



## THE CENTURY OF JOSHUA

Moses' mission had ended on Mount Nebo. As we saw in Deuteronomy, Moses had been called by God to guide the people and to make them "go up" from slavery in Egypt to the doors of the Promised Land. The people had arrived there, at the very edge of that land that God had given them as their heritage and at that moment, it was Joshua, the first Jesus (since in Hebrew Joshua and Jesus have the same spelling) who was going to take the people to the Promised Land.

### *A people of immigrants*

To speak of a people may be going too far. In fact, they were no more than a few clans who had been led by Moses through the desert and who had no doubt grown by incorporating the new elements that they had encountered in the sacred place of Kadesh-Barnea. However few these nomads, now entrusted to Joshua, may have been, they were bringing such a rich experience with them that after joining the other tribes that had not abandoned Palestine, they were to transform that experience into the spiritual heritage of everyone.

In the presence of the Canaanites who were living in cities and cultivating the lands surrounding them, these nomads became gradually aware of their originality and their identity. The One who had revealed himself to Moses at Sinai and who had multiplied his marvels for the fugitives from Egypt, Yahweh-God, made a covenant with these nomadic people, with these tribes of Bedouins. Yahweh-God gave them his Law and his promise at the same time. From that moment on, they would be the people that God chose for himself and he would be their God. It was during that period of Joshua and the Judges that the people of Israel would be really established.

However, even though they must have felt blessed by Yahweh, these nomads must have felt admiration for the Canaanites among whom they were living. Historians tell us that this period of the second millennium before Christ was the most prestigious period of the history of Palestine at the cultural level. Compared to the Canaanite cities with their fortifications, their Temples and their palaces with coffered cedar ceilings, decorated with marble inlays, these nomads seemed to have a very poor standard of living. The same contrast was found at the religious level: the Canaanites of the cities had countless celebrations, feasts and rituals in full view of the Bedouins who did not even have a temple.

The temptation was great and the books of Joshua and Judges, as well as the books of Samuel and Kings, would constantly show us how easily the people of Israel let themselves be carried away. Attracted by that brilliant civilization, they abandoned their own customs and their faith at the same time, to adopt the rites of the inhabitants of the country. During this entire period of the kings, the prophets would never stop reminding the people of the demands of the covenant and of fidelity to Yahweh.

### *The Truth about the Conquest*

A people seduced by Canaanite culture, men of God who resisted and proclaimed the call to fidelity, such was the permanent conflict that the texts of the Bible present to us with regard to this period. The book of Joshua seems to present a systematic conquest of the country carried out by Joshua as the head of the tribes but in reality, things must have happened in a very different way.

City people and nomads were very different and the fact that they were forced to live together on the same territory did not prevent conflicts. At times, the Canaanites won and at times, the nomads did. However, little by little, the tribes began to impose their own law on the early inhabitants of the country and in Saul's days, the nomads of former times who had become city people as the years went by, had seized power in the country. First, David and then, Solomon were to confirm this situation.

Active minorities are the ones who make up history. When we speak of the Church and of its impact in the world, oftentimes we are only dealing with a minority of believers. The groups of prophets, who several centuries after Joshua, compiled the traditions and the documents on the conquest, did not claim to give us an exact and complete history of that conquest. We should not allow ourselves to be deceived by the triumphant aspect of these accounts in which all of Israel obtains amazing victories with Joshua: the book of Joshua relates small things that made up a great history.

## THE BOOK OF JOSHUA AND ITS AUTHORS

When this book was written, the history of Joshua was lost in a past whose many details had already been forgotten. However, a few images and memories were sufficient to illustrate the vocation of the people of God and the meaning of their adventures.

Joshua inaugurates the series of books that the Hebrew Bible calls Early Prophets, meaning by this title that these historical books tell us about a history that started long before the prophets. However, these books were conceived and written in the prophets' groups. The entire series, that takes us from Joshua to the books of Kings, actually forms a unit with a reflection on Deuteronomy. Today, we usually speak of *Deuteronomic* history to refer to this series.

For the most part, the book of Joshua was written in the last days of the Kingdom of Judah. Thus, the idea that the land of Palestine was God's great gift to this people and the sign of his covenant, was an invitation to find in the past a correspondence between the conquests and fidelity to the covenant, between infidelity and failure.

