

BEACHHEAD FOR BLESSING

DIVIDE AND CONQUER: The Taking of the Promised Land—Canaan.



Prologue

Caleb: Num 13.30 Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.”

People: Num 14.3-4 Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn’t it be better for us to go back to Egypt?” **4** And they said to each other, “We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”

Joshua: Num 14. 7-9 [Joshua] said to the entire Israelite assembly, “The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. **8** If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. **9** Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them.”

People: Num 14.10 But the whole assembly talked about stoning them.

The Lord: Num 14.11 The Lord said to Moses, “How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the signs I have performed among them?

40 years in the Wilderness prepared them for the next step. See previous Weeks:

BIG IDEA: ON THE DOOR STEP

Numbers 20. 14-21: Edom denies passage.

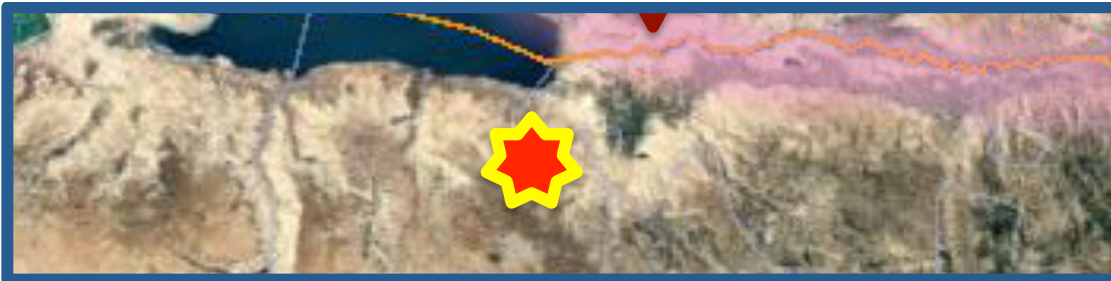
Nu 21. 1-9 Arad defeated and turned to “Hormah” (destruction.) Snakes attack and the bronze serpent.

See also John 3: 14-15

Nu 21. Journey to Moab’s territory, which was dominated by the Amorites. Remember the Amorites?

God had told Abraham about them when God said his family would go to Egypt: Genesis 15.16: *In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.*”

Now Israel has gone around the Dead Sea and even avoided the “King’s Highway” by going on the Desert Highway. They have avoided Edom and their ethnic relatives in Moab. And now they approach the Amorite king Sihon of Heshbon.



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If the Israelites had gone the natural way north from the coast road or Kadesh or Arad or the Wilderness of Zin into southern Canaan, the strategy would have been stacked against them. But God led them around to the “back door.” There they were given a battle they could dominate. The terror of their victory became psychological warfare against the Canaanites. (By the way the Ethnic identity of the Canaanites was Amorite. God had made it clear that it was the time for justice to be visited on the Amorites. Both Sihon and later Og of Bashan were Amorite kings. See Deut. 2.24-3.11 and 2 Kings 21.11.)

Deut 2. 24 “Set out now and cross the Arnon Gorge. See, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his country. Begin to take possession of it and engage him in battle.
25 This very day I will begin to put the terror and fear of you on all the nations under heaven. They

will hear reports of you and will tremble and be in anguish because of you.”

26 From the Desert of Kedemoth I sent messengers to Sihon king of Heshbon offering peace and saying, **27** “Let us pass through your country. We will stay on the main road; we will not turn aside to the right or to the left. **28** Sell us food to eat and water to drink for their price in silver. Only let us pass through on foot— **29** as the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir, and the Moabites, who live in Ar, did for us—until we cross the Jordan into the land the Lord our God is giving us.” **30** But Sihon king of Heshbon refused to let us pass through. For the Lord your God had made his spirit stubborn and his heart obstinate in order to give him into your hands, as he has now done.

31 The Lord said to me, “See, I have begun to deliver Sihon and his country over to you. Now begin to conquer and possess his land.”

