

Plan and Purpose Bible Lesson #III-25

(Read Joshua 9:1-15) At this point Joshua and the Israelites are still camped at Gilgal which is very near Jericho. They hadn't yet ventured very far into the land to know who lived where. So Joshua is at least a little cautious and asks the people of Gibeon if they lived in the land of Canaan to which the Gibeonites lied and said that they lived in a very far country and proved this by the old clothes and wine bottles they had and the dried and moldy bread that they had that they said they had taken hot out of the ovens as they began their journey. Finally Joshua agreed to make a treaty with them without consulting God first. Apparently part of this treaty was a provision that Israel would protect these Hivites from Gibeon should they be attacked. Gibeon, it turns out was only about 20 plus miles from Gilgal.

(Read Joshua 9:16-21) Three days after making the treaty, Joshua heard who these people really were. He marched his army to Gibeon, a less than three day march, but because the Israelites had made the treaty, even though the Hivites had lied about who they were, they would not fight against them because they had sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel. But they did make them servants of the Israelites as the Scriptures says, hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation.

(Read Joshua 9:22-27) When Joshua asked them why they had beguiled him and the princes of Israel, they simply said they were afraid of them because of the LORD their God. When they were informed that they would be servants of the Israelites, they voluntarily agreed to do so.

However, trouble came not directly from these Hivites, but because of the treaty. (Read Joshua 10:1-7) I think it worth noting that with the possible exception of the cities of Jericho and Ai, God caused the Canaanites to come against the Israelites first rather than the Israelites coming against the Canaanites first. In this case we see that when the king of Jerusalem heard what had happened to the Gibeonites, he confederated with four other kings to come against the Gibeonites because of the treaty they had made with the Israelites. Because, as part of the treaty, the Israelites agreed to protect the Gibeonites, the Gibeonites were quick to seek help from the Israelites. So Joshua and his army responded to Gibeon.

(Read Joshua 10:8-14) This day of battle is often referred to as Joshua's long day. The book of Jasher says that the sun stood still for "six and thirty moments." The translator of the book of Jasher provides a note saying that the word he translates as "moments" literally means "times" and then adds his comment, "What proportion of time, I cannot understand by this term, never used in scripture to express any division of time, so I have translated it 'moments.'" Joshua 10:13 says, "**(the sun) hastened not to go down about a whole day.**" This still doesn't tell us how long the day was, but based on the two quotes, my speculation is that either the normal 12 hour day lasted 36 hours or the normal 24 hour day lasted 36 hours. Either way, this is quite a miracle. I once read, and I can't find it now, that this could have been brought about by the earth moving on its axis, which as I understand it could account today for true north and magnetic north being different.

At any rate, Joshua was able to completely destroy the army of these five kings. However, the five kings themselves had escaped the battle. (Read Joshua 10:15-27) Joshua had guards keep the kings in the cave, once he heard where they were, until he had time to deal with them. He then used them to demonstrate to the Israelite soldiers that they could overcome their enemies by having them come and

put their foot on the necks of these kings. He then killed the kings and hung them until evening. I urge you to read the rest of Joshua 10. Joshua and the Israelite army are moving south and taking the cities as they go. They went south to Hebron and Debir and after taking those cities turned west to Gaza and the Mediterranean coast and then went back north to Gilgal.

(Read Joshua 11:1-9) This takes the Israelites north pretty much to the border with Lebanon when they destroyed Hazor. Not all of the Canaanites have been destroyed or driven out of the land, but the majority has and it is time to start dividing up the land. Chapter 12 gives a list of all the kings of the land of Canaan that Joshua and the Israelites conquered. The book of Jasher says that the Israelites were five years accomplishing what they had done at this point.

Chapter 13 lists some of the territory that still needed to be conquered. However, Joshua begins the process of dividing the land and left at least part of the responsibility of driving out the remaining Canaanites to the individual tribes in the land that they inherited. We have already seen that the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh chose their inheritance on the east side of the Jordan River. Chapter 14 gives the boundaries of the inheritance that Judah received. Their lot was determined by the land that Caleb chose. (Read Joshua 14:6-15) Caleb chose land on the south end of the land around the city of Hebron. Chapter 15 then goes into detail of the borders of the land of Judah. Verse 63 tells us that the Jebusites occupied Jerusalem and the Judahites could not drive them out, so the author of Joshua says they were still dwelling with the children of Judah at the time he was writing this history.