The author was familiar with the days of Joshua, by way of many sources: oral traditions, no doubt very distorted due to the 500 years that had elapsed, documents that may have been kept in Israel's ancient sanctuaries, like the one in Gilgal and documents, going back to the days of the monarchy, concerning the official land register of the tribes.

The book must have been modified at the time of the Babylonian Exile. This was the time when priests intervened and imposed another interpretation in many passages. At the same time, they emphasized the liturgical aspect of important events.

## I will be with you

**1** • After the death of Moses, Yahweh spoke to Joshua, the son of Nun and the minister of Moses, and said to him: <sup>2</sup>“My servant Moses is dead; therefore, the hour has come for you to cross the Jordan River, and all the people shall go with you to the land which I give to the sons of Israel. <sup>3</sup>I give you all the places where you set your feet, as I promised Moses. <sup>4</sup>Your frontiers will extend from the mountain of Lebanon in the north, to the desert in the south, as far as the great Euphrates in the east and the Great Sea in the west. <sup>5</sup>As long as you live, no one will be able to stand against you. I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not leave you or abandon you. <sup>6</sup>Be valiant and have courage for I will give this people the land I swore to their fathers I would give them. <sup>7</sup>Therefore, be brave and faithfully fulfill the whole Law which Moses, my servant, gave you. Do not turn aside from it either to the right or to the left, and you shall succeed wherever you go. <sup>8</sup>Constantly read the book of this

Law and meditate on it day and night that you may truly do what it says. So shall your plans be fulfilled and you shall succeed in everything. <sup>9</sup>It is I who command you; be strong, then, and be valiant. Do not tremble or be afraid, because Yahweh, your God, is with you wherever you go.”

<sup>10</sup>Joshua ordered the secretaries of the people: <sup>11</sup>“Pass through the camp and give this command: ‘Store up enough food for, in three days’ time, you shall cross the Jordan and enter the land which Yahweh, your God, will give you’.”

<sup>12</sup>To the people of the tribes of Reuben and Gad and to half of the tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, <sup>13</sup>“Remember the command of Moses, the servant of Yahweh; Yahweh has provided you with a place of rest and has given you all this region. <sup>14</sup>The women and children, as well as the livestock, shall remain on this side of the Jordan, in the region which Moses gave you; but you who are valiant shall cross over, armed, ahead of your brothers and shall help them <sup>15</sup>until Yahweh gives them rest, as he has given you, that they may also conquer the land which Yahweh, our God, gives them. So you shall return to the region which Moses gave us and take possession of that land at the east of the Jordan.”

<sup>16</sup>They answered Joshua: “We will do all you have commanded us and go

13  
Num 32

• **1.1** The hero of the book is Joshua, son of Nun, who succeeded Moses (Dt 34:9). The conquest of the Promised Land is narrated here as if Joshua had directed everything. In this way the image of a savior is enhanced (“Joshua,” like “Jesus,” means Yahweh-saves) who leads the people of God into their land and to their rest. Joshua prefigures Jesus, as we are told in the Letter to the Hebrews (4:8). The phrase “Yahweh said to Joshua” should not be taken literally. This merely means that, in taking such an initiative, Joshua fulfilled Yahweh’s plan. Like all the prophets seen later in Israel, Joshua appears here as the “servant of Yahweh” who day and night ponders his word (Ps 1:2). The first biblical image that will come to the mind of the primitive Christian community when speaking of Jesus will be that of the “holy servant of God” (Acts 3:13; 3:26; 4:27; 4:30).

*I give you all the places where you set your feet.* In this way we ought to expect God’s benefits. He does not do the work for us; instead, he sees to it that we make the necessary effort. The land which Yahweh gives to the Israelites will belong to them once they conquer it.

Sometimes, religious people have the reputation of being unconcerned about social problems, and of not committing themselves to tasks involving the common good. It is true that the Gospel does not speak of earthly conquests, but biblical history shows that the Gospel could not have been understood deeply except by people who had fought to conquer their land and to forge their own identity, so as later to create their own culture. The Church knows by experience that evangelization cannot be divorced from human development.

wherever you send us. Just as we have obeyed Moses, so shall we obey you in the same way. <sup>17</sup>May Yahweh, your God, be with you as he was with Moses. <sup>18</sup>He who contradicts your words and disobeys your orders shall die. But be valiant and courageous.”