32 When Sihon and all his army came out to meet us in battle at Jahaz, **33** the Lord our God delivered him over to us and we struck him down, together with his sons and his whole army. **34** At that time we took all his towns and completely destroyed[c] them—men, women and children. We left no survivors. **35** But the livestock and the plunder from the towns we had captured we carried off for ourselves. **36** From Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge, and from the town in the gorge, even as far as Gilead, not one town was too strong for us. The Lord our God gave us all of them. **37** But in accordance with the command of the Lord our God, you did not encroach on any of the land of the Ammonites, neither the land along the course of the Jabbok nor that around the towns in the hills.

Deut 3.1 Next we turned and went up along the road toward Bashan, and Og king of Bashan with his whole army marched out to meet us in battle at Edrei. **2** The Lord said to me, “Do not be afraid of him, for I have delivered him into your hands, along with his whole army and his land. Do to him what you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon.”

3 So the Lord our God also gave into our hands Og king of Bashan and all his army. We struck them down, leaving no survivors. **4** At that time we took all his cities. There was not one of the sixty cities that we did not take from them—the whole region of Argob, Og’s kingdom in Bashan. **5** All these cities were fortified with high walls and with gates and bars, and there were also a great many unwallled villages. **6** We completely destroyed[a] them, as we had done with Sihon king of Heshbon, destroying[b] every city—men, women and children. **7** But all the livestock and the plunder from their cities we carried off for ourselves.

8 So at that time we took from these two kings of the Amorites the territory east of the Jordan, from the Arnon Gorge as far as Mount Hermon. **9** (Hermon is called Sirion by the Sidonians; the Amorites call it Senir.) **10** We took all the towns on the plateau, and all Gilead, and all Bashan as far as Salekah and Edrei, towns of Og’s kingdom in Bashan. **11** (Og king of Bashan was the last of the Rephaites. His bed was decorated with iron and was more than nine cubits long and four cubits wide.[c] It is still in Rabbah of the Ammonites.)

The Arnon River was the north border of Edom. That’s about where they destroyed Sihon in his capital of Heshbon. Then they went further north into the territory of Moab which was controlled by the Amorite King Og of Bashan (Golan Heights). So they took what became known as the “Trans Jordan.”

A THIRD MAJOR REASON FOR THE DETOUR AROUND THE DEAD SEA IS that the taking of the Trans Jordan land of Sihon and Og—the Plains of Moab and the heights of Bashan also known as “Gilead” is that this provided a staging area for the campaign to take the land. Some of the tribes wanted this land, namely Reuben, Gad and Manasseh. They will leave their wives and children there and form a 40,000 man army all by themselves.

A FOURTH REASON for coming this way is that Israel now controlled the EAST Bank and so had backside protection as it moved against Canaan west of the Jordan.

MOSES GIVES HIS FAREWELL:

HE reviews the law – Deuteronomy 5 repeats the TEN COMMANDMENTS,.
HE reminds them of their history and heritage.
HE reinforces the lessons of their past.
HE challenges them for their future including the commission to be a blessing.
HE redlines the power of God's presence.
HE re-energizes their capacity militarily, psychologically and spiritually for destiny that lies ahead.
He lays out the blessings and curses and makes them commit to repeat them in a great ceremony at SHECHEM by repeating the blessings and the curses on the slopes of Mounts Ebal and Gerizim.
(Deut. 28 and Josh 8)

AND THEN Moses climbs Mt. Nebo, looks over into the Promised Land and dies. God buries him.

Intervening Episode of Balaam and Balak (Numbers 22-25) gives example for how the peoples of the land can be a snare to Israel. Balaam is used despite himself and Balak to confirm the promises of God to Israel.

