main part of Issachar's territory. V. G. Blaikie, (*The Book of Joshua, The Expositor's Bible*, page 304), says that these cities were very important to the defense of the Esdraelon Plain and that it was therefore necessary that they be held by some tribe stronger than Issachar.

10. *Why could Manasseh not drive out the Canaanites?* 17:12

Manasseh may have been numerous and strong, but she was not able to do all God expected the people to do.

They possessed many cities, even taking possession of some which lay in the territory of her neighbors, but the people could have done better. Perhaps they trusted in their rich heritage and did not reach the potential which was possible for them. Heredity is never a guarantee of success; success takes hard work.

11. How did most of the children of Israel deal with the Canaanites? 17:13

God had commanded the children of Israel to drive out the Canaanites. He expected His people to exterminate them, lest they pollute the people with their idolatrous ways. Evidently, the rest of the children of Israel were like the children of Manasseh. They were not strong enough or ambitious enough to do what God commanded them to do. They allowed the Canaanites to be subject to task work. This was the agreement made with the Gibeonites who had deceived Joshua. The Gibeonites were made to be hewers of wood and drawers of water (Joshua 9). The people of Israel put the Canaanites under tribute and made them perform servile tasks.

The Complaint of the Children of Joseph 17:14-18

14 And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as the Lord hath blessed me hitherto?

15 And Joshua answered them, If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee.

16 And the children of Joseph said, The hill is not enough for us: and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both they who are of Beth-shean and her towns, and they who are of the valley of Jezreel.

17 And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou art a great people, and hast great power: thou shalt not have one lot only:

18 But the mountain shall be thine; for it is a wood, and thou shalt cut it down: and the outgoings of it shall be thine: for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong.

12. What was the request of the children of Joseph? 17:14

The children of Joseph asked for more than one lot and one portion. Ephraim must have led in this request. They were saying that since the descendants of Manasseh received two portions in two lots—one east of the Jordan and one west of the Jordan—they, too, should receive an equal amount of territory. Manasseh west may have joined in the request, since the complaint is attributed to “the children of Joseph.”

13. What was Joshua's answer? 17:15-18

In effect, Joshua told them to make full use of what they had. The territory which they possessed was very mountainous, but it would be possible for them to terrace the hillsides and grow crops on the slopes. The Perizzites were Canaanite villagers; and if the children of Joseph had driven out all these people from their villages and taken possession of them, they would have had plenty of room.

14. Why mention the chariots of iron? 17:18

No record is made prior to this time of the Israelites having any chariots for warfare. Their battles were fought by men with swords and spears. Her soldiers were on foot and at a disadvantage when going against those who had these chariots. Jabin, king of Hazor, the leader of the northern coalition, had used these chariots against the children of Israel (Joshua 11:6). The people of Israel had defeated these Canaanites in this engagement. The chil-

dren of Joseph were fainthearted in feeling that they would not be able to possess the land since their enemies had these chariots. They were evidently looking for an excuse.

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 17

1. Who was Machir?
2. Who was Zelophehad?
3. Where was Bashan?
4. What was Manasseh's western border?
5. Which tribe lay south of Manasseh?
6. What tribe lay north of Manasseh?
7. What tribe lay east of Manasseh?
8. What river lay between Manasseh and Ephraim, near their western borders?
9. What did the children of Israel do to the Canaanites who lived among them?
10. What was the name given to the mountain in the land of the children of Joseph?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 18

- Vv. 1-10 *The remaining land divided into portions.* There were seven portions of land left to be assigned; and after the children of Joseph were settled in the midst of the land, the remaining territory was divided into lots for those tribes which had not yet received their portions. Joshua was determined to complete the work which had been assigned to him by God.
- Vv. 11-20 *Benjamin's inheritance.* The first tribe of the seven remaining without an inheritance was Benjamin. The territory assigned to these people lay just north of the land given to the

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tribe of Judah. The east border was the Jordan River. The territory was rather small, reaching only to the hill country which was in the center of the land. On the west of Benjamin's territory was the land eventually assigned to Dan. On the north of Benjamin's territory was the land assigned to the tribe of Ephraim.

Vv. 21-28 *List of Benjamin's cities.* A total of twenty-six cities were listed as belonging to Benjamin. Twelve of these were in the eastern half of the land, and fourteen were in the western part of the territory. Most of these cities figured prominently in later Israelite history. Most important among these cities was the city later known as Jerusalem.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God's house should be in the midst of His people.* The Lord had said that Israel was not to worship on every high hill (Deuteronomy 12). He said that He would appoint a place for His house to be established among His people. Although the Tabernacle was more or less temporary, it was important for it to be set up in the midst of the land. In like fashion, every community should have the church in its midst. God's people should make provisions for His house to be established among them.
2. *A place prepared for all.* The children of Israel came into a land which was intended for them. It was described as a land flowing with milk and honey. There was to be room for all the millions among the people of Israel. Such a beneficent provision points to God's preparation of a city not made with hands. Jesus said

He was going away to prepare a place for those who will be with Him in His glory (John 14:1 ff.). Every child of God will have a place in the heavenly home, just as every Israelite had a home in the days of Joshua.

3. *God's people should be busy with His work.* Joshua was old and impatient with laziness and irregularity. "How long are ye slack to possess the land?" he asked. When Jesus' mother asked why He had stayed behind in Jerusalem, He answered by asking if she did not know He was busy with His Father's business. Such should be the tenor of the life of every Christian.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Remaining Land Divided Into Portions 18:1-10

And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them.

2 And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance.

3 And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?

4 Give out from among you three men for each tribe: and I will send them, and they shall rise, and go through the land, and describe it according to the inheritance of them; and they shall come again to me.

5 And they shall divide it into seven parts: Judah shall abide in their coast on the south, and the house of Joseph shall abide in their coasts on the north.

6 Ye shall therefore describe the land into seven parts, and bring the description hither to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the Lord our God.

7 But the Levites have no part among you; for the priesthood of the Lord is their inheritance: and Gad, and Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh, have received their inheritance beyond Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave them.

8 And the men arose, and went away: and Joshua charged them that went to describe the land, saying, Go and walk through the land, and describe it, and come again to me, that I may here cast lots for you before the Lord in Shiloh.

9 And the men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities into seven parts in a book, and came again to Joshua to the host at Shiloh.

10 And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord: and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions.

1. *Where was Shiloh?* 18:1

Shiloh was in the midst of the territory assigned to the tribe of Ephraim. It was admirably situated near the geographic center of the land. It lay east of the road which ran along the center of the ridge which formed the backbone of the Promised Land. In Shiloh, the house of God was established; and here it stayed through the three hundred years of the time of the judges. Shiloh was the center of Israel's worship down into the reign of David. Only when David made preparation for the building of the Temple was the site of Israel's worship moved from this place which became hallowed to them through the worship which centered there around the Tabernacle.

2. *How many surveyors were employed?* 18:4

Twenty-one men went out to survey the land which had not yet been assigned to the tribes. Their work consisted not in the taking of accurate measurements of all the borders, but in preparing a list of the towns in the

different parts of the land. Probably this included an account of the size and character of these towns. They would have made a notice of the quality and condition of the soil, but it hardly would have been necessary for them to penetrate into every corner of the land and every town which was still inhabited by the Canaanites in order to accomplish their end. Since only seven tribes were involved in receiving this territory, three men were selected from each of these tribes; and the total of twenty-one workers would have been sufficient to accomplish the task in a very short time.

3. *Which tribes had already been settled?* 18:5

Three tribes—Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh—had land east of the Jordan. Judah and “the children of Joseph”—Ephraim and Manasseh—were settled west of the Jordan. Since Levi was to have no land as a possession, only seven tribes remained without a portion of land. These were Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan.

4. *Why did Levi receive no inheritance?* 18:7

It was understood that “the priesthood of the Lord” was the inheritance of Levi. They had no time or need for land in which to plant grains, vines, and trees. They were to give themselves completely to the service of God, teaching the law, protecting the rights of the oppressed, and in general, fulfilling their mission as the Lord’s peculiar possession. In return for these services, they were to receive forty-eight cities in which to dwell; and their livelihood was to be provided by the other tribes who gave a tithe of all their income to the Lord for the support of the Levites.

5. *How did the surveyors work?* 18:8, 9

The description was not a measurement made in feet and inches. The art of surveying was well known in Egypt in ancient times. The Israelites would have learned

this skill while in bondage there, but their description which was written in the book was of a general nature. The men chosen for this purpose were able to perform their tasks without being hindered by the Canaanites. These Canaanites had been crushed, although not exterminated, by the victories which the people of Israel had gained. When the formal record was finished, they brought it back to Joshua in the camp at Shiloh. Joshua then assigned the land as he cast the sacred lot.

Benjamin's Inheritance 18:11-20

11 And the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families: and the coast of their lot came forth between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph.

12 And their border on the north side was from Jordan; and the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north side, and went up through the mountains westward; and the goings out thereof were at the wilderness of Beth-aven.

13 And the border went over from thence toward Luz, to the side of Luz, which is Beth-el, southward; and the border descended to Ataroth-adar, near the hill that lieth on the south side of the nether Beth-horon.

14 And the border was drawn thence, and compassed the corner of the sea southward, from the hill that lieth before Beth-horon southward; and the goings out thereof were at Kirjath-baal, which is Kirjath-jearim, a city of the children of Judah: this was the west quarter.

15 And the south quarter was from the end of Kirjath-jearim, and the border went out on the west, and went out to the well of waters of Nephtoah:

16 And the border came down to the end of the mountain that lieth before the valley of the son of Hinnom, and which is in the valley of the giants on the north,

and descended to the valley of Hinnom, to the side of Jebusi on the south, and descended to En-rogel,

17 And was drawn from the north, and went forth to En-shemesh, and went forth toward Geliloth, which is over against the going up of Adummim, and descended to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben.

18 And passed along toward the side over against Arabah northward, and went down unto Arabah:

19 And the border passed along to the side of Beth-hoglah northward: and the outgoings of the border were at the north bay of the Salt Sea at the south end of Jordan: this was the south coast.

20 And Jordan was the border of it on the east side. This was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, by the coasts thereof round about, according to their families.

6. Which lot came up first? 18:11

The first lot to be assigned was that given to Benjamin. Benjamin was the son of Jacob by Rachel (Genesis 35). The children of Benjamin inherited a territory which lay north of Judah and south of Ephraim. His land did not extend all the way from the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea, but reached to the boundary of the children of Dan who had territory on the west of the territory of Benjamin.

