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THE HOLY BIBLE **NKJV** REFERENCE GUIDE

OLD TESTAMENT

BOOK 6

JOSHUA



Joshua's Victory over the Amorites by Nicolas Poussin

SUMMARY

After the death of Moses, Joshua took up the mantle of leadership of Israel. Moses had led the Israelites out of Egypt. Joshua was to lead them into the Promised Land.

Chapter 1 commences "after the death of Moses" and presents the first of three important moments in Joshua marked with major speeches and reflections by the main characters; here first God, and then Joshua, make speeches about the goal of conquest of the Promised Land. In chapter 12, the narrator looks back on the conquest; and in chapter 23 Joshua gives a speech about what must be done if Israel is to live in peace in the land).

God commissions Joshua to take possession of the land and warns him to keep faith with the Covenant. God's speech foreshadows the major themes of the book: the crossing of the Jordan River and conquest of the land, its distribution, and the imperative need for obedience to the Law; Joshua's own immediate obedience is seen in his speeches to the Israelite commanders and to the Transjordanian tribes, and the Transjordanians' affirmation of Joshua's leadership echoes Yahweh's assurances of victory.

Entry into the land and conquest (chapters 2–12)

Joshua Leading the Israelites Across the Jordan River through the miraculous intervention of God and the Ark of the Covenant and are circumcised at Gibeath-Haaraloth , renamed Gilgal.

The conquest begins in Canaan with Jericho, followed by Ai (central Canaan), after which Joshua builds an altar to Yahweh at Mount Ebal (northern Canaan) and renews the Covenant. The covenant ceremony has elements of a divine land-grant ceremony, similar to ceremonies known from Mesopotamia.

Jericho was the first city to fall. All the spoil were taken into the house of the Lord. Only Rahab was spared. However greed got the better of Achan and he kept some of the garments, silver and gold for himself. His sin led to the defeat of Israel when they went to attack the city of Ai. Achan's sin was exposed and he faced the judgement, suffering a horrible fate. Ai was eventually defeated.

The narrative then switches to the south. The Gibeonites trick the Israelites into entering into an alliance with them by saying they are not Canaanites; this prevents the Israelites from exterminating them, but they are enslaved instead. An alliance of Amorite kingdoms headed by the Canaanite king of Jerusalem is defeated with Yahweh's miraculous help of stopping the sun and the moon, and hurling down large hailstones. The enemy kings were eventually hanged on trees.

The battle for Jerusalem, which also involved the king of Hebron, King of Jarmuth, King of Lachish and the king of Eglon is a fascinating and revealing story. This is where Joshua commanded the sun to stand still in order to aid him in winning the battle.

With the south conquered the narrative moves to the northern campaign. A powerful multi-national (or more accurately, multi-ethnic) coalition headed by the king of Hazor, the most important northern city, is defeated with Yahweh's help and Hazor captured and destroyed.

SUMMARY Continued

Chapter 11:16–23 summarizes the extent of the conquest: Joshua has taken the entire land, almost entirely through military victories, with only the Gibeonites agreeing to peaceful terms with Israel. Joshua 11:18 asserts that the conquest took "a long time". The land then "had rest from war".

Chapter 12 lists the vanquished kings on both sides of the Jordan: the two kings who ruled east of the Jordan who were defeated under Moses' leadership, and the 31 kings on the west of the Jordan who were defeated under Joshua's leadership. Division of the land.

Having described how the Israelites and Joshua have carried out the first of their God's commands, the narrative now turns to the second: to "put the people in possession of the land." Joshua is "old, advanced (or stricken) in years" by this time - "about ninety years of age" in the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges' estimation; Joseph Benson refers to an estimate that he was 83, but the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary says that he was "probably above a hundred years old".

This land distribution is a "covenantal land grant": Yahweh, as king, is issuing each tribe its territory. The "cities of refuge" and Levitical cities are attached to the end, since it is necessary for the tribes to receive their grants before they allocate parts of it to others. The Transjordanian tribes are dismissed, affirming their loyalty to Yahweh.

The book reaffirms Moses' allocation of land east of the Jordan to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and then describes how Joshua divided the newly conquered land of Canaan into parcels, and assigned them to the tribes by lot.

Joshua 14:1 also makes reference to the role of Eleazar the priest (ahead of Joshua) in the distribution process. The description serves a theological function to show how the promise of the land was realized in the biblical narrative; its origins are unclear, but the descriptions may reflect geographical relations among the places named.