Boundaries directed by God:

Numbers 34: 1 Then the LORD said to Moses, 2“Give these instructions to the Israelites: When you come into the land of Canaan, which I am giving you as your special possession, these will be the boundaries. 3The southern portion of your country will extend from the wilderness of Zin, along the edge of Edom. The southern boundary will begin on the east at the Dead Sea.* 4It will then run south past Scorpion Pass* in the direction of Zin. Its southernmost point will be Kadesh-barnea, from which it will go to Hazar-addar, and on to Azmon. 5From Azmon the boundary will turn toward the Brook of Egypt and end at the Mediterranean Sea.* 6“Your western boundary will be the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea. 7“Your northern boundary will begin at the Mediterranean Sea and run east to Mount Hor, 8then to Lebo-hamath, and on through Zedad 9and Ziphron to Hazar-enan. This will be your northern boundary. 10“The eastern boundary will start at Hazar-enan and run south to Shepham, 11then down to Riblah on the east side of Ain. From there the boundary will run down along the eastern edge of the Sea of Galilee,* 12and then along the Jordan River to the Dead Sea. **These are the boundaries of your land.”**

BIG IDEA: TAKING THE GATEWAY CITY—JERICHO



Israel's armies and people led by Joshua crossed the Jordan River at a time when the River's flow was likely full. It could be the river was 12 feet deep with swirling and dangerous currents. It is recounted as an act of heroism in Israel's Chronicles (1 Chron 12:15)

Then the Israelites were circumcised. –Joshua 5.

Only then did the siege and conquest of Jericho begin and end.

It must be noted that Joshua's name transliterated from Hebrew is *Yeshua* which means "The Lord will rescue." It is the same name given to the Son of Mary and Joseph.

Jericho had an ancient and storied history and heritage. It is oldest known excavated city on the planet. John Bright says Jericho goes back to as early as 10,000 BC. Kathleen Kenyon excavated down to 8000 BC. *See slides.*

Jericho was the Gateway from the east because the fords of the Jordan were there. The Jordan, the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee formed the rest of the western wall of Canaan. AND now that Israel controlled the East Bank, Israel could move to DIVIDE AND CONQUER the promised land.

Consider the other main possible approach, the Mediterranean Trade Route. If Israel had threatened that super corridor, international war could have destroyed them. Now, entering through the "back door," all they had to deal with was the Canaanites, not Egypt and Mesopotamia as well.

RAHAB AND THE SCARLET ROPE: Consider the implications. Does God care about the people of Canaan?

The walls of Jericho fall OUTWARD. Therefore, there is no destruction level even though the whole city is "devoted" to the Lord. *They devoted the city to the Lord and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.—Joshua 6:21*

The word used in Hebrew is cherem. "Devoted" means destroyed in total because of a sacred duty. What is the sacred duty here? (Remember Genesis 15:16)

Why does God forbid the rebuilding of Jericho considering its extremely strategic location?

Joshua 6:26 *At that time Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: "Cursed before the Lord is the one who undertakes to rebuild this city, **Jericho**: "At the cost of his firstborn son he will lay its foundations; at the cost of his youngest he will set up its gates."*

1 Kings 16:34 *In Ahab's time, Hiel of Bethel rebuilt **Jericho**. He laid its foundations at the cost of his firstborn son Abiram, and he set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, in accordance with the word of the Lord spoken by Joshua son of Nun.*

The covetousness of Achan is utterly intolerable: Compromise now with Canaanite/ Amorite practices would ultimately doom Israel. God wanted Israel to be clear: Keep your boundaries. This should have acted as a singular warning of the destruction that would come by disobedience.

Then AI was taken. These were "twin cities" that stood at the entrance of the central Aijalon Valley.

Then they went and did what Moses Commanded since they now had access to the central city in Israel's history: Shechem. See Joshua 8: 30-35. They divided the people and read the blessings and curses from the *slopes of Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerazim.*

BIG IDEA: THE SOUTH FALLS

Having split the land in two by conquering the Aijalon Valley guard cities, Joshua destroys the Southern Alliance.



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Gibeon tricks Joshua and Israel. But that enables Israel to “take” that most important city and location without a fight. Notice the Gibeonites were “Hivites” while the other five kings are called “Amorites.”

