

HISTORICAL BOOKS

JOSHUA – ESTHER

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

UNITY OF MESSAGE

Joshua and most of the immediately subsequent historical books comprise the “former prophets” in the Hebrew canon. This section follows on the heels of the Torah, not simply as the outworking of sacred history for its own sake. Rather, the historical narratives as prophecies carry a theological message that preaches to the reader.

Even as the latter prophets are not original in concepts, so also the former prophets are covenant messengers who hearken back to the foundational covenant(s) introduced in the law. Obedience to the covenant brings the promised blessings, while disobedience results in the threatened curses. This is the warning of Joshua and Samuel, and the practical outworking of the period of the book of Judges and later in the Book of Kings. Ultimately, Moses’ covenant promises of land and rest that began to be realized in Joshua’s day were lost in the time of the latter kings.

DEVELOPMENT of the MESSAGE

“The history of Israel is in a real sense the story of great leaders.” — Geisler, *A Popular Survey of the OT*, p. 85

GENERAL SCOPE AND HARMONY OF THE PERIOD

While Deuteronomy is the summation of the covenant, it also serves to prepare God’s people for possessing the promised land. The Book of Joshua, similar in language and thought to Deuteronomy, shows God’s faithfulness in the outworking of that covenant promise that was first given to Abraham.

For the sake of perspective, the Book of I Chronicles covers the same period as I and II Samuel. II Chronicles covers the same period as I and II Kings. The history of the kings in Samuel and Kings was written from a prophetic point of view whereas the Chronicles record the history of the Temple from a priestly viewpoint.

The Book of Esther fits between chapter 6 and 7 of the Book of Ezra. Old Testament history ends with Nehemiah.

ELEMENTS of NARRATIVE LITERATURE

1. Setting: where and when
2. Characterization: key players and how they are portrayed
3. Plot: how the story unfolds and engages the reader

MEMORIZATION

For a clear chronological picture of the OT, the following key **dates should be memorized**:

- 1446 = (early) date of the Exodus
- 931 = division of the nation (death of Solomon)
- 722 = fall of the northern kingdom to Assyria
- 605 = 1st captivity of Judah
- 597 = 2nd captivity of Judah
- 586 = destruction of Jerusalem and final captivity by Babylon
- 536 = first return of the remnant after the end of captivity (539)

Also, be ready on the final exam to list the **twenty monarchs of Judah** (for credit) **and the twenty monarchs of Israel** (for extra credit). Familiarity with the kings is often required in Presbytery exams.

| | Judah | Israel |
|----|--------------|---------------|
| 1 | Rehoboam | Jeroboam |
| 2 | Abijam | Nadab |
| 3 | Asa | Baasha |
| 4 | Jehoshaphat | Elah |
| 5 | Jehoram | Zimri |
| 6 | Ahaziah | (Tibni) |
| 7 | Athaliah | Omri |
| 8 | Joash | Ahab |
| 9 | Amaziah | Ahaziah |
| 10 | Uzziah | Jehoram |
| 11 | Jotham | Jehu |
| 12 | Ahaz | Jehoahaz |
| 13 | Hezekiah | Jehoash |
| 14 | Manasseh | Jereboam II |
| 15 | Amon | Zechariah |
| 16 | Josiah | Shallum |
| 17 | Jehoahaz | Menahem |
| 18 | Jehoiakim | Pekahiah |
| 19 | Jehoiachin | Pekah |
| 20 | Zedekiah | Hoshea |

JOSHUA

I. Authorship and Date

A. Strong Tradition

1. Jewish

- a. Historic place in the canon
- b. Talmud: *Baba Bathra* 14b credits Joshua as the author

2. Uniform Protestant tradition, in agreement with conservative Jewish tradition, until higher critics dated it to the time of the alleged Deuteronomistic redactors of VII-VI b.c.

B. Internal Indications

1. The author apparently was an eyewitness to the events of the book, 5:1,6

5:1 So it was, when all the kings ... heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel until we had crossed over, that their heart melted;

5:6 the LORD swore that He would not show them the land which the LORD had sworn to their fathers that He would give us,

2. Joshua wrote his farewell charge in a book, 24:26; a disciple like Phineas (24:33) may have written the account of Joshua's death, 24:31; cf. death of Moses at end of Deut.