With the land conquered Joshua goes about dividing the land among the tribes of Israel. Six cities of refuge were also allocated for those who are awaiting judgement after committing a crime. An offender who made his way to that city was given a refuge from the consequences of his or her sin until proper investigation and judgement could be carried out. They were safe in the city as long as the High Priest was alive.

The wording of Joshua 18:1-4 suggests that the tribes of Reuben, Gad, Judah, Ephraim and Manasseh received their land allocation some time before the "remaining seven tribes", and a 21-member expedition set out to survey the remainder of the land with a view to organizing the allocation to the tribes of Simeon, Benjamin, Asher, Naphtali, Zebulun, Issachar and Dan. Subsequently, 48 cities with their surrounding lands were allocated to the Tribe of Levi.

Omitted in the Hebrew text, but present in the Septuagint, is a statement that: Joshua completed the division of the land in its boundaries, and the children gave a portion to Joshua, by the commandment of the Lord.

SUMMARY Continued

They gave to him the city for which he asked, Timnath Serach they gave him in Mount Ephraim, and Joshua built the city, and dwelt in it. And Joshua took the stone knives with which he had circumcised the children of Israel, which were in the way in the wilderness, and he placed them in Timnath Serach.

By the end of chapter 21, the narrative records that the fulfilment of God's promise of land, rest and supremacy over the enemies of the Israelites was complete. The tribes to whom Moses had granted land east of the Jordan are authorized to return home to Gilead, having faithfully 'kept the charge' of supporting the tribes occupying Canaan.

They are granted "riches ... with very much livestock, with silver, with gold, with bronze, with iron, and with very much clothing" as a reward. A misunderstanding between the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh on one side and the rest of Israel on the other nearly lead to a civil war.

Joshua's farewell speeches (chapters 23–24. Joshua, in his old age and conscious that he is "going the way of all the earth", gathers the leaders of the Israelites together, "perhaps at Timnath-serah, or possibly at Shiloh" and reminds them of Yahweh's great works for them, and of the need to love Yahweh.

The Israelites are told - just as Joshua himself had been told - that they must comply with "all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses", neither "turn[ing] aside from it to the right hand or to the left" (i.e. by adding to the law, or diminishing from it). Joshua charges the people to remain faithful to Yahweh and the covenant, warning of judgment if (or when) Israel were to leave Yahweh and follow other gods.

Joshua meets again with all the people at Shechem in chapter 24 and addresses them a second time. He recounts the history of God's formation of the Israelite nation, beginning with "Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor, [who] lived beyond the Euphrates River and worshiped other gods".

He invited the Israelites to choose between serving the LORD who had delivered them from Egypt, or the gods which their ancestors had served on the other side of the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land they now lived. The people chose to serve the LORD, a decision which Joshua recorded in the Book of the Law of God, and he then erected a memorial stone "under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord" in Shechem. The oak is associated with the Oak of Moreh where Abram had set up camp during his travels in this area.

Thus "Joshua made a covenant with the people, literally "cut a covenant", a phrase common to the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin tongues, and derived from the custom of sacrifice, in which the victims were cut in pieces and offered to the deity invoked in ratification of the engagement". The people then returned to their inheritance i.e. their allocated lands.

The Book of Joshua closes with three concluding items (referred to in the Jerusalem Bible as "Two Additions"): The death of Joshua and his burial at Timnath-serah, The burial of the bones of Joseph at Shechem, The death of Eleazar and his burial in land belonging to Phinehas in the mountains of Ephraim.

NKJV SELECTED SCRIPTURE

- 1:8** This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.
- 1:9** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.
- 3:17** 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.
- 4:23** 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,
- 4:24** 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."
- 10:11** 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.
- 10:12** 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.
- 10:13** 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.
- 10:14** 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.
- 11:20** 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.
- 24:29** 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.

CHARACTER Definitions

RAHAB - Rahab's story is found in Joshua 2-6. This passage describes the conquest of the fortified city of Jericho by the Israelites. In its day, Jericho was the most important Canaanite fortress city in the Jordan Valley. It was a stronghold directly in the path of the advancing Israelites, who had just crossed the Jordan River.