**The history of Rahab**

Heb  
11:31;  
Jas 2:25;  
Mt 1:5

**2** • <sup>1</sup>Joshua sent two spies secretly from Shittim with the following order “Go and look over the land well, especially the city of Jericho.”

The spies went and as soon as they came to Jericho, they went to the house of the prostitute named Rahab. <sup>2</sup>But someone told the king of Jericho: “Some Israelites have entered here tonight to spy on us.” <sup>3</sup>So the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab: “Send those men out of your house because they came to spy on the land.” <sup>4</sup>But the woman had hidden them, so she said: “It is true; they came to my house but I did not know where they came from. <sup>5</sup>And at nightfall, shortly before the city gates were to be closed, they went out. I do not know where they went, but hurry and you will surely overtake them.” <sup>6</sup>The woman had hidden them on the roof of the house, under the stalks of flax which she kept there.

<sup>7</sup>The pursuers went to search for them by the road leading to the valley of the Jordan, and as they went out, the city gates were closed.

<sup>8</sup>Then the woman went up to where she had hidden the spies of Joshua, <sup>9</sup>and she said to them: “I know that Yahweh, your God, has given this land to you; we are frightened and the inhabitants of the land tremble before you. <sup>10</sup>We know how Yahweh dried up the waters of the Red Sea to let you cross when you came out of Egypt. We know what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who lived at

the other side of the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you destroyed by anathema.

<sup>11</sup>The news has frightened us, and everyone has lost courage because of you, for Yahweh, your God, is God in heaven above as he is on earth below.

<sup>12</sup>Now then, swear to me by Yahweh that just as I have been faithful to you, so shall you be towards my family, <sup>13</sup>and respect the life of my father, mother, brothers and sisters, and all that belong to them.”

<sup>14</sup>The men answered: “Provided that you do not reveal our talk, then we will pay back life for life when Yahweh hands over to us this land, and we will deal generously and faithfully with you.”

<sup>15</sup>Then she let them down by a rope through the window, since her house was built into the city wall. <sup>16</sup>But she said to them: “Go through the mountains so that you do not meet those who pursue you. Remain in hiding for three days, until they return, and then you may go your way.” <sup>17</sup>They answered: “See how we shall fulfill our oath. <sup>18</sup>When we enter this land, tie this scarlet cord as a sign on the window through which we have escaped. Bring into your house your father, mother, brothers and sisters, and all your relatives. <sup>19</sup>If any of them leaves the house, he shall be the one responsible for his death, and the guilt will not be ours. But if anyone who is with you is killed, then may the punishment for his death come upon us. <sup>20</sup>However, be careful not to reveal our plan. If you do, then we are freed from the oath we have sworn.” <sup>21</sup>Rahab said to them: “So be it.” And after she had sent them off, she tied the scarlet cord to the window.

<sup>22</sup>The men went into the mountains and hid there for three days, until their pursuers had returned. These men had searched in vain for them everywhere.

<sup>23</sup>Then the two spies came down again

Acts 9:25

• **2.1** A prostitute receives Joshua’s spies. They, in turn, promise to spare her life and that of her entire household. The huge walls of Jericho had been destroyed a century earlier but new inhabitants had settled inside without bothering to repair them. We may imagine all this people assembled together in a house which was built from the debris of the same walls.

This minor incident has symbolic value. The author of the book places on the lips of Rahab a profession of faith in Yahweh, the living God, who will entrust the country to the Hebrew people. Because of this faith, Rahab will be saved.

Jewish tradition recognizes her as an ancestress of king David, and the Gospel mentions her name in the genealogy of Jesus (Mt 1:5).

from the mountains and, crossing the Jordan River, came to Joshua, son of Nun, and gave him an account of their mission and everything that had happened. <sup>24</sup>They said to Joshua: "Yahweh has given all this land into our hands; their inhabitants already tremble before us."

### Crossing the Jordan

**3**<sup>•</sup> <sup>1</sup>Early in the morning, Joshua rose and set out from Shittim with all the people of Israel and came to the Jordan River. There they encamped while waiting to cross the river.

<sup>2</sup>After three days, the officers went around the camp <sup>3</sup>and ordered the Israelites: "When you see the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh go by, carried by the priests from the tribe of Levi, then you shall set out from your camp and follow it, <sup>4</sup>that you may know the way you shall go. Because you have never been that way before. But you shall follow it at a distance of a thousand meters. Do not go near it."