7. What were the borders of Benjamin? 18:12

The border of Benjamin on the east was the Jordan River. From a point on the river just north of Jericho the northern boundary ran almost due west to Beth-el, or Luz, as it was called in the early times. The western border ran directly south from lower Beth-horon to Kirjath-jearim. The southern border ran directly east from Kirjath-jearim to the north shore of the Dead Sea. The tribe of Ephraim was on the north, Dan was on the west, and Judah was on the south. The Jordan River (and across it, the tribe of Gad) was on the east.

8. *Where was Jebusi?* 18:16

Jebusi was the city of the Jebusites. This site later was captured by David and became known as Jerusalem, David's capital and the capital of the succeeding kings of Judah until it was finally captured by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. This passage of Scripture clearly indicates that the site lay within the border of the tribe of Benjamin. It is mentioned again later in the list of the cities which belonged to Benjamin (18:28).

List of Benjamin's Cities 18:21-28

21 Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin according to their families were Jericho, and Beth-hoglah, and the valley of Keziz,

22 And Beth-arabah, and Zemaraim, and Beth-el,

23 And Avim, and Parah, and Ophrah,

24 And Chephar-haammonai, and Ophni, and Gaba; twelve cities with their villages:

25 Gibeon, and Ramah, and Beeroth,

26 And Mizpeh, and Chephirah, and Mozah,

27 And Rekem, and Irpeel, and Taralah,

28 And Zelah, Eleph, and Jebusi, which is Jerusalem, Gibeath, and Kirjath; fourteen cities with their villages. This is the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families.

9. *Why was Jericho mentioned?* 18:21

Although Jericho was destroyed earlier, its site was important. The city itself was not rebuilt until much later in the days of Ahab. Nevertheless, the site was important to Israel and was worthy of mention among the cities possessed by the men of Benjamin. In addition, certain smaller villages pertained to most of the larger cities; and such was probably the case with Jericho.

10. *Where was Beth-el?* 18:22

Beth-el was in the hill country, and was famous as well as hallowed among the Israelites since it was there that the father of the twelve sons who were heads of the tribes of Israel had worshiped. At Beth-el Jacob received the vision of a ladder set upon the earth and saw angels going up and down on it (Genesis 28). Abraham had pitched his tent near Beth-el, with Beth-el on the west and Ai on the east (Genesis 12); and the people of Benjamin must have counted themselves fortunate to have such an important spot within their borders.

11. *Where was Gibeon?* 18:25

Gibeon was a Canaanite city west and a little south of Beth-el. The Hivites, a group of the Canaanites, had lived here. These people had tricked the children of Israel, pretending to have come from a great distance to make peace with God's people (Joshua 9). It was the defecting of these people which led to the formation of the southern coalition of Canaanite kings who attacked Israel and were defeated on the occasion when Joshua prayed for the sun to stand still, thus giving more time for his warriors to attack their enemies (chapter 10).

12. *Why mention Ramah?* 18:25

Ramah was the home of Samuel. It was a high place, and the name itself means "height." Such a high hill rises above Gibeon, and is pointed out as the burial place of Samuel. The land of Benjamin was filled with sites which became famous as events in later Israelite history transpired. Other sites to the north of Gibeon are also identified as Ramah's or "heights" and are considered to have been the Ramathaim-Zophim, the "heights of Zuph," the home of Samuel's parents (I Samuel 1:1).

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 18

1. Where was the Tabernacle located?
2. How many tribes remained without land?
3. How many men went out from each tribe to survey the remaining land?
4. Which tribe had no inheritance of land in Israel?
5. Where was the record made of the survey?
6. Which tribe was first to receive a part of the remaining land?
7. What was the east border of this tribe?
8. What two cities were on the western border of this tribe?
9. What famous city, which was later David's capital, was within this tribe's border?
10. How many cities were within this tribe's borders?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 19

- Vv. 1-9 *The inheritance of Simeon.* Simeon received land within the boundaries of the territory of Judah. Jacob had said of Simeon and Levi, "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel" (Genesis 49:7b). Apparently this prediction of God's future dealings with Simeon was partially fulfilled when the men of Simeon received inheritance within the borders of another tribe. Generally speaking, Simeon inherited land within a twenty-mile radius around Beersheba. A number of cities are mentioned as being within the land which fell to this tribe, cities like Ziklag, Ramah, Moladah, and Sharuhén.

- Vv. 10-16 *The inheritance of Zebulun.* The tribe of Zebulun received land in Galilee, with boundaries along the Kishon River on the south, the tribe of Asher on the west, and the tribe of Naphtali on the north and east. The village of Nazareth, not listed at this time but made famous in New Testament times because the home of Joseph and Mary which was there, was in the territory of Zebulun. The land was varied, reaching on the east almost to the Sea of Galilee and on the west to the foot of Mount Carmel. Fertile plains were broken by mountain ranges, and little streams watered it well.
- Vv. 17-23 *The inheritance of Issachar.* A general outline of the territory of Issachar would be achieved by drawing a line from Mount Carmel east to the Jordan River over Mount Gilboa to form the southern boundary and another line from Mount Carmel east to the Jordan River over Mount Tabor to form the northern boundary. The land lay south and east of the land belonging to Zebulun and north of the eastern half of the territory of Manasseh. Within Issachar's borders were such important cities as Jezreel, Shunem, En-gannim, and Tabor. The territory was very rich in mineral resources and was mostly fertile soil, the plain of Jezreel being famous for its fertility.
- Vv. 24-31 *The Inheritance of Asher.* Asher received land along the Mediterranean seacoast. The land lay north of Mount Carmel and stretched all the way to the borders of Tyre. Asher's territory extended inland about half the distance to the

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Sea of Galilee and the upper waters of the Jordan River. The land was rich, and the people of Asher were so far north that they engaged in commerce with the great Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon and were not as active in the affairs of Israel as were some of the other tribes. It is interesting to notice that Anna, the prophetess who was in the Temple at the time of Jesus' presentation, was of this tribe (Luke 2:36).

Vv. 32-39 *The inheritance of Naphtali.* Naphtali also received land in Galilee. On the west was Asher; on the south, Zebulun and Issachar; on the east, the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River; and on the north, the region of Hamath. Naphtali and Asher thus received the northernmost land which was allocated to Israel.

Vv. 40-48 *The inheritance of Dan.* Dan's territory was perhaps the smallest of all; but it was known as the garden spot of southern Palestine. Dan was situated on the Mediterranean seacoast, and the territory extended inland to the western boundary of the land of Benjamin. Thus the borders were Ephraim on the north; Benjamin on the east; Judah on the south; and the Mediterranean Sea on the west. Joppa was an important town on Dan's border, and the tribe became famous in Bible history as the homeland of Samson.

Vv. 49-51 *The inheritance of Joshua.* The Israelites gave Joshua an inheritance in the midst of them. It is said that it was given him "according to the word of the Lord." This does not refer to a

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divine oracle, but to a promise which Joshua had probably received from God at the same time as Caleb. It was only fitting and proper for these people to give a place for their leader to live. God's promises are always fulfilled. God had told Abraham that He would make of him a great nation. He told him at one time that He would make his children as numerous as the sands on the seashore. Over 300,000 men of war, twenty years of age and older, were counted among these tribes whose inheritances are listed in this chapter. God had, furthermore, promised Jacob that the land whereon he lay around Beth-el would be given to his descendants. Under Joshua's administration, this promise was also fulfilled.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *To each according to his several ability* (Matthew 25:15b). In the parable of the talents, Jesus taught us that God gives to each of us according to his ability. The land given to the tribes of Israel was suited to their needs. Not only did Joshua, their military leader, and Eleazar, their priest, use their best judgment in making these assignments; but they asked for God's guidance in the matter. They cast the sacred lots in determining the portions to be given to each of the tribes, and in this chapter we read of the completion of this work.
2. *Last but not least.* When they had made an end of distributing the land for an inheritance by the borders of it to all the children of Israel, the people made proper provision for Joshua, the son of Nun; and they gave him an inheritance in the midst of them. The grand warrior of God had led them from victory unto victory.

He had also guided and inspired them until they had completed the work of settling the land. Their giving him a place to dwell in their midst was a fitting reward for his years of faithful service. In addition, as the text points out, it was "according to the commandment of the Lord." Since Joshua was a member of the tribe of Ephraim, his inheritance was appropriately in the hill country of Ephraim, where he built a city and lived in it.

3. "*Let all things be done decently and in order*" (I Corinthians 14:40). This injunction was given to the Christians in Corinth, but it is a principle which has always been applicable to God's work. The orderliness of the processes by which God called the universe into being according to the Biblical record (Genesis 1) has amazed and intrigued the keenest scientific minds. The arrangements made for Israel's encampment and marching during the wilderness wanderings explains a part of the process by which God forged a nation out of a band of emancipated slaves (Numbers 2-4). The way in which God directed the orderly allotment of land to the tribes of Israel is another incident which elicits reverence from all God-fearing people.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The Inheritance of Simeon 19:1-9

And the second lot came forth to Simeon, even for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families: and their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah.

2 And they had in their inheritance Beer-sheba, and Sheba, and Moladah,

3 And Hazar-shual, and Balah, and Azem,

4 And Eltolad, and Bethul, and Hormah,

5 And Ziklag, and Beth-marcaboth, and Hazar-susah,

6 And Beth-lebaoth, and Sharuhén; thirteen cities and their villages:

7 Ain, Remmon, and Ether, and Ashan; four cities and their villages:

8 And all the villages that were round about these cities to Baalath-beer, Ramath of the south. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families.

9 Out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon: for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them: therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them.

1. *Who was Simeon?* 19:1

Simeon was the son of Jacob by Leah. He was the second son born to them; and when he was born, his mother gave him a name that indicated that her petitions had been heard of the Lord. His name comes from the Hebrew verb, *shamah*, "to hear." His birth is recorded in Genesis 29:33. When Jacob blessed his sons, he prophesied that Simeon would be with Levi and scattered among the others of Jacob's descendants. Simeon was not to have a separate inheritance of his own. As a result of this prediction's being fulfilled, Simeon inherited cities which centered around Beer-sheba and were completely within the borders of the land given to the children of Judah (Genesis 49:5-7). At the first numbering, made before Israel left Sinai (Numbers 1), there were 59,300 men in Simeon. His tribe decreased in number until there were only 22,200 when the children of Israel were numbered again in the plains of Moab (Numbers 26).