Chapter 16 and 17 gives the boundaries of the tribe of Joseph, or rather the tribes of Ephraim and the half tribe of Manasseh. Their territory was in the northern part of the land. This was presumably by the choice of Joshua as his promise as to the land he wanted was the same as the promise to Caleb. They too failed to drive out all of the Canaanites from their land, a fact that we will find causes severe problems later on. This then left 7 tribes to divide the rest of the land. Ephraim and Manasseh, though sons of Joseph, were considered separate tribes in accordance with the blessing that Jacob gave to Joseph and his two sons just before he died. This made a total of 13 tribes, but the tribe of Levi was not to receive a land inheritance. They did receive some cities, but not the land in general, so this left the land to be divided among the 12 tribes.

Chapters 18 and 19 then give the borders of the lands of the remaining 7 tribes as they received them by lot. Six cities were selected as the cities of refuge. Kedesh in Galilee, Shechem, and Kirjatharba or Hebron were chosen on the west side of the Jordan and Bezer, Ramoth and Golan were chosen on the east side. The Levites then came to Joshua and the leaders of Israel and asked for the cities that they had been promised. Chapter 21 gives us a list of these cities. These cities were given by lot to the families within the tribe of Levi out of each of the territories that had been given to the rest of the tribes.

In chapter 22, Joshua sends the Reubenites, the Gaddites and the half tribe of Manasseh home to their land on the east side of the Jordan. However, a problem develops. (Read Joshua 22:10-34) As we see by the text, it was a misunderstanding, but it nearly had very serious consequences. Fortunately cooler heads prevailed and a catastrophe was averted.

The people settled into the land and all went well for a while. (Read Joshua 23:1-16) Joshua is old and as he says in verse 14, **“this day I am going the way of all the earth.”** He is concerned that the people will continue to follow all that they have been taught. He calls for all the leadership of Israel to

come and then he exhorts them to follow that which they have been taught and to make sure their people do the same. He warns them of the consequences should they fail to do this.

In chapter 24 Joshua then calls all the people together to Shechem and then gives a final exhortation to the leadership. He recounts their history starting with when Abraham lived on the east of the Euphrates River, when God first called him, up to the present time. (Read Joshua 24) It is in this speech that we have the saying Joshua is famous for. Verse 15 ends with, **“but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”** The people agreed to serve the LORD also and we’re told that they did during the life of Joshua and the elders that outlived Joshua and had known all of the miracles that God had performed for Israel during the exodus.

Finally we’re told that Joshua died at the age of 110 and was buried in his inheritance on Mt. Ephraim. We’re told that Joseph’s bones that the children of Israel had brought with them from Egypt were also buried in Shechem in a plot of land that Jacob purchased from Hamor, the father of Shechem before Simeon and Levi killed them.

I might mention that not only did the Israelites bring the bones of Joseph with them, but the book of Jasher tells of their bringing the bones, or bodies, of all of the sons of Jacob with them and burying them in their specific land inheritances.

We’re told that Eleazar, the son of Aaron also died and was buried in a hill that was owned by his son Phinehas which was given to him by the Ephraimites.

The Septuagint (The Greek Translation of the Old Testament Hebrew text) does not end this last chapter of Joshua as the King James and other translations do, but seems to add the following as an afterthought:

“In that day the children of Israel took the ark of God, and carried it about among them; and Phinees exercised the priest’s office in the room of Eleazar his father till he died, and he was buried in his own place Gabaar: but the children of Israel departed every one to their place, and to their own city: and the children of Israel worshipped Astarte, and Astaroth, and the gods of the nations round about them; and the Lord delivered them into the hands of Eglom king of Moab and he ruled over them eighteen years.”

We’ll continue our study with the book of Judges next week. JRL