<sup>5</sup>Joshua said to the Israelites: "Purify yourselves, for tomorrow Yahweh

will be in your midst doing wonders." <sup>6</sup>And Joshua ordered the priests: "Take the Ark of the Covenant and cross the river at the head of the people."

<sup>7</sup>Then Yahweh said to Joshua: "Today I will begin to make you great in the eyes of Israel and they shall know that I am with you as I was with Moses. <sup>8</sup>Give this order to the priests who carry the Ark of the Covenant: As soon as you come to the banks of the Jordan, stand still in the river." <sup>9</sup>And Joshua said to the Israelites: "Come nearer and listen to the words of Yahweh, our God. <sup>10</sup>Do you want a sign that Yahweh, the living God, is in your midst, he who drives away before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, as well as the Gergashites, Jebusites and Amorites? <sup>11</sup>See, the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the earth is going to cross the Jordan before you. <sup>12</sup>Now, choose twelve men from the twelve tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. <sup>13</sup>When the priests who carry the Ark of the Lord of all the earth put their feet into the water of the Jordan, the water coming from upstream shall stop flowing and stand in one single mass."

<sup>14</sup>When the people set out from their camp to cross the Jordan, the

19:10

• **3.1** The Jordan has not always been the boundary of Israel: according to its victories or defeats Israel possessed the land to the east of the Jordan or lost that in the west. Nevertheless the Jordan has always been recognized as the border of the Promised Land of the people of God. Consequently we see how the tribes of Reuben and Gad, already settled to the east of the river, are constrained by Moses, and later by Joshua to cross the river with their families: only on this condition will they be recognized as true heirs of the Promised Land. That is why the passage of the Jordan led by Joshua has had such importance in both Jewish and Christian traditions.

In this crossing as in that of the Reed Sea, God alone has the major role. It is at the moment that the bearers of the Ark, on which rests the Glory of Yahweh, touches the river, that it ceases to flow. When the bearers go up from the river, the water begins to flow again.

God, resting on his Ark, opens and closes the gate of the Promised Land (Rev 3:7). Like-

wise Jesus, the new Ark of the Covenant, in whom resides the fullness of the divinity (Col 2:9), will go down into the water of the Jordan to open the gates of the Promised Land. This crossing is, together with that of the Reed Sea, the baptism of the people of God. Reading this narrative, we understand that this book is not a military record of Joshua's conquest; it is a liturgical book in which we see God at work: he grants or withdraws his blessings according to the fidelity or infidelity of his people. At the end of the book, we see his people invited to make a solemn profession of faith (Jos 24). Each time that the Church invites us, like Joshua, to renew our profession of faith, whether at baptism or the paschal vigil, we are taking part in a long established Christian tradition.

*The water stood still, forming something like a dam.* In 1267 a landslide took place in the Jordan valley much higher than Jericho, leaving the river bed dry until a current washed out the obstacle a few hours later. A similar

priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant went before them. <sup>15</sup>There was much water in the Jordan, for it was overflowing its banks at this time of the barley harvest. Nevertheless, when those who carried the Ark went down to the river and their feet touched the edge of the water, the water from upstream stopped flowing.

<sup>16</sup>The water stood still, forming something like a dam very far from that place, near Adam, the neighboring city of Zarethan. The water flowing down to the Dead Sea was completely cut off, and so the people could cross opposite Jericho. <sup>17</sup>The priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant remained in the middle of the river which dried up, until all the Israelites had crossed the Jordan.

**4** <sup>1</sup>Once the whole nation had crossed, <sup>2</sup>Yahweh said to Joshua: "Choose twelve men, one from each tribe, <sup>3</sup>and give them the following order: Take twelve stones from the riverbed of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests stood still. Bring them with you and put them where you will encamp tonight."

<sup>4</sup>Joshua then called the twelve men he had chosen from the twelve tribes of Israel <sup>5</sup>and ordered them: "Walk to the Ark, up to the middle of the Jordan and take from there a stone for each tribe and

carry it upon your shoulder. <sup>6</sup>They will remain with you as a sign of what happened, so that when your children ask you in the future: What do these stones mean for you? <sup>7</sup>you may answer: When the Ark of Yahweh crossed the Jordan, the water parted before it. So these stones shall serve as a memorial to the Israelites forever."