2. *Where was Beer-sheba?* 19:2

Beer-sheba was immediately west of the south end of the Dead Sea and central in the territory given to Simeon. Isaac had lived there when Jacob left to seek a wife among his mother's people (Genesis 28). Abraham had dwelt there (Genesis 22:19), and Isaac had digged a well there (Genesis 26:25). Beer-sheba is famous in modern times as a center of business activity in Israel. A world-famous camel market is located at this southernmost city of Israel.

3. *Where was Ziklag?* 19:5

Ziklag was about twenty miles north and east of Beer-sheba. In the days of David the town was given to him by Achish, king of Gath; and the sacred writer says that Ziklag thereafter pertained unto the kings of Judah until the time of the writing of his narrative (I Samuel 27:6). Such a circumstance indicates that the town had fallen into the hands of the Philistines although it originally was given as a possession to the men of Simeon.

The Inheritance of Zebulun 19:10-16

10 And the third lot came up for the children of Zebulun according to their families: and the border of their inheritance was unto Sarid:

11 And their border went up toward the sea, and Maralah, and reached to Dabbasheth, and reached to the river that is before Jokneam;

12 And turned from Sarid eastward toward the sun-rising unto the border of Chisloth-tabor, and then goeth out to Daberath, and goeth up to Japhia,

13 And from thence passeth on along on the east to Gittah-hepher, to Ittah-kazin, and goeth out to Remmon-methoar to Neah;

14 And the border compasseth it on the north side to Hannathon: and the outgoings thereof are in the valley of Jiphthah-el:

15 And Kattath, and Nahallal, and Shimron, and Idalah, and Beth-lehem: twelve cities with their villages.

16 This is the inheritance of the children of Zebulun according to their families, these cities with their villages.

4. *Who was Zebulun?* 19:10a

The third lot came out for Zebulun, who was the son of Jacob and Leah, being the sixth son born of this union (Genesis 30:19). Since Leah at that time had borne six sons to Jacob, she felt her husband would certainly want to live continually with her. She gave this son a name from a Hebrew word, *zabal*, which means "dwelling." Jacob foresaw that Zebulun would not be a great leader among his people, but he did make a prophecy that he would "dwell" at the haven of the sea. By divine foresight, Jacob predicted Zebulun's inheritance would be in the northern part of the land given to Israel. There were 57,400 men in this tribe when they were numbered at Sinai (Numbers 1), and they had increased to a total of 60,500 when the second census was taken in Moab (Numbers 26).

5. *Where was the land given to Zebulun?* 19:10b-15

Although Jacob had predicted that they would dwell at the haven of the sea, there is some doubt about the exact location of this land. Keil and Delitzsch say in their *Commentary on the Old Testament, Joshua, Judges and Ruth* that the territory of Zebulun did not touch either the Mediterranean Sea nor the Jordan River (page 191). Nonetheless, this territory was in the fertile valley which stretched from the Mediterranean Sea, along the Kishon River, and extended to the east almost to the Sea of Galilee. By residing in such a position, the men of the tribe of Zebulun were in a position to derive the benefits which came from being close to both the Mediterranean Sea and the Sea of Galilee.

6. *Which Beth-lehem was in Zebulun's territory ? 19:15*

The Beth-lehem within the borders of the tribe of Zebulun was not the place of Jesus' birth. It is for this reason that quite often reference is made to Bethlehem-Judah (Judges 17:7, 19:1; see also Micah 5:2). Bethlehem of Zebulun was probably the home of Ibzan, one of the judges of Israel (Judges 12:8, 10). After him ruled Elon, the Zebulonite (Judges 12:11). Although it is not specified that Elon was his son, it is assumed that Ibzan, the Bethlehemite, and Elon, the Zebulonite, were from the same area, thus identifying Beth-lehem in Zebulun.

The Inheritance of Issachar 19:17-23

17 And the fourth lot came out to Issachar, for the children of Issachar according to their families.

18 And their border was toward Jezreel, and Chesul-loth, and Shunem,

19 And Haphraim, and Shihon, and Anaharath,

20 And Rabbith, and Kishion, and Abez,

21 And Remeth, and En-gannim, and En-haddah, and Beth-pazzez;

22 And the coast reacheth to Tabor, and Shahazimah, and Beth-shemesh; and the outgoings of their border were at Jordan: sixteen cities with their villages.

23 This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Issachar according to their families, the cities and their villages.

7. *Who was Issachar? 19:17*

Issachar was the fifth son born to Jacob and Leah. His name was from a Hebrew word, *zachar*, which meant "to hire." Leah felt she had "hired" her husband by allowing Rachel to have the mandrakes found by her son, Reuben. Issachar's birth is recorded in Genesis 30:17, 18,

and Jacob's prophecy about his future is given in Genesis 49:14, 15. When the children of Israel were numbered at Sinai, there were 54,400 men, twenty years of age and older, among these people. Later at the second census, there were 64,300 (Numbers 1 and 26).

8. *What were the borders of Issachar?* 19:18

Issachar lay in the valley between Mount Tabor and Mount Carmel. His land ran east to the Jordan River. Asher and Naphtali inherited land to the north, and the half-tribe of Manasseh (west) was on the south. It is doubtful that the land of Issachar reached either to the Mediterranean Sea or to the Sea of Galilee, but the fertile land in the valleys within his borders provided some of the best soil in all of Canaan.

9. *What cities of importance were in Issachar?* 19:18-22

Sixteen cities are listed as a part of the inheritance of Issachar. Jezreel was an important city. It became the summer home of the kings of Israel (I Kings 21:1). Shunem (verse 18) was the home of the Shunammite who befriended Elisha (II Kings 4:8 ff.). En-gannim (verse 21) was the scene of Ahaziah's escape from Jehu (II Kings 9:27), where it is translated, "the garden house," in the King James Version, and is identified with the modern city of Jenin, a large town of four thousand people. These cities were strategic defense outposts in the days of Israel's monarchy.

The Inheritance of Asher 19:24-31.

24 And the fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families.

25 And their border was Helkath, and Hali, and Becten, and Achshaph,

26 And Alammelech, and Amad, and Misheal; and reacheth to Carmel westward, and to Shihor-labnath;

27 And turneth toward the sunrising to Beth-dagon, and reacheth to Zebulun, and to the valley of Jiphthah-el toward the north side of Beth-emek, and Neiel, and goeth out to Cabul on the left hand,

28 And Hebron, and Rehob, and Hammon, and Kannah, even unto great Zidon;

29 And then the coast turneth to Ramah, and to the strong city Tyre; and the coast turneth to Hosah; and the outgoings thereof are at the sea from the coast to Achzib:

30 Ummah also, and Aphek, and Rehob: twenty and two cities with their villages.

31 This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families, these cities with their villages.

10. *Who was Asher?* 19:24

Asher was the son of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, and Jacob. When he was born (Genesis 30:13), he was given a name which signified that his mother was happy. *Asrab* means "happy" in the Hebrew. Jacob mentioned him in his blessings of his sons (Genesis 49:20). At the census taken near Mount Sinai, there were 41,500 men of war in Asher. Later at the census taken in Moab, he had 53,400 men, twenty years of age and older (Numbers 1 and 26).

11. *Where was the territory of Asher?* 19:24-31

The land assigned to the tribe of Asher reached from Mount Carmel to the northern border of Canaan itself. Carmel is a wooded mountain which stretches in the north-westerly direction, along the southern side of the River Kishon. Some of the land was very rich soil, and it made an excellent home for the descendants of Asher. Most of the land was along the Mediterranean seacoast, and would have been naturally bounded on the north by the Leontes

River. Deborah made reference to the nature of the land as she said, "Asher sat still at the haven of the sea and abode by his creeks" (Judges 5:17b).

12. *How many cities were in Asher?* 19:30

Twenty-two cities are listed as being within the borders of the tribe of Asher. Most of them are rather unimportant, being mentioned very infrequently in the rest of Bible history. Anna, daughter of Phanuel, was from the midst of this tribe (Luke 2:36). The phrase, "Great Sidon," denotes the preeminence which that city enjoyed over Tyre, the sister city, mentioned in verse 29, as being a "strong city." These non-Israelite cities maintained their preeminence. Asher did not drive out the inhabitants; and the history of the people of Asher was inextricably intertwined with the history of the Phoenicians, who lived in Tyre and Sidon.

The Inheritance of Naphtali 19:32-39

32 The sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali, even for the children of Naphtali according to their families.

33 And their coast was from Heleph, from Allon to Zaanannim, and Adami, Nekeb, and Jabneel, unto Lakum; and the outgoings thereof were at Jordan:

34 And then the coast turneth westward to Aznoth-tabor, and goeth out from thence to Hukkok, and reacheth to Zebulun on the south side, and reacheth to Asher on the west side, and to Judah upon Jordan toward the sun-rising.

35 And the fenced cities are Ziddim, Zer, and Ham-math, Rakkath, and Chinnereth,

36 And Adamah, and Ramah, and Hazor,

37 And Kedesh, and Edrei, and En-hazor,

38 And Iron, and Migdal-el, Horem, and Beth-anath, and Beth-shemesh; nineteen cities with their villages.

39 This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali according to their families, the cities and their villages.

13. *Who was Naphtali?* 19:32

Naphtali was the son of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, and Jacob. His birth is recorded in Genesis 30:8; and his name is from a Hebrew word, *naftal*, meaning "to wrestle." Rachel and Leah were wrestling with each other in an attempt to gain the favor of their husband, Jacob. Jacob gave a blessing to Naphtali (Genesis 49:21); and at the first census, he had 53,400 warriors (Numbers 1). He decreased in numbers until there were only 45,400 when the second census was taken (Numbers 26).

14. *Where was the territory of Naphtali?* 19:32-39

The territory given to the children of Naphtali lay immediately east of the territory given to Asher. On the south the land touched the territory of Issachar and Zebulun. On the east border were the streams which ran together to form the Jordan River, flowing through the waters of Merom, and finally into the Sea of Galilee. This tribe also reached to the northern extremities of the Promised Land, and its north border was the Syrian territory which lay beyond the Leontes River.

