

THOMAS NELSON

*New King James Version™*

**NKJV**

*The*  
**WOMAN'S**  
STUDY BIBLE



RECEIVING GOD'S TRUTH *for*  
BALANCE, HOPE  
*and* TRANSFORMATION

**FULL COLOR**



# Joshua

## TITLE

Joshua's birth name was Hoshea (Heb. lit. "salvation," Num. 13:8), but Moses called him "Joshua" (Heb. *yehoshua*, lit. "the Lord saves"; Num. 13:16). "Jesus" is the Greek form of the Hebrew "Joshua." While parts of the book appear to be written after Joshua's death (Josh. 10:12, 13; 24:29–33), tradition identifies Joshua as the primary author of the work. Assuming that Joshua and his fellow spy Caleb were of similar age when they were part of the original spy mission to Canaan 40 years earlier, Joshua would have been about 80 years old when the Israelites entered the Promised Land.

## AUTHOR

Joshua was divinely prepared to lead the Israelites (see chart, Preparation for Leadership). He had been a slave, a free man, a man without a country, the general of an ill-equipped nomadic army, a conqueror against incredible odds, a land agent, a statesman, and a settler. He witnessed extraordinary miracles: the 10 plagues of Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea and the Jordan River, the miraculous provision of food for 40 years in the wilderness, water flowing from rocks, city walls falling down, the sun standing still, and army after army falling away at his approach.

## DATE

The Book of Joshua covers approximately 30 years during what is now called the Late Bronze Age (1500–1200 B.C.). The actual invasion probably occurred about 1405 B.C. during the reign of Amenhotep III in Egypt (see Deut. 1:3–8; 1 Kin. 6:1).

## BACKGROUND

### *Setting*

The first five books of the Bible (the Pentateuch) provide background for the Book of Joshua. The people's preparation began in Genesis with the promise of the land to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen. 12:1–3, 7; 13:15; 15:7, 18; 17:8; 26:3; 28:13). Preparation continued, as for two centuries Abraham's descendants lived in the land but never fully controlled it.

For the next four centuries the Israelites lived in Egypt. The Book of Exodus records their escape from slavery and the giving of the Law. Leviticus prepares them for worship. Numbers and Deuteronomy provide for them a civic structure. Even the language in Joshua's account detailing Israel's entry



into the land is similar to the Deuteronomy description of Israel's preparation for entry into the Promised Land. The Book of Joshua refers to the Pentateuch as a completed entity normative for that generation (Josh. 1:7, 8).

Although the Law and Israel's special covenant relationship with God defined the nation's identity, God also had promised the Israelites a land of their own. The Book of Joshua is the record of their conquest of that land under God's leadership. Canaan, the strategic land bridge connecting Africa with Asia and ultimately with Europe, is a unique land (see chart, Terminology for the Land). It links the Indian Ocean (via the Red Sea) with the Atlantic Ocean (via the Mediterranean). It claims more military occupations, battles, and blood baths than any country on the globe; at least 30 world powers have trampled its soil. People living in this land need a special relationship with their defender.

The Promised Land was a pagan land. Though God had placed a witness to Himself in the land with the election of Abraham and his descendants as His chosen people, the people of Canaan persisted in the worship of numerous gods and goddesses. By the time of the conquest, the religious climate of Canaan had grown so decadent that a variety of detestable practices expressly forbidden to the Israelites, including cult prostitution and child sacrifice, had evolved (Lev. 18:21; Deut. 12:31; 23:17).

Egypt, the political Goliath of the day, showed little concern. Other political powers had waned, and Canaan's own native inhabitants lacked unity. The timing for the Israelite invasion was perfect.

### *Purpose*

The book is a reminder to the Israelites, including future generations, that their land was a gift from God and that their possession of the land was the fulfillment of His promise. What began as a promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and continued through Moses now would be fulfilled under Joshua.

The faithfulness of Joshua's generation would be tested in battle. Greater tests would come, however, as future generations changed from the nomadic life of herdsman to a new life as permanent settlers.

## THEMES

Though Joshua is a history book, its primary theme is the faithfulness of God as exhibited repeatedly through His presence, power, protection, provision, and fulfilled promises. A secondary theme is the faithfulness of God's people. The Israelites were about to enter an advanced culture of experienced farmers whose life was tied elaborately to the worship of pagan gods of nature; those gods would be a constant temptation to the Israelites. Their willingness to obey God would be tested, and many times they failed the test. Yet God's faithfulness never ceased.



## OUTLINE

- I. The Conquest of the Land (1:1—12:24)**
  - A. Preparation for conquest (1:1—5:15)**
    - 1. Preparing Joshua (1:1—9)
    - 2. Preparing the leaders (1:10—18)
    - 3. Preparing the strategy (2:1—24)
    - 4. Preparing the approach (3:1—4:24)
    - 5. Preparing the people (5:1—15)
  - B. The conquest of the land (6:1—12:24)**
    - 1. The conquest of Jericho (6:1—27)
    - 2. The conquest of Ai (7:1—8:29)
    - 3. The renewal of the covenant (8:30—35)
    - 4. The treaty with the Gibeonites (9:1—27)
    - 5. The conquest of southern Canaan (10:1—43)
    - 6. The conquest of northern Canaan (11:1—15)
    - 7. A summary of the conquest (11:16—12:24)
- II. The Division of the Land (13:1—21:45)**
  - A. The assignment of land to individual tribes (13:1—19:51)**
    - 1. Instructions to Joshua (13:1—7)
    - 2. Borders for the eastern tribes (13:8—33)
    - 3. Borders for the western tribes (14:1—19:51)
  - B. The assignment of special cities (20:1—21:45)**
    - 1. The cities of refuge (20:1—9)
    - 2. The cities of the Levites (21:1—45)
- III. The Settlement of the Land (22:1—24:33)**
  - A. The settlement of the eastern tribes (22:1—34)**
    - 1. Joshua's message to the eastern tribes (22:1—9)
    - 2. The building of an altar by the eastern tribes (22:10—34)
  - B. The settlement of the western tribes (23:1—24:33)**
    - 1. Joshua's farewell address to all Israel (23:1—24:24)
    - 2. The covenant at Shechem (24:25—28)
    - 3. The death and burial of godly leaders (24:29—33)

### God's Commission to Joshua

**1** After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: <sup>2</sup>"Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. <sup>3</sup>Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. <sup>4</sup>From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. <sup>5</sup>No man shall *be able to* stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. <sup>6</sup>Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. <sup>7</sup>Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. <sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>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."

### The Order to Cross the Jordan

<sup>10</sup>Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, <sup>11</sup>"Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess.'"

GOALS ARE A JOINT EFFORT PROCESS:  
GETTING IN TOUCH WITH OUR HEART  
AND SETTING A COURSE; THEN DEPENDING  
ON AND BEING WILLING FOR GOD  
TO DIRECT US ONE STEP AT A TIME.

*Sheila West*

<sup>12</sup>And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh Joshua spoke, saying, <sup>13</sup>"Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land.' <sup>14</sup>Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But you shall pass before your brethren armed, all your mighty men of valor, and help them. <sup>15</sup>until the LORD has given your brethren rest, as He *gave* you, and they also have taken possession of the land which the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD's servant

**1:1** The Israelites had been at the border of the Promised Land 40 years earlier (Num. 13:1—14:45), at which time the people had doubted that God could accomplish His promises. They refused to enter Canaan, and their disobedience resulted in God's judgment (see chart, Tale of Two Committees). None of the adults except Joshua and Caleb were allowed to enter the land (Josh. 5:6; see chart, Caleb: Portrait of a Hero). The death of Moses completed this judgment. God was ready to lead the Israelites into the land as He had promised. Joshua's position as "assistant" indicates a unique position of personal service, and thus the new leader of Israel began with a direct communication from the Lord (see chart, Preparation for Leadership).

**1:2** The crossing of the Jordan was considered the first step of the campaign (Deut. 32:47; Josh. 3:10–13). Although normally not very wide this close to Jericho, at flood stage the river could have been a mile wide.

**1:3** Treading upon the soil symbolized acceptance of property ownership (Deut. 11:24; Josh. 14:9); handing your shoe to another symbolized the transfer of land (Ruth 4:7, note). The transaction bound the new owners to the law, the land, and

the god of that region. God used the same formula (Law, Josh. 1:7, 8; Land, v. 2; Himself, vv. 5, 9).

**1:6** Repetition was typically used by the Hebrews for emphasis, with the threefold repetition as the highest degree (vv. 6, 7, 9; see also Is. 6:3; John 21:15–17). God's renewed promise to guide Joshua not only through the conquest but also through the distribution of the land followed (Josh. 13–21; see map, The Division of the Land).

**1:8** The command to meditate on God's Law (the Torah) included incorporating its teachings into one's lifestyle as the basis of true success in life.

**1:12–15** The Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh already had claimed and settled the land east of the Jordan with the understanding that they would fight alongside their brothers until the rest of the land was conquered. This commitment was important for the unity of the nation and demonstrated the faith of these tribes that God would provide for and protect those left behind while the fighting men were away (Num. 34:14, 15).

## *Preparation for Leadership*

The relationship between Moses and Joshua shows a mentoring pattern for developing leadership qualities.

EARLY YEARS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joshua was born in slavery and oppression (Ex. 1:13). • He was among those who cried out to God for deliverance (Ex. 2:23).</li> </ul>
THE EXODUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joshua observed the plagues (Ex. 7:14—12:29). • He saw the impotency of Egypt’s gods (Ex. 7:10–13). • He observed Pharaoh’s humiliation (Ex. 8:8–10). • He witnessed the miraculous provision of God (Num. 11:31–33).</li> </ul>
LEADERSHIP TRAINING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joshua was the leader of a tribe (Num. 13:2, 8, 16). • He stood for God at the risk of his own life (Num. 14:6–10). • Though in the minority, he wholly followed God (Num. 32:11, 12). • He co-lead the people (Num. 27:18–23). • He led battles (Ex. 17:9, 10).</li> </ul>
OBSERVATION OF MOSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moses delegated authority (Ex.18:17–26). • He encountered God on Mt. Sinai (Ex. 24:12, 13). • He experienced the rebellion of the people (Num. 12:1–15; 16:1–50). • He responded to complaining (Ex. 17:1–7). • He experienced frustration at the disobedience of the people (Ex. 16:25–30). • He obeyed God (Ex. 40:16–19).</li> </ul>
TEACHING BY MOSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joshua received the book written by Moses (Ex. 17:14). • He shared authority with Moses (Num. 27:18–23). • Moses gave instructions to Joshua (Josh. 1:7).</li> </ul>
OBSERVATIONS OF JOSHUA’S PREPARATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joshua learned patience (40 years waiting to get into the land). • He learned to seek God (Num. 27:15–18). • He learned to obey only God (Num. 14:8, 9). • He learned to lead (Num. 27:18–23).</li> </ul>
GOD’S CALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God told Moses that Joshua was the new leader (Num. 27:15–23). • God told Joshua that he was the new leader (Josh 1:1–9). • God showed the people Joshua was the leader (Josh. 3:7). • God personally appeared to Joshua (Josh. 5:13–15).</li> </ul>
GOD’S SPECIFIC PROMISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joshua would possess every place his foot would tread (Josh. 1:3). • God would be with Joshua as He was with Moses (Josh. 1:5, 9). • No one would be able to usurp Joshua’s position (Josh. 1:5). • Joshua would prosper (Josh. 1:7).</li> </ul>
GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be strong and courageous (Josh. 1:6, 9). • Observe all Moses’ commands (Josh. 1:7, 13). • Meditate on the Book day and night (Josh. 1:8). • Do not be afraid (Josh. 1:9).</li> </ul>
PUBLIC AFFIRMATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The people accepted him as Moses’ replacement (Josh. 1:16, 17). • They gave him their allegiance (Josh. 1:18). • Leaders (priests) responded to him (Josh. 3:8–17; 4:16–18).</li> </ul>
JOSHUA’S LEADERSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joshua acted quickly (Josh. 3:1). • He sent only two spies, and they reported to him (Josh. 2:1, 23). • He relayed God’s promises to the people (Josh. 3:5, 8). • He set up memorials (Josh. 4:1–9). • He recognized and worshiped the real Commander (Josh. 5:13–15). • He made mistakes (Josh. 7:1–9). • He experienced God’s direct involvement (Josh. 10:14). • He administered the division of land (Josh. 13—19).</li> </ul>
EVALUATIONS OF JOSHUA’S LEADERSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joshua practiced immediate obedience (Josh. 11:23). • He learned from the past (Josh. 10:25). • He held to God’s Word (Josh. 8:34, 35). • He taught the people the importance of God’s Word (Josh. 23:6). • He read God’s Word to the people (Josh. 8:35). • In victory, he praised God (Josh. 8:30). • He recognized that God fulfilled every need (Josh. 23:14). • He continually gave God the credit (Josh. 3:5, 10; 4:23, 24; 23:3). • He made a lifelong commitment (Josh. 24:15).</li> </ul>

gave you on this side of the Jordan toward the sunrise.”

<sup>16</sup>So they answered Joshua, saying, “All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. <sup>17</sup>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. <sup>18</sup>Whoever rebels against your command and does not heed your words, in all that you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and of good courage.”

## Tale of Two Committees

	SPIES OF MOSES (NUM. 13)	SPIES OF JOSHUA (JOSH. 2)
Number:	Twelve men were chosen.	Two men were helped and perhaps inspired by a woman—Rahab.
Identification:	The spies were named by Moses.	The spies were chosen by Joshua.
Debriefing Procedure:	The spies reported directly to the people.	The spies reported directly to Joshua.
Report:	The enemy is “bigger than we are.”	“God is bigger” than any enemy.
Committee Vote:	Ten out of twelve agreed with the report.	100% supported the report.
Debriefing Report:	Mission impossible!	Go for it!
Action Taken:	The people reacted in fear.	The people acted in faith.
Results:	The people wandered 40 more years.	The people settled in the Land of Promise.

### Rahab Hides the Spies

**2** Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove<sup>a</sup> to spy secretly, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.”

So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there. <sup>2</sup>And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, “Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country.”

<sup>3</sup>So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, “Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country.”

<sup>4</sup>Then the woman took the two men and hid them. So she said, “Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they *were* from.” <sup>5</sup>And it happened as the gate was being

shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them.” <sup>6</sup>(But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.) <sup>7</sup>Then the men pursued them by the road to the Jordan, to the fords. And as soon as those who pursued them had gone out, they shut the gate.

<sup>8</sup>Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, <sup>9</sup>and said to the men: “I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. <sup>10</sup>For we have

2:1 <sup>a</sup> Hebrew *Shittim*

**2:1** Ancient Jericho (Heb. lit. “moon” and thus “moon city”) may be the oldest city in the world and likely was dedicated to the worship of a moon god. Located about five miles west of the Jordan River, Jericho was an oasis in the Dead Sea area. This fortress city controlled the entrance to the land. The conquest of Jericho formed the initial stage of Joshua’s military strategy of “divide and conquer.” Rahab’s house was probably built over the gap between the two walls, 12 to 15 feet apart, a common practice in that day (v. 15). Rahab is described as a “harlot” (Heb. *zanah*). There is no evidence that she was a sacred prostitute in the service of her pagan gods (see Rahab). Prostitution was practiced commonly in the Canaanite culture. Lodging in the house of a prostitute may have been a way for the spies to avoid detection when entering and leaving the city.

**2:9** The spies needed help, and Rahab needed protection. Apparently of all the inhabitants of Jericho, Rahab alone believed in Israel’s God. Her words are an indictment of the Israelites whose unbelief caused them to lose 40 years in the wilderness. In effect, she told them the battle had been won when God delivered them from Egypt (vv. 10, 11). Rahab did lie to protect the spies (vv. 4, 5), for deception and espionage are part of warfare. Scripture unequivocally forbids lying, and nowhere does God condone Rahab’s lying (Prov. 12:22). However, we must affirm Rahab’s great faith and leave any judgment of her to God. Extenuating circumstances challenged the new faith of this resourceful woman, and God honored her faith by giving her a place in the lineage of the Messiah (Matt. 1:5).

## Rahab : DISCERNING DELIVERER

Rahab was obviously an intelligent woman. She showed a remarkable knowledge of the recent history of Israel as well as of what God was doing for the Israelites when they approached her country. In fact, she seemed more aware of God's intervention for Israel than Israel was (notice the similarity of her words in Josh. 2:9–11 with Josh. 1:2, 11, 13). In addition, she obtained an agreement for protection from the spies, hid them, and outsmarted her own people when they came looking for them.

Rahab also showed initiative in arranging for the deliverance of her entire family. She was a woman of great courage. Siding with the Israelites was treason, punishable by death, not only for herself but also for all her family. Once she made her decision, there was no turning back.

Finally, Rahab was a woman with spiritual insight. She recognized the disparity between Israel's God and the gods she and her people served. Israel's God was supreme—He did not share the rule in the heavens and the earth the way their gods reportedly did (Josh. 2:11). Rahab's initial confession of faith is seen in the use of the name *Yahweh*. Without any support or input from her world or Israel's, she claimed the covenant name God gave to Moses when the Israelites first left Egypt (Ex. 3:14). Then, again without any encouragement from others, she acted on her commitment by hiding the spies. This kind of faith was not often seen in God's people in the Old Testament, let alone from a Gentile harlot.

Rahab is a role model for making the right decisions and standing firm, even when it means going against your own peers. No wonder God wanted to honor her faith and courage by placing such a woman in the line of the Messiah. Boaz, one of the most gentle and godly men in the Old Testament, was her offspring (see Matt. 1:5 and the Book of Ruth; see chart, The Family Tree of Jesus). God honored Rahab's faith and courage by placing her in the lineage not only of Israel's great King David (Matt. 1:6) but also of Jesus, the King of kings (Matt. 1:1).

See also Matt. 1:5; Heb. 11:31; James 2:25; notes on Decision Making (1 Cor. 8); Heroines (Heb. 11)

heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who *were* on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. <sup>14</sup>And as soon as we heard *these things*, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. <sup>12</sup>Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my fa-

ther's house, and give me a true token, <sup>13</sup>and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death."

<sup>14</sup>So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the LORD has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you."

<sup>15</sup>Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house *was* on the city wall; she dwelt on the wall. <sup>16</sup>And she said to them, "Get to the mountain, lest the

**2:11** Our hearts melted indicated physical and emotional distress resulting in the inability to act (Ps. 97:5). Rahab's words confirm the fulfillment of Moses' song of victory after crossing the Red Sea (Ex. 15:14–16). Rahab drew a contrast between the one God of Israel and the many gods of the Canaanites. Unlike the Canaanite gods, *Yahweh* is not a god of a particular place and function; rather He is supreme everywhere. He is actively involved in the lives and events of His people (Josh. 2:9–11). In contrast, the Canaanite gods competed for rule, were limited to particular areas and functions, and were involved with their own lusts, murders, and intrigues.

**2:12–21** Middle Eastern culture centered around the family and clan. The faith and actions of one member could affect the whole family (see Josh. 7:24, 25; chart, Temptation: The Analysis of a Successful Trap). The agreement between Rahab and the spies required faithfulness on both sides (Josh. 2:14). Rahab was to keep secret the activities of the spies, bring all her family into her house, and display the scarlet cord (vv. 14, 17, 18). The spies were to see that all Israel spared her house and everyone in it.

pursuers meet you. Hide there three days, until the pursuers have returned. Afterward you may go your way.”