<sup>8</sup>The Israelites carried out Joshua's order and picked up twelve stones from the riverbed of the Jordan, one for each tribe, just as Yahweh had ordered Joshua. They brought these to the place where they encamped and placed them there.

<sup>9</sup>Joshua piled up twelve stones on the riverbed of the Jordan, at the spot where the priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant stood. They are still there to this day. <sup>10</sup>The priests who carried the Ark stood in the middle of the Jordan until Joshua finished saying everything that Yahweh had ordered him. <sup>11</sup>Then when all the people had finished crossing the river, the Ark also crossed, and the priests walked at the head of the people again.

<sup>12</sup>The men from the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh went ahead armed, as Moses had ordered them to do. <sup>13</sup>They were about forty thousand, well-armed, and they marched before Yahweh, ready for battle, to the plains of Jericho.

<sup>14</sup>On that day, Yahweh exalted Joshua before all Israel, and henceforth they respected him all the days of his life as they had done with Moses.

phenomenon could have allowed Joshua and his people to enter the Promised Land dry foot after crossing the riverbed. The miracle lies in the fact that the event happens at the moment when Joshua and his followers are waiting for Yahweh to open a passage for them. God often uses natural causes to keep a seemingly impossible promise.

*What do these stones mean for you? (4:6)* What is the meaning of such a monument, of such a feast? Each time, this was answered by narrating some event in which Yahweh had helped his people. In Israel the faith was taught through similar questions. The Israelites did not have much knowledge of religion; yet every place in their land reminded them that God was the savior of his people.

Joshua pitches his camp in Gilgal from where he organizes his assaults, and he returns wisely to Gilgal after each victory before the Canaanite forces can regroup.

It is evident that several accounts which are not entirely in accord with one another are combined here. Did they put twelve stones in the camp (v. 3), or did they put them on the riverbed of the Jordan (v. 9)? It really does not matter. At best, these stones were already near Gilgal even before Joshua and the Israelites arrived; this was a sanctuary devoted to pagan cult. But after the conquest, the priests wanted to give them a religious meaning in consonance with their faith, as we saw in Exodus 12:15.

<sup>15</sup>Yahweh said to Joshua: <sup>16</sup>“Command the priests who carry the Ark of the Covenant to come up from the Jordan.” <sup>17</sup>Joshua, therefore, ordered them to come up from the river. <sup>18</sup>And when these priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh came up from the middle of the Jordan, when their feet touched the banks, the waters of the Jordan returned as abundantly as on previous days and overflowed its banks.

<sup>19</sup>It was on the tenth day of the first month when the people came up out of the Jordan and encamped in Gilgal, on the eastern border of Jericho. <sup>20</sup>There in Gilgal, Joshua set up the twelve stones taken from the riverbed of the Jordan.

<sup>4:6-7</sup> <sup>21</sup>Then Joshua said to the Israelites: “When your children ask you in the future what these stones mean, <sup>22</sup>then you shall tell them that the people of Israel crossed the Jordan without getting their feet wet, <sup>23</sup>for Yahweh, our God, dried up the waters of the Jordan before us just as he did to the Red Sea which he also dried up before us to let us cross. <sup>24</sup>He did this so that the people of this land may know the power of Yahweh, our God, and that you yourselves may fear him forever.”

<sup>14:21</sup>

### The Israelites are circumcised at Gilgal

**5** • <sup>1</sup>The kings of the Amorites on the west of the Jordan and all the kings of the Canaanites who lived in the neighboring lands of the Mediterranean Sea came to know how Yahweh dried up the bed of the Jordan for the Israelites to cross. So they lost their courage and spirit to face the Israelites.

<sup>2</sup>At that time, Yahweh said to Joshua: “Make flint knives and celebrate a new

<sup>Gen 17:10</sup>

circumcision for the sons of Israel.” <sup>3</sup>Joshua obeyed the order of Yahweh and circumcised the Israelites at a place called the Hill of the Foreskins.