Before entering the land west of the Jordan, Joshua sent two spies to look over the land. The king of Jericho heard that two Israelite spies were within his city and ordered them to be brought out to him. Rahab, the woman with whom the spies were staying, protected them by hiding them on her roof.

She told them how the citizens of Jericho had been fearful of the Israelites ever since they defeated the Egyptians via the Red Sea miracle (some 40 years prior). She agreed to help them escape, provided that she and her family were spared in the upcoming battle.

CHARACTERS Continued

The spies agreed to her request, giving her three conditions to be met: 1) she must distinguish her house from the others by hanging a scarlet rope out of the window so the Israelites would know which home to spare; 2) her family must be inside the house during the battle; and 3) she must not later turn on the spies.

Safely escaping the city, the two spies returned to Joshua and reported that the "whole land was melting with fear." The Israelites crossed the Jordan into Canaan where they laid siege to the city of Jericho. The city was completely destroyed, and every man, woman, and child in it was killed.

Only Rahab and her family were spared. Ultimately, Rahab married Salmon, an Israelite from the tribe of Judah. Her son was Boaz, the husband of Ruth. Joseph, the legal father of Jesus, is her direct descendant.

Rahab was a young Canaanite prostitute and as such not a very likely candidate for a heroine of the faith. Jericho was one of the principal seats of idol worship, being especially devoted to Ashtaroah, the goddess of the moon. Here was centered all that was the vilest and most degrading in the religion of the Canaanites.

It is clear that Rahab was perceptive, intelligent and well informed. Rahab identified the spies for what they were, hid them, and had a plausible story ready with which to deceive the king's agents. Rahab didn't deny that she had entertained the men. She says that they left at dusk when it would be difficult for anyone to be sure of clearly seeing anything.

The agents did not dare to risk stopping to search Rahab's house because, if they did, the spies might get away. Finally, the Canaanite prostitute gives the two Israelites excellent advice. She tells them to hide in the hills for three days before attempting to cross the Jordan.

Spiritually, Rahab was not in an ideal circumstance to come to faith in the one true God, the God of Israel. She was a citizen of a wicked city that was under God's condemnation. Rahab was part of a corrupt, depraved, pagan culture. She had not benefited from the godly leadership of Moses or Joshua. However, Rahab had one asset—she had heard from the many men she came into contact with that the Israelites were to be feared.

She heard the stories of their escape from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, the wanderings in the wilderness, and their recent victory over the Amorites. She learned enough to reach the correct, saving conclusion: "For the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below". It is this change of heart, this faith—coupled with the actions prompted by faith—that saved her and her family.

ACHAN - The story of Achan is found in Joshua 7. God had delivered Jericho into the Israelites' hands, as recorded in Joshua 6. The Israelites had been instructed to destroy everything in the city, with the exception of Rahab and her family, as well as the city's gold, silver, bronze, and iron.

CHARACTERS Continued

The metals were to go into the tabernacle treasury; they were “sacred to the Lord” or “devoted” to Him. Jericho was to be totally destroyed, and the Israelites were to take no plunder for themselves.

Shortly after their success at Jericho, the Israelites moved on to attack the city of Ai. The spies Joshua sent to Ai thought the city would be easy to overtake—much easier than Jericho—and they suggested Joshua only send two or three thousand troops. Much to their shock, the Israelites were chased out of Ai, and thirty-six of them were killed. Joshua tore his clothes and bemoaned their attempts at conquering Canaan.

He told God, “The Canaanites and the other people of the country will hear about this and they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. What then will you do for your own great name?”. God responded by telling Joshua that some Israelites had sinned by taking devoted things. The people were to consecrate themselves, and then the following morning the perpetrator would be identified by lot.

When morning came, each tribe presented itself. The tribe of Judah was chosen by lot, then the clan of the Zerahites, then the family of Zimri, then Achan. “Then Joshua said to Achan, ‘My son, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, and honor him. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me’”.

Achan confessed his sin, admitting that in Jericho he saw a robe, two hundred shekels of silver, and a fifty-shekel bar of gold that he “coveted,” took, and hid in a hole he had dug within his tent. Messengers from Joshua confirmed the plunder was found in Achan’s tent, and they brought it before the assembly.

The Israelites then stoned Achan, his children, and his livestock and burned the bodies; they also burned Achan’s tent, the plunder he had taken, and “all that he had” in the Valley of Achor (i.e., the “Valley of Trouble”). The pile of stones was left there as a reminder of Achan’s sin and the high cost of not obeying the Lord.