<sup>17</sup>So the men said to her: “We *will be* blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, <sup>18</sup>unless, *when* we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father’s household to your own home. <sup>19</sup>So it shall be *that* whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood *shall be* on his own head, and we *will be* guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood *shall be* on our head if a hand is laid on him. <sup>20</sup>And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear.”

<sup>21</sup>Then she said, “According to your words, so *be* it.” And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window.

<sup>22</sup>They departed and went to the mountain, and stayed there three days until the pursuers returned. The pursuers sought *them* all along the way, but did not find *them*. <sup>23</sup>So the two men returned, descended from the mountain, and crossed over; and they came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all that had befallen them. <sup>24</sup>And they said to Joshua, “Truly the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us.”

### *Israel Crosses the Jordan*

**3** Then Joshua rose early in the morning; and they set out from Acacia Grove<sup>a</sup> and came to the Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they crossed

over. <sup>2</sup>So it was, after three days, that the officers went through the camp; <sup>3</sup>and they commanded the people, saying, “When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests, the Levites, bearing it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it. <sup>4</sup>Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure. Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you must go, for you have not passed *this* way before.”

<sup>5</sup>And Joshua said to the people, “Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.” <sup>6</sup>Then Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, “Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over before the people.”

So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people.

<sup>7</sup>And the LORD said to Joshua, “This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. <sup>8</sup>You shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, saying, ‘When you have come to the edge of the water of the Jordan, you shall stand in the Jordan.’”

<sup>9</sup>So Joshua said to the children of Israel, “Come here, and hear the words of the LORD your God.” <sup>10</sup>And Joshua said, “By this you 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 Gergashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites: <sup>11</sup>Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan. <sup>12</sup>Now therefore, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man from every tribe. <sup>13</sup>And it shall come to pass, as soon as the

3:1 <sup>a</sup> Hebrew *Shittim*

**2:24** The report of the spies reflected Rahab’s words (vv. 9–11). Unlike the report of the spies who returned to Moses 40 years earlier with a report emphasizing the weakness of the Israelites and the strength of the inhabitants of the land, this report emphasized God’s strength and faithfulness to deliver the land into the hands of His people (see Num. 13:26–33; see chart, Tale of Two Committees).

**3:3** The ark of the covenant (a wooden box overlaid with gold, approximately 45 long × 27 wide by 27 high) was the centerpiece of the tabernacle (see chart, The Plan of the Tabernacle). The ark contained the tablets God gave Moses on Mt. Sinai, a jar of manna, and Aaron’s rod (Ex. 25:10–16; Heb. 9:4, 5; see chart, The Furniture of the Tabernacle). The “mercy seat”

symbolized the presence of God and rested on top of the ark (Ex. 25:17–22). Here the priests sprinkled the sacrificial blood for the sins of the people and met God (Lev. 16:14). The bringing of the ark, which represented God’s presence, before the people meant that they were about to move. As the people prepared to enter the land, they were to follow the ark of the covenant.

**3:4** Two thousand cubits was about 3,000 feet or 925 meters (one cubit equals approximately 18 inches; see chart, Money and Measurements in the Bible). The ark still functioned as a guide. The distance required emphasized the sacred nature of the ark of the covenant and also affirmed the inappropriateness of irreverent familiarity.

soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, *that* the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, the waters that come down from upstream, and they shall stand as a heap.”

<sup>14</sup>So it was, when the people set out from their camp to cross over the Jordan, with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, <sup>15</sup>and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), <sup>16</sup>that the waters which came down from upstream stood *still*, *and* rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that *is* beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, *and* were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho. <sup>17</sup>Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.

### *The Memorial Stones*

**4** And it came to pass, when all the people had completely crossed over the Jordan, that the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying: <sup>2</sup>“Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from every tribe, <sup>3</sup>and command them, saying, “Take for yourselves twelve stones from here, out of the midst of the Jordan, from the place where the priests’ feet stood firm. You shall carry them over with you and leave them in the lodging place where you lodge tonight.”

<sup>4</sup>Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the children of Israel, one man from every tribe; <sup>5</sup>and Joshua said to them: “Cross over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of the Jordan, and each one of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, <sup>6</sup>that this

may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come, saying, ‘What do these stones *mean* to you?’ <sup>7</sup>Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever.”

<sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>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.

<sup>10</sup>So the priests who bore the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan until everything was finished that the LORD had commanded Joshua to speak to the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua; and the people hurried and crossed over. <sup>11</sup>Then it came to pass, when all the people had completely crossed over, that the ark of the LORD and the priests crossed over in the presence of the people. <sup>12</sup>And the men of Reuben, the men of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh crossed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses had spoken to them. <sup>13</sup>About forty thousand prepared for war crossed over before the LORD for battle, to the plains of Jericho. <sup>14</sup>On that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they had feared Moses, all the days of his life.

<sup>15</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying, <sup>16</sup>“Command the priests who bear the ark of the Testimony to come up from the Jordan.” <sup>17</sup>Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, “Come up from the Jordan.” <sup>18</sup>And it came to pass, when the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD had come from the midst of the Jordan, *and* the soles

**3:14–17** Only the priests (the spiritual leaders) had to get their feet wet. Seeing the priests obey God through their obedience to Joshua was important for the people.

**4:3–9** As a reminder of His miraculous provision, the Lord instructed the people to build a monument with stones taken

from the riverbed they had crossed. The Hebrew text itself, according to some scholars, suggests a second monument in the river itself (v. 9). In any event, the monument was to serve as a witness of God’s faithfulness to His children for future generations.

of the priests' feet touched the dry land, that the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks as before.

<sup>19</sup>Now the people came up from the Jordan on the tenth *day* of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. <sup>20</sup>And those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal. <sup>21</sup>Then he spoke to the children of Israel, saying: "When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, 'What *are* these stones?' <sup>22</sup>then you shall let your children know, saying, 'Israel crossed over this Jordan on dry land'; <sup>23</sup>for the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over, <sup>24</sup>that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD, that it *is* mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever."

### *The Second Generation Circumcised*

**5** So it was, when all the kings of the Amorites who *were* on the west side of the Jordan, and all the kings of the Canaanites who *were* by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel until we<sup>a</sup> had crossed over, that their heart melted; and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the children of Israel.

<sup>2</sup>At that time the LORD said to Joshua, "Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time."

<sup>3</sup>So Joshua made flint knives for himself, and circumcised the sons of Israel at the hill of the foreskins.<sup>a</sup> <sup>4</sup>And this *is* the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt *who were* males, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness

on the way, after they had come out of Egypt. <sup>5</sup>For all the people who came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness, on the way as they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised. <sup>6</sup>For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people *who were* men of war, who came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they did not obey the voice of the LORD—to whom the LORD swore that He would not show them the land which the LORD had sworn to their fathers that He would give us, "a land flowing with milk and honey."<sup>a</sup> <sup>7</sup>Then Joshua circumcised their sons *whom* He raised up in their place; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way.

<sup>8</sup>So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp till they were healed. <sup>9</sup>Then the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." Therefore the name of the place is called Gilgal<sup>a</sup> to this day.

<sup>10</sup>Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. <sup>11</sup>And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day. <sup>12</sup>Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year.

### *The Commander of the Army of the LORD*

<sup>13</sup>And it came to pass, when Joshua was

5:1 <sup>a</sup> Following Kethib; Qere, some Hebrew manuscripts and editions, Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *they*. 5:3 <sup>a</sup> Hebrew *Gibeath Haaraloth* 5:6 <sup>a</sup> Exodus 3:8 5:9 <sup>a</sup> Literally *Rolling*

**5:5** Circumcision had been a covenant requirement since the time of Abraham (Gen. 17:9–14). The reason Hebrew males were not circumcised during the 40 years in the wilderness is not known, though the answer may be in the phrase "on the way," indicating that during the years of constant wandering it was not feasible. For whatever reason, clearly God intended this time as another reminder to the Israelites of their special relationship with Him (see Gen. 17, Circumcision).

**5:6** The land flowing with milk and honey was not a tropical garden but rather one that was hospitable to flocks and meadows (the milk of goats and the honey of bees).

**5:10–12** The reminders of God's faithfulness became apparent to the Israelites after they completed their wilderness

wanderings, crossed the Jordan River, and prepared to take the city of Jericho. The "Passover" was celebrated in remembrance of their deliverance from slavery in Egypt (see chart, The Feasts of Israel). As they ate the "produce of the land," surely they must have marveled that God timed their arrival in Canaan during a season when the land would support them. As they ate of the land's abundance, the "manna ceased." This miraculous provision of food, gathered each morning, had been a daily reminder that God fulfilled His promises.

**5:13–15** The visitation to Joshua is similar to Moses' experience at the burning bush (Ex. 3:2–8). In the appearances to both men, the Lord pronounced the ground "holy" and instructed them to remove their sandals (Josh. 5:15). Joshua

by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, “Are You for us or for our adversaries?”

<sup>14</sup>So He said, “No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.”

And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, “What does my Lord say to His servant?”

<sup>15</sup>Then the Commander of the LORD’s army said to Joshua, “Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.” And Joshua did so.

### *The Destruction of Jericho*

**6** Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. <sup>2</sup>And the LORD said to Joshua: “See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor. <sup>3</sup>You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. <sup>4</sup>And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. <sup>5</sup>It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram’s horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him.”

<sup>6</sup>Then Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, “Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark of the LORD.” <sup>7</sup>And he said to the people, “Proceed, and march around the city, and let him who is armed advance before the ark of the LORD.”

<sup>8</sup>So it was, when Joshua had spoken to the

people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the LORD advanced and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. <sup>9</sup>The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while the priests continued blowing the trumpets. <sup>10</sup>Now Joshua had commanded the people, saying, “You shall not shout or make any noise with your voice, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I say to you, ‘Shout!’ Then you shall shout.” <sup>11</sup>So he had the ark of the LORD circle the city, going around it once. Then they came into the camp and lodged in the camp.

<sup>12</sup>And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. <sup>13</sup>Then 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 rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while the priests continued blowing the trumpets. <sup>14</sup>And the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. So they did six days.

<sup>15</sup>But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times. <sup>16</sup>And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: “Shout, for the LORD has given you the city! <sup>17</sup>Now the city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. <sup>18</sup>And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed

would have recognized the scenario immediately and understood this theophany (a visible appearance of God in bodily form) as another affirmation of his appointment as Moses’ successor. The presence of this divine Commander had been promised 40 years earlier (Ex. 23:20; Josh. 1:9).

**6:5** Conquering a walled city usually required breaching the walls or laying siege until the inhabitants exhausted their food and water supplies (a process often taking months). But God displayed His power to the Israelites by leveling the walls that had frightened their fathers 40 years earlier (Num. 13:28).

**6:8–16** The psychological warfare is ingenious. The resi-

dents of Jericho already were paralyzed with fear. In addition, for six days they watched this fearsome people, led by the ark, symbolizing God’s presence, march daily around their city with only trumpet blasts piercing the silence. Imagine how they felt on the seventh day when the process was repeated over and over!

**6:18** Destroying the spoils of war was a recognized method of devoting these spoils to a deity. To covet and take what had been devoted to God was sin and would have far-reaching consequences. A consistent OT theme is the effect of an individual’s sin on the family, the community, and even

## JUSTICE

## THE DESTRUCTION OF INNOCENTS

God's command to destroy everyone in these cities often troubles modern readers (Deut. 7:1–6). Two basic reasons are given for this command:

- 1) the inhabitants had reached the point of no return in their depravity (see Gen. 6:5, 6), and
- 2) if the Israelites lived beside these pagan people, they, too, would be infected with their wickedness (Ex. 34:12–16; Deut. 7:4).

In any case, Joshua was obeying a specific directive from God just as in the devastation of the Flood (Gen. 7:23) and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24, 25). While the loss of innocent life is always a tragedy, at times only radical action can save, as would be true with a deadly cancer in the body. We living on this side of the Cross are much more fortunate and have the promise of ultimate victory (Rom. 8:31–39).

Even secular scholars acknowledge that the practices of these Canaanite religions are some of the most perverse recorded in history. The goddess Asherah is noted for love of murder and war. When the people wanted their gods to do something, they would sometimes enact the deed themselves. They lived in an agricultural society. To ensure that Baal (the fertility god) would provide the rain (which they believed to be his semen), they practiced every imaginable sexual perversion with both male and female prostitutes as well as with animals (Ex. 22:19, 20). They did everything God hated (Lev. 18:20–24). They even threw their children into the fire as sacrifices (Lev. 18:21; Deut. 12:31). This act is a measure of their depravity, for no mother worthy of the name would willingly participate in the murder of her own child. God identified the abominations as so detestable that the land itself was defiled (Lev. 18:25).

These people had known about God (see Josh. 2:8–14). God had given them hundreds of years to change (Gen. 15:16). The destruction of the Canaanites was not ordered merely to secure the land for Israel. God was not unjust to other nations in order to reward Israel. The pagan nations were to be destroyed because of their own wickedness. God is a God of patience and mercy, but He is also a just God (Gen. 18:25). He does what is right, however it may appear to our finite minds and limited judgment. He will judge sin because He is holy (Deut. 7:10; 9:3–5; see also Ex. 14, Justice). Some of these perplexities await final understanding from God Himself.

things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. <sup>19</sup>But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, *are* consecrated to the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.”

<sup>20</sup>So the people shouted when *the priests* blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. <sup>21</sup>And they

utterly destroyed all that *was* in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

<sup>22</sup>But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, “Go into the harlot’s house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her.” <sup>23</sup>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

an entire nation (see Josh. 7:10–26; chart, Temptation: The Analysis of a Successful Trap). When a nation comes under judgment and even innocents are destroyed, its people have themselves to blame and not God (Amos 2:4). The booty was not important to God but rather the obedience of His people. He did not demand the spoils from all the cities (Josh. 8:2). But the booty of Jericho, the first victory, was consid-

ered the firstfruits. The firstfruits were to be given to Him in acknowledgment that all comes from Him (Ex. 23:19; 34:19, 26).

**6:23** Rahab was willing to give up her pagan gods and turn to the one true God. She is listed among the heroes of faith (Heb. 11:31; see Josh. 2, Rahab).

relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel. <sup>24</sup>But they burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. <sup>25</sup>And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

<sup>26</sup>Then Joshua charged *them* at that time, saying, "Cursed *be* the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates."

<sup>27</sup>So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country.

### *Defeat at Ai*

**7** But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi,<sup>a</sup> the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the LORD burned against the children of Israel.

<sup>2</sup>Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth Aven, on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying, "Go up and spy out the country." So the men went up and spied out Ai. <sup>3</sup>And they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not weary all the people there, for *the people of Ai are few.*" <sup>4</sup>So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai. <sup>5</sup>And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them *from* before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the

descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water.

<sup>6</sup>Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. <sup>7</sup>And Joshua said, "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? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan! <sup>8</sup>O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turns its back before its enemies? <sup>9</sup>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?"

### *The Sin of Achan*

<sup>10</sup>So the LORD said to Joshua: "Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? <sup>11</sup>Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put *it* among their own stuff. <sup>12</sup>Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, *but* turned *their* backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you. <sup>13</sup>Get up, sanctify the people, and say, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the LORD God of Israel: "*There is* an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you." <sup>14</sup>In the morning therefore you shall be brought according to your tribes. And it shall be *that* the tribe which the LORD takes shall

7:1 <sup>a</sup> Called *Zimri* in 1 Chronicles 2:6

**6:26** To sacrifice a firstborn child at the founding of a city was not uncommon for ancient pagans. Joshua's prediction came true in the time of Ahab, one of Israel's most evil kings (see 1 Kin. 16:34, note).

**7:1** Accursed things. When taking Jericho, the Israelites were commanded to spare Rahab and her family and to abstain from the things "accursed" (Heb. *cherem*, lit. "devoted"). The term has evolved to describe the enclosed, private apartments for women. This curse applied to Jericho was the most severe, meaning that someone and/or something was absolutely and irrevocably consecrated to destruction with no possibility of redemption (Lev. 27:28, 29). The experience of Achan

illustrates how the sin of an individual has consequences for the family and community. However unfair it may seem, the wrongdoing of one does indeed affect others adversely (Deut. 5:9; Josh. 6:17–19). Individual responsibility and corporate guilt often go hand in hand (see chart, Temptation: The Analysis of a Successful Trap).

**7:4–7** The path to despair is clear in this experience of Joshua at Ai. It begins with overwhelming defeat (v. 4). Defeat brought discouragement (v. 5), followed by despair (v. 6) and loss of vision (v. 7). God offered recovery: Sanctify or set yourself apart (v. 13) and do what the Lord directs you to do (Josh. 8:1).

come according to families; and the family which the LORD takes shall come by households; and the household which the LORD takes shall come man by man. <sup>15</sup>Then it shall be *that* he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel.”

<sup>16</sup>So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken. <sup>17</sup>He brought the clan of Judah, and he took the family of the Zarhites; and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. <sup>18</sup>Then 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.

<sup>19</sup>Now Joshua said to Achan, “My son, I beg you, give glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide *it* from me.”

<sup>20</sup>And Achan answered Joshua and said, “Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I have done: <sup>21</sup>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. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it.”

<sup>22</sup>So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver under it. <sup>23</sup>And they took them from the midst of the tent, brought them to Joshua and to all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD. <sup>24</sup>Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor. <sup>25</sup>And Joshua said, “Why have you troubled us? The LORD

will trouble you this day.” So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.

<sup>26</sup>Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor<sup>a</sup> to this day.

### *The Fall of Ai*

**8** Now the LORD said to Joshua: “Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; take all the people of war with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land. <sup>2</sup>And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king. Only its spoil and its cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves. Lay an ambush for the city behind it.”

<sup>3</sup>So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai; and Joshua chose thirty thousand mighty men of valor and sent them away by night. <sup>4</sup>And he commanded them, saying: “Behold, you shall lie in ambush against the city, behind the city. Do not go very far from the city, but all of you be ready. <sup>5</sup>Then I and all the people who *are* with me will approach the city; and it will come about, when they come out against us as at the first, that we shall flee before them. <sup>6</sup>For they will come out after us till we have drawn them from the city, for they will say, ‘*They are* fleeing before us as at the first.’ Therefore we will flee before them. <sup>7</sup>Then you shall rise from the ambush and seize the city, for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand. <sup>8</sup>And it will be, when you have taken the city, *that* you shall set the city on fire. According to the commandment of the LORD you shall do. See, I have commanded you.”

<sup>9</sup>Joshua therefore sent them out; and they went to lie in ambush, and stayed between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai; but

7:26 <sup>a</sup> Literally *Trouble*

**7:19** Personal confession. Though God pointed the finger at Achan, Achan himself needed to confess his sin before the people. The expression “give glory to the Lord God of Israel” is used here and elsewhere to call for an honest confession (1 Sam. 6:5; Jer. 13:16; John 9:24).

**7:24** The Valley of Achor (Heb. lit. “trouble”) is so named because of Achan’s sin and the consequences it brought on the Israelites. Later through the prophet Hosea, God promised to

make the Valley of Achor “a door of hope” (Hos. 2:15).

**8:2** The booty of Ai was not the firstfruits as in the case of Jericho (see Josh. 6:18, note); so Israel was allowed to take the booty specified. Consulting the Lord concerning each battle was important because the Lord seldom used the same method twice. He led the Israelites in psychological warfare at Jericho but used military strategy at Ai.