15. *How many cities were given to Naphtali?* 19:38

Nineteen cities and their villages were within the borders of the territory given to Naphtali. "Judah upon Jordan" is a very unusual reference and caused a great deal of controversy until it was noticed that the sixty towns of Jair, which were upon the eastern side of the Jordan, were called Judah. These cities were reckoned as pertaining to Judah; because Jair, the possessor of these

towns, was a descendant of Judah on the father's side through Hezron (I Chronicles 2:5, 21, 22). Manasseh East had received this territory on the other side of the Jordan opposite the land given to Naphtali. Barak was from this tribe (Judges 4:6).

The Inheritance of Dan 19:40-48

40 And the seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families.

41 And the coast of their inheritance was Zorah, and Eshtaol, and Ir-shemesh,

42 And Shaalabbin, and Ajalon, and Jethlah,

43 And Elon, and Thimnathah, and Ekron,

44 And Eltekeh, and Gibbethon, and Baalath,

45 And Jehud, and Bene-berak, and Gath-rimmon,

46 And Me-jarkon, and Rakkon, with the border before Japho.

47 And the coast of the children of Dan went out too little for them: therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein, and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father.

48 This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages.

16. Who was Dan? 19:40

Dan was also the son of Bilhah and Jacob (Genesis 30:6). His name means "to judge." Jacob gave him a rich blessing (Genesis 49:16-18); and when the tribes of Israel were counted at Sinai, there were 62,700 men, twenty years of age and older, in this tribe (Numbers 1). At the later census he had grown until there were 64,400 men of this age (Numbers 26).

17. *Where was the territory of Dan?* 19:40-46

The major part of Dan's territory lay along the Mediterranean seacoast, immediately west of the land given to the tribe of Benjamin. Benjamin was thus on his eastern border. On the northern border was the territory of Ephraim, and on the southern border was the territory of Judah.

18. *What additional territory was given to Dan?* 19:47, 48

Joshua mentions a conquest which was recorded more fully as an appendix to the book of Judges (Judges 17 and 18). These Israelites went up to the north part of the land given to Israel and conquered an area around Leshem, which was near the headwaters of the Jordan River. This point was the northernmost spot of the land of Israel; and after the name of the place was changed from Leshem to Dan, it was common to speak of the territory of Israel as extending from Dan to Beer-sheba, the northernmost and southernmost important towns, respectively.

The Inheritance of Joshua 19:49-51

49 When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coats, the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them:

50 According to the word of the Lord they gave him the city which he asked, even Timnath-serah in mount Ephraim: and he built the city, and dwelt therein.

51 These are the inheritances, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, divided for an inheritance by lot in Shiloh before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. So they made an end of dividing the country.

19. *Where was Timnath-serah?* 19:50

Timnath-serah was in the midst of the land assigned to the tribe of Ephraim. Captain Warren Conder said that there was no place in all Palestine so striking as that of Joshua's home. It was surrounded with deep valleys and rugged hills. Josephus, Jerome, and Eusebius all identify it with *Tbamma*; and it is mentioned again in Joshua 24:30 as reference is made to Joshua's final resting place.

20. *Who made the assignments of the territories?* 19:51

Joshua took the lead in assigning the inheritances for the various tribes; but Eleazar, son of Aaron, the priest, was also instrumental in performing this task. These men were ably assisted by all the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel. Every tribe was interested in it, and each tribe had one or more men who were officially part of the group making these assignments. The assignments were made in Shiloh at the door of the Tabernacle. This was an appropriate place, signifying that the hand of God was felt upon the work of these men.

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 19

1. In the midst of which tribe did Simeon receive an inheritance?
2. What city was central in Simeon's portion?
3. What was Asher's western border?
4. What two famous Phoenician cities were in Asher's territory?
5. What was Dan's west border?
6. What was the name of the town Joshua built?
7. In which tribe was Joshua's inheritance?
8. Who was priest in Joshua's day?
9. In what town were the leaders when they made the assignments?
10. How many tribes were mentioned as receiving a portion in this chapter?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 20

Vv. 1- 6 *God's instructions to Joshua.* Joshua walked humbly in the sight of God. He waited for instructions from his Heavenly Guide before he proceeded to lead the children of Israel in the direction they should travel. When Joshua was selected to succeed Moses, God told Moses that Joshua should stand before Eleazar, the priest, who would ask counsel for him before the Lord (Numbers 27:21). No doubt, Joshua and Eleazar worked together in this; but it was Joshua who took the initiative.

Vv. 7- 9 *The appointment of the cities of refuge.* God had spoken unto Moses while the children of Israel were in the plains of Moab, across the Jordan River from Jericho, and commanded him to select three cities to serve as cities of refuge. Six cities in all were to be appointed, but Moses was to select three cities on the east side of the Jordan. At that time, God defined the difference between murder and manslaughter and laid down the rules and regulations for the protection of those who might be falsely accused of murder (Numbers 35). Moses had selected three cities—Bezer, Ramoth-Gilead, and Golan. When the tribes were settled under Joshua, three more cities were to be selected; and the three which Moses appointed were to be recognized.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *"Thy will be done."* Every Christian should learn to pray as Jesus taught His disciples in the Model Prayer. We should learn to say, "Thy will be done." We should learn to pray even more meaningfully as Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane. There He prayed, "not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39). Joshua walked with the Lord. God commanded him, and Joshua did the Lord's bidding. His delight was in the law of the Lord. His meat was to do the will of God.
2. *A city of refuge.* Although there is no Biblical reference to the cities of refuge being a type of Christ, the Christian cannot read this arrangement for protection of the innocent without thinking of how he is able to flee to Jesus for refuge. In a sense, he finds this same refuge in the church. Although evil was not to go unpunished, God was careful that the innocent did not suffer unjustly. In the Old Testament, as well as in the New Testament, God's justice is tempered with mercy. He has made gracious provision for the salvation of those who flee to Jesus Christ for refuge.
3. *Life is sacred.* Throughout the history of mankind God has made it clear that a murderer should not go unpunished. God stated an everlasting principle when He told those coming out of the ark after the flood that whosoever shed man's blood by man should his blood be shed (Genesis 9:5). The arrangements made in Joshua 20 followed the prescriptions laid down in Numbers 35. These prescriptions called for the slaying of the murderer, but they also provided for the protection of those who were innocent of guilt.

CHAPTER TWENTY

God's Instructions to Joshua 20:1-6

The Lord also spake unto Joshua, saying,

2 Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses:

3 That the slayer that killeth any person unawares and unwittingly may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood.

4 And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them.

5 And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbor unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime.

6 And he shall dwell in this city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment, and until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled.

1. How did God speak to Joshua? 20:1

When Moses was told to select Joshua as a successor, he instructed him to set Joshua before Eleazar, the priest. God said Joshua would stand regularly before Eleazar, the priest, who would ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord (Numbers 27:21). The Urim and Thummim were a part of the high priest's garments and were instruments by which the Lord made known His

will (Exodus 28:30). Joshua normally must have asked Eleazar to inquire for him concerning the Lord's will, and it is probable that at the time of the appointing of the cities of refuge, God's will was revealed in this way.

2. What instructions had God given to Moses? 20:1b

Before the children of Israel left Sinai, God had revealed how He would appoint a place for anyone who killed another man accidentally (Exodus 21:13). Later, God had revealed how He would select cities from among those assigned to the Levites as their inheritance (Numbers 35:6, 11, 14). The Levites were to receive a total of forty-eight cities, and six of these were to be designated as cities of refuge. Still later, God revealed how the children of Israel were to prepare a road to lead to these cities. They were to divide their borders into three equal parts on each side of the Jordan so that no Israelites would be at any great distance from a city of refuge (Deuteronomy 19:2, 9). These facts were all well known to the Israelites, and now it was Joshua's task to implement the designation of these cities.

3. What purpose did these cities serve? 20:3

The cities of refuge were selected for the protection of those who killed someone but did not actually commit murder (see Numbers 35:9-34). The roads leading to the cities were always kept in thorough repair and according to tradition were required to be at least thirty-two cubits broad. All obstructions were removed. Nothing was to be allowed to stay the fugitive's foot or hinder his speed. No hill was left ungraded and no river was unbridged. At every turning were posts erected bearing the word "refuge" to guide the unhappy man in flight. When the manslayer was settled in such a city, he was given a suitable habitation; and the citizens were to teach him some trade by which he might support himself.

4. *Who was the avenger of blood?* 20:5

From the time of Noah, God had said the blood of a murderer would be required. He said that it would be required "at the hand of every man's brother" (Genesis 9:5). Normally, the brother of a man who was slain would set out to punish the man who had killed his brother. Joab thus attempted to avenge the killing of his brother, Asahel (II Samuel 2:18-24; cf. II Samuel 3:27; see also II Samuel 14:4-7). If the slain man's immediate brother was dead, the nearest relative then became the "avenger of blood."

5. *How could they tell the difference between a manslayer and a murderer?* 20:5

Certain guidelines were laid down in the law for distinguishing between a man who had committed manslaughter and a man who had committed murder. If a man struck another man following premeditation, the killing was judged to be murder. If he smote him with an instrument of iron or with a stone in his hand, he was guilty of murder. The same was true if he struck a man with a weapon of wood. On the other hand, if the head flew off his ax and struck another man, the congregation would have judged him guilty only of manslaughter (Deuteronomy 19:5; cf. Numbers 35:1-34). When a man was guilty of murder, he was delivered up to the avenger of blood; and the murderer was slain.

6. *How long was a fugitive allowed to stay in a city of refuge?* 20:6

If a man was judged innocent of murder, he was allowed to take up residence in the city of refuge. If he went out of the city of refuge, he went at his own risk. Of course, if the avenger of blood found him out of the city and killed him, the avenger of blood himself would have been guilty of committing murder. He, in turn, would have been tried and judgment passed on his acts.

The man who lived in the city of refuge was to stay there until the death of the high priest. At that time, he was free to go. Such an arrangement seems rather arbitrary to us, but it would make provision for the emptying of these cities of the fugitives from time to time.

The Appointment of the Cities of Refuge 20:7-9

7 And they appointed Kedesh in Gaililee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah.

8 And on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh.

9 These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth any person at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation.

*7. What three cities were selected west of the Jordan?
20:7*

West of the Jordan, Joshua selected Kedesh in the tribe of Naphtali, Shechem in the tribe of Ephraim, and Hebron in the tribe of Judah. Kedesh lay just north and west of the waters of Merom and was in the very far north part of the land allotted to the children of Israel. This would be readily accessible to people who lived in the borders of the tribes of Asher, Zebulun, Issachar, and Naphtali. Shechem was in the hill country of Ephraim and was west of the Jordan River about halfway between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. Men who lived in the broad expanses of the territory of the tribes of Manas-

seh and Ephraim would have ready access to Shechem as a city of refuge. Hebron was west of the Dead Sea about halfway down the length of the sea. This location was situated where it would be within easy reach of those who lived in the borders of the tribes of Dan, Benjamin, Simeon, and Judah.