After Achan was judged, God told Joshua, “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai. For I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land”. The Israelites laid an ambush and soundly defeated Ai, killing all of its inhabitants. This time, the Israelites were allowed to take the plunder for themselves. Only Jericho, the first city in Canaan, had been wholly devoted to the Lord.

The story of Achan is a stark reminder of the penalty of sin, which is death. We also see two truths illustrated plainly: first, that sin is never an isolated event—our sin always has a ripple effect that touches others. Achan’s sin led to the deaths of thirty-six of his fellow soldiers and defeat for the whole army. Second, we can always be sure that our sins will find us out. Hiding the evidence in our tents will not conceal it from God.

Achan’s sin was grave. He took what was God’s. The Israelites had been specifically warned about the consequences of not doing as God instructed. Joshua told them, “Keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it”.

CHARACTERS Continued

Achan's sin was a clear and willful violation of a direct order, and he did bring trouble on the entire camp of Israel. Also, Achan was given time to repent on his own; he could have come forward at any time, yet chose to wait through the casting of lots.

Rather than admit his guilt and perhaps call on the mercy of God or at least demonstrate reverence for Him, Achan attempted to hide. "Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy".

GIBEONITES - The Gibeonites were a group of people, descended from the Amorites. They are described in Joshua 9 as people who deceived the Israelites in order to protect themselves. After the Israelites had defeated the cities of Jericho and Ai, many of the nearby Canaanites united to form a large army to fight Israel.

The Gibeonites, however, took a different approach: They resorted to a ruse: They went as a delegation whose donkeys were loaded with worn-out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended. They put worn and patched sandals on their feet and wore old clothes.

All the bread of their food supply was dry and moldy. Then they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and the Israelites, We have come from a distant country; make a treaty with us.

The Israelites did not consult with God before agreeing to the treaty and fell for the Gibeonites' scheme. The Israelites soon discovered they had been tricked and discussed how to respond. The leaders of Israel decided, "We have given them our oath by the Lord, the God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now.

This is what we will do to them: We will let them live, so that God's wrath will not fall on us for breaking the oath we swore to them.' They continued, 'Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers in the service of the whole assembly.' So the leaders' promise to them was kept".

The end of this account notes, "That day [Joshua] made the Gibeonites woodcutters and water carriers for the assembly, to provide for the needs of the altar of the Lord at the place the Lord would choose.

And that is what they are to this day.". In other words, the Gibeonites survived, yet they served as slaves to the Israelites for generations to come. The land of Gibeon would later be allotted to the tribe of Benjamin.

King Saul later broke the treaty that Joshua had signed and attacked the Gibeonites. Later still, during the time of King David, a famine occurred in Israel. When David asked the Lord about the famine, God said, "It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death".

To appease the Gibeonites and put an end to the famine, seven sons of Saul were given to them to be put to death. God healed Israel's land after that.

CHARACTERS Continued

GILGAL - Though Gilgal is first mentioned in Deuteronomy 11:30, it gains its primary meaning and significance in the book of Joshua. The first camp of the Israelites after they crossed the Jordan into the Holy Land was at a place called Gilgal.

This camp served as their base of operations during the initial conquest of the Holy Land under Joshua. Several other important events in the Bible take place either at this Gilgal or at a different one. Eventually, though, Gilgal became corrupt, and two of the prophets railed against it later in Israel's history.

In the biblical narrative, Joshua orders the Israelites on the 10th of the Hebrew month Nisan, to take twelve stones from the river, one for each tribe, and place them there in memory.

Proposed location of Biblical Gilgal, in the modern-day West Bank
According to the biblical narrative, Joshua then orders the Israelites who had been born during the Exodus to be circumcised. The Bible refers to the place where this occurred as Givat Ha'aralot.

Gilgal is said to have been "on the eastern border of Jericho". "Gilgal" is also mentioned in a list of places to divide the land under the leadership of Joshua. The first camp of Israel after crossing the Jordan. According to Joshua 15:7 it lay to the North of the valley of Achor, which formed the border between Judah and Benjamin.

Here 12 memorial stones taken from the bed of the river were set up by Joshua, after the miraculous crossing of the Jordan; and here the people were circumcised preparatory to their possession of the land, when it is said in Joshua, with a play upon the word, "This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you."