## Temptation: The Analysis of a Successful Trap

SATAN	EVE	ACHAN	DAVID
A perfect, anointed cherub (Ezek. 28:12, 13) ↓ Saw God's glory (Ezek. 28:13) ↓ Desired to be like Him (Is. 14:13, 14) ↓ Took what he wanted (Is. 14:14; Ezek. 28:6) ↓ Became the enemy of God (Is. 14:15; Ezek. 28:9)	The perfect creation of God (Gen. 2:18, 22, 23) ↓ Saw the fruit (Gen. 3:6) ↓ Desired to be like God (Gen. 3:6) ↓ Took the fruit (Gen. 3:6) ↓ Gave it to Adam (Gen. 3:6) ↓ Ushered sin into the world (Gen. 3:7, 11-13, 16) ↓ Was expelled from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:23, 24)	A member of the tribe of Judah (Josh. 7:1) ↓ Saw the treasures (Josh. 7:21) ↓ Coveted what God had specified as His (Josh. 7:21) ↓ Took the spoils of battle (Josh. 7:1, 21) ↓ Hid the valuable objects (Josh. 7:21) ↓ Caused the defeat of a nation (Josh. 7:12) ↓ Destroyed himself and his family (Josh. 7:11, 15, 24, 25)	The king of Israel (2 Sam. 12:7) ↓ Saw a woman (2 Sam. 11:2) ↓ Desired the wife of another man (2 Sam. 11:2) ↓ Took her for himself (2 Sam. 11:2-5, 26, 27) ↓ Lied and created a web of deception (2 Sam. 11:6-15) ↓ Caused the death of Uriah (2 Sam. 11:16, 17, 21) ↓ Broke fellowship with God (Gen. 12: 7-12)

Joshua lodged that night among the people. <sup>10</sup>Then Joshua rose up early in the morning and mustered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai. <sup>11</sup>And all the people of war who *were* with him went up and drew near; and they came before the city and camped on the north side of Ai. Now a valley *lay* between them and Ai. <sup>12</sup>So he took about five thousand men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city. <sup>13</sup>And when they had set the people, all the army that *was* on the north of the city, and its rear guard on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley.

<sup>14</sup>Now it happened, when the king of Ai saw *it*, that the men of the city hurried and rose early and went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at an appointed place before the plain. But he did not know that *there was* an ambush against him behind the city. <sup>15</sup>And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness. <sup>16</sup>So all the people who *were* in Ai were called together to pursue them. And they pursued Joshua and were drawn away from the city. <sup>17</sup>There was not a man left in Ai or Bethel who did

not go out after Israel. So they left the city open and pursued Israel.

<sup>18</sup>Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Stretch out the spear that *is* in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand." And Joshua stretched out the spear that *was* in his hand toward the city. <sup>19</sup>So *those* in ambush arose quickly out of their place; they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand, and they entered the city and took it, and hurried to set the city on fire. <sup>20</sup>And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and behold, the smoke of the city ascended to heaven. So they had no power to flee this way or that way, and the people who had fled to the wilderness turned back on the pursuers.

<sup>21</sup>Now when Joshua and all Israel saw that the smoke of the city ascended, they turned back and struck down the men of Ai. <sup>22</sup>Then the others came out of the city against them; so they were *caught* in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side. And they struck them down, so that they let none of them remain or escape. <sup>23</sup>But the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua.

<sup>24</sup>And it came to pass when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of

Ai in the field, in the wilderness where they pursued them, and when they all had fallen by the edge of the sword until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned to Ai and struck it with the edge of the sword.<sup>25</sup> So it was *that* all who fell that day, both men and women, *were* twelve thousand—all the people of Ai.<sup>26</sup> For Joshua did not draw back his hand, with which he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.<sup>27</sup> Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as booty for themselves, according to the word of the LORD which He had commanded Joshua.<sup>28</sup> So Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, a desolation to this day.<sup>29</sup> And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until evening. And as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his corpse down from the tree, cast it at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raise over it a great heap of stones *that remains* to this day.

### *Joshua Renews the Covenant*

<sup>30</sup> Now Joshua built an altar to the LORD God of Israel in Mount Ebal,<sup>31</sup> as Moses the servant of the LORD had 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 has wielded an iron *tool*.”<sup>a</sup> And they offered on it burnt offerings to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings.<sup>32</sup> And there, in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written.<sup>33</sup> Then all Israel, with their elders and officers and judges, stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, the stranger as well as he who was born among them. Half of them *were* in front of Mount

Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel.<sup>34</sup> And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law.<sup>35</sup> There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.

### *The Treaty with the Gibeonites*

**9** And it came to pass when all the kings who *were* on this side of the Jordan, in the hills and in the lowland and in all the coasts of the Great Sea toward Lebanon—the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite—heard *about it*,<sup>2</sup> that they gathered together to fight with Joshua and Israel with one accord.

<sup>3</sup> But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai,<sup>4</sup> they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended,<sup>5</sup> old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry *and moldy*.<sup>6</sup> And they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, “We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us.”

<sup>7</sup> Then the men of Israel said to the Hivites, “Perhaps you dwell among us; so how can we make a covenant with you?”

<sup>8</sup> But they said to Joshua, “We *are* your servants.”

8:31 <sup>a</sup> Deuteronomy 27:5, 6

**8:33** The stranger in this verse may refer to non-Israelites who had accepted Israel's God and therefore had been accepted into the Hebrew community (see also v. 35). Aliens or strangers who embraced *Yahweh* as God and chose to live among God's people were assimilated into the nation (1 Kin. 8:41–43).

**8:34** The blessings and curses are outlined in Deuteronomy 27:1–28:68.

**8:35** Two requirements were fulfilled by Joshua: the altar and its sacrifices were a visual reaffirmation of Moses' covenant (vv. 30, 31; Ex. 24:3–8), and the reading was a fulfillment of Moses' written memorial (Ex. 17:14; Josh. 1:8).

**9:1, 2** The reputation of Israel's conquering army under the

leadership of Joshua provided the impetus needed to unite these traditionally independent cities. From this point, Israel faced a coalition of united forces rather than one city at a time.

**9:1–15** The inhabitants of Gibeon were identified as the Hivites, one of the seven nations God had promised to drive out of the land before Israel (v. 7; Josh. 3:10; see also Deut. 7:1, 2; map, The Division of the Land). The testimony of the Gibeonites provides additional evidence that the people of Canaan were not totally ignorant of God's truth (v. 9). They knew Israel was allowed to make treaties with cities that accepted peace and became Israel's servants, except for the seven nations named (Deut. 20:10, 11); so they concealed their identity to deceive Joshua and save themselves.

And Joshua said to them, “Who *are* you, and where do you come from?”

<sup>9</sup>So they said to him: “From a very far country your servants have come, because of the name of the LORD your God; for we have heard of His fame, and all that He did in Egypt, <sup>10</sup>and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who *were* beyond the Jordan—to Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who was at Ashtaroth. <sup>11</sup>Therefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, ‘Take provisions with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say to them, “We *are* your servants; now therefore, make a covenant with us.”’ <sup>12</sup>This bread of ours we took hot for our provision from our houses on the day we departed to come to you. But now look, it is dry and moldy. <sup>13</sup>And these wineskins which we filled *were* new, and see, they are torn; and these our garments and our sandals have become old because of the very long journey.”

<sup>14</sup>Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the LORD. <sup>15</sup>So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them.

<sup>16</sup>And it happened at the end of three days, after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they *were* their neighbors who dwelt near them. <sup>17</sup>Then the children of Israel journeyed and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities *were* Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath Jearim. <sup>18</sup>But the children of Israel did not attack them, because the rulers of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the congregation complained against the rulers.

<sup>19</sup>Then all the rulers said to all the congregation, “We have sworn to them by the LORD God of Israel; now therefore, we may not touch them. <sup>20</sup>This we will do to them: We will let them live, lest wrath be upon us because of the oath which we swore to them.” <sup>21</sup>And the rulers said to them, “Let them live,

but let them be woodcutters and water carriers for all the congregation, as the rulers had promised them.”

<sup>22</sup>Then Joshua called for them, and he spoke to them, saying, “Why have you deceived us, saying, ‘We *are* very far from you,’ when you dwell near us? <sup>23</sup>Now therefore, you *are* cursed, and none of you shall be freed from being slaves—woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God.”

<sup>24</sup>So they answered Joshua and said, “Because your servants were clearly told that the LORD your 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 very much afraid for our lives because of you, and have done this thing. <sup>25</sup>And now, here we are, in your hands; do with us as it seems good and right to do to us.” <sup>26</sup>So he did to them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, so that they did not kill them. <sup>27</sup>And that day Joshua made them woodcutters and water carriers for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, in the place which He would choose, even to this day.

### *The Sun Stands Still*

**10** Now it came to pass when Adonizedek king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai and had utterly destroyed it—as he had done to Jericho and its king, so he had done to Ai and its king—and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them, <sup>2</sup>that they feared greatly, because Gibeon *was* a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it *was* greater than Ai, and all its men *were* mighty. <sup>3</sup>Therefore Adonizedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon, saying, <sup>4</sup>“Come up to me and help me, that we may attack Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel.” <sup>5</sup>Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron,

**9:19–20** Even though the treaty was based on deceit, the leaders of Israel were obligated to honor it since they had sworn by the Lord God of Israel. The commitment of the oath was to the Lord, not to the Gibeonites (vv. 18–20).

**10:1** The five kings of the Amorites. As a result of their pre-

vious victories and the surrender of the Gibeonites, the Israelites were entrenched in the central highlands close to Jerusalem. The coalition's strategy was to recapture Gibeon because of its strategic location.

the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon, gathered together and went up, they and all their armies, and camped before Gibeon and made war against it.

<sup>6</sup>And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp at Gilgal, saying, “Do not forsake your servants; come up to us quickly, save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the mountains have gathered together against us.”

WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN THE  
POSSIBILITIES OF DEFEAT.

*Queen Victoria*

<sup>7</sup>So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor. <sup>8</sup>And the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you.” <sup>9</sup>Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, having marched all night from Gilgal. <sup>10</sup>So the LORD routed them before Israel, killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, chased them along the road that goes to Beth Horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah. <sup>11</sup>And it happened, as they fled before Israel *and* were on the descent of Beth Horon, that the LORD cast down large hailstones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. *There were* more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword.

<sup>12</sup>Then Joshua spoke 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 still over Gibeon;  
And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon.”

<sup>13</sup> So the sun stood still,  
And the moon stopped,  
Till the people had revenge  
Upon their enemies.

Is this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go *down* for about a whole day. <sup>14</sup>And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the LORD heeded the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.

<sup>15</sup>Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

### *The Amorite Kings Executed*

<sup>16</sup>But these five kings had fled and hidden themselves in a cave at Makkedah. <sup>17</sup>And it was told Joshua, saying, “The five kings have been found hidden in the cave at Makkedah.”

<sup>18</sup>So Joshua said, “Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and set men by it to guard them. <sup>19</sup>And do not stay *there* yourselves, *but* pursue your enemies, and attack their rear *guard*. Do not allow them to enter their cities, for the LORD your God has delivered them into your hand.” <sup>20</sup>Then it happened, while Joshua and the children of Israel made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they had finished, that those who escaped entered fortified cities. <sup>21</sup>And all the people returned to the camp, to Joshua at Makkedah, in peace.

No one moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.

<sup>22</sup>Then Joshua said, “Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings to me from the cave.” <sup>23</sup>And they did so, and brought out those five kings to him from the cave: the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon.

<sup>24</sup>So it was, when they brought out those kings to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the captains of the

**10:6–11** Gibeon’s treaty with Israel required Israel to come to the aid of the Gibeonites (Josh. 9:15). God gave His people victory.

**10:12–14** Joshua’s longest day. One of God’s most spectacular miracles is cited also in the Book of Jasher, a piece of Hebrew poetic literature chronicling Israel’s victories that is now lost (see 2 Sam. 1:18). Subsequent verses give strategic and military details of the battle. Exact details on the inner workings of the miracle are not recorded. Perhaps the earth tilted so that Israel would experience a northern-

type long day, or the rotation of the earth may have slowed. Numerous details about the battle are noted: the extent of Israel’s march, their attack and pursuit, the names of battle sites, the names of kings, a description of the hailstorm. The supplying of such details shows that this is not mere legend but an actual military debriefing. We do know these three things about the miracle of the sun standing still: nothing like this ever happened before or after; God was responsible for whatever transpired; and He acted because Joshua called upon Him for help.

men of war who went with him, “Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings.” And they drew near and put their feet on their necks. <sup>25</sup>Then Joshua said to them, “Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; be strong and of good courage, for thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight.” <sup>26</sup>And afterward Joshua struck them and killed them, and hanged them on five trees; and they were hanging on the trees until evening. <sup>27</sup>So it was at the time of the going down of the sun *that* Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees, cast them into the cave where they had been hidden, and laid large stones against the cave’s mouth, *which remain* until this very day.

### *Conquest of the Southland*

<sup>28</sup>On that day Joshua took Makkedah, and struck it and its king with the edge of the sword. He utterly destroyed them<sup>a</sup>—all the people who *were* in it. He let none remain. He also did to the king of Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho.

<sup>29</sup>Then Joshua passed from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, to Libnah; and they fought against Libnah. <sup>30</sup>And the LORD also delivered it and its king into the hand of Israel; he struck it and all the people who *were* in it with the edge of the sword. He let none remain in it, but did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho.

<sup>31</sup>Then Joshua passed from Libnah, and all Israel with him, to Lachish; and they encamped against it and fought against it. <sup>32</sup>And the LORD delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, who took it on the second day, and struck it and all the people who *were* in it with the edge of the sword, according to all that he had done to Libnah. <sup>33</sup>Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish; and Joshua struck him and his people, until he left him none remaining.

<sup>34</sup>From Lachish Joshua passed to Eglon, and all Israel with him; and they encamped against it and fought against it. <sup>35</sup>They took it

on that day and struck it with the edge of the sword; all the people who *were* in it he utterly destroyed that day, according to all that he had done to Lachish.

<sup>36</sup>So Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, to Hebron; and they fought against it. <sup>37</sup>And they took it and struck it with the edge of the sword—its king, all its cities, and all the people who *were* in it; he left none remaining, according to all that he had done to Eglon, but utterly destroyed it and all the people who *were* in it.

<sup>38</sup>Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to Debir; and they fought against it. <sup>39</sup>And he took it and its king and all its cities; they struck them with the edge of the sword and utterly destroyed all the people who *were* in it. He left none remaining; as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir and its king, as he had done also to Libnah and its king.

<sup>40</sup>So Joshua conquered all the land: the mountain country and the South<sup>a</sup> and the lowland and the wilderness slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded. <sup>41</sup>And Joshua conquered them from Kadesh Barnea as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even as far as Gibeon. <sup>42</sup>All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel. <sup>43</sup>Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

### *The Northern Conquest*

**11** And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor heard *these things*, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, to the king of Achshaph, <sup>2</sup>and to the kings who *were* from the north, in the mountains, in the plain south of Chinneroth, in the lowland, and in the heights of Dor on

10:28 <sup>a</sup> Following Masoretic Text and most authorities; many Hebrew manuscripts, some manuscripts of the Septuagint, and some manuscripts of the Targum read *it*.  
10:40 <sup>a</sup> Hebrew *Negev*, and so throughout this book

**10:40** Joshua conquered all the land. This summary statement indicated that by the taking of certain strategically located cities, Israel gained a measure of control over the southern region. Full political control would take place much later under King David.

**11:1** Hazor was much more formidable than any of the previous cities (see map, The Division of Land). Located ten miles

north of the Sea of Chinnereth (later Sea of Galilee), Hazor covered at least 200 acres (compared with Jericho’s approximately seven acres). It had massive walls and was surrounded by a fortified ditch. Conquering Hazor was essential to the conquest of the northern portion of the country. Recent archaeological excavations at Hazor have uncovered a wide variety of Canaanite structures.

the west, <sup>3</sup>to the Canaanites in the east and in the west, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite in the mountains, and the Hivite below Hermon in the land of Mizpah. <sup>4</sup>So they went out, they and all their armies with them, *as many people as the sand that is on the seashore in multitude*, with very many horses and chariots. <sup>5</sup>And when all these kings had met together, they came and camped together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel.

<sup>6</sup>But the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid because of them, for tomorrow about this time I will deliver all of them slain before Israel. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire.” <sup>7</sup>So Joshua and all the people of war with him came against them suddenly by the waters of Merom, and they attacked them. <sup>8</sup>And the LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, who defeated them and chased them to Greater Sidon, to the Brook Misrephoth,<sup>a</sup> and to the Valley of Mizpah eastward; they attacked them until they left none of them remaining. <sup>9</sup>So Joshua did to them as the LORD had told him: he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire.

<sup>10</sup>Joshua turned back at that time and took Hazor, and struck its king with the sword; for Hazor was formerly the head of all those kingdoms. <sup>11</sup>And they struck all the people who *were* in it with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying *them*. There was none left breathing. Then he burned Hazor with fire.

<sup>12</sup>So all the cities of those kings, and all their kings, Joshua took and struck with the edge of the sword. He utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded. <sup>13</sup>But *as for* the cities that stood on their mounds,<sup>a</sup> Israel burned none of them, except Hazor only, *which* Joshua burned. <sup>14</sup>And all the spoil of these cities and the livestock, the children of Israel took as booty for themselves; but they struck every man with the edge of the sword until they had de-

stroyed them, and they left none breathing. <sup>15</sup>As the LORD had commanded Moses His servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses.

### *Summary of Joshua's Conquests*

<sup>16</sup>Thus Joshua took all this land: the mountain country, all the South, all the land of Goshen, the lowland, and the Jordan plain<sup>a</sup>—the mountains of Israel and its lowlands, <sup>17</sup>from Mount Halak and the ascent to Seir, even as far as Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings, and struck them down and killed them. <sup>18</sup>Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. <sup>19</sup>There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. All *the others* they took in battle. <sup>20</sup>For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might utterly destroy them, *and* that they might receive no mercy, but that He might destroy them, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

<sup>21</sup>And at that time Joshua came and cut off the Anakim from the mountains: from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. <sup>22</sup>None of the Anakim were left in the land of the children of Israel; they remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod.

<sup>23</sup>So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Then the land rested from war.

### *The Kings Conquered by Moses*

**12** These *are* the kings of the land whom the children of Israel defeated, and

11:8 <sup>a</sup> Hebrew *Misrephoth Maim* 11:13 <sup>a</sup> Hebrew *tel*, a heap of successive city ruins 11:16 <sup>a</sup> Hebrew *arabah*

**11:19, 20** Instruments of judgment. When God promised the land to Abraham, He did not instruct him to drive out or destroy the inhabitants of the land because at that time the iniquity of the Amorites was “not yet complete” (Gen. 15:16). God was patient with the inhabitants of Canaan for hundreds of years, giving them many opportunities to repent. Yet despite the witness of God’s people to the one true God and such warnings as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the sin,

rebellion, and depravity of the Canaanites continued until the day came when God’s judgment fell on them. God uses many instruments of judgment. In the case of the Canaanites, the instrument was the Israelite army (see Josh. 6, Justice).

**11:22** The Anakim were the “giants” who frightened the Israelites 40 years earlier (Num. 13:33).

**12:1–24** The leadership of Moses and Joshua (vv. 1–24)

whose land they possessed on the other side of the Jordan toward the rising of the sun, from the River Arnon to Mount Hermon, and all the eastern Jordan plain: <sup>2</sup>*One king was Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon and ruled half of Gilead, from Aroer, which is on the bank of the River Arnon, from the middle of that river, even as far as the River Jabbok, which is the border of the Ammonites, and the eastern Jordan plain from the Sea of Chinneroth as far as the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea), the road to Beth Jeshimoth, and southward below the slopes of Pisgah.* <sup>4</sup>*The other king was Og king of Bashan and his territory, who was of the remnant of the giants, who dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei, and reigned over Mount Hermon, over Salcah, over all Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and over half of Gilead to the border of Sihon king of Heshbon.*

<sup>6</sup>These Moses the servant of the LORD and the children of Israel had conquered; and Moses the servant of the LORD had given it as a possession to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh.