24:26 Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God.

3. Incidental Internal indications

- a. Joshua did some writing (8:32; 24:26)

- b. Jerusalem not in control (15:63), which vitiates a mid VI critical date

15:63 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 to this day.

- c. Rahab was still alive at the book's writing, 6:25

6:25 And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day,

- d. Philistines not yet in view, whereas they are a bit later in the time of Samson. Joshua 10:34 indicates that Eglon is considered a Canaanite city, not yet Philistine.

C. Date for Joshua

1. Most of the book would have been written around 1380, soon before Joshua's death (1379), a date which is based upon how old Caleb was at Joshua's death (Judges 2:8) which is based upon Caleb's age at the Exodus, Josh. 14:7.

Judges 2:8 Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died when he was one hundred and ten years old.

Josh. 14:7 "I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land," –Caleb speaking

2. Date of Conquest would have been around 1405-1399

II. Theme

Joshua is the beginning of the realization of God's promise to Abraham to give his descendants the **land of promise**. Note this recurring theme (over 50 times in the book) as in the opening lines (1:2-4) and in the closing chpt 24 (vss. 8,13) which repeats the Abrahamic covt. Compare Joshua 1:3 with Gen. 13:14-17. Note 21:43-45.

A supplemental idea of the Abrahamic Covt's goal of returning to Paradise is the **Immanuel theme** (cf. Mt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5). Even as God's presence was promised to Moses (Ex. 3:12,8), it is also given to Joshua (Dt. 31:6-8) in conjunction with the land, 1:5,9,2.

1:5 ...as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.

1:9 ...do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

1:2 ...arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them

III. Theological Themes (per Madvig in *Expositors Bible Commentary*, 2:245)

A. God

1. God is the Covenant God Who personally acts on His promises in behalf of His people
2. God is holy, not tolerating rebellion or sin before Him
3. God is gracious, evinced in His treatment of nations (Israel), clans (Gibeonites), and individuals (Rahab)
4. God is the supreme Creator Who controls His creation (supernatural manifestations in chapters 3,6,10) and Who will not brook the presence of counterfeit gods of nature, like Baal the storm God (10:11).

B. The Promised Land is delivered to the seed of Abraham

1. A key theme introduced in Genesis, developed in Deuteronomy, and repeated 50+ times

in Joshua

2. An effort is made to purge contamination
3. It is God's gift divided to the inheritors of the covenant as His stewards
 - a. God apportions it and demands its first fruits, showing His ownership
 - b. The land is tied to covenant obedience
 - (1) Rebel Canaanites are disinherited
 - (2) Disobedience will bring threatened exile to covenant breakers (23:9-16)

23:12 ...if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations ... 13 "know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the LORD your God has given you.

C. Rest (Note God's own example of resting the 7th day)

1. Rest from war within and without with secure borders. That the "land had rest from war" (11:23; 14:15) anticipates the continuing theme in Judges where the refrain repeats that "the land had rest X years" (Jdg. 3:11,30; 5:31; 8:28)
2. Rest from labors; established cities and vineyards are possessed, as promised in Dt. 8, in a land flowing with milk and honey
3. NT allusions: Mt. 5:5 (Ps. 37:9,29,34); Rom. 4:13-16

Matt. 5:5 Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth (i.e., "the land").

Hebrews 4:1-11 addresses the biblical theme of "rest," associating it clearly with God's pattern of creation rest (4:4) that God, and Adam and Eve, enjoyed. When man's fall into sin forfeited that rest, God offered its renewal through His covenant.

Rest is held out to Joshua's generation; they did not fully realize it (Heb. 4:8) so that it is still held out to those who will enter the covenant.

Heb. 4:8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day.

IV. Outline and highlights

A. Entering the Promised Land — 1-5a

Promised land of the Covenant (Gen 13.17; Deut 11.24):

Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. —Josh 1.3



1. Preparation of the people — 1-3a

a. Inward Preparation: obey God's law from the heart, 1:8,9

8 "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. 9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Verse 8 (Book of the Law) corresponds to the Book of Deuteronomy while verse 9 corresponds to the charge that Moses gave to Joshua in Dt. 31:23. Note Scriptural focus on dependence on written revelation, a self-confirmation of canonicity.

b. Outward Preparation: survey the land and get a better report than 40 years earlier, 2:24

For the NT perspective of Rahab's faith, see Heb. 11:31 and James 2:25 (Mt. 1:5). Josephus expresses her high regard in Jewish tradition when he calls her "an innkeeper" (*Ant.* 5:1:7) instead of the NT language of "harlot" πορνή /*porne*."