Whereupon the Passover was celebrated and the manna ceased. To Gilgal the ark returned every day after having compassed the city of Jericho during its siege. Hither the Gibeonites came to make their treaty, and again to ask aid against the Amorites.

Gilgal was still the headquarters of the Israelites after the battle with the Amorites; again after Joshua's extensive victorious campaign in the hill country of Judea extending to Kadesh-barnea and Gaza; and still later upon his return from the great battle at the Waters of Merom. At the conclusion of the conquest, the headquarters were transferred to Shiloh on the summit of the mountain ridge to the West.

CONQUEST OF CANAAN - The Israelite conquest of the 'promised land' of Canaan took at least two years. The first year was occupied with a campaign to destroy the southern cities of Canaan. The Israelites moved west from their camp on the Plains of Moab, crossed the River Jordan and attacked Jericho in April in c.1406BC.

After seven days of noisy marching round the city (to intimidate the inhabitants and perhaps to distract them from the Israeli tunnellers who were secretly undermining the city walls) Jericho fell and was burnt to the ground.

CHARACTERS Continued

The next target was the city of Ai. The first approach, a pitched battle outside the city, was a disaster, but a second, more subtle, approach succeeded in luring the defenders away from the city – which was then successfully destroyed in a commando raid.

After making a treaty with the people of Gibeon, the Israelites then confronted the five Amorite kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon when these Canaanite kings besieged Gibeon. The five kings were killed in a surprise attack, and the city of Makkedah was captured.

Joshua then took advantage of the situation to destroy the southern cities of Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron and Debir – though the well-fortified city of Jerusalem remained an independent Canaanite enclave until it was captured by King David in 1004 BC.

Gezer also appears to have maintained its independence as a Canaanite stronghold, and was only handed over to the Israelites by Pharaoh Haremheb of Egypt when King Solomon married his daughter in c.970BC.

By the end of c.1406BC, the Israelites had conquered much of the southern region from Kadesh Barnea in the Negev Desert to Gaza on the Mediterranean coast, and from Goshen on the southern border with Egypt to Gibeon in the north.

The following year, c.1405BC, the Israelites embarked on a further campaign to subjugate the northern cities of Canaan. After a surprise attack at the Waters of Meron that routed the kings of Hazor, Madon, Shimron and Acshaph, the Israelites followed this up by capturing the city of Hazor and the central hill country south of the Lake of Kinnereth (the Sea of Galilee). By the end of the year, the Israelites had secured the whole of the uplands from Hebron in the south to Hazor in the north.

While the Israelites successfully conquered the central hill country of Canaan (where the terrain favored surprise attacks and hand-to-hand fighting), they were less successful in subduing the cities of the surrounding lowland plains. Here, the more technologically advanced societies deployed spear-throwers on fast-moving chariots to defend their cities.

Neither were they able to take the Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon to the north on the coast of Lebanon. Unable to use chariots in the central hill country, the Israelites resorted to hamstringing the horses and destroying the chariots that they captured from their enemies in the surrounding lowlands.

Indeed, the Israelites only began to use chariots in battle some four hundred years later when King Solomon built three 'chariot cities' at Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer in c.947BC to defend the Vale of Jezreel and the coastal Plain of Sharon.

Hazor was situated on high ground overlooking Lake Merom in the Jordan Valley to the north of Lake Kinnereth (the Sea of Galilee). It guarded a steep-sided pass on the main trade route to the north, and had become the largest and most powerful city-state in Canaan at the time of the conquest by the Israelites.

CHARACTERS Continued

When its ruler, King Jabin, heard of the success of the Israelites over the southern cities of Canaan, he assembled the armies of Hazor, Madon, Shimron, Acshaph and some smaller towns at the Waters of Merom (Lake Merom). Using their most successful tactic – a surprise attack – the Israelites defeated the Canaanite confederation and King Jabin was killed.

The city of Hazor was burnt down and razed to the ground. The heat of the fire consuming the cedar-panelled walls of the palace was made more intense by the enormous stocks of olive oil that burst into flame.

JORDAN RIVER - The Israelites' crossing of the Jordan River on dry land was of tremendous significance to the Israelites. Joshua explained the significance of this event before it took place, stating, "This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites.

See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you. Now then, choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the Lord—the Lord of all the earth—set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap". Their miraculous crossing affirmed God's presence with them and His promise to remove their enemies from the land.