### *The Kings Conquered by Joshua*

<sup>7</sup>And these are the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel conquered on this side of the Jordan, on the west, from Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon as far as Mount Halak and the ascent to Seir, which Joshua gave to the tribes of Israel as a possession according to their divisions, <sup>8</sup>in the mountain country, in the lowlands, in the Jordan plain, in the slopes, in the wilderness, and in the South—the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: <sup>9</sup>the king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Bethel, one; <sup>10</sup>the king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; <sup>11</sup>the king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; <sup>12</sup>the king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one; <sup>13</sup>the king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; <sup>14</sup>the king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one;

<sup>15</sup>the king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; <sup>16</sup>the king of Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one; <sup>17</sup>the king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hopher, one; <sup>18</sup>the king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one; <sup>19</sup>the king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one; <sup>20</sup>the king of Shimron Meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; <sup>21</sup>the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; <sup>22</sup>the king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam in Carmel, one; <sup>23</sup>the king of Dor in the heights of Dor, one; the king of the people of Gilgal, one; <sup>24</sup>the king of Tirzah, one—all the kings, thirty-one.

### *Remaining Land to Be Conquered*

**13** Now Joshua was old, advanced in years. And the LORD said to him: “You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed. <sup>2</sup>This is the land that yet remains: all the territory of the Philistines and all that of the Geshurites, <sup>3</sup>from Sihor, which is east of Egypt, as far as the border of Ekron northward (which is counted as Canaanite); the five lords of the Philistines—the Gazites, the Ashdodites, the Ashkelonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites; <sup>4</sup>from the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that belongs to the Sidonians as far as Aphek, to the border of the Amorites; <sup>5</sup>the land of the Gebalites,<sup>a</sup> and all Lebanon, toward the sunrise, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon as far as the entrance to Hamath; <sup>6</sup>all the inhabitants of the mountains from Lebanon as far as the Brook Misrephoth,<sup>a</sup> and all the Sidonians—they I will drive out from before the children of Israel; only divide it by lot to Israel as an inheritance, as I have commanded you. <sup>7</sup>Now therefore, divide this land as an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh.”

### *The Land Divided East of the Jordan*

<sup>8</sup>With the other half-tribe the Reubenites and the Gadites received their in-

13:5 <sup>a</sup> Or *Giblites* 13:6 <sup>a</sup> Hebrew *Misrephoth Maim*

displayed the continuity of God’s mission. A list of the defeated kings would be a permanent record and reminder of the reality of the conquest.

**13:2** The designation Palestine comes from the name “Philistines” (see chart, Terminology for the Land).

**13:7** The land not yet conquered was to be allotted to the various tribes (see Josh. 13–21). From this point, the conquest would be carried out by the respective tribes in the allotted area of each.

heritance, which Moses had given them, beyond the Jordan eastward, as Moses the servant of the LORD had given them: <sup>9</sup>from Aroer which is on the bank of the River Arnon, and the town that is in the midst of the ravine, and all the plain of Medeba as far as Dibon; <sup>10</sup>all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, as far as the border of the children of Ammon; <sup>11</sup>Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites and Maachathites, all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan as far as Salcah; <sup>12</sup>all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei, who remained of the remnant of the giants; for Moses had defeated and cast out these.

<sup>13</sup>Nevertheless the children of Israel did not drive out the Geshurites or the Maachathites, but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day.

<sup>14</sup>Only to the tribe of Levi he had given no inheritance; the sacrifices of the LORD God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance, as He said to them.

### *The Land of Reuben*

<sup>15</sup>And Moses had given to the tribe of the children of Reuben an inheritance according to their families. <sup>16</sup>Their territory was from Aroer, which is on the bank of the River Arnon, and the city that is in the midst of the ravine, and all the plain by Medeba; <sup>17</sup>Heshbon and all its cities that are in the plain: Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon, <sup>18</sup>Jahaza, Kedemoth, Mephaath, <sup>19</sup>Kirjathaim, Sibmah, Zereth Shahar on the mountain of the valley, <sup>20</sup>Beth Peor, the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth Jeshimoth— <sup>21</sup>all the cities of the plain and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses had struck with the princes of Midian: Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, who were princes of Sihon dwelling in the country. <sup>22</sup>The children of Israel also killed with the sword Balaam the son of Beor, the soothsayer, among those who were killed by them. <sup>23</sup>And the border of the children

of Reuben was the bank of the Jordan. This was the inheritance of the children of Reuben according to their families, the cities and their villages.

### *The Land of Gad*

<sup>24</sup>Moses also had given an inheritance to the tribe of Gad, to the children of Gad according to their families. <sup>25</sup>Their territory was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the Ammonites as far as Aroer, which is before Rabbah, <sup>26</sup>and from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpah and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the border of Debir, <sup>27</sup>and in the valley Beth Haram, Beth Nimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, with the Jordan as its border, as far as the edge of the Sea of Chinnereth, on the other side of the Jordan eastward. <sup>28</sup>This is the inheritance of the children of Gad according to their families, the cities and their villages.

THE MOST IMPORTANT FILTER YOUR CHILD  
CAN HAVE IN ANY DECISION-MAKING  
PROCESS IS THE WORD OF GOD.

*Susan Alexander Yates*

### *Half the Tribe of Manasseh (East)*

<sup>29</sup>Moses also had given an inheritance to half the tribe of Manasseh; it was for half the tribe of the children of Manasseh according to their families: <sup>30</sup>Their territory was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair which are in Bashan, sixty cities; <sup>31</sup>half of Gilead, and Ashtaroth and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, were for the children of Machir the son of Manasseh, for half of the children of Machir according to their families.

<sup>32</sup>These are the areas which Moses had distributed as an inheritance in the plains of Moab on the other side of the Jordan, by Jericho eastward. <sup>33</sup>But to the tribe of Levi Moses

**13:14** The tribe of Levi was to be scattered among the people with the assignment of performing the sacrifices and teaching the Law (Deut. 33:8–10). Therefore, this tribe would not be counted among the 12 in the land division. The inheritance of

Joseph was divided between two tribes named after Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh, bringing the count again to 12 tribes (see chart, The Breastplate of the High Priest's Clothing).

## Caleb: Portrait of a Hero

CALEB'S ACTIONS	GOD'S EVALUATION	GOD'S REWARDS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. He sided with the Lord (Num. 14:6–10).</li> <li>2. He was not afraid of God's enemies, even though others were (Num. 13:30–33).</li> <li>3. He risked his life rather than forsake the Lord (Num. 14:6–10).</li> <li>4. He suffered in the wilderness because of the lack of faith of others (Num. 14:20–24, 30–38).</li> <li>5. He kept his faith and enthusiasm for God through the wilderness wandering (Josh. 14:7, 8).</li> <li>6. He was ready to move against God's enemies (the Anakim) 40 years later (Josh. 15:14–16).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You have "a different spirit" (Num. 14:24).</li> <li>2. "You have wholly followed the LORD my God" (Josh. 14:8, 9).</li> <li>3. You are "My servant" (Num. 14:24).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. God named Caleb as one of only two adults who left Egypt and were allowed to enter the Land of Promise (Num. 14:29, 30).</li> <li>2. He kept Caleb alive forty more years (Josh. 14:10).</li> <li>3. He preserved his energy and strength (Josh. 14:11).</li> <li>4. He gave Caleb victory over the Canaanites in his own territory (Josh. 15:13, 14).</li> <li>5. He gave Caleb and his descendants the promised inheritance (Josh. 14:13, 14).</li> </ol>
CALEB IS FAITHFUL	GOD IS PLEASED	GOD REWARDS

had given no inheritance; the LORD God of Israel was their inheritance, as He had said to them.

### The Land Divided West of the Jordan

**14** These are the areas which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel distributed as an inheritance to them. <sup>2</sup>Their inheritance was by lot, as the LORD had commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes and the half-tribe. <sup>3</sup>For Moses had given the inheritance of the two tribes and the half-tribe on the other side of the Jordan; but to the Levites he had given no inheritance among them. <sup>4</sup>For the children of Joseph were two tribes: Manasseh and Ephraim. And they gave no part to the Levites in the land, except cities to dwell in, with their common-lands for their livestock and their property. <sup>5</sup>As the LORD had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did; and they divided the land.

### Caleb Inherits Hebron

<sup>6</sup>Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him: "You know the word which the LORD said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea. <sup>7</sup>I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart. <sup>8</sup>Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the LORD my God. <sup>9</sup>So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God.' <sup>10</sup>And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the LORD spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. <sup>11</sup>As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both

**14:1** Eleazar is named first because he, as priest, would have the ephod with the Urim and Thummim (see Ex. 28:15; Deut. 33:8, notes). Though the exact procedure is not clear, the Urim

and Thummim apparently were sacred lots used to determine God's direction. The Israelites considered the use of lots as a way to leave the choice completely in God's hands.

for going out and for coming in.<sup>12</sup>Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim *were* there, and *that* the cities *were* great *and* fortified. It may be that the LORD *will be* with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the LORD said.”

<sup>13</sup>And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance. <sup>14</sup>Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel. <sup>15</sup>And the name of Hebron formerly was Kirjath Arba (*Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim*).

Then the land had rest from war.

### *The Land of Judah*

**15** So *this* was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families:

The border of Edom at the Wilderness of Zin southward *was* the extreme southern boundary. <sup>2</sup>And their southern border began at the shore of the Salt Sea, from the bay that faces southward. <sup>3</sup>Then it went out to the southern side of the Ascent of Akrabim, passed along to Zin, ascended on the south side of Kadesh Barnea, passed along to Hezron, went up to Adar, and went around to Karkaa. <sup>4</sup>*From there* it passed toward Azmon and went out to the Brook of Egypt; and the border ended at the sea. This shall be your southern border.

<sup>5</sup>The east border *was* the Salt Sea as far as the mouth of the Jordan.

And the border on the northern quarter *began* at the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan. <sup>6</sup>The border went up to Beth Hoglah and passed north of Beth Arabah; and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben. <sup>7</sup>Then the border went up toward Debir from the Valley of Achor, and it turned northward toward Gilgal, which is before the Ascent of Adummim, which is

on the south side of the valley. The border continued toward the waters of En Shemesh and ended at En Rogel. <sup>8</sup>And the border went up by the Valley of the Son of Hinnom to the southern slope of the Jebusite city (which is Jerusalem). The border went up to the top of the mountain that *lies* before the Valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the Valley of Rephaim<sup>a</sup> northward. <sup>9</sup>Then the border went around from the top of the hill to the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, and extended to the cities of Mount Ephron. And the border went around to Baalah (which is Kirjath Jearim). <sup>10</sup>Then the border turned westward from Baalah to Mount Seir, passed along to the side of Mount Jearim on the north (which is Chesalon), went down to Beth Shemesh, and passed on to Timnah. <sup>11</sup>And the border went out to the side of Ekron northward. Then the border went around to Shicron, passed along to Mount Baalah, and extended to Jabneel; and the border ended at the sea.

<sup>12</sup>The west border *was* the coastline of the Great Sea. This is the boundary of the children of Judah all around according to their families.

### *Caleb Occupies Hebron and Debir*

<sup>13</sup>Now to Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a share among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, *namely*, Kirjath Arba, which is Hebron (*Arba was the father of Anak*). <sup>14</sup>Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak from there: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi, the children of Anak. <sup>15</sup>Then he went up from there to the inhabitants of Debir (formerly the name of Debir *was* Kirjath Sepher).

<sup>16</sup>And Caleb said, “He who attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give Achsah my daughter as wife.” <sup>17</sup>So Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it; and he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife. <sup>18</sup>Now it was so, when she came *to him*, that

15:8 <sup>a</sup> Literally *Giants*

**15:1** The tribe of Judah was not the largest, nor was Judah the eldest son of Jacob. However, a line of kings, beginning with David and ending with Christ, the King of kings, came from this tribe (Gen. 49:10).

**15:4** The Brook of Egypt was a stream that ran into the Mediterranean and served as the southern boundary between Judah's inheritance and Egypt. The sea (or Great Sea, v. 12) is the

Mediterranean (see map, The Division of Land).

**15:18, 19** Caleb apparently reared his family well (see chart, Caleb: Portrait of a Hero). His daughter Achsah was not afraid to speak up, and her forthrightness was rewarded (see Achsah). Othniel, Caleb's nephew, became Achsah's husband, and later was one of the judges of Israel (Judg. 1:12–15; 3:9–11; see chart, The Period of the Judges).

## Achsah : THE CLEVER DAUGHTER OF CALEB

Achsah, Caleb's daughter, appeared on the scene when her father offered a marriage between her and whomever was able to conquer the town Kirjath Sepher. The primary interest for everyone at that time was the land. Everything depended on it—their worship, home, food, financial and political security, and the ability to raise a family. Since it was the custom of the day for parents to arrange marriages, the offer Caleb made was not unusual.

Caleb's nephew Othniel accepted the challenge, took the Canaanite town, and won both Achsah and the portion of land promised. Yet Achsah knew their land would only be productive with a water source. Seeing the solution in the nearby springs, Achsah discussed the situation with her husband and convinced him that they needed to approach her father for help. Her approach to her father for a blessing was likely a request for a wedding present and was consistent with the blessings for weddings and families (Deut. 28:1–14).

Achsah showed interest and involvement in her inheritance, her marriage, and her future. She was not greedy, but neither was she hesitant to pursue what was needed just as the industrious woman pictured in Proverbs 31:27.

See also notes on *Decision Making* (1 Cor. 8); *Feminine Leadership* (1 Sam. 25); *Wives* (Prov. 31)

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?”<sup>19</sup> She answered, “Give me a blessing; since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water.” So he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

### *The Cities of Judah*

<sup>20</sup>This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families:

<sup>21</sup>The cities at the limits of the tribe of the children of Judah, toward the border of Edom in the South, were Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur,<sup>22</sup> Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah,<sup>23</sup> Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan,<sup>24</sup> Ziph, Telem, Bealoth,<sup>25</sup> Hazor, Hadattah, Kerioth, Hezron (which is Hazor),<sup>26</sup> Amam, Shema, Moladah,<sup>27</sup> Hazar Gaddah, Heshmon, Beth Pelet,<sup>28</sup> Hazar Shual, Beersheba, Bizjothjah,<sup>29</sup> Baalah, Ijim, Ezem,<sup>30</sup> Eltolad, Chesil, Hormah,<sup>31</sup> Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah,<sup>32</sup> Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain, and Rimmon: all the cities *are* twenty-nine, with their villages.

<sup>33</sup>In the lowland: Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah,<sup>34</sup> Zanoah, En Gannim, Tappuah, Enam,<sup>35</sup> Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah,<sup>36</sup> Sharam, Adithaim, Gederah, and Gederothaim: fourteen cities with their villages;<sup>37</sup> Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal Gad,<sup>38</sup> Dilean, Mizpah,

Joktheel,<sup>39</sup> Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon,<sup>40</sup> Cabbon, Lahmas,<sup>a</sup> Kithlish,<sup>41</sup> Gederoth, Beth Dagon, Naamah, and Makkedah: sixteen cities with their villages;<sup>42</sup> Libnah, Ether, Ashan,<sup>43</sup> Jiphtah, Ashnah, Nezib,<sup>44</sup> Keilah, Achzib, and Mareshah: nine cities with their villages;<sup>45</sup> Ekron, with its towns and villages;<sup>46</sup> from Ekron to the sea, all that *lay* near Ashdod, with their villages;<sup>47</sup> Ashdod with its towns and villages, Gaza with its towns and villages—as far as the Brook of Egypt and the Great Sea with *its* coastline.

<sup>48</sup>And in the mountain country: Shamir, Jattir, Sochoh,<sup>49</sup> Dannah, Kirjath Sannah (which is Debir),<sup>50</sup> Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim,<sup>51</sup> Goshen, Holon, and Giloh: eleven cities with their villages;<sup>52</sup> Arab, Dumah, Eshean,<sup>53</sup> Janum, Beth Tappuah, Aphekah,<sup>54</sup> Humtah, Kirjath Arba (which is Hebron), and Zior: nine cities with their villages;<sup>55</sup> Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah,<sup>56</sup> Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah,<sup>57</sup> Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah: ten cities with their villages;<sup>58</sup> Halhul, Beth Zur, Gedor,<sup>59</sup> Maarath, Beth Anoth, and Eltekon: six cities with their villages;<sup>60</sup> Kirjath Baal (which is Kirjath Jearim) and Rabbah: two cities with their villages.

<sup>61</sup>In the wilderness: Beth Arabah, Middin, Secacah,<sup>62</sup> Nibshan, the City of Salt, and En Gedi: six cities with their villages.

15:40 <sup>a</sup> Or *Lahmam*

<sup>63</sup>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.

### *Ephraim and West Manasseh*

**16** The lot fell to the children of Joseph from the Jordan, by Jericho, to the waters of Jericho on the east, to the wilderness that goes up from Jericho through the mountains to Bethel, <sup>2</sup>then went out from Bethel to Luz, <sup>a</sup>passed along to the border of the Archites at Ataroth, <sup>3</sup>and went down westward to the boundary of the Japhletites, as far as the boundary of Lower Beth Horon to Gezer; and it ended at the sea.

<sup>4</sup>So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance.

### *The Land of Ephraim*

<sup>5</sup>The border of the children of Ephraim, according to their families, was *thus*: The border of their inheritance on the east side was Ataroth Addar as far as Upper Beth Horon.

<sup>6</sup>And the border went out toward the sea on the north side of Michmethath; then the border went around eastward to Taanath Shiloh, and passed by it on the east of Janohah. <sup>7</sup>Then it went down from Janohah to Ataroth and Naarah, <sup>a</sup>reached to Jericho, and came out at the Jordan.

<sup>8</sup>The border went out from Tappuah westward to the Brook Kanah, and it ended at the sea. This *was* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim according to their families. <sup>9</sup>The separate cities for the children of Ephraim *were* among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages.

<sup>10</sup>And they did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites to this day and have become forced laborers.

### *The Other Half-Tribe of Manasseh (West)*

**17** There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh, for he was the firstborn of Joseph: *namely* for Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead, because he was a man of war; therefore he was given Gilead and Bashan. <sup>2</sup>And there was a lot for the rest of the children of Manasseh according to their families: for the children of Abiezer, <sup>a</sup>the children of Helek, the children of Asriel, the children of Shechem, the children of Hephher, and the children of Shemida; these *were* the male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph according to their families.

<sup>3</sup>But Zelophehad the son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but only daughters. And these *are* the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. <sup>4</sup>And they came near before Eleazar the priest, before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the rulers, saying, “The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brothers.” Therefore, according to the commandment of the LORD, he gave them an inheritance among their father’s brothers. <sup>5</sup>Ten shares fell to Manasseh, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which *were* on the other side of the Jordan, <sup>6</sup>because the daughters of Manasseh received an inheritance among his sons; and the rest of Manasseh’s sons had the land of Gilead.

