

SINAI – JOSHUA TO JUDGES

OUTLINE OF JOSHUA

1:1-5:12 – Israel's entrance into the land

5:13-12:14 – The story of the partial conquest of the land.

13-21 – The distribution of the land (the administrative organization of Yahweh's earthly kingdom)

22-24 – Israel's continued loyalty to Yahweh and the renewing of the covenant at Shechem.

Commissioning of Joshua to be the leader of the second generation:

Moses: "Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land that the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall put them in possession of it. It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed." (Num 27:7)

God: "Be strong and courageous, for you shall bring the people of Israel into the land that I swore to give them. I will be with you." (Deut 31:23)

After Moses' death, when it was time to cross the Jordan into the land, God said to Joshua: "Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful 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." (Joshua 1:7-8)

Preparation for battle:

Joshua 3:5 – "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you."

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- God parted the Jordan for “the entire nation” to cross.
- This “next generation” were all circumcised.
- They celebrated Passover. (And, the “manna” stopped after 40 years of it!)
- Joshua met the “commander of the army of the Lord.”

The Battle:

Joshua 6:27- *“So the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land”*

Herem = proscription (the “ban”)

The war ideology of the ancient near east – the destroyed enemy items (people, things, animals) – are consecrated to the deity who made the victory possible. We find this in records of other ancient civilizations (eg., the Moabite Mesha stele).

The Jews understood a “Holy War” to be a conquest or battle that was a divine undertaking, resulting in obliteration (“utterly destroying”) of the enemy. The enemy cities were to be put to the torch (thereby purifying them) and dedicated to God.

The conquest of the land was more than a story of God fulfilling his promise, it is also:

- 1) The story of God’s judgment against the Canaanites.

God told Moses: “This is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled. Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out its inhabitants.” (Leviticus 18:24-25)

The context here is the list of sexual sins that the pagan nations of Canaan practiced (Leviticus 18). God told the Israelites not to do the same or the land would vomit them out too:

“Keep all my decrees and laws and follow them, so that the land where I am bringing you to live may not vomit you out. You must not live according to the customs of the nations I am going to drive out before you. Because they did all these things, I abhorred them. But I said to you, “You will possess their land; I will give it to you as an inheritance, a land flowing with milk and honey.” I am the Lord your God, who has set you apart from the nations.” (Leviticus 20:22-24)

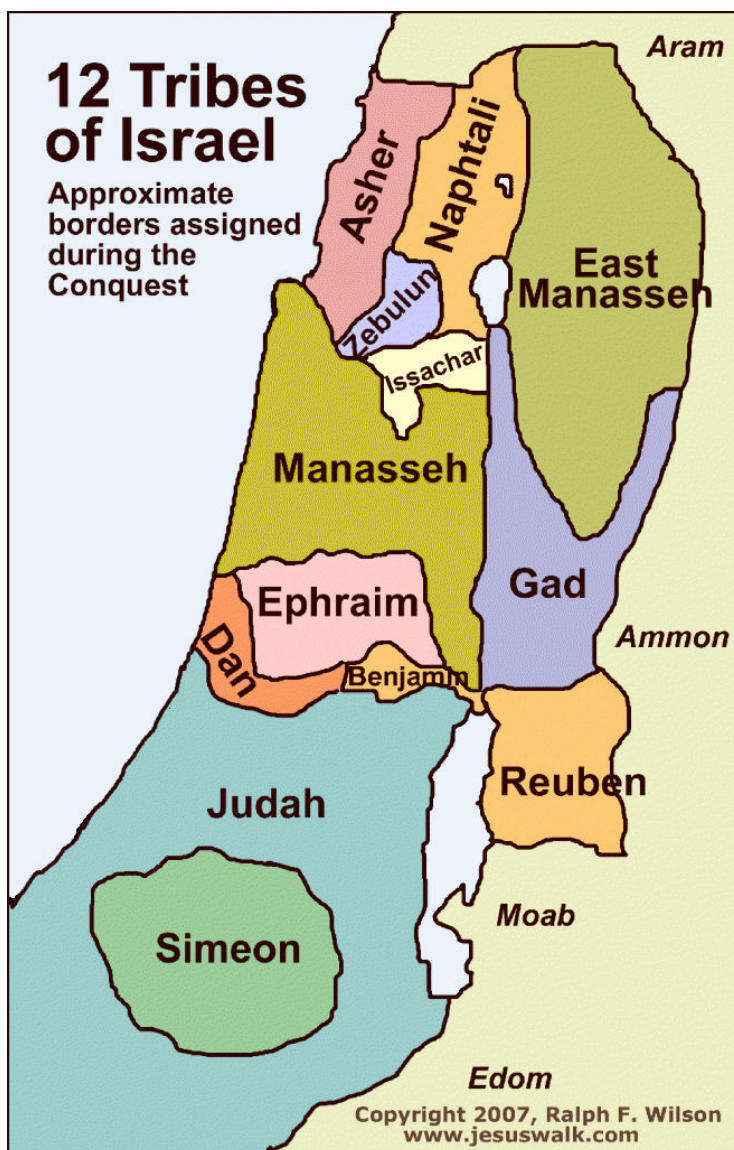
In addition to sexual sin, God also talks about their injustice, harmful ritual worship, and child sacrifice. The Canaanites were described as utterly corrupt,

especially when it came to violence and abuse of the most vulnerable people in their communities.

- 2) It is also the story of God's salvation. The means by which the people are saved is violence. It has been the common thread since the Exodus event. And, it is the means by which we are saved – the violence of crucifixion.

The Land:

Joshua 13 – the dividing of the land



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“Thus the Lord gave to Israel all the land he swore to give to their fathers... Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.”
- Joshua 21:43-45

“Joshua summoned all Israel... “it is the Lord your God who has fought for you. Behold, I have allotted to you as an inheritance for your tribes those nations that remain... The Lord your God will push them back before you and drive them out of your sight. And you shall possess their land, just as the Lord your God promised you.” - Joshua 23:2-5

“Therefore, be very strong to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to the right hand nor to the left, that you may not mix with these nations remaining among you or make mention of the names of their gods or swear by them or serve them or bow down to them...” - Joshua 21:6-7

“Know for certain that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations before you, but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good ground that the Lord your God has given you.” - Joshua 21:13

“Then the people answered, “Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods, for it is the Lord our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight and preserved us in all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed. And the Lord drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God.” - Joshua 24:16-18

Shofet – Judge

“If the book of Joshua highlights the successful possession of the land, the book of Judges concentrates on the blemishes of this achievement.” (Graeme Goldsworthy)

Problems in “the Land:”

The Lord rebukes the people for making covenants with the Canaanites and reminds them that these foreigners will become a snare to them (Judges 2:2-3).

In addition, we learn that the people didn’t fully enforce the “ban” that they were given by God and they retained some of their foes for forced labor (Judges 11:27-36).

And...

“After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel.” - Judges 2:10

A cycle begins and continues...

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- The very next verse tells us what happened as a result of their not telling their children about the Lord. They worshiped false gods – the gods of the people who lived around them, because they had not driven the people out of the land (v. 11-12).
- Then we see how God responded, just as He had told them that He would. He took away His protection and allowed those other nations to be a snare to them (v. 11-15)
- The people were in terrible distress and the Lord was moved to pity (even though they weren't worshipping Him anymore!), so the Lord sent judges to rescue them (v. 16, 18)
- But they didn't listen to the judges and still followed other gods (v. 17)

“Whenever the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge... But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. They did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways.” - Judges 2:18-19