2. Passage of the people — 3b-4

a. Faith in advancement vs. retreat of Reed Sea experience

b. Jordan R. has mild floods in springtime (Passover season); waters cut off at Adam (ed Damiah), 15 miles north of Jericho.

c. Two monuments of witness—one of 12 stones in the river and one at Gilgal—serve as witness to the nations as well as the nation (4:8,9)

"And the children of Israel did so, just as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones from the midst of the Jordan, as the LORD had spoken to Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them to the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. 9 Then Joshua 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 stood; and they are there to this day."

3. Purification of the people — 5a

a. Covenant renewal at Gilgal, "[reproach] Rolled away," (Hebrew pilpal stem of *galal*)

1) Commitment to the faith of the fathers

2) Return to "Eden"

Cf. the case of Moses (Ex. 4) who must obey in circumcising his own son

before introducing the cov't terms to the Hebrews

- b. Flint knives used out of tradition, even though now in bronze age; also, sacramental tool made without human hands
- c. First Passover; cf. Ex. 12:48

Ex. 12:48 "And when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it.

B. Conquering the Promised Land — 5b-12

- 1. Central campaign (divide and conquer strategy before pushing south and north)

- a. Angel of the Lord and Joshua — vv. 13-15 cf. Ex. 3:5

Relevant passages on the Angel of the Lord: Is. 63:9 → Ex. 33:14,15 → Ex. 23:20-22 → Mal 3:1

—Parallels between Joshua and Moses

- (1) Charge and a Pledge: 1:17

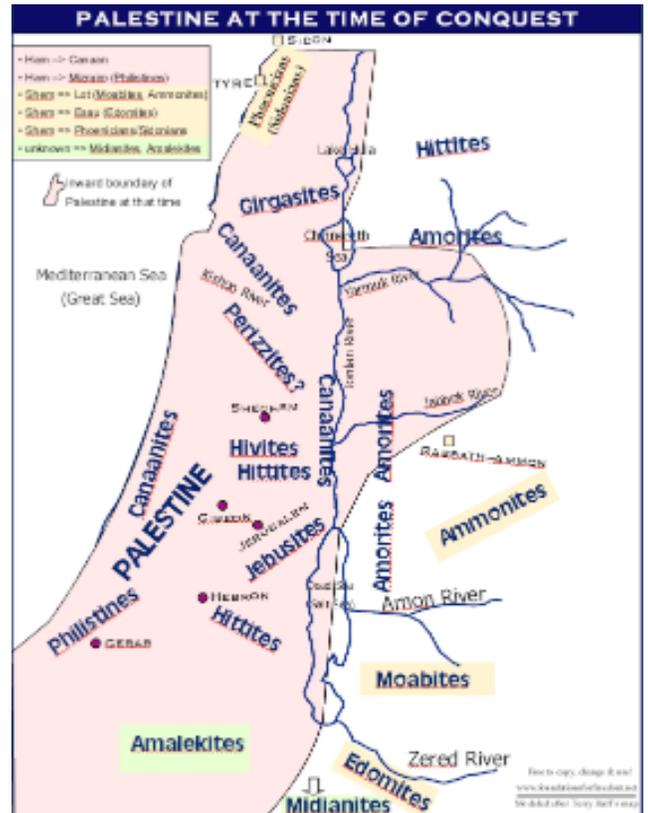
1:17 "Just as we heeded Moses in all things, so we will heed you. Only the LORD your God be with you, as He was with Moses.

- (2) Dedication (circumcision) before great work (Ex. 4)

- (3) Prayer of supplication: 7:7 cf. Ex. 32:11-13; Num. 14:15,16

7:7 "Alas, Lord GOD, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all -- to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.... 8 "O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turns its back before its enemies? 9 "For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear it, and surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. Then what will You do for Your great name?"

- (4) Sandals on holy ground (Ex. 3)



b. The Amarna Letters, 1300-1200 b.c.