<sup>7</sup>And the territory of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethath, that *lies* east of Shechem; and the border went along south to the inhabitants of En Tappuah. <sup>8</sup>Manasseh had the land of Tappuah, but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh *belonged* to the children of Ephraim. <sup>9</sup>And the border descended to the Brook Kanah, southward to the brook. These cities of Ephraim *are* among the cities

16:2 <sup>a</sup> Septuagint reads *Bethel* (that is, Luz). 16:7 <sup>a</sup> Or *Naaran* (compare 1 Chronicles 7:28) 17:2 <sup>a</sup> Called *Jeezer* in Numbers 26:30

**15:63** The final conquest of Jerusalem occurred under King David, several hundred years later (see 2 Sam. 5:6, 7). The Book of Joshua combines victories and failures in a natural way. The rewards of obedience and penalties for disobedience are clear (see chart, Models of Obedience and Disobedience). God responds to the cries of His people, but He is not subject to them.

**16:1** The descendants of Joseph drew one lot, but the land

was divided between the tribes of Joseph’s two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Jacob, Joseph’s father, had regarded the two sons of Joseph as his own (Gen. 48:5), bringing the count of the territories to 12, since the Levites did not inherit a specific area (see Josh. 13:14, note).

**17:3, 4** See Num. 26, Daughters of Zelophehad; 27:1–4, 5–7; 36:1–12, notes.

of Manasseh. The border of Manasseh was on the north side of the brook; and it ended at the sea.

<sup>10</sup>Southward it was Ephraim's, northward it was Manasseh's, and the sea was its border. Manasseh's territory was adjoining Asher on the north and Issachar on the east. <sup>11</sup>And in Issachar and in Asher, Manasseh had Beth Shean and its towns, Ibleam and its towns, the inhabitants of Dor and its towns, the inhabitants of En Dor and its towns, the inhabitants of Taanach and its towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and its towns—three hilly regions. <sup>12</sup>Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out *the inhabitants* of those cities, but the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land. <sup>13</sup>And it happened, when the children of Israel grew strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not utterly drive them out.

### *More Land for Ephraim and Manasseh*

<sup>14</sup>Then the children of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, “Why have you given us *only* one lot and one share to inherit, since we *are* a great people, inasmuch as the LORD has blessed us until now?”

<sup>15</sup>So Joshua answered them, “If you *are* a great people, *then* go up to the forest country and clear a place for yourself there in the land of the Perizzites and the giants, since the mountains of Ephraim are too confined for you.”

<sup>16</sup>But the children of Joseph said, “The mountain country is not enough for us; and all the Canaanites who dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, *both those who are* of Beth Shean and its towns and *those who are* of the Valley of Jezreel.”

<sup>17</sup>And Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph—to Ephraim and Manasseh—saying, “You *are* a great people and have great power; you shall not have *only* one lot, <sup>18</sup>but the mountain country shall be yours. Although

it is wooded, you shall cut it down, and its farthest extent shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots *and* are strong.”

### *The Remainder of the Land Divided*

**18** Now the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of meeting there. And the land was subdued before them. <sup>2</sup>But there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance.

<sup>3</sup>Then Joshua said to the children of Israel: “How long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers has given you? <sup>4</sup>Pick out from among you three men for *each* tribe, and I will send them; they shall rise and go through the land, survey it according to their inheritance, and come *back* to me. <sup>5</sup>And they shall divide it into seven parts. Judah shall remain in their territory on the south, and the house of Joseph shall remain in their territory on the north. <sup>6</sup>You shall therefore survey the land in seven parts and bring *the survey* here to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD our God. <sup>7</sup>But the Levites have no part among you, for the priesthood of the LORD *is* their inheritance. And Gad, Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance beyond the Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them.”

<sup>8</sup>Then the men arose to go away; and Joshua charged those who went to survey the land, saying, “Go, walk through the land, survey it, and come back to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD in Shiloh.” <sup>9</sup>So the men went, passed through the land, and wrote the survey in a book in seven parts by cities; and they came to Joshua at the camp in Shiloh. <sup>10</sup>Then Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD, and there

**17:14–18** The descendants of Joseph approached Joshua with two problems: They faced the iron chariots of the Canaanites, and they expressed the need for more land because of their size. Their allotment was already one of the largest as well as being in one of the most fertile regions, but it did include a large mountain range. Joshua turned their argument around and suggested that they could best drive out the Canaanites and clear the mountain ranges precisely because their tribe was so large.

**18:1** The camp was moved from Gilgal on the fringe of the inheritance to the center at Shiloh (modern Khirbet Seilun about 12 miles south of Shechem). Moving the ark of the covenant and setting up the tabernacle of meeting indicated the certainty of conquest and symbolized unification under God's presence as the tribes began settling the land.

**18:6** The casting of lots would have been done by Eleazar the priest in the presence of the ark of the covenant, establishing the results as God's choice (see Deut. 33:8, note).

Joshua divided the land to the children of Israel according to their divisions.

### *The Land of Benjamin*

<sup>11</sup>Now the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families, and the territory of their lot came out between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph. <sup>12</sup>Their border on the north side began at the Jordan, and the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north, and went up through the mountains westward; it ended at the Wilderness of Beth Aven. <sup>13</sup>The border went over from there toward Luz, to the side of Luz (which is Bethel) southward; and the border descended to Ataroth Addar, near the hill that *lies* on the south side of Lower Beth Horon.

<sup>14</sup>Then the border extended around the west side to the south, from the hill that *lies* before Beth Horon southward; and it ended at Kirjath Baal (which is Kirjath Jearim), a city of the children of Judah. This *was* the west side.

<sup>15</sup>The south side *began* at the end of Kirjath Jearim, and the border extended on the west and went out to the spring of the waters of Nephtoah. <sup>16</sup>Then the border came down to the end of the mountain that *lies* before the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, which is in the Valley of the Rephaim<sup>a</sup> on the north, descended to the Valley of Hinnom, to the side of the Jebusite city on the south, and descended to En Rogel. <sup>17</sup>And it went around from the north, went out to En Shemesh, and extended toward Geliloth, which is before the Ascent of Adummim, and descended to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben. <sup>18</sup>Then it passed along toward the north side of Arabah,<sup>a</sup> and went down to Arabah. <sup>19</sup>And the border passed along to the north side of Beth Hoglah; then the border ended at the north bay at the Salt Sea, at the south end of the Jordan. This *was* the southern boundary.

<sup>20</sup>The Jordan was its border on the east side. This *was* the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, according to its boundaries all around, according to their families.

<sup>21</sup>Now the cities of the tribe of the chil-

dren of Benjamin, according to their families, were Jericho, Beth Hoglah, Emek Keziz, <sup>22</sup>Beth Arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel, <sup>23</sup>Avim, Parah, Ophrah, <sup>24</sup>Chephar Haammoni, Ophni, and Gaba: twelve cities with their villages; <sup>25</sup>Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth, <sup>26</sup>Mizpah, Chephirah, Mozah, <sup>27</sup>Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah, <sup>28</sup>Zelah, Eleph, Jebus (which is Jerusalem), Gibeath, and Kirjath: fourteen cities with their villages. This was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families.

### *Simeon's Inheritance with Judah*

**19** The second lot came out for Simeon, for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. And their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah. <sup>2</sup>They had in their inheritance Beersheba (Sheba), Moladah, <sup>3</sup>Hazar Shual, Balah, Ezem, <sup>4</sup>Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah, <sup>5</sup>Ziklag, Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susah, <sup>6</sup>Beth Lebaoth, and Sharuhem: thirteen cities and their villages; <sup>7</sup>Ain, Rimmon, Ether, and Ashan: four cities and their villages; <sup>8</sup>and all the villages that *were* all around these cities as far as Baalath Beer, Ramah of the South. This *was* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families.

<sup>9</sup>The inheritance of the children of Simeon *was included* in the share of the children of Judah, for the share of the children of Judah was too much for them. Therefore the children of Simeon had *their* inheritance within the inheritance of that people.

### *The Land of Zebulun*

<sup>10</sup>The third lot came out for the children of Zebulun according to their families, and the border of their inheritance was as far as Sarid. <sup>11</sup>Their border went toward the west and to Maralah, went to Dabbasheth, and extended along the brook that is east of Jokneam. <sup>12</sup>Then from Sarid it went eastward toward the sunrise along the border of Chisloth Tabor, and went out toward Daberath,

18:16 <sup>a</sup> Literally *Giants* 18:18 <sup>a</sup> Or *Beth Arabah* (compare 15:6 and 18:22)

**18:11–28** The inheritance of Benjamin is described at length. Though Judah was the tribe of the promised line of kings, Saul, the first king of Israel, came from the tribe of Ben-

jamin. Jerusalem, which eventually would be captured by King David and become the capital of the nation, was near the border between the territories of Benjamin and Judah.

bypassing Japhia. <sup>13</sup>And from there it passed along on the east of Gath Hopher, toward Eth Kazin, and extended to Rimmon, which borders on Neah. <sup>14</sup>Then the border went around it on the north side of Hannathon, and it ended in the Valley of Jiphthah El. <sup>15</sup>Included were Kattath, Nahallal, Shimron, Idalah, and Bethlehem: twelve cities with their villages. <sup>16</sup>This was the inheritance of the children of Zebulun according to their families, these cities with their villages.

### *The Land of Issachar*

<sup>17</sup>The fourth lot came out to Issachar, for the children of Issachar according to their families. <sup>18</sup>And their territory went to Jezreel, and included Chesulloth, Shunem, <sup>19</sup>Haphraim, Shion, Anaharath, <sup>20</sup>Rabbith, Kishion, Abez, <sup>21</sup>Remeth, En Gannim, En Haddah, and Beth Pazzez. <sup>22</sup>And the border reached to Tabor, Shahazimah, and Beth Shemesh; their border ended at the Jordan: sixteen cities with their villages. <sup>23</sup>This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Issachar according to their families, the cities and their villages.

### *The Land of Asher*

<sup>24</sup>The fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families. <sup>25</sup>And their territory included Helkath, Hali, Beten, Achshaph, <sup>26</sup>Alammelech, Amad, and Mishal; it reached to Mount Carmel westward, along the Brook Shihor Libnath. <sup>27</sup>It turned toward the sunrise to Beth Dagon; and it reached to Zebulun and to the Valley of Jiphthah El, then northward beyond Beth Emek and Neiel, bypassing Cabul which was on the left, <sup>28</sup>including Ebron,<sup>a</sup> Rehob, Hammon, and Kanah, as far as Greater Sidon. <sup>29</sup>And the border turned to Ramah and to the fortified city of Tyre; then the border turned to Hosah, and ended at the sea by the region of Achzib. <sup>30</sup>Also Ummah, Aphek, and Rehob were included: twenty-two cities with their villages. <sup>31</sup>This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families, these cities with their villages.

### *The Land of Naphtali*

<sup>32</sup>The sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali, for the children of Naphtali according to their families. <sup>33</sup>And their border began at Heleph, enclosing the territory from the terebinth tree in Zaanannim, Adami Nekeb, and Jabneel, as far as Lakkum; it ended at the Jordan. <sup>34</sup>From Heleph the border extended westward to Aznoth Tabor, and went out from there toward Hukkok; it adjoined Zebulun on the south side and Asher on the west side, and ended at Judah by the Jordan toward the sunrise. <sup>35</sup>And the fortified cities are Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakath, Chinnereth, <sup>36</sup>Adamah, Ramah, Hazor, <sup>37</sup>Kedesh, Edrei, En Hazor, <sup>38</sup>Iron, Migdal El, Horem, Beth Anath, and Beth Shemesh: nineteen cities with their villages. <sup>39</sup>This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali according to their families, the cities and their villages.

### *The Land of Dan*

<sup>40</sup>The seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families. <sup>41</sup>And the territory of their inheritance was Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh, <sup>42</sup>Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Jethlah, <sup>43</sup>Elon, Timnah, Ekron, <sup>44</sup>Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, <sup>45</sup>Jehud, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon, <sup>46</sup>Me Jarkon, and Rakkon, with the region near Joppa. <sup>47</sup>And the border of the children of Dan went beyond these, because the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem and took it; and they struck it with the edge of the sword, took possession of it, and dwelt in it. They called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father. <sup>48</sup>This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages.

### *Joshua's Inheritance*

<sup>49</sup>When they had made an end of dividing the land as an inheritance according to their borders, the children of Israel gave an inheritance among them to Joshua the son

19:28 <sup>a</sup> Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; a few Hebrew manuscripts read *Abdon* (compare 21:30 and 1 Chronicles 6:74).

**19:15** Bethlehem was the site east of Mount Carmel, not the Bethlehem in Judah where Jesus was born.

**19:49** The allotments began with Caleb's (Josh. 14:13) and

ended with Joshua's. These were the only two men who experienced the entire saga of leaving Egypt, wandering in the wilderness, and participating in the conquest.

of Nun.<sup>50</sup> According to the word of the LORD they gave him the city which he asked for, Timnath Serah in the mountains of Ephraim; and he built the city and dwelt in it.

<sup>51</sup>These *were* the inheritances which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel divided as an inheritance by lot in Shiloh before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. So they made an end of dividing the country.

EVEN CHRISTIANS STRUGGLE WITH NEGATIVE FEAR, BUT I BELIEVE IT'S POSSIBLE TO TURN FEAR INTO FAITH, RENEWED CONFIDENCE, AND POSITIVE ACTION.

*Carol Kent*

### *The Cities of Refuge*

**20** The LORD also spoke to Joshua, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘Appoint for yourselves cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, <sup>3</sup>that the slayer who kills a person accidentally *or* unintentionally may flee there; and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood. <sup>4</sup>And when he flees to one of those cities, and stands at the entrance of the gate of the city, and declares his case in the hearing of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city as one of them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them. <sup>5</sup>Then if the avenger of blood pursues him, they shall not deliver the slayer into his hand, because he struck his neighbor unintentionally, but did not hate him beforehand. <sup>6</sup>And he shall dwell in that city until he stands before the congregation for judgment, *and* until the death of the one who is high priest in those days. Then the slayer may return and come to his own city and his own house, to the city from which he fled.’”

<sup>7</sup>So they appointed Kedesh in Galilee, in the mountains of Naphtali, Shechem in the

mountains of Ephraim, and Kirjath Arba (which *is* Hebron) in the mountains of Judah. <sup>8</sup>And on the other side of the Jordan, by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness on the plain, from the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth in Gilead, from the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan, from the tribe of Manasseh. <sup>9</sup>These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel and for the stranger who dwelt among them, that whoever killed a person accidentally might flee there, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood until he stood before the congregation.

### *Cities of the Levites*

**21** Then the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the Levites came near to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the tribes of the children of Israel. <sup>2</sup>And they spoke to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, “The LORD commanded through Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with their common-lands for our livestock.” <sup>3</sup>So the children of Israel gave to the Levites from their inheritance, at the commandment of the LORD, these cities and their common-lands:

<sup>4</sup>Now the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites. And the children of Aaron the priest, *who were* of the Levites, had thirteen cities by lot from the tribe of Judah, from the tribe of Simeon, and from the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>5</sup>The rest of the children of Kohath had ten cities by lot from the families of the tribe of Ephraim, from the tribe of Dan, and from the half-tribe of Manasseh.

<sup>6</sup>And the children of Gershon had thirteen cities by lot from the families of the tribe of Issachar, from the tribe of Asher, from the tribe of Naphtali, and from the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan.

<sup>7</sup>The children of Merari according to their families had twelve cities from the tribe of Reuben, from the tribe of Gad, and from the tribe of Zebulun.

<sup>8</sup>And the children of Israel gave these cities with their common-lands by lot to the

**20:1–9** Cities of refuge were established to provide asylum for an individual who accidentally killed another (Ex. 21:12, 13; Num. 35:6–34). A distinction was to be made between willful murder and accidental killing or manslaughter (Num. 35:6–34; Deut. 19:1–13). The practice of blood revenge (often leading to

long-lasting feuds) was customary in OT times.

**21:1–42** The 48 cities of the Levites were scattered among all the territories because a major part of the role of the priests was to teach all the people God's Law (see Josh. 13:14, note).

DIVIDING THE LAND



Levites, as the LORD had commanded by the hand of Moses.

<sup>9</sup>So they gave from the tribe of the children of Judah and from the tribe of the children of Simeon these cities which are designated by name, <sup>10</sup>which were for the children of Aaron, one of the families of the Kohathites, *who were* of the children of Levi; for the lot was theirs first. <sup>11</sup>And they gave them Kirjath Arba (*Arba was the father of Anak*), which *is* Hebron, in the mountains of Judah, with the common-land surrounding it. <sup>12</sup>But the fields of the city and its villages they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as his possession.

<sup>13</sup>Thus to the children of Aaron the priest they gave Hebron with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), Libnah with its common-land, <sup>14</sup>Jattir with its common-land, Eshtemoa with its common-land, <sup>15</sup>Holon with its common-land, Debir with its common-land, <sup>16</sup>Ain with its common-land, Juttah with its common-land, and Beth Shemesh with its common-land: nine cities from those two tribes; <sup>17</sup>and from the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with its common-land, Geba with its common-land, <sup>18</sup>Anathoth with its common-land, and Almon with its common-land: four cities. <sup>19</sup>All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, *were* thirteen cities with their common-lands.

<sup>20</sup>And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites, the rest of the children of Kohath, even they had the cities of their lot from the tribe of Ephraim. <sup>21</sup>For they gave them Shechem with its common-land in the mountains of Ephraim (a city of refuge for the slayer), Gezer with its common-land, <sup>22</sup>Kibzaim with its common-land, and Beth Horon with its common-land: four cities; <sup>23</sup>and from the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with its common-land, Gibbethon with its common-land, <sup>24</sup>Aijalon with its common-land, *and* Gath Rimmon with its common-land: four cities; <sup>25</sup>and from the half-tribe of Manasseh, Tanach with its common-land and Gath Rimmon with its common-land: two cities. <sup>26</sup>All the ten cities with their common-lands were for the rest of the families of the children of Kohath.

<sup>27</sup>Also to the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, from the *other* half-tribe of Manasseh, *they gave* Golan in Bashan with its common-land (a city of ref-

uge for the slayer), and Be Eshterah with its common-land: two cities; <sup>28</sup>and from the tribe of Issachar, Kishion with its common-land, Daberath with its common-land, <sup>29</sup>Jarmuth with its common-land, *and* En Gannim with its common-land: four cities; <sup>30</sup>and from the tribe of Asher, Mishal with its common-land, Abdon with its common-land, <sup>31</sup>Helkath with its common-land, and Rehob with its common-land: four cities; <sup>32</sup>and from the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), Hammoth Dor with its common-land, and Kartan with its common-land: three cities. <sup>33</sup>All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families *were* thirteen cities with their common-lands.

<sup>34</sup>And to the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites, from the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with its common-land, Kartah with its common-land, <sup>35</sup>Dimnah with its common-land, *and* Nahalal with its common-land: four cities; <sup>36</sup>and from the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with its common-land, Jahaz with its common-land, <sup>37</sup>Kedemoth with its common-land, and Mephaath with its common-land: four cities;<sup>a</sup> <sup>38</sup>and from the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), Mahanaim with its common-land, <sup>39</sup>Heshbon with its common-land, *and* Jazer with its common-land: four cities in all. <sup>40</sup>So all the cities for the children of Merari according to their families, the rest of the families of the Levites, were *by* their lot twelve cities.

<sup>41</sup>All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel *were* forty-eight cities with their common-lands. <sup>42</sup>Every one of these cities had its common-land surrounding it; thus *were* all these cities.