8. *What cities were selected east of the Jordan?* 20:8

East of the Jordan, Joshua selected Golan in the land belonging to the children of Manasseh, Ramoth-Gilead in the land belonging to the children of Gad, and Bezer in the land belonging to the children of Reuben. Golan was in the north part of the land beyond the Jordan, Ramoth-Gilead was in the center, and Bezer was in the south. Once again, provision was made so that no person living east of the Jordan would have too far to go to get to a city of refuge. Each one of the three tribes had a city of refuge within its borders.

9. *What strangers sojourned in Israel?* 20:9a

When the children of Israel left Egypt, a mixed multitude went up with them (Exodus 12:38). This mixed multitude must have been a group of natives of Egypt and other countries who cast their lots with the children of Israel. When the laws were given to Israel, specific notice was made of these people; and it was clearly ordered that the laws which governed Israel's society were to apply to all who lived among them. There was not a separate law for men who were native Israelites as opposed to those who were strangers among them. Even this law with regard to murder was to be enforced on strangers in their midst, as well as upon those who were native Israelites.

10. *In what sense did the fugitive stand "before the congregation"?* 20:9b

The fugitive was to declare his cause in the ears of the elders of the city of refuge (verse four). These elders were to receive the fugitive into the city and give him a

place where he might dwell among them. If the avenger of blood came to the city, these men were not to deliver the slayer to the avenger of blood. When the fugitive's case had been heard and judgment had been rendered, the elders were to see that the proper execution of the judgment was implemented. In this sense, a fugitive "stood before the congregation." The elders of the city of refuge and the inhabitants of that city passed judgment on behalf of all Israel.

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 20

1. Who selected the cities of refuge east of the Jordan?
2. Who selected the cities of refuge west of the Jordan?
3. How long was a fugitive to live in the city of refuge?
4. What city of refuge was within the borders of the tribe of Naphtali?
5. What city of refuge was within the borders of the tribe of Ephraim?
6. What city of refuge was within the borders of the tribe of Judah?
7. What city of refuge was within the borders of the tribe of Reuben?
8. What city of refuge was within the borders of the tribe of Gad?
9. What city of refuge was within the borders of the tribe of Manasseh?
10. Were only native-born Israelites protected by these provisions?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 21

- Vv. 1- 8 *Preparation for the assignment of the Levitical cities.* Since the children of Levi did not have any land as an inheritance in Canaan, they were

to be given forty-eight cities, scattered throughout the borders of the other tribes. Their inheritance was the service of the Lord. Some of them were to attend to the work of the Tabernacle, while others were living in the six cities of refuge which were appointed out of the total of forty-eight cities given to them. The remainder must have been busily engaged in teaching the Law, making copies of the Scriptures, and in general, "waiting on the Lord."

Vv. 9-19 *Cities given to the family of Aaron.* The high priests were all descendants of Aaron. Aaron had four sons—Nadab, Abihu, Ithamar, and Eleazar. Anyone eligible for the priesthood had to be a descendant of these men. Two of them, Nadab and Abihu, were killed (Leviticus 10); and the line of the high priests was traced through the other two sons—Ithamar and Eleazar. A total of thirteen cities were given to the descendants of these high priests.

Vv. 20-26 *Cities given to the family of Kohath.* Both Aaron and Moses were from the family of Kohath, a descendant of Levi. Other prominent men such as Korah were also out of this family. When the Levites were numbered at Sinai, there were 8600 of the family of Kohath among the Levites (Numbers 3:28). During the exodus, these men resided in the area immediately south of the Tabernacle and had charge of the Ark, the Table of Shewbread, the Candlestick, the altars, and the vessels of the

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sanctuary. Whenever camp was broken, these men shouldered these hallowed items of furniture and carried them until camp was set up again. A total of ten cities were given to the families of the children of Kohath.

Vv. 27-33 *Cities given to the family of Gershon.* There were 7,500 Levites, a month old and upward, among the families of the Gershonites when they were numbered at Sinai (Numbers 3:22). These members of the tribe of Levi encamped at the back of the Tabernacle in front of the tents of the tribes of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Benjamin. These workers had charge of the coverings of the Tabernacle itself, the hangings, the screen for the door of the tent of meeting, and the cords (Numbers 3:25, 26). Thirteen cities were given to the Gershonites.

Vv. 34-40 *Cities given to the families of Merari.* Twelve cities were given to the remaining families of the Levites by the tribes of Israel. These Levites were all descendants of Merari, one of the descendants of Levi. There were 6,200 of them when they were numbered at Sinai (Numbers 3:34). Their workmen had charge of the boards, bars, pillars, sockets, pins, and cords (Numbers 3:37).

Vv. 41-45 *Summary of the assignment of the land.* A total of forty-eight cities with their suburbs were given to the Levites. Since all the other tribes had received their inheritance of land, the work of assigning the territory to the children of Israel was completed.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *There is a task for every worker.* The children of Israel were very well organized. Captains were appointed over groups of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. The work was thereby properly administered, and the special task of the Levites was the service of the Lord. In Numbers, specific details were given with regard to their service. Such a division of labor reminds us of the fact that there is a job for each Christian.
2. *A laborer is worthy of his hire.* When Jesus sent forth the seventy disciples, two by two, He told them to enter into whatever house would receive them. As they stayed in these houses, they were to eat whatever was given to them. He then said, "The laborer is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10:7). The Apostle Paul declared that they who preached the gospel should live of the gospel (I Corinthians 9:14). God made provision for the Levites to receive their livelihood at the hands of their fellow Israelites. Not only did they receive a tithe of the income of the land, but they also were given cities in which to dwell.
3. *Jesus never fails.* It is a frequent statement of truth on the part of the Christian that "Jesus never fails." Jesus came into the world that they who beheld Him would behold the Father. He said that if any man had seen Him, he had seen the Father. Jesus' faithfulness is an example of the never-failing goodness of God. When the Israelites had been settled in the Promised Land and cities had been assigned to the Levites, we read, "There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass" (Joshua 21:45).

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Preparation for the Assignment of the Levitical Cities
21:1-8

Then came near the heads of the fathers of the Levites unto Eleazar the priest, and unto Joshua the son of Nun, and unto the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel;

2 And they spake unto them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, The Lord commanded by the hand of Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with the suburbs thereof for our cattle.

3 And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites out of their inheritance, at the commandment of the Lord, these cities and their suburbs.

4 And the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites: and the children of Aaron the priest, which were of the Levites, had by lot out of the tribe of Judah, and out of the tribe of Simeon, and out of the tribe of Benjamin, thirteen cities.

5 And the rest of the children of Kohath had by lot out of the families of the tribe of Ephraim, and out of the tribe of Dan, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh, ten cities.

6 And the children of Gershon had by lot out of the families of the tribe of Issachar, and out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities.

7 The children of Merari by their families had out of the tribe of Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad, and out of the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities.

8 And the children of Israel gave by lot unto the Levites these cities with their suburbs, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.

1. *Who were the "heads of the fathers of the Levites"? 21:1*

Every tribe was led by the respected elders who had been appointed and recognized. The leaders of the twelve tribes were listed in the first chapter of Numbers. Since the high priests were from the tribe of Levi, Eleazar would be recognized as the primary leader of these Israelites. Under him were the "heads of the fathers' houses" (Numbers 1:4). At the time of the first numbering, the names of the heads of the three families of Levites were listed (Numbers 1:18-20). Their successors must have approached Eleazar and Joshua when they asked for the cities to be assigned to them.

2. *When did God command Moses to give cities to the Levites? 21:2*

God spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho, and commanded him to give an inheritance to the Levites. He stipulated that this inheritance was to be cities in which they might dwell. They were also to receive suburbs for the cities (Numbers 35:1, 2). Such provision made it possible for them to have some cattle and other beasts. They could also erect their houses in which to live and perhaps have some small vegetable crops.

3. *Where were the cities given to the children of Aaron? 21:4*

A total of thirteen cities were given to the children of Aaron. These lay within the borders of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Simeon. Thus, all the cities given to the children of Aaron were on the west side of the Jordan and in the south part of the territory.

4. *Where were the cities given to the family of Kohath? 21:5*

Since all the children of Aaron were also descendants of Kohath, only ten additional cities were given to the remaining families of the Kohathites. These cities were located within the borders of the tribes of Ephraim, Dan,

and the half tribe of Manasseh, who lived west of the Jordan. All of these cities were also west of the Jordan, but they were in the central part of the western territory.

5. *Where were the cities given to the families of the Gershonites?* 21:6

Thirteen cities were given to the families of the Gershonites. These were located within the borders of the tribes of Asher, Naphtali, and the half tribe of Manasseh which lived east of the Jordan. These cities were, thus, located on both sides of the Jordan River, but were all in the extreme northern part of the Promised Land.

6. *Where were the cities given to the families of Merari?* 21:7

Twelve cities were given to the descendants of Merari. These were located within the borders of the tribe of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun. The cities assigned to these Levites were more scattered than any of the others. Some of them were east of the Jordan and some were west of the Jordan. Some of them were in the north—in the tribe of Zebulun, and some were in the far south—in the tribe of Reuben. Others were in the central part of the eastern territory—within the borders of the tribe of Gad.

Cities Given to the Family of Aaron 21:9-19

9 And they gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon, these cities which are here mentioned by name.

10 Which the children of Aaron, being of the families of the Kohathites, who were of the children of Levi, had: for their's was the first lot.

11 And they gave them the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, with the suburbs thereof round about it.

12 But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, gave they to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for his possession.

13 Thus they gave to the children of Aaron the priest Hebron with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Libnah with her suburbs,

14 And Jattir with her suburbs, and Eshtemoa with her suburbs,

15 And Holon with her suburbs, and Debir with her suburbs,

16 And Ain with her suburbs, and Juttah with her suburbs, and Beth-shemesh with her suburbs; nine cities out of those two tribes.