Significantly, there were no super-powers who controlled Palestine at this time. Egypt had internal interests which deflected concern from its former northern territory and the Hittites were busy building their empire in Asia Minor.

The Amarna Letters, found at that site in Egypt, is a historical cache of correspondence between Egypt and Palestine from this general period before and during the Conquest. Amarna was the capital city of Pharaoh Akhenaton from 1380-63. Included are letters from vassal Palestinian princes which do speak of invading “Habiru.”

Scholars now recognize that the Habiru/Hapiru, were more of a social class of nomads (Habiru is taken to mean “marauders, outlaws”), dating from 2000 b.c. Still, the Hebrews could be the subject of some of this correspondence, particularly from Jerusalem regarding the fall of Shechem, since “Hebrew” was the historic designation used by themselves and their contemporaries.

c. Jericho

(1) This time, two spies report to the presbyterian oligarchy instead of risking an evil report to the whole congregation, 2:1,23,24.

(2) Attack

(a) Israel’s peculiar engagement of this major fortress gateway to Canaan would be precedent-setting for Israel’s march on the land, and would serve as a form of psychological warfare against the rest of the pagan cities.

(b) No day of rest in marching

(c) City and its contents were *cherem*, “*cherem*,” under a religious ban (6:17-19; cf. Num. 21:2,3)

Num. 21:2 So Israel made a vow to the LORD, and said, "If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities." 3 And ... they utterly destroyed them and their cities. So the name of that place was called Hormah.

RELIGIOUS

i) “Devoted” to sacrificial destruction as first fruits of the inheritance cf. Lev. 27:28

PRACTICAL

ii) Avoidance of a snare, Dt. 13:12-18; 20:16-18

DIDACTIC

iii) Joshua pronounced God’s abiding curse at the city’s destruction, v. 26 (ctr. Num. 23:8).
Cf. I Kings 16:34 when Hiel’s two sons were killed in the days of Ahab

(3) Rahab

(a) Fits into Hexateuchal pattern of grace and deliverance in the midst of judgment

- i) Cf. Noah, Sodom, Goshen, golden calf
- ii) Pattern of matriarchal women finding grace: see genealogy of Mat 1

(b) Red thread follows pattern of Passover on lintels

(c) 6:17 - Rahab's spiritual leadership delivers her household

6:17 Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

6:23 And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel.

(d) "Rahab the Harlot's" lie to the city officials (2:4,5). The NT commends her faith (Heb. 11:31) by which she was justified (James 2:25)

(4) Excavations

(a) First completed in 1930-36: Garstang said the city showed destruction from the era of Pharaoh Amenhotep (ca. 1400).

Garstang believed that the walls of Jericho had fallen outward, rather than being battered in. The Hebrew translates that the "wall fell down in its place" (6:5).

(b) Second excavation in 1952-58: Kathleen Kenyon countered Garstang's findings to say the city was burned around 1500 and then later around 1300. Note that neither of these dates confirm the late date of conquest, either.

(c) Modern Re-evaluations

Kenneth Kitchen maintains that there is hardly any indication of settlement past the late bronze era (1380) until the days of Ahab in the 800s.

Recently, Bryant Wood has reevaluated the dating methods of Kenyon and showed that they were flawed. He favors Garstang's original dating (Howard, *IOTHB*, p. 85.; Kaiser, *History of Israel*, pp. 152-153):

- i. Kenyon's pottery dating was skewed
- ii. New Carbon 14 dating of the level of City IV suggests a date of 1410
- iii. City IV was filled with stores of goods, indicating the city was not pillaged by invaders when it was burned, and that the timing was NOT late summer before/during harvest when invaders usually came.

d. Ai (Hebrew = “The Ruins”) and Achan, chpt 7

(1) Achan’s sin

- (a) Robbing God: The spoils of Jericho were to be the first fruits of possession offered back to God. Therefore they belonged to God and were declared to be *cherem*, or “dedicated” to holy use.
- (b) Robbing the community of its purity

(2) Possible use of urim and thumim to detect the guilty (Num 27:18,21)

Num. 27:21 “[Joshua] shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire before the LORD for him by the judgment of the Urim.....

(3) Achan’s confession (7:21) is similar to Eve’s temptation in scope and in language, Gen. 3:6 (cf. I John 2:16)

Jos. 7:21 "When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them.
Gen. 3:6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.
I John 2:16 For all that *is* in the world -- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life -- is not of the Father but is of the world.