### *The Promise Fulfilled*

<sup>43</sup>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. <sup>44</sup>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

<sup>21:37</sup> <sup>a</sup> Following Septuagint and Vulgate (compare 1 Chronicles 6:78, 79); Masoretic Text, Bomberg, and Targum omit verses 36 and 37.

their enemies into their hand. <sup>45</sup>Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.

### *Eastern Tribes Return to Their Lands*

**22** Then Joshua called the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, <sup>2</sup>and said to them: “You have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you. <sup>3</sup>You have not left your brethren these many days, up to this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God. <sup>4</sup>And now the LORD your God has given rest to your brethren, as He promised them; now therefore, return and go to your tents *and* to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side of the Jordan. <sup>5</sup>But take careful heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to hold fast to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.” <sup>6</sup>So Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their tents.

<sup>7</sup>Now to half the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given a possession in Bashan, but to the *other* half of it Joshua gave a possession among their brethren on this side of the Jordan, westward. And indeed, when Joshua sent them away to their tents, he blessed them, <sup>8</sup>and spoke to them, saying, “Return with much riches to your tents, with very much livestock, with silver, with gold, with bronze, with iron, and with very much clothing. Divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren.”

<sup>9</sup>So the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel at Shiloh, which *is* in the land of Canaan, to go to the country of Gilead, to the

land of their possession, which they had obtained according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

### *An Altar by the Jordan*

<sup>10</sup>And when they came to the region of the Jordan which *is* in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh built an altar there by the Jordan—a great, impressive altar. <sup>11</sup>Now the children of Israel heard *some* say, “Behold, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh have built an altar on the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region of the Jordan—on the children of Israel’s side.” <sup>12</sup>And when the children of Israel heard *of it*, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go to war against them.

<sup>13</sup>Then the children of Israel sent Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest to the children of Reuben, to the children of Gad, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, <sup>14</sup>and with him ten rulers, one ruler each from the chief house of every tribe of Israel; and each one *was* the head of the house of his father among the divisions<sup>a</sup> of Israel. <sup>15</sup>Then they came to the children of Reuben, to the children of Gad, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, to the land of Gilead, and they spoke with them, saying, <sup>16</sup>“Thus says the whole congregation of the LORD: ‘What treachery *is* this that you have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in that you have built for yourselves an altar, that you might rebel this day against the LORD? <sup>17</sup>Is the iniquity of Peor not enough for us, from which we are not cleansed till this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD, <sup>18</sup>but that you must turn away this day from following the LORD? And it shall be, if you rebel today against the LORD, that tomorrow He will be angry with

22:14 <sup>a</sup> Literally *thousands*

**22:10–34** The move to Shiloh for the two and a half eastern tribes made immediate access to the tabernacle of meeting impossible (see Josh. 18:1, note). The Jordan River divided them from the rest of Israel (Josh. 22:25). To avoid becoming a separated people, they built an altar before God as a “witness” to their unity with the tribes on the western side of the river (v. 34). This action was misinterpreted by those on the western

side. Thinking the group had already regressed into worshipping other gods, they feared God’s judgment would come upon all of them again as it had when they sinned at Peor by falling into Baal worship (v. 17). Their zeal might have meant disaster if they had not followed God’s plan for dealing with conflict or misunderstanding. Their action was postponed until the facts were clear (see Deut. 13:13–15).

the whole congregation of Israel. <sup>19</sup>Nevertheless, if the land of your possession is unclean, *then* cross over to the land of the possession of the LORD, where the LORD's tabernacle stands, and take possession among us; but do not rebel against the LORD, nor rebel against us, by building yourselves an altar besides the altar of the LORD our God. <sup>20</sup>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 did not perish alone in his iniquity?"

<sup>21</sup>Then the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh answered and said to the heads of the divisions<sup>a</sup> of Israel: <sup>22</sup>"The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods, He knows, and let Israel itself know—if *it* is in rebellion, or if in treachery against the LORD, do not save us this day. <sup>23</sup>If we have built ourselves an altar to turn from following the LORD, or if to offer on it burnt offerings or grain offerings, or if to offer peace offerings on it, let the LORD Himself require *an account*. <sup>24</sup>But in fact we have done it for fear, for a reason, saying, 'In time to come your descendants may speak to our descendants, saying, "What have you to do with the LORD God of Israel?" <sup>25</sup>For the LORD has made the Jordan a border between you and us, *you* children of Reuben and children of Gad. You have no part in the LORD." So your descendants would make our descendants cease fearing the LORD.' <sup>26</sup>Therefore we said, 'Let us now prepare to build ourselves an altar, not for burnt offering nor for sacrifice, <sup>27</sup>but *that it may be* a witness between you and us and our generations after us, that we may perform the service of the LORD before Him with our burnt offerings, with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your descendants may not say to our descendants in time to come, "You have no part in the LORD.'" <sup>28</sup>Therefore we said that it will be, when they say *this* to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say, '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.' <sup>29</sup>Far be it from us that we should rebel against the LORD, and turn from following the LORD this day, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for grain offerings, or for sacrifices, besides the altar of the LORD our God which is before His tabernacle."

<sup>30</sup>Now when Phinehas the priest and the rulers of the congregation, the heads of the divisions<sup>a</sup> of Israel who *were* with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh spoke, it pleased them. <sup>31</sup>Then Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said to the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh, "This day we perceive that the LORD is among us, because you have not committed this treachery against the LORD. Now you have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD."

<sup>32</sup>And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the rulers, returned from the children of Reuben and the children of Gad, from the land of Gilead to the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought back word to them. <sup>33</sup>So the thing pleased the children of Israel, and the children of Israel blessed God; they spoke no more of going against them in battle, to destroy the land where the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt.

<sup>34</sup>The children of Reuben and the children of Gad<sup>a</sup> called the altar, *Witness*, "For *it is* a witness between us that the LORD is God."

### *Joshua's Farewell Address*

**23** Now it came to pass, a long time after the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, advanced in age. <sup>2</sup>And Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers, and said to them:

"I am old, advanced in age. <sup>3</sup>You have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the

<sup>22:21</sup> <sup>a</sup> Literally *thousands*    <sup>22:30</sup> <sup>a</sup> Literally *thousands*  
<sup>22:34</sup> <sup>a</sup> Septuagint adds *and half the tribe of Manasseh*.

**23:2** The farewell addresses of Joshua are recorded (Josh. 23; 24). Chapter 23 may have been addressed to the leaders (v. 2), while chapter 24 was addressed to all the people (Josh. 23:2).

**23:3** The secret of Joshua's success was his acknowledgment of the Lord as the great Defender of Israel. He pointed out an important principle: Faith in the Lord is rooted in historical realities. The NT teaches the same principle (John 20:30, 31).

LORD your God is He who has fought for you. <sup>4</sup>See, I have divided to you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from the Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, as far as the Great Sea westward. <sup>5</sup>And the LORD your God will expel them from before you and drive them out of your sight. So you shall possess their land, as the LORD your God promised you. <sup>6</sup>Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, <sup>7</sup>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 *any*one to swear *by them*; you shall not serve them nor bow down to them, <sup>8</sup>but you shall hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day. <sup>9</sup>For the LORD has driven out from before you great and strong nations; but *as for* you, no one has been able to stand against you to this day. <sup>10</sup>One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the LORD your God is He who fights for you, as He promised you. <sup>11</sup>Therefore take careful heed to yourselves, that you love the LORD your God. <sup>12</sup>Or else, if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations—these that remain among you—and make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you, <sup>13</sup>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.

<sup>14</sup>“Behold, this day I *am* going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed. <sup>15</sup>Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all the good things have come upon you which the LORD your God promised you, so the LORD will bring upon you all harmful things, until He has destroyed you from this good land which the LORD your God has given you. <sup>16</sup>When you have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed down to them, then the anger of the LORD will burn against you, and you shall perish quickly from the good land which He has given you.”

### *The Covenant at Shechem*

**24** Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and called for the elders of Israel, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God. <sup>2</sup>And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘Your fathers, *including* Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River<sup>a</sup> in old times; and they served other gods. <sup>3</sup>Then I took your father Abraham from the other

<sup>24:2</sup> <sup>a</sup> Hebrew *Nahar*, the Euphrates, and so in verses 3, 14, and 15

**23:6** The command to demonstrate courage in obedience has not lost its importance (Josh. 1:6, 7, 9, 18). It would require as much courage for the Israelites to stay true to the Lord in peace as it did for them to march for the Lord in war. Joshua gave the people, almost verbatim, the same instructions the Lord gave him (Josh. 1:7).

**23:8** Joshua’s personal commitment to the Lord is described by the words “hold fast” (Heb. *davaq*). The same Hebrew word appears in Genesis 2:24 where a man is instructed to leave his father and mother and to “be joined to” or “cling” to his wife in the most binding, intimate human relationship. It also describes a uniquely close relationship with the Lord (Deut. 4:4; 10:20; 11:22; 13:4).

**23:14, 15** God’s faithfulness is the constant theme in Joshua (Josh. 1:3; 2:24; 3:10; 10:42; 11:8; 21:43–45). Israel had seen God’s faithfulness in keeping His promises; they needed to be reminded that He is also faithful in His judgment against sin.

**23:16** The word covenant does not occur often in the Book of Joshua, but the idea of covenant is at the heart of all that

Joshua and the Israelites experienced. Marks of the covenant are clearly recognized: the ark (Josh. 3:8–17), circumcision (Josh. 5:2–7), the Passover (Josh. 5:10), the altar, the rereading of the Law of Moses with the blessings and curses (Josh. 8:30–35), and a recitation of the Lord’s faithfulness (Josh. 24:2–13).

**24:1** At Shechem, located in the hill country of Ephraim, Joshua presented covenant renewal. Joshua’s first message, in abbreviated form, was to the two and a half tribes who were returning to their land on the east side of Jordan (Josh. 22:1–5). The second was possibly to a group of the nation’s leaders (Josh. 23). At Shechem, where God previously promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 12:6, 7), Joshua renewed the covenant for the last time (see Josh. 8:30–35).

**24:3** Joshua began with Abraham, whose decision to separate himself from the safety and community of his clan in Ur and to walk away from the religion of his fathers was a mighty act of faith. Throughout Scripture Abraham is presented as the prime example of faith (Acts 7:2–8; Rom. 4:1–4; Gal. 3:6, 7; Heb. 11:8–12, 17–19; James 2:23).

side of the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac. <sup>4</sup>To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau I gave the mountains of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt. <sup>5</sup>Also I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to what I did among them. Afterward I brought you out.

<sup>6</sup>Then I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea; and the Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. <sup>7</sup>So they cried out to the LORD; and He put darkness between you and the Egyptians, brought the sea upon them, and covered them. And your eyes saw what I did in Egypt. Then you dwelt in the wilderness a long time. <sup>8</sup>And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, who dwelt on the other side of the Jordan, and they fought with you. But I gave them into your hand, that you might possess their land, and I destroyed them from before you. <sup>9</sup>Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose to make war against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you. <sup>10</sup>But I would not listen to Balaam; therefore he continued to bless you. So I delivered you out of his hand. <sup>11</sup>Then you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho. And the men of Jericho fought against you—*also* the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. But I delivered them into your hand. <sup>12</sup>I sent the hornet before you which drove them out from before you, *also* the two kings of the Amorites, *but* not with your sword or with your bow. <sup>13</sup>I have given you a land for which you did not labor, and cities which you did not build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.

<sup>14</sup>Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve

Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! <sup>15</sup>And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

<sup>16</sup>So the people answered and said: “Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; <sup>17</sup>for the LORD our God *is* He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed. <sup>18</sup>And the LORD drove out from before us all the people, including the Amorites who dwelt in the land. We also will serve the LORD, for He *is* our God.”

<sup>19</sup>But Joshua said to the people, “You cannot serve the LORD, for He *is* a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. <sup>20</sup>If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you, after He has done you good.”

<sup>21</sup>And the people said to Joshua, “No, but we will serve the LORD!”

<sup>22</sup>So Joshua said to the people, “You *are* witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD for yourselves, to serve Him.”

And they said, “*We are* witnesses!”

<sup>23</sup>“Now therefore,” *he said*, “put away the foreign gods which *are* among you, and incline your heart to the LORD God of Israel.”

<sup>24</sup>And the people said to Joshua, “The LORD our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!”

<sup>25</sup>So Joshua made a covenant with the

**24:6, 7** The safe passage through the Red Sea often is used by God as a reference pointing to His faithfulness and power (Deut. 11:4; Josh. 2:10; 4:23; Neh. 9:9–11; Ps. 106:8–11, 22; 136:13–15; Is. 51:10; Acts 7:36; Heb. 11:29).

**24:15** God’s faithfulness is a constant theme in Joshua (see Josh. 23:14, 15, note). The question is: Will His people respond faithfully in return? Joshua presented only two choices: Serve the Lord God or serve foreign gods. They could not serve both (see Josh. 24:19, 20, note). Such a challenge might seem more appropriate at the beginning of the book rather than at the end because at this stage the people had won the wars, ob-

tained their land, and begun settling it. But Joshua understood that the challenge of choice—faithfulness and obedience, or unfaithfulness and disobedience—would be continually faced in the daily routines of life. He called the people to declare their loyalty and allegiance to God.

**24:19, 20** The Lord stands alone. Other religions cannot be incorporated with devotion to the Lord. The first commandment makes this clear (Ex. 20:3). Apostasy seldom starts with an outright denial of the Lord, but rather with small compromises of His teachings. God will not tolerate unfaithfulness and idolatry.

people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.

<sup>26</sup>Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone, and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. <sup>27</sup>And Joshua said to all the people, “Behold, this stone shall be a witness to us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD which He spoke to us. It shall therefore be a witness to you, lest you deny your God.” <sup>28</sup>So Joshua let the people depart, each to his own inheritance.

### *Death of Joshua and Eleazar*

<sup>29</sup>Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* one hundred and ten years old. <sup>30</sup>And they buried him within the

border of his inheritance at Timnath Serah, which is in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash.

<sup>31</sup>Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.

<sup>32</sup>The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt, they buried at Shechem, in the plot of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of silver, and which had become an inheritance of the children of Joseph.

<sup>33</sup>And Eleazar the son of Aaron died. They buried him in a hill *belonging to* Phinehas his son, which was given to him in the mountains of Ephraim.

**24:31** The testimony to the effectiveness of Joshua's leadership is that not only he but also those he trained were faithful to the Lord (Josh. 11:15; 24:15; see chart, Preparation for Leadership).

**24:32** The bones of Joseph were to be buried in the land which God had promised to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the land in which the Israelites now lived (Gen. 50:24,

25). Following Joseph's instructions symbolized the completion of this stage of Israel's national life and testified to God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

**24:33** The death of a servant of God begins and ends this book (Josh. 1:1; 24:29–33). However, God's work continues, and His faithfulness to His children never ends.



# Ruth

## AUTHOR

The author is not identified in the text. Samuel is suggested by the Talmud and Jewish tradition because of the similarity of language within the books of Ruth, Judges, and Samuel. Hezekiah and David also have been suggested as possible authors. However, the textual evidence does not confirm any of these theories.

## DATE

According to the text, the story is set during the period of the judges, probably the latter part of that era (Ruth 1:1; 4:18–22), but the date of authorship is generally understood to be during the reign of David (1010–970 B.C.). The book must not have been completed before the time of David (Ruth 4:22); yet surely it was not completed after the time of Solomon, or Solomon would have been included.

## BACKGROUND

### *Setting*

The setting for Ruth begins and ends in the Judahite village of Bethlehem with a Moab sojourn in between. Moab was the pagan nation that began with the incestuous relationship between Lot and his elder daughter (Gen. 19:36, 37). The Moabites, as perpetual enemies of Israel, were the recipients of consistent pronouncements of judgment from the prophets (see Is. 15:1–9).

### *Purpose*

With its sad beginning and happy ending, the Book of Ruth portrays the village life of a family faithfully honoring *Yahweh* and pictures divine providence even in the midst of adversities and sorrows. God uses simple people and ordinary events to accomplish His great purposes.

### *Audience*

The Book of Ruth is a primer on family relationships with a message for all. However, women must have been especially interested in this narrative in which the virtues of womanhood are abundantly clear. Also, those interested in history must have found the account of David's genealogy helpful. The book makes clear David's faithful ancestry, though he was also of Moabite descent.



### *Literary Characteristics*

The author uses chiasmatic structure, a device which consists of repeating a series of elements in reverse order through the restating or paralleling of words, ideas, actions, or characters that meet in the center. Especially common in the Old Testament, this device organizes extensive narratives like the Book of Ruth, in which the turning point is found at the end of chapter 2. Note this expression of chiasmatic structure:

- 1:1–5      The Family of Elimelech
- 1:6–22    The Faithfulness of Ruth
- 2:1–23    The Kinsman-Redeemer in the Barley Field
- 3:1–18    The Kinsman-Redeemer at the Threshing Floor
- 4:1–17    The Faithfulness of Boaz
- 4:18–22   The Family of David

### THEMES

Some distinct themes appear in the Book of Ruth:

*Divine Providence*—God’s undergirding hand is seen and felt throughout the book. God brought comfort to Naomi in her greatest hurt, following the deaths of her husband and sons, through Ruth’s tender and loving care (Ruth 1:16, 17). God provided sustenance in the days of poverty for Ruth and Naomi, through the generous “close relative” Boaz, who became the kinsman-redeemer (Ruth 2:7, 8; 4:10). God replaced Naomi’s root of bitterness with a fountain of joy, through the birth of her grandson Obed (Ruth 4:15, 16). God used the brokenness of two women who, though seeming to lose all, found the highest honor in becoming part of the ancestry of the Messiah (Ruth 4:17; see also Matt. 1:3–6; Luke 3:31–33).

*Commitment in Relationships*—The Book of Ruth clearly establishes commitment as the key to all interpersonal relationships (see Ruth 1; Matt. 16, Commitment). The following elements of commitment are clearly illustrated in Ruth herself (Ruth 1:16, 17): a willingness to give up home and family; a determination to follow the living God; an acceptance of different people, a strange land, and a new faith; an awareness of the exclusiveness of a new faith; a testimony to the permanency of her pledge; and a consistent example of perseverance even in the midst of adversities. Ruth’s commitment was tested repeatedly, beginning with the departure from her birth family, her native land, and her secure environment, and continuing as she experienced the opportunities and trials of a new life and faith. The routine cycles of life—up and down, good and bad, hope and despair (see chart, The Cycle of Life)—typically challenge all commitments.

*Friendship Between Women*—The remarkable friendship between Ruth and Naomi—women from diverse backgrounds (one a Gentile and the other a Hebrew) and different generations (one young and in the prime of life and the other old and beyond childbearing age)—illustrates the unique joys found in the caring relationships women have with one another as their lives and hearts are knit together in mutual affection and reciprocal commitment (see Luke 1, Friendship). They are carried



through difficult times not only by God's providential care but also by their extraordinary devotion to one another and creative initiative to care for one another.

*Romantic Love*—This book also describes the growing relationship between a man and a woman, as the romance of Ruth and Boaz unfolds in a charming way (see Song 2, Romance). Gentile and Hebrew are ultimately united in marriage to become a link in the chain of redemption.

*Redemption and Reconciliation*—The Moabitess Ruth experienced spiritual reconciliation as she was drawn into the family of God. She chose the godly Hebrew family; then God adopted Ruth into His family. As Ruth remained committed even in the midst of sorrow and poverty, God in His providence rewarded her with the security of a husband's protective care, the joy of a mother's nurturing task, and the legacy of her own place in the ancestry of Messiah.