<sup>4</sup>This is the reason why Joshua did this second circumcision: all the men of Israel who left Egypt were circumcised, but they died during their journey in the desert. <sup>5</sup>But all those born in the desert were not circumcised. <sup>6</sup>For the Israelites walked in the desert for forty years until the whole nation died—the whole generation who did not obey Yahweh. For Yahweh had sworn that they would not enter the land flowing with milk and honey which he promised to their ancestors. <sup>7</sup>But it was their children, whom Joshua circumcised.

<sup>8</sup>After circumcising all, they rested in the camp until they were healed. <sup>9</sup>Then Yahweh said to Joshua: “Today I have removed from you the shame of Egypt.” So the place is called Gilgal up to this day.

<sup>10</sup>The Israelites encamped in Gilgal where they celebrated the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. <sup>11</sup>On the following day, they ate of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain on that very day. <sup>12</sup>And from that day on when they ate of the produce of the land, the manna ceased.

There was no more manna for the Israelites, and that year they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan.

<sup>13</sup>When Joshua was near Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and saw before him a man with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua approached him and said: “Are you for us or for our enemies?” <sup>14</sup>And he

<sup>Num 22:22</sup>

<sup>23:20</sup>

• **5.1** At their first encampment, Joshua’s men celebrated their first religious cult performing circumcision (see Gen 17:10). In Israel, this was the sign of one’s entrance into the religious community. In order to insist on this obligation, the book notes that, upon entering the Holy Land, all the men were circumcised.

From that day on, *they ate of the produce of the land* (v. 11). See commentary on Exodus 16 for the explanations concerning the manna and legends about it.

Then begins a new era. Up to this time, the religion of the Israelites had been that of a nomadic people. Now begins a deep crisis which

will last until king David’s time, with the Israelites trying to adapt themselves to their new situation as farmers and city-dwellers and gradually evolving a kind of religion suitable for this new situation. This text goes even further: the time of the journey, the time of the march towards the Promised Land is over; the people have entered this land. The manna, nourishment for the journey, no longer falls and the people satisfy their hunger with the fruit of the country. So it will be at the end of time when all humanity will have reached the Father and his kingdom, no longer will the Church give people bread for the journey—what they will have is the eternal presence of God.

Dn 12:1;  
Rev 19:11

answered: "No, I have come as the commander of the army of Yahweh." Joshua lay prostrate on the ground, worshiped him and said: "What does my Lord ask of his servant?"<sup>15</sup> The commander of the army of Yahweh said to him: "Take off your sandals from your feet; the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so.

### The conquest of Jericho

**6**<sup>•</sup> The inhabitants of Jericho had closed the city and had fastened their bolts so that the Israelites could not enter. No one came in and no one went out.<sup>2</sup> But Yahweh said to Joshua: "I will give you the city, its king and all its men of war.<sup>3</sup> For this, you shall have to go around the city once every day for six days.<sup>4</sup> Seven priests shall go before the Ark bearing the seven trumpets used in the time of the Jubilee. On the seventh day, they shall march around the city seven times,<sup>5</sup> and when they blow the horn, all the people shall come up to attack, shouting their battle cry. At that moment, the walls of the city will fall and everyone shall enter straight ahead of him."

<sup>6</sup> Joshua, son of Nun, called the priests and said to them: "You shall carry the Ark of the Covenant; seven priests shall go ahead with the trumpets they use for the Jubilee."<sup>7</sup> Then Joshua said to the people: "You shall march around the city and the vanguard of the army shall go before the Ark of Yahweh."

<sup>8</sup> When Joshua finished speaking, the priests began to blow the seven trumpets they used to blow on the Feast of the Jubilee, and they went before the Ark of Yahweh.<sup>9</sup> The vanguard of the people went before the priests, and the rest of the people came after the Ark.<sup>10</sup> The trumpets blew continually. Joshua had given this order: "Do not shout or utter anything, nor let even a single word be heard, until the day comes when I say: Shout and cry out!"

<sup>11</sup> That day he had the Ark of Yahweh carried around the city once, then all returned to the camp where they spent the night.<sup>12</sup> On the following day, Joshua rose early in the morning<sup>13</sup> and the priests took the Ark and those who blew the seven trumpets again went before the Ark. The vanguard went before them and the rest followed the Ark while the trumpets blew.