(4) “Valley of Achor” (“trouble”) becomes a watershed in Jewish tradition: Is. 65:10; Hos. 2:15. The genealogy in I Chron. 2:7 names him “Achar,” an allusion to the trouble he caused.

(5) Church Discipline. Compare the treatment of Ananias and Saphira in the early days of NT Church as a deterrent in a new era.

e. Shechem, stomping grounds of the patriarchs, is taken next after Ai. From the two mountains on either side of the village, the terms of God’s covenant were proclaimed and plastered, vv. 30-34, in keeping with the charge in Dt. 27:2-8.

Blessings and curses were pronounced on the heads of the people in the valley, 8:33.

The Samaritans would set up their altar of worship on Mt. Gerezim in the intertestamental period (Jn. 4:20)

2. The Southern campaign — 9-10 (follows the central campaign)

a. Gibeonite covenant, 9

- (1) Hivites, one of the cursed peoples
- (2) Solemn covenant entered without God’s guidance; Saul’s later breach of it

brings judgment on his sons, II Sam. 21:1-14

b. Adonizedek of Jerusalem, 10

- (1) Similarity of name to “Melchizedek” of Salem (Gen. 14)
- (2) Leads five principalities against Gibeon; Amarna letters confirm Jerusalem’s leading role in this time
- (3) Though defeated, Jerusalem apparently is not taken (15:63) till the time of the Judges (1:8), but then only temporarily.

c. The command for the **sun to stand still** is literally, “Sun, be silent” (10:12), although vs. 13 does say that the “sun stood still.”

The three main miracles in Joshua all show God’s power in arresting nature. The opening of the Jordan River (3:16) and the freezing of the moon (10:13) both explicitly use the word “stood” still, while the destruction of the “standing” walls of Jericho is only implied and may be in this pattern of God stopping a force of nature in order to win the ultimate prize of rest.

Numerous theories of interpretation abound for what the sun standing still means and how God accomplished this feat.

- (1) A longer day to chase the enemy
 - (a) Universe arrested en toto - Merrill
 - (b) Earth’s rotation slowed - Wood
 - (c) Earth tilted on its axis toward the sun
 - (d) Meteor shower or effects of passing through a comet tail (cf. 10:11)
 - (e) Special local refraction of sun’s rays by the atmosphere; cf. local darkness in Egyptian plague
- (2) A softening of the sun’s harsh rays during battle, phps by storm clouds which pelted enemy with hail
- (3) Prolonged darkness (not light) after night march and confusion of hail storm (R.D. Wilson); implied by Hebrew, “the sun was silent.” Some have suggested something like an eclipse of the sun, though it would still have to last for about a whole day-time period, 10:13. Also, 10:13d says that the sun did not hasten “to come.”

d. Conquest of the south to Kadesh Barnea, v. 41

“The Lord fought for Israel...” –10:42

3. The Northern campaign — 11

The battle against the united northern alliance (vs. 20: God providentially hardened their hearts) under King Jabin of Hazor, a city of about 40,000 on the main caravan route from Egypt to Damascus, accelerated the conquest of the North as opposed to besieging numerous city states.

This city may have been the largest in all Canaan; the tel covers about 170 acres as opposed to Jericho's 9 acres. While it was razed as part of Joshua's plan of psychological warfare, many of the other northern cities were preserved for immediate occupation.

4. Recapitulation of conquered territory — 12

This chapter "... gives eloquent testimony to the fact that Israel's enemies, who had banded together with hostile intent (11:19-20; cf. 9:1,2; 11:1-5), had been unable to stand against Israel and its God. Thus seen, this list is a song of praise to the Lord's honor." —Woudstra, *NICOT - Joshua*, p. 200.

Josh 11:23 Then the land rested from war.

C. Possessing and Distribution of the promised land — 13-24

PLEASE BE ABLE TO DRAW A MAP OF THE TRIBAL ALLOTMENTS ON YOUR FIRST EXAM; YOU WILL FIND A GOOD MAP IN HOWARD ON p. 105, Rev. ed.