## OUTLINE

- I. Elimelech and Naomi Left the Land and Lost Divine Protection (1:1–22)**
  - A. The family experienced tragedy (1:1–5)**
  - B. Ruth modeled faithfulness (1:6–22)**
- II. The Widowed Naomi Returned to the Land and Sought Divine Protection (2:1—3:18)**
  - A. Ruth met the kinsman-redeemer (2:1–23)**
  - B. The kinsman-redeemer provided security for Ruth and Naomi (3:1–18)**
- III. Boaz and Ruth Obeyed God and Received a Place in the Ancestry of the Messiah (4:1–22)**
  - A. Boaz exemplified faithfulness (4:1–17)**
  - B. The family of David received blessing (4:18–22)**

### *Elimelech's Family Goes to Moab*

**1** Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. <sup>2</sup>The name of the man was Elimelech, the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there. <sup>3</sup>Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. <sup>4</sup>Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of

the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years. <sup>5</sup>Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.

### *Naomi Returns with Ruth*

<sup>6</sup>Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had visited His people by giving them bread. <sup>7</sup>Therefore she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on

#### THE BOOK OF RUTH

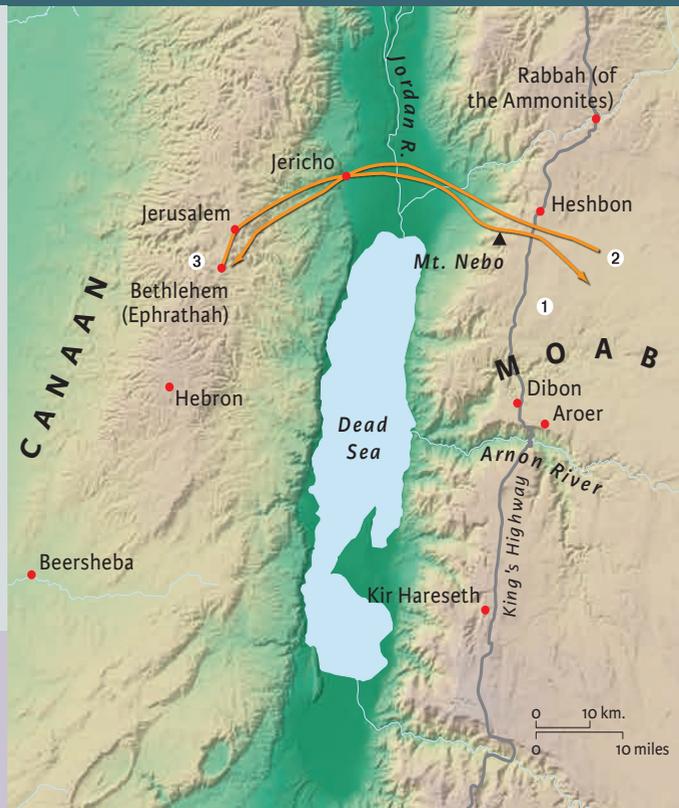
Set in the dark and bloody days of the judges, the story of Ruth is silent about the underlying hostility and suspicion the two peoples—Judahites and Moabites—felt for each other. The original onslaught of the invading Israelite tribes against towns that were once Moabite had never been forgotten or forgiven, while the Hebrew prophets denounced Moab's pride and arrogance for trying to bewitch, seduce, and oppress Israel from the time of Balaam on. The Mesha Stele (c. 830 B.C.) boasts of the massacre of entire Israelite towns.

Moab encompassed the expansive, grain-rich plateau between the Dead Sea and the eastern desert on both sides of the enormous rift of the Arnon River gorge. Much of eastern Moab was steppe land—semi-arid wastes not profitable for cultivation, but excellent for grazing flocks of sheep and goats. The tribute Moab paid to Israel in the days of Ahab was 100,000 lambs and the wool of 100,000 rams.

**1** Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah widowed (Ruth 1:3, 5)

**2** Probable route of Naomi and Ruth (Ruth 1:19)

**3** Naomi and Ruth resettled (Ruth 1:22)

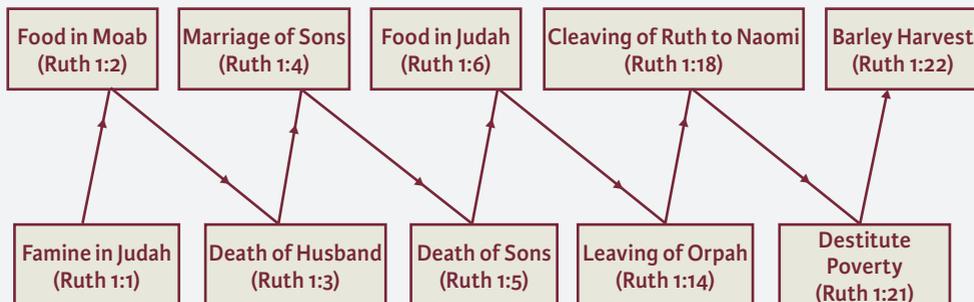


**1:1** The text gives no evidence that God directed Elimelech (Heb. lit. “my God is king”) to leave Bethlehem (contrast Abraham’s exodus from his homeland, Gen. 12:1). Fertility of soil and abundance in harvest have never been ultimate security against famine. Neither is changing location necessarily God’s way of dealing with a crisis (see Rom. 8:37–39). Elimelech’s departure from Bethlehem (Heb. lit. “house of bread”) did not keep him and his two sons from dying in a foreign land, leaving

his wife Naomi perhaps more destitute and isolated than if she had remained among friends and relatives.

**1:5** The plight of a widow in biblical days was especially precarious. Young widows were allowed lodging in their father’s home (Gen. 38:11; see also 2 Kin. 4; Ps. 68; Jer. 29, Widowhood), but an older widow whose parents were dead was dependent upon her children for support. Seemingly, God had snatched away her family’s usefulness and productivity.

## The Cycle of Life



## A Comparison Between Ruth and the "Virtuous Woman"

DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE IN RUTH	REFERENCE IN PROVERBS
Her family commitment is noted by others	2:11, 12	31:11, 12
She provided sustenance for her household	2:14, 18	31:15
Her selfless lifestyle drew praise from others	2:11; 3:10; 4:15	31:28
She committed herself to Yahweh as God	1:16	31:30

the way to return to the land of Judah. <sup>8</sup>And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each to her mother's house. The LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. <sup>9</sup>The LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband."

So she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. <sup>10</sup>And they said to her, "Surely we will return with you to your people."

<sup>11</sup>But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? <sup>12</sup>Turn back, my daughters, go—for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons, <sup>13</sup>would you wait for them till they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands? No, my daughters; for it grieves

**1:8** God's dealings with His children are described theologically as "kindly" (Heb. *chesed*; see Ex. 20:5, 6, note; 34:5–7; Ruth 3:10). No ingredient is more essential in an intimate relationship because such an attitude precludes bitterness, retaliation, negative criticism, or other destructive behavior. *Chesed* is love joined to loyalty and integrated with mutual commitment (see Jer. 31:3); it is action and feeling combined. What is received is returned. The mixture of divine will and human activity joins the warmth of God's fellowship with the security of His faithfulness.

**1:9** Rest is more than the cessation of work and the absence of anxiety. Certainly this "rest" implied much more than a marriage ceremony, and included security, provision, and blessing (see Josh. 21:44). The same word is translated "security" in Ruth 3:1.

**1:13** For anyone who accepts full sovereignty of a just and merciful God, the existence of evil by divine permission (theodicy) is a natural dilemma. Naomi implied an indictment of unfaithfulness against God, whose relationship to His people had always been based squarely upon the presupposition of

## COMMITMENT

## THE BEDROCK OF A RELATIONSHIP

Commitment is the foundation for every relationship, whether earthly or heavenly. The Book of Ruth brings the heavenly concept of covenant into vital contact with earthly life. Ruth's statement of commitment (Ruth 1:16, 17) concerned events, situations, and relationships that would permanently bind the two women. She willingly accepted an unsettled future and bound herself by solemn oath not only to Naomi but also to the God of Israel. Only here did Ruth use the covenant name *Yahweh* instead of the impersonal Elohim, though Naomi, Boaz, and others used *Yahweh* frequently for blessing or complaint. Ruth officially joined the people whose God was *Yahweh*. He had become her God as well as Naomi's and was the present witness to and future judge of all subsequent activities. A commitment described by permanent bonding of hearts and pervasive linking of lives extends beyond a passing companionship.

Ruth "clung" to Naomi (Ruth 1:14; see 2:8, 21, where the same word is translated "stayed close"). This covenant language is also used to describe the intimate relationship between husband and wife (Gen. 2:24) and to picture the faithfulness of God to His covenant people (Deut. 10:20). The word describes friendship more binding than brotherhood.

A foundation of purposeful love and the outworking of devoted deeds set Ruth's commitment apart from verbal clichés and the whim of momentary emotions. Abram left home after being commanded to do so (Gen. 12:1); Ruth left her pagan homeland on her own initiative, despite the protest of her mother-in-law, in order to come under the "wings" of God (Ruth 2:12). Ruth offered herself first to Naomi and ultimately to God.

*See also note on Commitment (Matt. 16)*

me very much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me!"

<sup>14</sup>Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

<sup>15</sup>And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law."

<sup>16</sup>But Ruth said:

"Entreat me not to leave you,  
Or to turn back from following after you;  
For wherever you go, I will go;  
And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;  
Your people *shall be* my people,  
And your God, my God.

<sup>17</sup> Where you die, I will die,  
And there will I be buried.  
The LORD do so to me, and more also,  
If *anything but* death parts you and me."

<sup>18</sup>When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.

<sup>19</sup>Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem. And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was excited because of them; and the women said, "Is this Naomi?"

<sup>20</sup>But she said to them, "Do not call me Naomi;<sup>a</sup> call me Mara,<sup>b</sup> for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. <sup>21</sup>I went out full,

1:20 <sup>a</sup> Literally *Pleasant* <sup>b</sup> Literally *Bitter*

His faithfulness. Naomi determined, because of her personal losses, that God had turned away from her, and she decided to reciprocate by turning away from Him. She asked to be called "Mara" (Heb. lit. "bitter"; see v. 20). Nevertheless, a glimmer of hope existed for Naomi because she, by her reference to the Lord (Heb. *Yahweh*), placed these tragic experiences of losing her husband, sons, and earthly belongings in the setting of the covenant promise. This use of the Lord's personal covenant name reminded Naomi and her daughters-in-law of God's ultimate faithfulness.

**1:20, 21** The Almighty has dealt bitterly with me. What a natural reaction to blame God for any misfortune (see Heb. 12, Bitterness). Naomi was conscious of her own wrongdoing and viewed her suffering as God's punishment for her own sins (see Ruth 1:13, 20, 21). On the other hand, God views affliction as a necessary part of His sovereign and loving purpose (Eccl. 7:14; 2 Cor. 12:7–10; see also Is. 42; 1 Pet. 4, Suffering). A believer going through the fire can produce a beautiful and pleasant aroma to the Lord (Num. 29:6; 2 Cor. 2:15).

In contrast to the verse 1 reference to the devastation of

## Orpah: THE DAUGHTER-IN-LAW WITH A WAVERING FAITH

Orpah is a name with root meanings as diverse as “fawn or young doe,” “double-minded,” or even “nape of the neck”—suggesting the meaning of “stubborn” or “stiff-necked.” She wavered in her commitment to Naomi and chose to return to her life in Moab instead of clinging to *Yahweh* (Ruth 1:4–14; 4:9, 10).

Orpah was not a bad woman and, in fact, showed deep affection for the mother of her deceased husband Chilion. However, although Orpah loved and respected her mother-in-law Naomi, she did not have the depth of loyalty and spirit of selflessness for a permanent lifestyle commitment to Naomi and the God of Israel.

Naomi’s persuasive words painted a vivid picture of the uncertainties to come, and Orpah seemingly turned her thoughts to her own devices for happiness. With her return to Moab, she vanished from the pages of biblical history.

See also chart on *In-Law or In-Love* (Ruth 4)

and the LORD has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?”

<sup>22</sup>So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

### *Ruth Meets Boaz*

**2** There was a relative of Naomi’s husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name *was* Boaz. <sup>2</sup>So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, “Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after *him* in whose sight I may find favor.”

And she said to her, “Go, my daughter.”

<sup>3</sup>Then she left, and went and gleaned in

the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field *belonging* to Boaz, who *was* of the family of Elimelech.

<sup>4</sup>Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, “The LORD *be* with you!”

And they answered him, “The LORD bless you!”

<sup>5</sup>Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, “Whose young woman is this?”

<sup>6</sup>So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, “It is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. <sup>7</sup>And she said, ‘Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.’ So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house.”

famine, Naomi testified, “I went out full,” realizing that her husband and sons were worth far more than land and wealth (a restoration of her own sense of values). She had been genuinely blessed in Bethlehem, even in the midst of famine and poverty. Naomi chose to assign the blame for her tragedies to the Lord. Contrasting her own weakness, she referred to His power by calling Him Shaddai (Heb.), here translated “Almighty” and understood by some to mean “all-sufficiency.” God must be trusted “for better or worse” (see Prov. 24:10).

**2:1** Boaz was rich and influential (v. 1), a landowner (v. 3), a kind and considerate employer (v. 4), a gentleman who showed respect and courtesy to Ruth and others (vv. 8, 9), a sensitive leader who complimented Ruth with genuine praise (v. 12), a generous benefactor (v. 14; Ruth 3:15), a spiritual leader (Ruth 2:12), a man who chose to be a channel for happiness (vv. 15, 16), and a man of high moral character (Ruth 3:7–13; see also Gen. 2, Masculinity and Godly Manhood).

**2:3** The bringing together of Ruth and Boaz cannot be attributed to chance, especially when God begins with provision of food in famine (Ruth 1:6) and ends with the gift of a child to an empty womb (Ruth 4:13). Chance (“happened”) simply means that no human intent was involved; the fact that Ruth chose the field of her close relative in which to glean was unplanned and unforeseen on her part.

**2:7** The ancient custom of gleaning as codified in the Law gave the widow, or even a resident alien, the right to gather grain anywhere she pleased (Lev. 19:9; 23:22; Deut. 24:19). In OT Law, a landowner was instructed not to reap completely the corners of his fields, leaving the gleanings for the strangers and the poor. God’s welfare plan has always made provision for the poor (Lev. 19:9, 10; 23:22; see Luke 9, the Homeless; 14, Poverty), but the needy, as they were able, also willingly worked for what they received (2 Thess. 3:10). This generous provision in the Law is understood to be an act of

## Naomi: A WISE MOTHER-IN-LAW

During the period of the judges, approximately 1200 B.C., a famine in the region of Bethlehem caused Elimelech to take his wife Naomi and their two sons to the green fields of Moab east of the Dead Sea. Shortly after arriving, however, Elimelech died, and Naomi was left as an alien to work in a nation that practiced polygamy and idol worship.

In time, her two sons chose wives, Ruth and Orpah, before whom Naomi continued to live a pious life of dedication to *Yahweh*. As a widow and a single parent, she demonstrated inner strength; when both of her sons died, she faced her destitution with resoluteness, determined to return to her home in Israel. She believed that God had dealt harshly with her. Her life had been disappointing, but her faith was intact. Consequently, she insisted that her daughters-in-law return to their mothers' homes. Both of them resisted, but eventually Orpah, the widow of Chilion, returned. Ruth, however, vowed to accompany Naomi back to Jerusalem, renouncing her own family and religion. Naomi learned that even in the midst of greatest suffering and adversity, God is good and full of mercy.

Having returned to her homeland, Naomi wisely introduced Ruth to her new environment and coached her on proper behavior, masterminding Ruth's contacts with Boaz, a relative of Elimelech. Naomi models the way God works through a woman who moves forward, even in the midst of tragedy and trial, actively seizing every opportunity God provides rather than waiting passively for events to happen. In the providential care of God, eventually Boaz agreed to act as the *goel* (Heb.) or kinsman-redeemer provided in Jewish law, buying the estate of Naomi and taking Ruth as his wife. The blessing of God on their home produced a son, Obed, who became an ancestor of King David and of Jesus Christ.

Naomi had not always responded appropriately in her time of affliction. Though she acknowledged God's working in her life, she misjudged God, for example, when she said that she left Bethlehem full. Actually it had been the emptiness of famine that had driven her family away from their homeland. She continued her analogy by accusing God of bringing her back empty, and indeed she had lost her husband and sons, but in their place God had given her Ruth, a devoted daughter-in-law (Ruth 4:15). By focusing on the negative, Naomi became so bitter (Ruth 1:20) that she could not see the good and positive plans God was working.

And yet, throughout the Book of Ruth, we see Naomi grow into a woman of deep faith and wisdom. The result of her wisdom shines throughout Scripture.

See also chart on *In-Law or In-Love* (Ruth 4); notes on *Widowhood* (Ps. 68; Jer. 29)

<sup>8</sup>Then Boaz said to Ruth, "You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women. <sup>9</sup>Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn."

<sup>10</sup>So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you

should take notice of me, since I *am* a foreigner?"

<sup>11</sup>And Boaz answered and said to her, "It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and *how* you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before. <sup>12</sup>The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge."

grace freely given and not a mandate for personal rights forcibly demanded. Those who receive are to accept whatever care God provides, including food and shelter, with humble spirit and grateful heart (Ruth 2:17–19; see Eph. 5:20). Those

who can share from abundance are to express spiritual concern, exemplifying the character of God that prompts such generosity to others (Ruth 2:11, 12; see Matt. 10:8; Luke 6:38).

## Ruth: A FAITHFUL MOABITNESS

Ruth, a Moabite, grew up on the high plateau south of the Arnon River, probably in a polygamous nation as a worshiper of the false god Chemosh.

A Hebrew family came from Bethlehem to Moab, and they were different. The mother, Naomi, was treated with respect by her husband Elimelech.

Ruth, who was asked to be the bride of Naomi's son Mahlon, was thus introduced into a close, mentoring relationship with this wise, stable woman whom she came to love and admire. Ruth and her sister-in-law Orpah bonded closely with Naomi. The three women clung together as they watched their husbands die.

Naomi had heard that the famine in Bethlehem was past, and she wanted to return home. She strongly urged her daughters-in-law to return to their respective homes to live in the women's quarters so that once again they would be eligible for marriage. Both young women wanted to stay with her, but after an emotional farewell, Orpah relented and returned to her home.

Ruth, however, steadfastly clung to Naomi. Her name is a contraction of the Hebrew *reuth*, from the root for "sight," meaning "something worth seeing," or possibly "friendship." Ruth understood that moving to Bethlehem meant total renunciation of her heritage and a lifetime of living as a foreigner. Her vow to Naomi stands as one of the most beautiful statements of commitment in history (Ruth 1:16, 17).

The arrival of the two women in Bethlehem marked the beginning of a new life for Ruth. She worked in the barley fields of Naomi's relative, Boaz, gleaning the edges left for the poor people. The stalks of grain were collected and threshed with a heavy wooden hand tool; then with a large fork the grain was lifted into the air to allow the wind to blow away the chaff. Many of the poor women flirted with the reapers and tried to steal grain, but Ruth soon gained a reputation for such honesty and integrity that the owner commended her.

Following the wise counsel of her mother-in-law, humble Ruth won the respect and eventually the love of Naomi's kinsman Boaz, who bought the estate of Naomi and took Ruth as his wife. In so doing he became a kinsman-redeemer (see Lev. 25:25).