Then Joshua must defend Gibeon against an alliance that forms out of fear and loathing of the Gibeonites’ betrayal of their fellow Canaanites. Five Canaanite kings from the power towns in the south attack Gibeon but find Joshua and Israel’s armies are ready to repel them. Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon were and remained enemies of Israel, though Joshua conducted a mop-up campaign against each. (Josh 10. 10-43)

BIG IDEA: Northern Coalition Responds

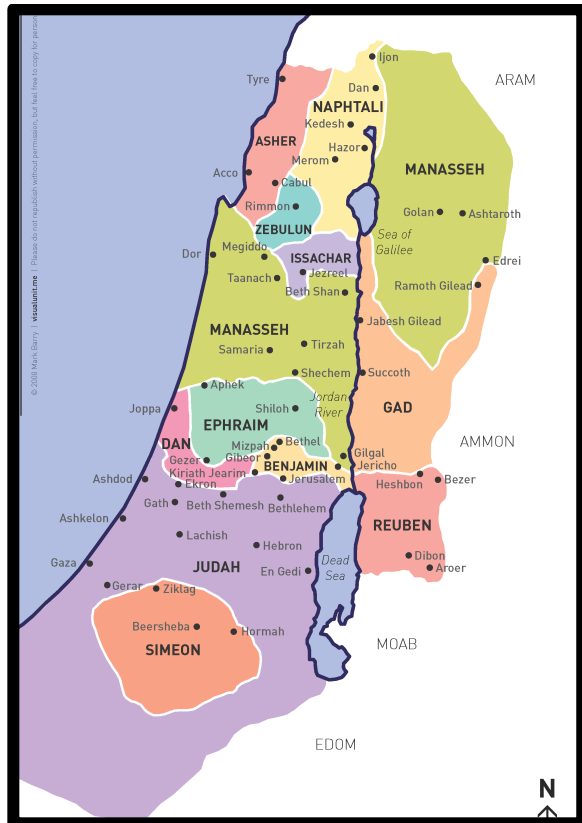


Jabin of Hazor, the chief fortified city up in the Galilee region, gathered a coalition and Joshua defeats them. He then razes Hazor. [This will be done again by Deborah and Barak in Judges 4-5.]

So with that Joshua concludes that Joshua has essentially conquered the land.

But the Lord tells him: *When Joshua had grown old, the Lord said to him, "You are now very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over..."* (Joshua 13.1)

Then the land is divided as in this map:



The Covenant is once more renewed at SHECHEM where Joshua summons the people before his death and he makes them commit to serve the Lord. And they raise a memorial stone. Joshua gives them this charge:

14 “Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. **15** But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” --Joshua 24.

HISTORICAL SUPPLEMENT for BEACHHEAD FOR BLESSING

John Bright – *History of Israel*

Conquest in light of evidence:

- a. Not a single coherent account of Conquest presented in Bible.

Josh 1-12 present a complete cleaning out of the land

Josh 13-21 – apportionment of empty land to the 12 tribes

BUT

Jdg 1 and Jsh 13.2-6; 15.13-19,63; 23: 7-13 show awareness of incomplete conquest.

- b. Some have thought therefore, Joshua was storied form of what was really a sort of INFILTRATION rather than CONQUEST.

DATE FOR ARRIVAL IS ISRAEL IN CANAAN [Hess, IVP OT Commentary]

1 Kg 6.1 480 years from entrance of Canaan to building of Solomon's temple – literal interpretation would put entry at about 1400 BC

But, 480 = 12 generations – symbolic number. This would allow for conquest archeology to fit evidence from Bright below

Certain that Pharaoh Merneptah fought Israel —maybe at the instigation of the kings of the city-states in the south? – from the Merneptah stele dated at 1207. So Israel is certainly in Canaan by 1207 BC.

Or we could be dealing with several entrances into Canaan – which would allow Jericho to be destroyed about 1400 and then later capture of cities of Canaan.

The ARCHEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE of CONQUEST [Bright]

“Clearly shows that a major upheaval engulfed Palestine as the Late Bronze Age ended” (p130)
numbers of towns said in the Bible to have been destroyed show this from the evidence in late 13th Cent.

Jericho:

Very little is known of late bronze Jericho – almost every trace has vanished. No real wall found, though possible for those walls to have been rebuilt middle bronze walls destroyed in 1550 BC – Bright → “One is forced for the present to suspend judgment.”

Jim Martin: the lack of further evidence is evidence – that the curse on Jericho and God's prohibition from rebuilding this back door protection of Israel was heeded by the Israelites. **Js 6.26.**

Ai:

Also problematical

the most likely Tell (et-Tell) near Bethel destroyed mid third Millennium and not occupied again until the 12th Century. Therefore, some other location?

?Bethel – story told in Jg 1.22-16—only a mile apart—Bethel was known to have been destroyed in the latter 13th CBC by terrific fire leaving layer of ash & debris several feet thick.

Debir: Js 10.38

(Kirjah-sepher [Js 10.38ff] completely destroyed by intense conflagration [Tell Beit Mirsim])

Lachish: Js 10.31

[Tell ed-Duweir] likewise ravaged and left unoccupied for two more centuries.

Eglon: Js 10.34 also destroyed in late 13th CBC [Tell el-Hesi]

Hazor: Js 11.10 [Tell el-Qedah.] likewise destroyed in latter 13th cbc—largest city in Palestine

EVIDENCE FROM BRIGHT THAT DOES NOT FIT LATE BRONZE 13TH CENT CONQUEST

Gibeon – Js 10.2 “great city, like one of the royal cities.” Seems not to have been significant in 13th cent

NOTE: 1 Kg 3.4-5 Solomon went to the *principal high place* at Gibeon to offer 1000 burnt offerings – God met him there in the dream at the beginning of his reign. Also, David said to have left Tabernacle at Gibeon – after he brought it to Jerusalem with rejoicing and dancing. 2 Chron 16.39 – interesting!

Hebron – Josh 10.36f – no Late Bronze remains so far found

Arad & Hormah –Nu 21. 1-4 & Js 12.14 seem not to have existed

Debir depends on site identification

Response by Bright:

Site identification is in dispute – Ai, Debir

Gibeon, Hebron, Khirbet Rabud—excavation is partial

Absence of destruction level does not mean necessarily that a city was not taken by Israel – if conquest was in any sense an “inside” job, conquest does not mean destruction

Conquest was truly a long drawn out affair – Jerusalem is not taken until by David—2 Sam 5.6ff

“there can be little doubt that the main phase of the conquest took place approximately in the transition from the late Bronze to the Iron Age (shortly before or more probably shortly after 1200 BC and that it was far more than a largely peaceful infiltration of nomadic pastoralists [sic], but involved a bitter struggle and a major political and socioeconomic upheaval.”

[p 133]

Shechem was never mentioned in Josh as having been conquered. No destruction level exists, either in archeology.

During the Amarna period of the 14th CBC we have evidence of Hapiru people seizing this central hill country. Could these people simply have coalesced with Israel? Temple of Baal-berith/ El-berith (Jg 9.4, 46)

Jacob erected altar at Shechem to El-Elohe-Israel [“El, God of the Patriarch” – Bright]

Josh 8.30ff—Altar on Mt. Ebal with reading of the law from Gerizim & Ebal with the blessings and the curses.

see Joshua 24--Joshua recommits to the covenant at Shechem.

THE BIBLE PROJECT

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK (16)

Look back on all the lesson materials. Mark questions left unanswered.

Review BIG IDEAS.

Continue to memorize the Markers through the book of Joshua.

Catch up on your reading.

Get ready for a major review and discussion which will then lead to what amounts to a mid-term exam.

It will contain LESSONS, BIG IDEAS AND MARKERS. There will be thought questions as well regarding some of connection between the big ideas.

The test will come, if the Lord and you will, between Thanksgiving and Christmas.