Why did the Israelites build a memorial? Joshua said, "When your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever". The memorial was to serve as a lasting sign of God's work among the Israelites.

The conclusion of this event offers an additional insight into its significance and the reason for the memorial. Joshua 4:23–24 says, "The Lord your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over.

The Lord your God did to the Jordan what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over. He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God."

First, a comparison is made with the crossing that took place at the Red Sea under the leadership of Moses. This emphasis on God's miraculous provision was an ongoing sign to the people of Israel.

Second, there was an emphasis on the power of God. The miracle was done "so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful." No other god could compare in power. The gods of Israel's enemies were created things that had no ability to move water and provide dry passage across a river.

Third, the result of the miracle was that the Israelites would fear the Lord forever. The idea was that this miracle would leave the people in such awe that they and their descendants would talk about it and live in the fear of God and worship Him as a result.

CHARACTERS Continued

God showed His power and presence in the crossing of the Jordan, and the memorial set up by His people served as a reminder of His might and why the Israelites should fear the Lord. Both the act and its memorial worked to point to God's glory, presence, and strength, which would empower the Israelites as they took possession of their land in the days ahead. Still today, a look at this powerful miracle reveals the greatness of God, and our only appropriate response—to worship and serve Him.

JERICHO - The battle of Jericho featured one of the most astounding miracles in the Bible, proving that God stood with the Israelites. After the death of Moses, God chose Joshua, son of Nun, to be the leader of the Israelite people.

They set about to conquer the land of Canaan, under the Lord's guidance. God said to Joshua: "Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Spies from the Israelites sneaked into the walled city of Jericho and stayed at the house of Rahab, a prostitute. But Rahab had faith in God. She told the spies: "I know that the Lord has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you.

We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt ... When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.

She hid the spies from the king's soldiers, and when the time was right, she helped the spies escape out a window and down a rope, since her house was built into the city wall. Rahab made the spies swear an oath. She promised not to give their plans away, and in return, they swore to spare Rahab and her family when the battle of Jericho began.

She was to tie a scarlet cord in her window as a sign of their protection. Meanwhile, the Israelite people continued to move into Canaan. God commanded Joshua to have the priests carry the Ark of the Covenant into the center of the Jordan River, which was at flood stage.

As soon as they stepped into the river, the water stopped flowing. It piled up in heaps upstream and downstream, so the people could cross on dry ground. God performed a miracle for Joshua, just as he had done for Moses, by parting the Red Sea.

God had a strange plan for the battle of Jericho. He told Joshua to have the armed men march around the city once each day, for six days. The priests were to carry the ark, blowing trumpets, but the soldiers were to keep silent.

On the seventh day, the assembly marched around the walls of Jericho seven times. Joshua told them that by God's order, every living thing in the city must be destroyed, except Rahab and her family. All articles of silver, gold, bronze and iron were to go into the Lord's treasury. At Joshua's command, the men gave a great shout, and Jericho's walls fell down flat! The Israelite army rushed in and conquered the city. Only Rahab and her family were spared.

CHARACTERS Continued

Joshua felt unqualified for the monumental task of taking over for Moses, but God promised to be with him every step of the way, just as he had been for Moses. This same God is with us today, protecting and guiding us.

Rahab the prostitute made the right choice. She went with God, instead of the evil people of Jericho. Joshua spared Rahab and her family in the battle of Jericho. Although she'll forever bear the label "Rahab the harlot," her involvement in this story declares God's peculiar grace and life-transforming power.

Joshua's strict obedience to God is a key lesson from this story. At every turn, Joshua did exactly as he was told and the Israelites prospered under his leadership. An ongoing theme in the Old Testament is that when the Jews obeyed God, they did well. When they disobeyed, the consequences were bad.

As Moses' apprentice, Joshua learned firsthand that he wouldn't always understand God's ways. Human nature sometimes made Joshua want to question God's plans, but instead he chose to obey and watch what happened. Joshua is an excellent example of humility before God.

BATTLE OF AI - In the Book of Joshua, chapters 7 and 8, the Israelites attempt to conquer Ai on two occasions. The first, in Joshua 7, fails. The Biblical account portrays the failure as being due to a prior sin of Achan, for which he is stoned to death by the Israelites.

On the second attempt, in Joshua 8, Joshua, who is identified by the narrative as the leader of the Israelites, receives instruction from God. God tells them to set up an ambush and Joshua does what God says. An ambush is arranged at the rear of the city on the western side.