1. Eschatological dimension of Joshua (cf. Mt. 1:21)

Following on the heels of his remark above, Woudstra observes, "The events recorded in the first part of Joshua form a prelude to a more final victory which God will win over the enemies of his cause. At that future time, God will purge the world of those who have refused to accept him as Lord and will give this purified world to his people as their inheritance forever (Ps. 37:9; Mt. 5:5)." — p. 200

2. There remained "very much land to be possessed" — 13:1

There were still pockets of resistance which the individual tribes were to conquer; resistance continues into the time of the monarchy, e.g., Jerusalem.

a. Philistia, from Brook of Egypt to Joppa

b. Isolated city states — e.g., Jebus

c. Phoenician cities of the northern coast; only mention of Philistines in Joshua, 13:2,3

3. Division of land among the tribes — 13-20

a. By lot, 14:2 (cf. Prov. 16:33)

Prov. 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD.

b. Survey crews sent throughout the land for seven remaining tribes (18:4) after Judah, Ephraim, and East Bank tribes first assigned; some complain of small territories, too many woods, and too many pagans (17:14ff; II Kgs . 2:24).

c. Caleb's inheritance at Hebron; assistance from his nephew, Othniel (or younger brother? Josh. 15:17; Jdg. 1:13; 3:9).

Possibly Kenaz was of Edomite extraction (Gen. 36:11), thus showing some re-assimilation of the nations into the covenant

d. Judah and Ephraim given central portions of the land due to their patriarchal prominence in garnering the blessing and birthright, 15 & 16.

(1) Judah does not own territory of Jerusalem which is a Benjamite possession, 15:8

(2) Caleb's daughter, 15:17ff.

See *Bible Review*, "Coarse Language in the Bible," April '89, pp. 22ff. At the crux of the debate is the uncertain meaning of *tisnach* in 15:18; the LXX implies a noise by translating a "sigh." ἐβόησεν ἐκ τοῦ ὄνου

Josh. 15:18 Now it was so, when she came to him, that she persuaded him to ask her father for a field. So she dismounted from her donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What do you wish?"

Since this term is also used of Jael "dismounting" the sleeping Sisera (Judges 4.21), it appears best to follow this sense of modern translations.

(3) [Jewish] profit motive: Ephraim and Manasseh put Canaanites to tribute for sake of ease and profit instead of expelling them; 16; 17:12,13.

(4) "Simeon, perhaps decimated by the judgment of Yahweh at Peor, had insufficient population to warrant a separate district and so was in effect a clan within Judah." — Merrill, p. 135

e. Danite migration to Leshim above Galilee, 19:47

(1) Seems anachronistic in view of Judges 18; possible editor's note or else proof of early migration

(2) Philistines too powerful for them in the Shephelah region along the coast

f. 6 Cities of refuge (ch. 20) among the 48 Levitical cities (ch. 21)

(1) Three distributed evenly on each side of Jordan as sanctuary for innocent

(a) Protection from the *goel haddam*, the “avenger of blood”

(b) House arrest till the death of the High Priest. God’s law required a life for a life (Gen. 9:6). As the mediator of the covenant, the High Priest interceded for his people, and ultimately, even his death symbolically marked mediatorial satisfaction of justice for those who had unavoidably shed blood. See Hebrews 2:17; 9:15.

(2) The Levitical clans were located in groups of cities within one region.

Significantly, the Kohathites (priestly line), were centered in the central region of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin, putting them in close proximity with the later centralized tabernacle.

(3) Beginning of fulfillment of covt promises in 21:43-45 (n.b., Heb. 11:13)

Josh. 21:43 So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. 44 The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. 45 Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.

4. Two and half tribes’ “witness” (*ED*) altar at the Jordan — 22

This new altar was without God’s sanction and in defiance of Mosaic prohibitions (Dt. 12:5; Josh. 22:19) against any altars besides at the tabernacle. The 2½ tribes explained the altar was merely a memorial monument so that future generations would recognize the trans-Jordan tribes.

Josh. 22:28 ...'Here is the replica of the altar of the LORD which our fathers made, though not for burnt offerings nor for sacrifices; but it *is* a witness between you and us.'