17 And out of the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with her suburbs, Geba with her suburbs,

18 Anathoth with her suburbs, and Almon with her suburbs; four cities.

19 All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, were thirteen cities with their suburbs.

7. What important cities were given to the children of Aaron? 21:10-19

Several of the cities given to the children of Aaron were well known and figured prominently in later Israelite history. Jattir, for example, was one of the cities to which David sent spoils from Ziklag (I Samuel 30:27). This town lay twelve miles south of Hebron. The ruins of Attir have been located on a hill at this point. Hebron, a city of refuge, was one of the most famous cities in the entire land. Gibeon was famous as the home of the Hivites, who had tricked Joshua into making a peace treaty with them. Anathoth was the home of high priests in the times of David.

8. What special provision was made with regard to Hebron? 21:11

Since Caleb had asked for territory in the South and had been given Hebron and its suburbs, a provision was made for him to have jurisdiction over the villages which

belonged to Hebron. The fields that surrounded the city were also left in Caleb's possession.

Cities Given to the Family of Kohath 21:20-26

20 And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites which remained of the children of Kohath, even they had the cities of their lot out of the tribe of Ephraim.

21 For they gave them Shechem with her suburbs in mount Ephraim, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Gezer with her suburbs,

22 And Kibzaim with her suburbs, and Beth-horon with her suburbs; four cities.

23 And out of the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with her suburbs, Gibbethon with her suburbs,

24 Aijalon with her suburbs, Gath-rimmon with her suburbs; four cities.

25 And out of the half tribe of Manasseh, Tanach with her suburbs, and Gath-rimmon with her suburbs; two cities.

26 All the cities were ten with their suburbs for the families of the children of Kohath that remained.

9. What important cities were given to the families of the Kohathites? 21:20-26

Prominent among the cities given to the Kohathites was Shechem, which was also one of the cities of refuge. Gezer was on the Shephelah, and was one of Solomon's fortified cities. Beth-horon was a point on the western border of Benjamin and served to identify the line between Benjamin and Dan. Aijalon was the point over which the moon stood when Joshua prayed for an extension of time as he fought against the kings of the South. Tanach has been excavated in recent times and was an important citadel on the northern border of Ephraim.

Cities Given to the Family of Gershon 21:27-33

27 And unto the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, out of the other half tribe of Manasseh they gave Golan in Bashan with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Beeshterah with her suburbs; two cities.

28 And out of the tribe of Issachar, Kishon with her suburbs, Dabareh with her suburbs,

29 Jarmuth with her suburbs, En-gannim with her suburbs; four cities.

30 And out of the tribe of Asher, Mishal with her suburbs, Abdon with her suburbs,

31 Helkath with her suburbs, and Rehob with her suburbs; four cities.

32 And out of the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Hammoth-dor with her suburbs, and Kartan with her suburbs; three cities.

33 All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families were thirteen cities with their suburbs.

10. What important cities were given to the families of Gershon? 21:27-33

The families of Gershonites were given Kedesh, which was also a city of refuge. In addition, they had jurisdiction over En-gannim, which is the modern Jenin, a town of four thousand inhabitants. They also possessed Golan, east of the Sea of Galilee. This was an important city in Bashan and was one of the cities of refuge.

Cities Given to the Family of Merari 21:34-40

34 And unto the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites, out of the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with her suburbs, and Kartah with her suburbs,

35 Dimnah with her suburbs, Nahalal with her suburbs; four cities.

36 And out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with her suburbs, and Jahazah with her suburbs,

37 Kedemoth with her suburbs, and Mephaath with her suburbs; four cities.

38 And out of the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Mahanaim with her suburbs,

39 Heshbon with her suburbs, Jezer with her suburbs; four cities in all.

40 So all the cities for the children of Merari by their families, which were remaining of the families of the Levites, were by their lot twelve cities.

11. What important cities were given to the families of Merari? 21:30-40

Jokneam, a city located on a high hill, overlooking the valley of Jezreel, belonged to these people. Definitive archaeological excavations are yet to be undertaken at this site. They also had two cities of refuge—Bezer and Ramoth-Gilead. The families of the Merarites also lived in Heshbon, which had been the capital city of Sihon, king of the Amorites, who was defeated by Moses.

Summary of the Assignment of the Land 21:41-45

41 All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel were forty and eight cities with their suburbs.

42 These cities were every one with their suburbs round about them: thus were all these cities.

43 And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein.

44 And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand.

45 There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.

12. *What was the total number of cities?* 21:41

Moses had commanded Joshua to give the children of Levi a total of forty-eight cities—six cities of refuge and forty-two other cities (Numbers 35:6, 7). Joshua was faithful in fulfilling the will of God in this matter. He, Eleazar, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel were careful to give the exact number of cities to the Levites.

13. *What were the "suburbs"?* 21:42

When the original instructions were given by God to Moses, He ordered suburbs to be given to the Levites. He specified that these were to reach out a thousand cubits from the city wall on every side (Numbers 35:1-5). Evidently these suburbs were strips of land around the cities where the Levites could tether their animals and plant some small vegetable crops. They did not have enough room for vineyards or large fields of grain, but they were able to raise some produce for their tables. This would supplement their sustenance which they received from the tithe given by the other tribes.

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 21

1. How many cities were given to the families of Aaron?
2. How many cities were given to the other Kohathite families?

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3. How many cities were given to the families of Gershon?
4. How many cities were given to the families of Merari?
5. Which family possessed Shechem?
6. Who possessed Kedesh?
7. Who possessed Ramoth-Gilead?
8. What was the total number of cities given to the Levites?
9. How many of these were cities of refuge?
10. Were any of God's promises left unfulfilled?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 22

Vv. 1- 9 *The dismissal of the eastern tribes.* The war of conquest had been finished. Land had been distributed to the tribes receiving an inheritance west of the Jordan. The three eastern tribes had fulfilled their promise of assisting to conquer the land, and they were now ready to return to their possessions east of the Jordan. Joshua called the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh and sent them home from Shiloh.

Vv. 10-20 *An altar erected at Jordan.* When the three eastern tribes reached the valley of the Jordan River they stopped on the west side and erected an altar. Their actions were reminiscent of the two memorials which Joshua and the children of Israel erected in the Jordan Valley when they crossed over on dry land near Jericho. Their motive in building this altar was misunderstood for a time, and it nearly caused a civil war in Israel.

STUDIES IN JOSHUA-JUDGES-RUTH

Vv. 21-34 *A reason given for the altar.* The eastern tribes explained that their purpose in erecting the altar was reasonable. They had not built the altar in order to have their own place to worship. They were not trying to abandon the sanctuary which had been set up at Shiloh. It was not their purpose to offer strange sacrifices to a heathen god. They had erected the altar as a reminder to their brethren on the west that Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh were an integral part of Israel.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Avoid the very appearance of evil.* The eastern tribes had not been very careful to prevent giving the wrong impression to their brethren. They erected an altar which had the appearance of being in competition with the altar at Shiloh. The Apostle Paul has written that Christians should avoid the very appearance of evil (I Thessalonians 5:22). It should be the aim of every Christian to dress in such a way that he would not be mistaken for a lewd person. He should conduct himself so as not to be thought of as one who is riotous and unruly. In every aspect of his life he should be careful of the appearance he makes.
2. *Zeal without knowledge is dangerous.* Phinehas led the children of Israel to war against the eastern tribes. On the surface, it had appeared that the eastern tribes were in rebellion against the Lord. Without making full inquiry into the matter, the ten princes who were with Phinehas and all the armies of Israel were ready to begin civil war. Phinehas charged the Gileadites with committing iniquity, similar to that practiced in Peor. They were compared to Achan, who committed a trespass in

the accursed thing. After the eastern tribes explained their actions, the other Israelites were satisfied; and civil war was averted. In many similar instances today, people jump to conclusions and condemn their neighbors on circumstantial evidence. Their zeal in striving to do what is right is admirable; but when zeal is based on insufficient evidence or inaccurate information, dangers of every sort arise.

3. *Out of sight; out of mind.* The eastern tribes were afraid that they would be forgotten by their brethren west of the Jordan. This was their reason for building an altar after the pattern of the altar at Shiloh. They knew that people soon forget their friends who are absent. Parents become unmindful of children who are away from home and neglect to pray for them. Children move aged parents to rest homes and are negligent in not observing their birthdays and other special occasions. Missionaries are sent to the field and forthwith forgotten. Such things ought not so to be, and every effort should be made to establish means for remembering those who are absent.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The Dismissal of the Eastern Tribes 22:1-9

Then Joshua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh,

2 And said unto them, Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you:

3 Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord your God.

4 And now the Lord your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them: therefore now return

ye, and get you unto your tents, and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you on the other side Jordan.

5 But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.

6 So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away: and they went unto their tents.

7 Now to the one half of the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given possession in Bashan: but unto the other half thereof gave Joshua among their brethren on this side Jordan westward. And when Joshua sent them away also unto their tents, then he blessed them,

8 And he spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment: divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren.

9 And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go unto the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed, according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses.

1. When were the eastern tribes dismissed? 22:1

The eastern tribes were summoned to accompany Joshua across the Jordan as he made his plans for the conquest of Canaan (1:12 ff.). Since this summons began the account of the war, their dismissal might be considered a proper conclusion to the history of the conquest. Some suppose these auxiliaries were sent back home immediately after the conquest was concluded. If such be the case,

the account of their returning east of the Jordan is not in its proper place in the text. It may seem only natural for the history of the conquest itself to be completed fully before any other narratives were introduced; but since the eastern tribes were dismissed from Shiloh and the tribes assembled there for the first time during the casting of the lots for the land, the dismissal of the eastern tribes probably did not occur until after lots had been cast. When the other tribes had received land assigned to them, the eastern tribes were allowed to return to their inheritance east of the Jordan. The narrative is doubtless in chronological order.

2. *What did Moses command them to do?* 22:2

Moses misunderstood the three tribes' reason for asking to settle east of the Jordan. He thought that they were afraid to go into Canaan. Such a fear would have been similar to the one which swept over Israel at Kadesh-Barnea after the sending of the twelve spies (Numbers 13). The eastern tribes explained that they were not afraid to go into Canaan. They were willing to go and to help conquer the land. They only requested to be allowed to settle east of the Jordan when the conquest was concluded. When Moses heard them say they would go and fight, he said they would be free to return home to the territory east of the Jordan. These tribes had done this, and so they were allowed to go to their portions of land.