Joshua is with a group of soldiers that approach the city from the front so the men of Ai, thinking they will have another easy victory, chase Joshua and the fighting men from the entrance of the city to lead the men of Ai away from the city.

Then the fighting men to the rear enter the city and set it on fire. When the city is captured, 12,000 men and women are killed, and it is razed to the ground. The king is captured and put on a stake until he is dead. His body is then placed at the city gates and stones are placed on top of his body. The Israelites then burn Ai completely and made it a permanent heap of ruins. God told them they could take the livestock as plunder and they did so.

MEROM WATERS - After the conquests of Jericho and Ai, and the subjugation of other parts of the Judean hill country, the Bible tells of Joshua's campaign in northern Canaan. His route took him from Gilgal, where the Israelite camp was, to Upper Galilee. The Israelites would have had to pass either through the central hill country or along the Jordan valley west of the river.

The kings of the north formed a formidable coalition. The alliance was headed by Jabin, king of the important Canaanite city of Hazor, and included the kings of Merom, Achshaph and Shimron. The Canaanites advanced to meet Joshua with all their troops, a people as numerous as the sands of the sea, with a huge number of horses and chariots.

CHARACTERS Continued

At the “Waters of Mermon,” presumably the water source of nearby Merom city, the Canaanites assembled and set up camp. Clearly the Israelites would be no match for the Canaanites in open battle. The Canaanites were not only better trained and equipped but had the advantage of a large chariot force which could attack with devastating effect.

Accordingly, Joshua had to resort to non-conventional tactics. While the Canaanites were still preparing for battle, the Israelites advanced secretly and made a surprise attack on the enemy camp. The Canaanites were caught completely unawares. Joshua’s forces “hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots”, thus destroying the most effective arm of the Canaanite army.

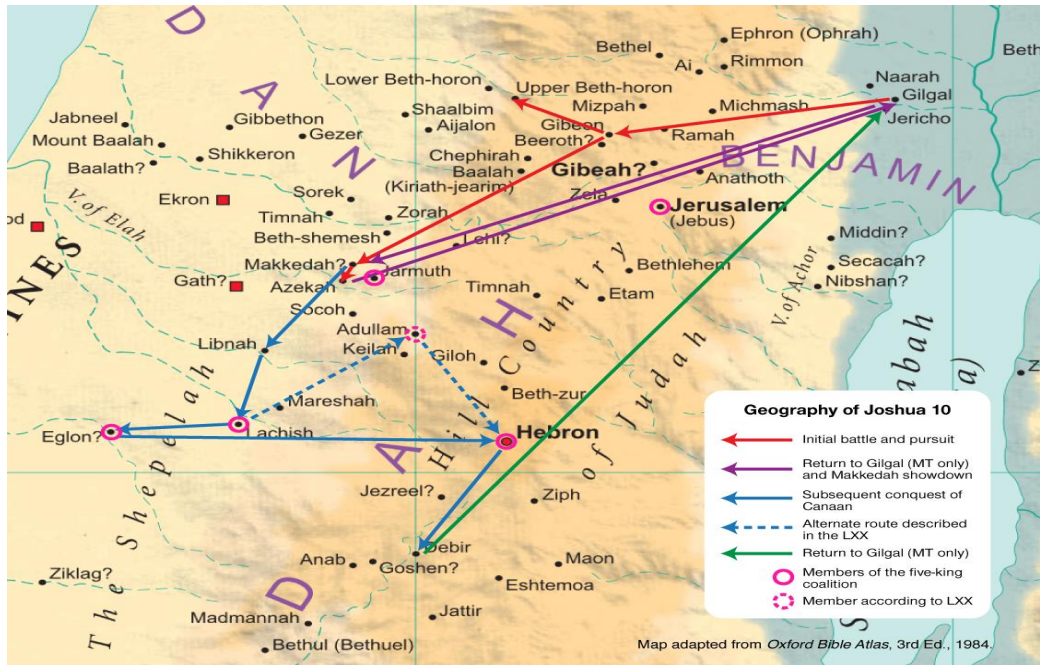
The confounded enemy troops scattered and were pursued by the Israelites, who cut them down “until not one of them was left alive”.