5. Joshua’s farewell address — 23-24

a. Separation from heathen unto God, 23:7,8. Intermingling will be its own punishment, 23:13

Joshua 23:7 "...and lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you. You shall not make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause anyone to swear by them; you shall not serve them nor bow down to them, 8 "but you shall hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day. 23:13 "know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the LORD your God has given you.

b. At Shechem

- (1) Site of Abraham's altar as God confirmed covt with him at Shechem, Gen. 12:6,7
- (2) Second formal covenant renewal at Shechem (cf. Josh. 8) of a covt already established (23:16) at Sinai
 - (a) On heels of East bank challenge (22)
 - (b) Orchestrated for another new generation before Joshua's death, ca. 1379-1370 (see Merrill, p. 138), 30 years after the first renewal at Shechem
 - (c) Charge to "cling" to God, not to pagans and their women (cf. Gen 2:24)

⁶Therefore, be very strong to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to the right hand nor to the left, ⁷that you may not mix with these nations..., ⁸but you shall **cling** to the LORD your God just as you have done to this day. *** ¹¹Be very careful, therefore, to love the LORD your God. ¹²For if you turn back and cling to the remnant of these nations remaining among you and make marriages with them,... ¹³know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations before you, but they shall be a snare.... (Joshua 23:6-13)

c. Literary form of farewell follows ancient treaty forms, thus helping to date it, ch. 24

- (1) Prologue, vv. 1,2
- (2) Historical Prologue, vv. 2-13
- (3) Stipulations, 14-24; "reverence and service" v. 14
- (4) Deposition of covenant renewal, phps. a stela, 25-28

d. Covenant Headship and Family salvation — Joshua 24:15

6. Epilogue — 24:29-33

Joshua and Joseph rest in peace

Joshua goes the way of all flesh (23:14). He is buried in the promised land in the hope of the resurrection, as are Joseph and Eleazer (24:30-33)

D. Summary: Psalm 44:1-3

We have heard with our ears, O God, Our fathers have told us, The deeds You did in their days, In days of old: 2 You drove out the nations with Your hand, But them You planted; You afflicted the peoples, and cast them out. 3 For they did not gain possession of the land by their own sword, Nor did their own arm save them; But it was Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your countenance, Because You favored them.

Excursus on the **annihilation of the Canaanites**:

Problem: How can God's command be justified to the modern mind?

Not that this question can be easily answered, but here are some of the stock theological answers as suggested by Geisler (99) and CKL:

- 1) This action was not murder in that it was not premeditated and personal; it was much like capital punishment, but upon an entire guilty land instead of one criminal.
- 2) The Canaanites were under an ancient curse (Gen. 9:25) and freely lived as objects of the curse and children of the devil; their immorality was of the vilest varieties (Lev. 18:25). Israel was not handed the land for their innate goodness, but rather because of the inhering wickedness of the Canaanites (Dt. 9:5).
- 3) God gave the Canaanites 100s of years to repent (II Pet. 3:9) before visiting judgment upon them when their iniquity was full (Gen. 15:16; cf. Gen. 10:16-18). All of the cursed nations are related to their cursed father, Canaan.
The "Wisdom of Solomon" (12:3-11) suggests that God chose to destroy the Canaanites systematically, rather than all at once, to give them opportunity to repent.
- 4) We know that the faithful were saved, (Rahab, cf. Gen. 18:22ff.), as well as another remnant of Canaanites (ch. 9)
- 5) The Canaanites were generally in an offensive posture against Israel, culturally and religiously, if not militarily. They willingly would attack the Israelites (now and in future generations when the children grew up), although we know God's hand was in their demise (Joshua 11:19,20)
- 6) Regarding the children, "We must remember that death is not the ultimate destiny of the human race, nor is it the greatest evil" (Madvig in *EBC*, 247).
- 7) God also threatened Israel to vomit them out of the land if they became like Canaanites
- 8) Holy War under the New Covenant is no longer sanctioned

Because of the attacks of the New Atheism that accuse God-believers of promoting war and intolerance through history, recent evangelical scholarship has been addressing the concern of Israel's genocide against the Canaanites. Recent contributions include:

1. Christopher Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*. Appendix: "What about the Canaanites?" IVP, 2011.
2. Pekka Pitkanen, *Apollos OT Commentary: Joshua*. "The Problem of war, conquest and genocide in Joshua," p. 75. IVP, 2011.
3. David Lamb, *God Behaving Badly: Is the God of the OT Angry, Sexist, and Racist?* IVP: 2012.