3. *Where did these tribes get their riches?* 22:8

As Joshua blessed the tribes, he said, "Return with much riches." They had cattle, silver, gold, brass, iron, and very much raiment. It is finally described as "spoil." This spoil would have come to the tribes as they conquered the many cities in Canaan. They were allowed to take spoil of every city except from the city of Jericho. This city with all of its goods was dedicated to the Lord as the firstfruits

of the land of Canaan. After Jericho fell, Israel was free to take spoil from every other city. The eastern tribes received a portion of this booty, and they were allowed to take it home to their possession.

An Altar Erected At Jordan 22:10-20

10 And when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that are in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by Jordan, a great altar to see to.

11 And the children of Israel heard say, Behold, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh have built an altar over against the land of Canaan, in the borders of Jordan, at the passage of the children of Israel.

12 And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh, to go up to war against them.

13 And the children of Israel sent unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest,

14 And with him ten princes, of each chief house a prince throughout all the tribes of Israel; and each one was an head of the house of their fathers among the thousands of Israel.

15 And they came unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, unto the land of Gilead, and they spake with them, saying,

16 Thus saith the whole congregation of the Lord, What trespass is this that ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the Lord, in that ye have builded you an altar, that ye might rebel this day against the Lord?

17 Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the Lord,

18 But that ye must turn away this day from following the Lord? and it will be, seeing ye rebel today against the Lord, that tomorrow he will be wroth with the whole congregation of Israel.

19 Notwithstanding, if the land of your possession be unclean, then pass ye over unto the land of the possession of the Lord, wherein the Lord's tabernacle dwelleth, and take possession among us: but rebel not against the Lord, nor rebel against us, in building you an altar beside the altar of the Lord our God.

20 Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? and that man perished not alone in his iniquity.

4. On what shore of Jordan did they build their altar?
22:10

Since it is said that they erected the altar when they came unto the borders of Jordan, it is apparent that the altar was erected on the west side of the Jordan. Even though Phinehas and the other Israelites who were with him went "unto the land of Gilead" (verse 15), it still seems apparent that the altar was on the west bank of Jordan. Phinehas and his men would have been obliged to cross the Jordan and enter into the land east of the Jordan in order to hold a conference with the eastern tribes. The altar would have served its ultimate purpose best by being on the west side of the river, for there it would serve as a constant reminder to the western tribes.

5. Why did the rest of Israel think of going to war? 22:12

There was no separation of church and state in the days of Joshua. God was a ruler of Israel in a very real

sense. His laws were the laws of the state. He had ordained that there should be only one place of worship (Deuteronomy 12). When the eastern tribes set up another altar besides the one which was at Shiloh, the western tribes naturally supposed they were transgressing God's laws. They banded themselves together as a military force to punish the criminals.

6. *Who was Phinehas?* 22:13

Phinehas was the son of Eleazar, the high priest. He had proved himself to be zealous on behalf of the Lord when he punished those who committed iniquity in the days of Balaam while Israel was in Midian, across the Jordan River from Jericho. This same Phinehas had taken a javelin and slain Cozbi and Zimri (Numbers 25). He is to be commended for his zeal in enforcing the laws of God, but he and those who were with him should have made further inquiry before taking such drastic measures in the matter of the altar erected by the eastern tribes.

7. *Why did ten princes go with Phinehas?* 22:14

The ten princes were selected from the tribes of Israel who lived west of the Jordan. Each was the chief of a house in these western tribes. There were only ten tribes west of the Jordan since the three tribes east of the Jordan had already gone home. There were ten west of the Jordan since another part of the tribe of Manasseh had settled in the western section.

8. *Why was the building of an altar a sin?* 22:16

Phinehas considered the erecting of the altar as a trespass. He compared it to the iniquity which was committed in Peor. He also compared it to the sin of Achan (verses 17, 20). Phinehas believed the erecting of the altar was a direct violation of God's commandment that the people of Israel should bring their burnt offerings, sacrifices, tithes, heave offerings, vows, freewill offerings, and firstlings of their herds and flocks to the one place which

God should select as the center of worship (Deuteronomy 12:6, 7). God had given this commandment in order to prevent Israel from worshipping different gods in many different places in a manner similar to that followed by the Canaanites who lived in the land. Phinehas felt that such a sin should not go unpunished.

9. *What was the iniquity of Peor?* 22:17

The sin which was committed at Peor was of great consequences. Phinehas said that the congregation of Israel was not cleansed from that sin even in his day. On that occasion the people of Moab enticed the Israelites to sacrifice to their god, Chemosh; and lewd women among them enticed the men of Israel to commit fornication (Numbers 25:3, 4, 6). A ringleader in those sins was Zimri, a prince of Simeon. When God punished Israel in those days for those sins, twenty-four thousand Israelites were slain. Most of those must have been from Simeon since they were reduced to 22,200 in the second census from a much larger number of 59,300 in the first census. The short time which elapsed after the sin of Baal-Peor before the second census was not time enough for the tribe to recover from such a catastrophe.

10. *Why remember the sin of Achan?* 22:20

Israel had been given very specific instructions about taking spoils of war as they conquered Palestine. They were to be allowed the taking of spoils from every city except from the city of Jericho. Jericho was the first city they attacked. It was something of a firstfruits of the land to be given completely unto the Lord. As a result, they were expressly commanded not to take any kind of spoil of war from Jericho. When Achan saw a wedge of gold, a Babylonian garment, and some pieces of silver, he coveted these items and stole them. His bold and brazen disobedience of an express commandment of the Lord brought punishment not only upon himself but upon other

members of his household. Phinehas considered the erection of another altar a similar kind of brazen disobedience. He compared what he considered to be the sin of the eastern tribes to the sin of Achan.

A Reason Given for the Altar 22:21-34

21 Then the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh answered, and said unto the heads of the thousands of Israel,

22 The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if it be in rebellion, or if in transgression against the Lord, (save us not this day,)

23 That we have built us an altar to turn from following the Lord, or if to offer thereon burnt offering or meat offering, or if to offer peace offerings thereon, let the Lord himself require it;

24 And if we have not rather done it for fear of this thing, saying, In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the Lord God of Israel?

25 For the Lord hath made Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of Reuben and children of Gad; ye have no part in the Lord: so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the Lord.

26 Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice:

27 But that it may be a witness between us, and you, and our generations after us, that we might do the service of the Lord before him with our burnt offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your children may not say to our children in time to come, Ye have no part in the Lord.

28 Therefore said we, that it shall be, when they should so say to us or to our generations in time to come, that we

may say again, Behold the pattern of the altar of the Lord, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between us and you.

29 God forbid that we should rebel against the Lord, and turn this day from following the Lord, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for meat offerings, or for sacrifices, beside the altar of the Lord our God that is before his tabernacle.

30 And when Phinehas the priest, and the princes of the congregation and heads of the thousands of Israel which were with him, heard the words of the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the children of Manasseh spake, it pleased them.

31 And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manasseh, This day we perceive that the Lord is among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the Lord: now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the Lord.

32 And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the princes, returned from the children of Reuben, and from the children of Gad, out of the land of Gilead, unto the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought them word again.

33 And the thing pleased the children of Israel; and the children of Israel blessed God, and did not intend to go up against them in battle, to destroy the land wherein the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt.

34 And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar *Ed*: for it shall be a witness between us that the Lord is God.

11. What was the fear of the eastern tribes? 22:24

The eastern tribes were afraid they would be forgotten by the rest of Israel. Their inheritance was east

of the Jordan, and the Jordan River formed a very natural boundary between them and the rest of the people. All of the Israelites were expected to attend the three annual feasts at the Tabernacle. There were other occasions when the whole congregation would gather together, and the eastern tribes were afraid that the western tribes would neglect to send a summons to them.

12. *In what way would an altar be a witness?* 22:27, 28

The altar which the eastern tribes erected at the edge of the Jordan was patterned after the brazen altar which stood in front of the Tabernacle. God had instructed the Israelites to make an altar which was five cubits long and five cubits wide. It was also to be three cubits high. Around it was to be a network or a grating. It was to have a ledge on it. Four horns were to be at the four corners of the altar. The altar which the eastern tribes built must have been built according to the instructions given in Exodus 27, and anyone who saw it would know they must have been a part of the nation of Israel or else they would not have had access to these plans. In this way, they identified themselves as being a part of Israel.

13. *Why were the rest of the Israelites pleased with the explanation of the eastern tribes?* 22:30

The western tribes could hardly have had any real desire to wage war against their brethren east of the Jordan, although they were willing to fight them in order to punish those who broke God's laws. They must have been glad when they found they did not have justifiable reasons for starting a civil war. The explanation was plausible. Surely the eastern tribes had no wicked motive in building the altar, and their wanting to be remembered was understandable. All of the leaders of Israel must have heaved a great sigh of relief when they heard the explanation.

14. *What was the meaning of the name given to the altar?*
22:34

The word, *ed*, means "a witness." The eastern tribes called this altar by that name for it was indeed a witness to their being an integral part of Israel. Joshua used this same word when he erected a stone as a memorial of Israel's making a covenant to serve God faithfully. Of his stone, Joshua said, "Behold, this stone shall be a *witness* to us; for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a *witness* unto you, lest ye deny your God" (Joshua 24:27).

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 22

1. Name the three tribes which settled east of the Jordan?
2. From what point were these three tribes dismissed?
3. Where did these three tribes erect an altar?
4. What name was given to the land possessed by the eastern tribes?
5. Whom did the children of Israel send to accost the eastern tribes?
6. How many princes of Israel were with him?
7. What earlier tragedy in Israel did the erection of the altar call to mind?
8. To the sin of what man did they compare this act of the eastern tribes?
9. What name was given to the altar erected by the eastern tribes?
10. What was the meaning of the name given to the altar?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 23

Vv. 1- 5 *A review of Joshua's work.* Joshua 23 is a digest of Joshua's address to the elders and officers of the children of Israel. The address was given sometime after the conquest was

STUDIES IN JOSHUA-JUDGES-RUTH

finished and the assignments had been made to the various tribes of Israel. The address to this group of representatives of the people forms an introduction to the longer address given to all the Israelites and recorded in the following chapter. The first part of this speech is a resume of Joshua's activity among his people.