Joshua then turned his attention towards Hazor. The Israelites captured the city, slaughtered its king and the entire population and “Hazor was burnt to the ground”. In a mopping-up operation the other cities of the area were systematically plundered and their inhabitants massacred, “yet of all these towns standing on their mounds, Israel burned none, apart from Hazor”.

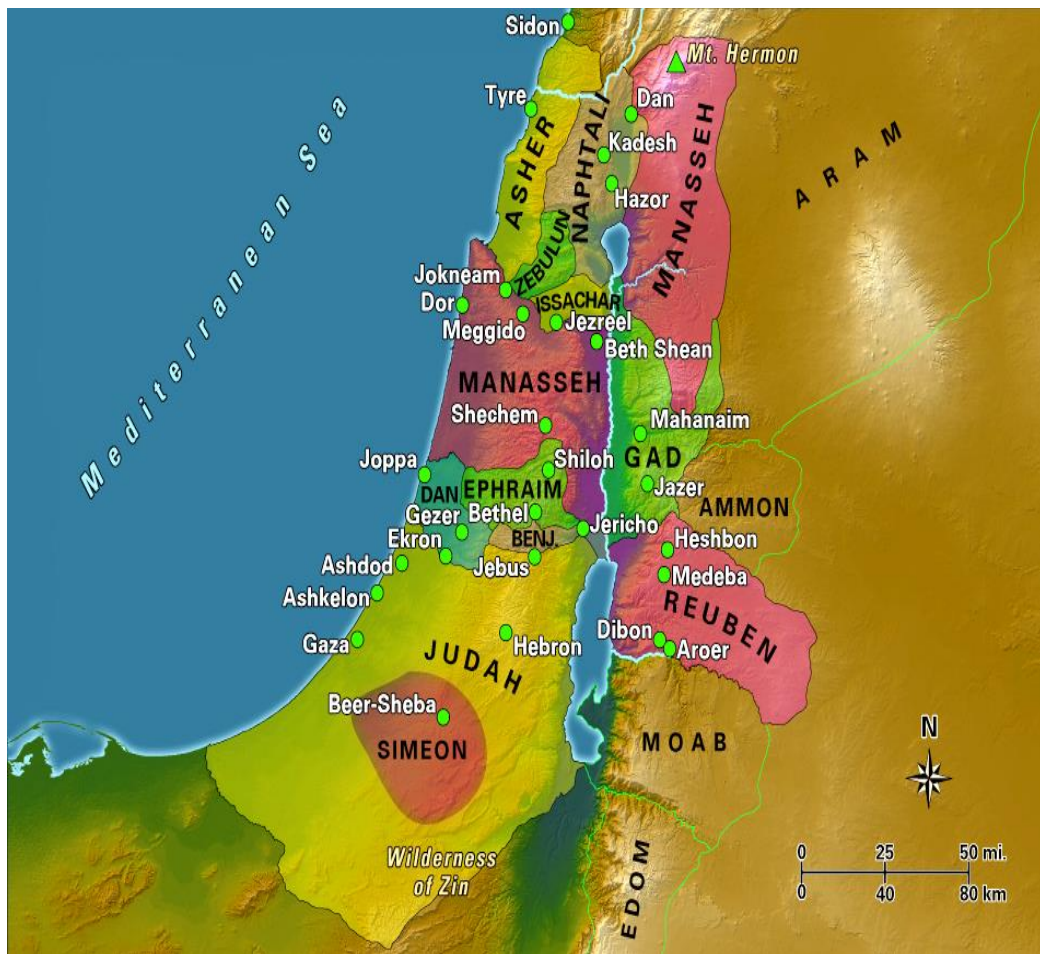
BIBLE TIMELINE

1406 BC	God Commissions Joshua	Joshua 1
1406 BC	Rahab Welcomes the Spies	Joshua 2
1406 BC	The Israelites Cross the Jordan	Joshua 3 - 5
1406 BC	Conquer of Jericho and Ai	Joshua 6 - 8
1405 BC	Kings Join against Israel	Joshua 9
1405 BC	The Sun Stands Still	Joshua 10
1405 BC	Northern Palestine Defeated	Joshua 11, 12
1399 BC	Land allotted among the Tribes	Joshua 13 - 22
1375 BC	Joshua's Farewell Address	Joshua 23, 24

MAP REFERENCES



THE TWELVE TRIBES TERRITORIES



MAP REFERENCES Continued



MAP REFERENCES Continued