Ruth lives in history as a model of womanhood, willing in joy and confidence to break with her past on the basis of God's revelation taught to her by a loving mother-in-law. God uses the faithfulness of ordinary women to accomplish His extraordinary plans: He provided bread for two widows through Ruth's gleaning; He provided security for the young widow Ruth through her marriage to Boaz; He provided posterity for Naomi through Obed, the son born to Ruth and Boaz; God provided a great king for Israel and even the Messiah through this Gentile woman.

See also Lev. 25:25; Is. 59:20; Matt. 1:5; note on Vows (Num. 30); chart on In-Law or In-Love (Ruth 4)

<sup>13</sup>Then she said, "Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken kindly to your maid-servant, though I am not like one of your maidservants."

<sup>14</sup>Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, "Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed parched grain to her; and she ate and was satisfied, and kept some back. <sup>15</sup>And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. <sup>16</sup>Also let grain from the bundles fall purposely for

her; leave it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her."

<sup>17</sup>So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. <sup>18</sup>Then she took it up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. So she brought out and gave to her what she had kept back after she had been satisfied.

<sup>19</sup>And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you."

So she told her mother-in-law with whom

## Ruth and Orpah: A Contrast in Women

RUTH	ORPAH
An intelligent love of choice	An emotional love of feeling
Quiet fidelity	Passionate affection
Love that bore testing	Love that failed in adversity
Genuine spiritual base for her conduct and decisions	Selfish basis for decision making
A resolute exercise of the will	An easy change of emotions

she had worked, and said, “The man’s name with whom I worked today is Boaz.”

<sup>20</sup>Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “Blessed *be* he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!” And Naomi said to her, “This man *is* a relation of ours, one of our close relatives.”

<sup>21</sup>Ruth the Moabite said, “He also said to me, ‘You shall stay close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.’”

<sup>22</sup>And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “*It is good*, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and that people do not meet you in any other field.” <sup>23</sup>So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.

### *Ruth’s Redemption Assured*

**3** Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you? <sup>2</sup>Now Boaz, whose young women you were

with, *is he* not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. <sup>3</sup>Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your *best* garment and go down to the threshing floor; *but* do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. <sup>4</sup>Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do.”

<sup>5</sup>And she said to her, “All that you say to me I will do.”

<sup>6</sup>So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her. <sup>7</sup>And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.

<sup>8</sup>Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. <sup>9</sup>And he said, “Who *are* you?”

**2:20** Two important Hebrew concepts were motivated by commitment to family and a determination to cooperate in continuing the family line: the function of the *go’el* (Heb. lit. “kinsman-redeemer” or “close relative”; see Ruth 3:1–18) and the practice of levirate marriage (see also Deut. 25:5–10). Only in the Book of Ruth are these two concepts linked. The “close relative” or “kinsman-redeemer” functioned in behalf of another person and his property within the family circle in times of crisis. These are his functions:

- 1) He redeems property by purchasing what has been lost and returning it to the one who was forced to sell (Lev. 25:25–28).
- 2) He redeems persons, that is, a relative who was forced to sell himself into slavery (Lev. 25:47–55).
- 3) He redeems blood; that is, he avenges the death of a relative who has been murdered (Num. 35:16–21, 31).

Because Boaz (Heb. lit. “in him is strength”) was a relative of Elimelech, he was eligible to be the *go’el* or “kinsman-redeemer” with the right and responsibility to redeem the forfeited inheritance of the family so that the property of the dead man remained within the family. This responsibility usually included care for the widow (see Deut. 25:5–10). Boaz functioned as Ruth’s “kinsman-redeemer” and in so doing prefigured Christ as the ultimate *go’el*. Three requirements of the *go’el* have been fulfilled in Christ: He must be related by blood (Phil. 2:5–8); He must be able to pay the price (1 Pet. 1:18, 19); and He must be willing to redeem (Matt. 20:28).

**3:3–9** Naomi’s daring plan. Love culminating in a desire for the highest good in the person loved, even to the point of self-sacrifice, is illustrated in Naomi. Sensing that Boaz and Ruth were already genuinely attracted to one another and understanding well the law of the “kinsman-redeemer,”

So she answered, “I *am* Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing,<sup>a</sup> for you are a close relative.”

<sup>10</sup>Then he said, “Blessed *are* you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. <sup>11</sup>And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you *are* a virtuous woman. <sup>12</sup>Now it is true that I *am* a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I. <sup>13</sup>Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be *that* if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you—good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, *as* the LORD lives! Lie down until morning.”

<sup>14</sup>So she lay at his feet until morning, and she arose before one could recognize another. Then he said, “Do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.” <sup>15</sup>Also he said, “Bring the shawl that *is* on you and hold it.” And when she held it, he measured six *ephahs* of barley, and laid *it* on her. Then she<sup>a</sup> went into the city.

<sup>16</sup>When she came to her mother-in-law, she said, “Is that you, my daughter?”

Then she told her all that the man had done for her. <sup>17</sup>And she said, “These six *ephahs* of barley he gave me; for he said to me, ‘Do not go empty-handed to your mother-in-law.’”

<sup>18</sup>Then she said, “Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day.”

### *Boaz Redeems Ruth*

**4** Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, “Come aside, friend,<sup>a</sup> sit down here.” So he came aside and sat down. <sup>2</sup>And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, “Sit down here.” So they sat down. <sup>3</sup>Then he said to the close relative, “Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which *belonged* to our brother Elimelech. <sup>4</sup>And I thought to inform you, saying, ‘Buy *it* back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem *it*, redeem *it*; but if you<sup>a</sup> will not redeem *it*, then tell me, that I may know; for *there is* no one but you to redeem *it*, and I *am* next after you.’”

And he said, “I will redeem *it*.”

<sup>5</sup>Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy *it* from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate<sup>a</sup> the name of the dead through his inheritance.”

<sup>6</sup>And the close relative said, “I cannot redeem *it* for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem *it*.”

<sup>7</sup>Now this *was the custom* in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: one man took off

3:9 <sup>a</sup> Or *Spread the corner of your garment over your maidservant* 3:15 <sup>a</sup> Many Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac, and Vulgate read *she*; Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Targum read *he*. 4:1 <sup>a</sup> Hebrew *peloni almoni*; literally *so and so* 4:4 <sup>a</sup> Following many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *he*. 4:5 <sup>a</sup> Literally *raise up*

Naomi devised a strategy based upon knowledge of levirate marriage (see Deut. 25:5–10). By this practice a widow became the wife of her husband’s brother or another close relative in order to produce a child who would inherit her first husband’s estate and preserve his name. Some scholars debate whether levirate marriage is fully applicable in the story of Ruth. In any case, the producing of a male child to continue the “name” of the deceased was at stake in Ruth. Ruth’s loyalty to the tradition of her husband’s people and her desire to care for Naomi by marrying someone within the family was a tribute to her commitment to the family of her deceased husband. Without any effort to trap Boaz or put him in a compromising situation, Ruth made a straightforward, yet delicate and beautiful, appeal to inspire Boaz to do the duty of a “close relative.” The “kinsman” duty was one performed, not for personal gain but as an act of pure love. The *go’el* was motivated to marry not by the force of law but by the influence of custom prompted by the intent expressed in Deuteronomy 25.

Ruth’s request, “Take your maidservant under your wing,”

is a metaphor suggesting her need for protection just as young birds would run under the wings of their mothers to escape birds of prey. *Yahweh’s* “wing” is Boaz’s “wing”! A Jewish husband covers his bride with the end of his prayer shawl (Heb. *talith*) as a symbolic gesture that she is under his protection (see Ezek. 16:8). Ruth’s humble request to Boaz is for his protection as a “close relative.” Any argument for sexual consummation goes beyond what the text states and runs counter to the characterization of Ruth and Boaz as a virtuous couple who would not have yielded to the temptation to consummate their relationship before the proper time. The risk to spoil God’s plan is certainly there. The Hebrew text uses words that are commonly used for sexual relationships (“lie down” and “uncover,” vv. 4, 7), implying that Ruth and Boaz had opportunity but rightly refused to disobey God’s Law. Compare and contrast Ruth, who did the honorable thing, with Tamar, who played the harlot (see Gen. 38, Tamar). Ruth trusted God; Tamar took matters into her own hands.

**4:7** The nearest kinsman could refuse to act as *go’el* (see Ruth

## GRANDPARENTHOOD

## A LIVE-IN GRANDMA

Naomi no doubt lived with Ruth and Boaz and had a close daily relationship with her grandson, Obed. Here are some Bible-based principles Naomi may very well have exemplified in her experiences as a “live-in grandma.”

Use your accumulated wealth of knowledge, time-tested insights, and experience to provide wise counsel when needed (Prov. 1:5). You may bridge the gap between parent and child (perhaps gently reminding a parent of her own behavior when a teenager), while being careful *never to undermine parental authority*. Be there, but do not meddle.

Do not complain (about aches and pains). Instead, praise God for your long life. You will be happier, and so will people around you (1 Thess. 5:18). You will also be modeling for your grandchild the concept that growing old can be an enjoyable experience.

Stay active and maintain interests outside the family (Col. 2:6, 7). Your needs and appointments are important, too. You can enjoy and minister to children and grandchildren without giving up usefulness in other areas of life.

Exemplify for your grandchildren that

- Forgiveness is the highest form of giving (Eph. 4:32);
- Right and wrong are defined by God’s Word (Prov. 14:12);
- Great joy can be experienced in living each day, rather than dwelling on the past or future (Neh. 8:10; Ps. 118:24).

See also Matt. 18:3, note; notes on Aging (Is. 46); Children (2 Sam. 21; Ps. 128; Prov. 22; Luke 15); Family (Gen. 32; 1 Sam. 3; Ps. 78; 127); Grandparenthood (Ps. 71; 129); Influence (Esth. 4); portrait of Naomi (Ruth 1)

his sandal and gave *it* to the other, and this *was* a confirmation in Israel.

<sup>8</sup>Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, “Buy *it* for yourself.” So he took off his sandal. <sup>9</sup>And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You *are* witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech’s, and all that *was* Chilion’s and Mahlon’s, from the hand of Naomi. <sup>10</sup>Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate.<sup>a</sup> You *are* witnesses this day.”

<sup>11</sup>And all the people who *were* at the gate,

and the elders, said, “*We are* witnesses. The LORD make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel; and may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. <sup>12</sup>May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which the LORD will give you from this young woman.”

*Descendants of Boaz and Ruth*

<sup>13</sup>So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son. <sup>14</sup>Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed

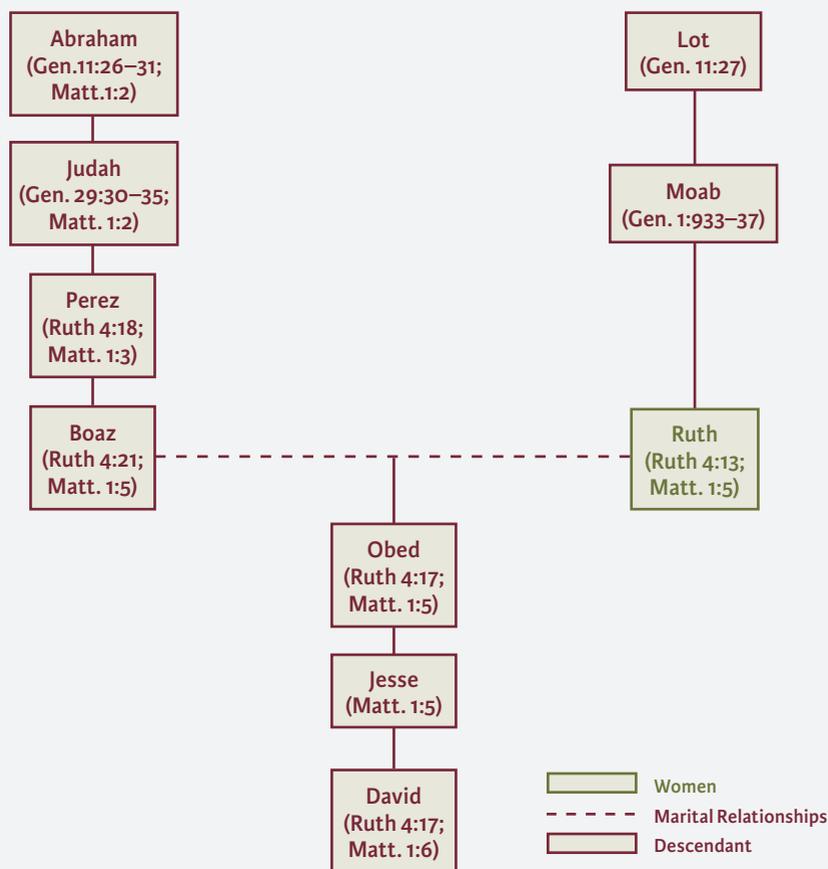
4:10 <sup>a</sup> Probably his civic office

2:20, note), thereby losing the right to the inheritance and perhaps even experiencing the indignity of the contemptuous spitting in the face. In this case, the next kinsman could then come forward. Since treading upon the soil signified taking possession of fixed property, taking off the sandal and giving it to an-

other would symbolize the transfer of property or possession.

**4:11** This wedding prayer suggests a blessing which might have customarily been recited on the occasion of betrothals in Bethlehem. Ruth was like Rachel in being blessed with children after a long period of barrenness.

## The Family Tree of Ruth



be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel! <sup>15</sup>And may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you,

who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him.” <sup>16</sup>Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him. <sup>17</sup>Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, “There is a son born

**4:15** To be described as better than seven sons, in a culture in which sons were so highly esteemed, is a supreme compliment. This commendation of Ruth as an extraordinary woman also bears testimony to the loving ministries she performed in Naomi’s behalf above what would have been expected of any daughter or son. The relationship between mother and daughter-in-law is described by many as the most troublesome in the human family. Yet the lives of Ruth and Naomi portray an example of the joy found when divine principles are followed even in that most difficult relationship. The result is loving commitment, mutual comfort, and consistent edification (see chart, In-Law or In-Love). Decisions to follow God’s way are always honored and blessed by God. Ruth de-

termined to respond to Naomi in a loving and godly way. Her decision to care for the aged, impoverished, and embittered Naomi is rewarded both by the security of a wealthy and devoted husband and by the joy and blessing of motherhood in bearing a son, who, in turn, gave her a place in the ancestry of the Messiah. The commitment between these two is a pattern for mutual benefit and a doorway for the blessings of heaven to be showered upon them both (Ruth 1:7, 8, 16, 17).

**4:17** The book ends with an outline of the lineage of the Messiah as a reminder of redemption. The focus falls upon the vital link in which the Hebrew (Boaz) and the Gentile (Ruth) unite to share in the ancestry of David, through whom would come Jesus Christ.

## In-Law or In-Love

The family unit in the Bible includes many domestic relationships: both those related by blood and those related by marriage. In the Hebrew society, a husband and wife were more closely associated with the groom's parents than the bride's. The bride left her family and people to become a member of her husband's family with all the rights and responsibilities of a daughter (Ruth 1:1–7). These relationships ranged from extremely hostile (Gen. 26:34, 35) to lovingly helpful (Ruth 4:15). Ideally, in-law relationships were mutually beneficial to all within the family circle, extending the supportive base of the family for helping and encouraging one another and exemplifying spiritual values to successive generations (Ps. 78:4–6).

MOTHER-IN-LAW	DAUGHTER-IN-LAW
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commits (Ruth 1:7, 8)</li> <li>• Expresses gratitude (Ruth 1:8, 9)</li> <li>• Acts unselfishly (Ruth 1:11–13)</li> <li>• Becomes bitter (Ruth 1:20, 21)</li> <li>• Shows interest (Ruth 2:19)</li> <li>• Offers counsel (Ruth 3:2–4, 18)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commits (Ruth 1:16, 17)</li> <li>• Expresses loyalty (Ruth 1:10)</li> <li>• Responds unselfishly (Ruth 2:14–18)</li> <li>• Exercises creativity (Ruth 2:1–3)</li> <li>• Communicates response (Ruth 2:19, 21, 23)</li> <li>• Accepts counsel (Ruth 3:5, 6)</li> </ul>
MUTUAL COMMITMENT BETWEEN THE WOMEN	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gratitude on the part of one awakens loyalty in the heart of the other.</li> <li>• Selflessness on the part of one demands unselfishness from the other.</li> <li>• Bitterness in one gives opportunity for creativity in the other.</li> <li>• Interest from one is rewarded by responsive communication in the other.</li> <li>• Counsel from one bears fruit as accepted and honored by the other.</li> </ul>	
<p><i>See also Ex. 18:7, 24; 1 Sam. 18:22, 23, 26; notes on Family (Gen. 32; 1 Sam. 3; Ps. 78; 127); Fruit of the Spirit (Ps. 86; Rom. 5; 15; 1 Cor. 10; 13; Gal. 5; Eph. 4; Col. 3; 2 Thess. 1; Rev. 2); Motherhood (Ezek. 16); Parenthood (Prov. 10); Portraits of Naomi (Ruth 1); Ruth (Ruth 2).</i></p>	

to Naomi.” And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

<sup>18</sup>Now this is the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron; <sup>19</sup>Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab; <sup>20</sup>Amminadab

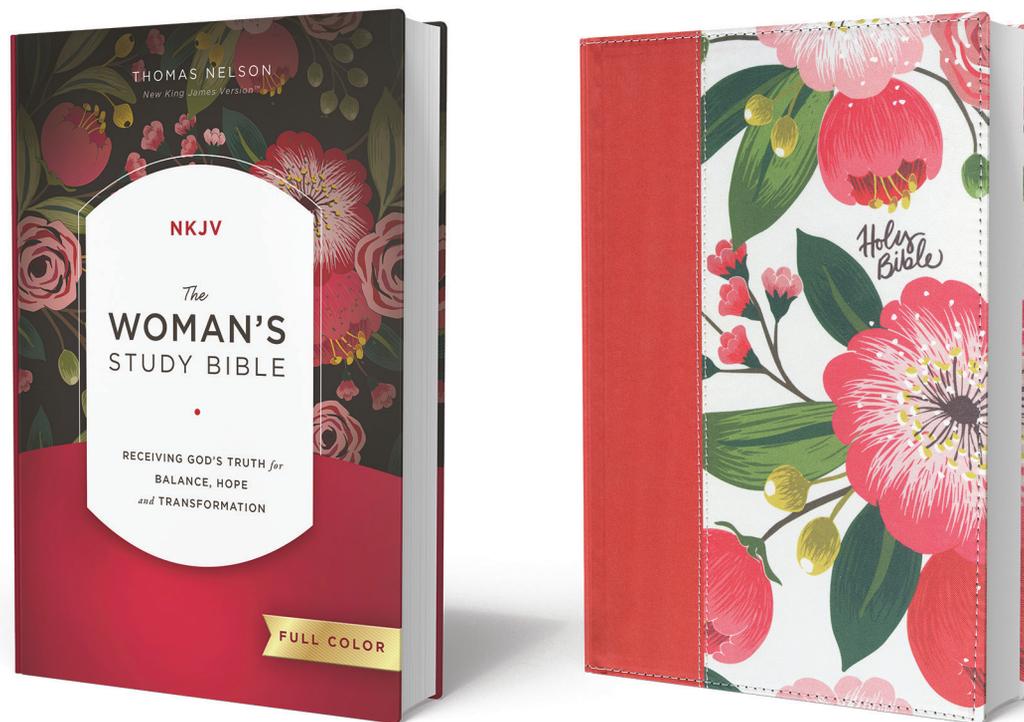
begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon;<sup>a</sup> <sup>21</sup>Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed; <sup>22</sup>Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.

4:20 <sup>a</sup> Hebrew *Salmah*

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