- Vv. 6-11 *Promises of blessings for obedience.* Joshua was anxious for his people to obey the Lord, and he began his discourse to their leaders by reminding them of the many blessings which would come to them when they obeyed. Joshua especially foresaw the danger of their falling away into idolatry and serving the gods whom the Canaanites served.
- Vv. 12-16 *Warnings of punishment for disobedience.* Joshua emphasized the positive by mentioning the blessings first, but he knew the Israelites needed to be warned of the punishments which would come upon them if they disobeyed God. It was just as inevitable evil would befall them when they disobeyed as it was sure that they would be blessed if they were faithful to God. Joshua knew they would lose the land in which they dwelt if they turned away from God.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Forget not His benefits.* A constant reminder of God's goodness is before all when they count the blessings which they have received. Joshua recounted these blessings for his people as an introduction to his exhortation for faithfulness on their part. Many times people turn

their backs on God because they forget His benefits. A little time spent in remembering the good things which befall a Christian will keep him faithful to his Lord. Joshua knew this would be true for his people as well.

2. *One and God make a majority.* Joshua said one man of Israel would be able to chase a thousand enemies (verse 10). He was like Elisha who reminded his servant that they who fought for Israel were more than they who fought for their enemies (II Kings 6:16). If the Israelites in Joshua's day remained faithful, they would know that the Lord fought for them even as Elisha's servant knew that God was fighting for Israel in his day when his eyes were opened and he saw the Lord's hosts on the mountains around Samaria.
3. *The soul that sins shall die.* God had made it clear that the soul who sinned would die. The wages of sin is death and has always been. What was true for an individual was true for a nation. If a nation of individuals sinned against God, they would doom their souls eternally, and they would also bring physical destruction upon their society. Joshua tried to impress this on his people.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

A Review of Joshua's Work 23:1-5

And it came to pass a long time after that the Lord had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age.

2 And Joshua called for all Israel, and for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them, I am old and stricken in age:

3 And ye have seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the Lord your God is he that hath fought for you.

4 Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the Great Sea westward.

5 And the Lord your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the Lord your God hath promised unto you.

1. How much time had elapsed between the settling of the land and Joshua's last address? 23:1

The Scripture says that a long time had elapsed after the people of Israel had finished their conquest before Joshua gave his address to the leaders. Joshua was at least sixty years of age when he came into the Promised Land, since he was numbered at Sinai among those who were twenty years of age and over. After the people left Sinai, they wandered for forty years in the wilderness; and Joshua would therefore have been at least sixty when he came into Canaan. Caleb said that he was forty years of age when he was sent out as a spy (14:17). We may assume that Joshua was about the same age. Joshua was one hundred and ten years of age when he died. No more than twenty-five years would have elapsed between the end of the conquest and the death of Joshua if Joshua was of the same age as Caleb. Twenty years would have certainly been "a long time."

2. To what point did Joshua call the leaders? 23:2

Joshua must have called the leaders to Shiloh. This is where the tribes had assembled when they received their final allotments. His final address was delivered at Shechem, but there is a special mention of their assembling

there in 24:1. Since there is no mention here of their moving, it is assumed his address to the smaller group of leaders was given at Shiloh.

3. *How did Joshua call for all Israel?* 23:3

The address consists of two parts which run parallel to one another so far as the contents are concerned. Part one is verses 2b-13, and part two is verses 14-16. In both parts Joshua commences with a reference to his age and his approaching death. In consequence of this impending event, he felt constrained to remind the people once more of all the great things which the Lord had done for them and to warn them against falling away from the gracious covenant of God. Joshua, in the last act of his life, was treading in the footsteps of Moses, who had concluded his life with the exhortations to the people to be faithful to the Lord (Deuteronomy 1:30). Joshua's address contains reminiscences from the Pentateuch, more especially from Deuteronomy. He had little new to announce to the people, but he wished to impress the old truth upon their minds once more. He called for all Israel by asking their leaders to assemble.

4. *Who were the "officers"?* 23:2

The term *elders* is the general term used to denote all the representatives of the people, who were divided into heads, judges, and officers. The heads were those who stood at the head of the tribes, families, and fathers' houses; and out of their number the most suitable persons were chosen as judges and officers (Deuteronomy 1:15). Some had jurisdiction over thousands, hundreds, and fifties (Exodus 18). Others served in different capacities.

5. *How had Joshua divided the remaining nations by lot?*
23:4

Joshua had not assigned different tribes to attack separate nations. There is no record that he told Reuben,

for example, to drive out the Ammonites. We find no mention made of his telling Benjamin to drive out the Jebusites. Incidental references are made to certain people such as the Perizzites who lived in the midst of the children of Joseph (17:15). Since he had divided all the remaining territory by lots and these Canaanite nations lived in the territories, it was assumed that the different tribes would drive out those foreign nations which were in the land assigned to them. In this way, it could be said that Joshua had divided by lot the nations which remained.

6. What general boundaries of the Promised Land did Joshua mention? 23:4

Joshua gave the eastern boundary as being the Jordan. He called the western boundary "the great sea westward." This was a reference to the Mediterranean Sea. Although Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh lived east of the Jordan, it was reasonable to speak of the Jordan and the land which pertained to it as the eastern boundary. There was no land for them to possess beyond the Mediterranean Sea.

Promises of Blessings for Obedience 23:6-11

6 Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left;

7 That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them:

8 But cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this day.

9 For the Lord hath driven out from before you great nations and strong; but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day.

10 One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the Lord your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you.

11 Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God.

7. Was the Pentateuch written in the days of Joshua?
23:6

Joshua urged his people to "do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses." The book of the law of Moses is an evident reference to the five books of the Pentateuch—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Moses compiled the writing of the book of the Law and commanded the priests to keep it where it could be read regularly to the people of Israel (Deuteronomy 31:9, 24). Joshua urged his people to keep this law and not to turn aside from it in either direction—to the right or to the left. Certainly the book was written and was known to the people or this passing reference on the part of Joshua would have had no meaning. Here is good evidence for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

8. How had God fought for Israel? 23:3, 10

When Moses and the people of Israel stood at the edge of the Red Sea with the Egyptians behind them and no way of escape to the right or to the left, Moses said, "The Lord shall fight for you" (Exodus 14:14). God did fight for Israel. By His providences the chariot wheels were removed from the chosen chariots of Egypt. The armies of Pharaoh were overthrown in the midst of the sea. When the sun and moon stood still so that the people could avenge themselves upon their enemies, it was said again, "The Lord fought for Israel" (10:14). These people had experienced God's providences on their behalf and knew of the times when God had fought for Israel in the days of their ancestors.

9. *What great nations had been driven out?* 23:9

A list of thirty-one kings whom the Israelites had beaten is given in chapter twelve. The kings beyond the Jordan had also been defeated. Some of these nations were great and powerful nations. Only by the providences of God were the Israelites able to overthrow these kingdoms.

10. *Why say one man could chase a thousand?* 23:10

Joshua was expressing the unusual strength which would come to the Israelites when they followed the Lord. Moses had earlier said that five of them would chase an hundred and an hundred would put ten thousand to flight (Leviticus 26:8). Later Moses had used this very terminology to express the unusual strength which would be Israel's as he said one would chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight (Deuteronomy 32:30). Unusual feats of courage were performed by these Israelites. Shamgar slew six hundred men with an ox goad (Judges 3:31), and Samson slew a thousand men with a new jawbone of an ass (Judges 15:15). One of David's mighty men was famous for his fighting against eight hundred men (II Samuel 23:8). Even though individual feats of this nature can be isolated in the Scripture, Joshua's reference was a general allusion to the fact that they would be able to overcome great odds as they followed the Lord faithfully.

11. *Why did Joshua urge the people to take good heed to themselves?* 23:11

Joshua's exhortation was really quite explicit. A stronger translation of this passage would indicate that he urged them to "guard carefully" their souls. Here was an exhortation that they should love the Lord with all their hearts, souls, and minds. They were to give Him first place in their thoughts and in their devotions. Joshua was most concerned over their spiritual attitudes and made this clear as he gave this exhortation.

Warnings of Punishments for Disobedience 23:12-16

12 Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you:

13 Know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you.

14 And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.

15 Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the Lord your God promised you; so shall the Lord bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you.

16 When ye have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.

12. What was the special danger posed by the remaining nations? 23:12

Joshua foresaw the day when the Israelites would intermarry with those among whom they dwelt. When they did this, he knew they could no longer remain a

separate and peculiar people devoted completely to God. There would then be the danger of their making mention of the names of the gods of the Canaanites and swearing by them. Eventually they would serve them and bow down to them (verse 7). Such a state of idolatry would mean that they would perish from off the good land which the Lord their God had given to them. Moses had forbade such a condition of intermarriage as he spoke to the Israelites in his day and said, "neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son" (Deuteronomy 7:3).

13. *What was "the way of all the earth?"* 23:14

This was another way for Joshua to say that he was nearing the end of his earthly sojourn. The day of his death was at hand in his estimation. He knew that he was old and stricken in years and that his term of service could not be much longer. This fact made it imperative for him to give these final exhortations to the people among whom he had worked and served.

14. *What evil things would the Israelites suffer if they disobeyed God?* 23:15

Moses had warned that God would send a terror, consumption, and burning ague among the people if they disobeyed God (Leviticus 26:16). He further predicted that they would sow their seed in vain. In addition, he foresaw the land being overrun by wild beasts which would rob them of their children, destroy their cattle, make them few in number, and cause their highways to be desolate (Leviticus 26:22). Moses had later pronounced five curses upon the people—in the city, in the field, of basket and store, fruit of body and of land, and increase of kine and flocks. In short, he saw them being completely devoid of God's blessings (Deuteronomy 28:15, 16). Joshua must

have had a similar God-forsaken condition in mind when he warned his people about the results of disobedience. He said that they would be destroyed from off the good land which God had given them.

15. *What covenant had the Lord commanded?* 23:16

The Old Testament was God's covenant with the people of Israel. The epitome of its provisions was in the Ten Commandments. These people had received this covenant at Mount Sinai and had agreed to live by it. When they broke their part of the covenant, God could only punish them for their disobedience. The terrible prospect of their losing the Promised Land was held before them. Joshua wanted to encourage them to be faithful to God's covenant, for this would insure their remaining in the land they had received as an inheritance.

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 23

1. What representatives of the people assembled at Joshua's call?
2. What was the eastern border of the Promised Land?
3. What was the western border mentioned by Joshua?
4. To what book of commandments did Joshua make reference?
5. How many men did Joshua say one Israelite would chase?
6. Why were the Israelites unusually strong?
7. To what danger and annoyances did Joshua compare the remaining Canaanites?
8. Had any good thing failed to come to pass for the Israelites?
9. Did Joshua believe the people would be in danger of losing the Promised Land if they disobeyed God?
10. Did Joshua approve of Israelites marrying members of the foreign nations among whom they lived?