<sup>14</sup> So they did the next day, and for six days they marched once a day

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• **6.1** With the capture of Jericho, the conquest begins. Jericho is made "anathema," i.e., set apart for God. The people renounce all booty, entrust the spoils to Yahweh's treasury and kill all living beings instead of taking possession of the animals and reducing the inhabitants to slavery. This same word "anathema" will eventually be used to refer to someone who bears the curse of God (see Rom 9:3). This was a practice among a number of peoples. By destroying everything Canaanite, Israel safeguarded itself from adopting the culture and materialism of the Canaanites.

Sometimes the modern reader is scandalized: how could God order such a war? And how could Joshua think of pleasing God by ordering the killing of all the inhabitants including babies?

One should bear in mind when this conquest took place and when the book was written.

The conquest took place in the thirteenth century B.C. It is difficult for us to understand the mentality of such ancient times. In Canaan,

babies were burned as an offering to the pagan gods. In Assyria, prisoners were skinned alive. Israel conquered Palestine by force like any nomadic people in the world. God was beginning to instruct his people. To start with, he could not expect that they had already been educated. The bloody victories were a step on the way to the shaping of a national conscience. In this sense, we cannot, in the name of peace, despise heroes of past wars.

Moreover, the present book was written in the seventh century B.C., in the small kingdom of Judah which was surrounded by powerful neighbors with whom they tried to be at peace. Hence, the accounts of past victories and massacres were amplified (compare 2 S 12:31 written by contemporaries of the events, and 1 Chr 20:2, written four centuries later). The author wanted to show his contemporaries that they had nothing to fear, since God was with them. By imaginatively amplifying the massacres of Canaanites in times past, he wanted to say to his compatriots: do not follow any



around the city and then returned to the camp. <sup>15</sup>On the seventh day, the Israelites rose early at dawn and marched around Jericho in the same way as on the previous days. But on that day, they did it seven times. <sup>16</sup>At the seventh time, as the priests blew the trumpets, Joshua ordered the people: “Shout your battle cry for Yahweh has given you the city!”

<sup>17</sup>The city and all that is in it shall be given in anathema to Yahweh. Only Rahab the prostitute with all who may be with her in her house shall live, since she hid the spies we sent. <sup>18</sup>But for your part, be careful not to touch anything, big or small since everything shall be consecrated in anathema; do not take anything for yourself lest the curse be upon the camp of Israel and bring trouble upon it. <sup>19</sup>All the gold, silver, copper and iron are to be consecrated to Yahweh and shall go into the treasury of Yahweh.”

Num  
31:54Heb  
11:30

<sup>20</sup>The people shouted and the trumpets blew. At this precise moment, the walls of the city fell. Then everyone went straight into the city to the place before him.

<sup>21</sup>They seized Jericho. And with sword in hand, they killed all the men and women, both young and old, as well as the oxen, sheep and asses, and they gave these as anathema or, rather, sacrificed them to God.

pagan practices, but preserve the holy germ of Israel’s faith. Using these bloody examples, the Scripture gives us a lesson: since the people of God had a unique hope for the world, no sacrifice would be too big to keep it intact. The Gospel is no less sharp than the sword of Joshua, it is no less indulgent against our idols and our fears, even when it refuses the violence and, of course, the fanaticism of these primitive times.

In like manner then, when we read: *Yahweh ordered Joshua the anathema*, we should not think this was a special intervention of God (see commentary on Gen 16). These words only mean that Joshua decided to declare and implement the anathema, and in so doing preserved Israel’s faith from idolatry, a situation

<sup>22</sup>Two men had been sent to explore Jericho, (and upon entering the city, were hidden by a prostitute). Then Joshua said to them: “Go into the house of the prostitute and bring her out with all her family as you had sworn to her.”

<sup>23</sup>These young men then brought out the woman named Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers and sisters with all her relatives to safety outside the camp of Israel. <sup>24</sup>Afterwards, they burned the city and all that was in it. They saved only the silver, gold and the vessels of bronze and iron which they put with the precious things in the Sanctuary of Yahweh. <sup>25</sup>Joshua saved the prostitute and all her family, and she lived in Israel, because she had kept the spies sent by Joshua.

<sup>26</sup>Joshua asked the people to pronounce this curse: “May Yahweh curse the man who rebuilds Jericho. May its foundation rise on the body of his eldest son, and the gates on that of his youngest son.”

1K 16:34

<sup>27</sup>So Yahweh was with Joshua and made him famous in all the land.

### The sacrilege of Achan is punished

**7** <sup>1</sup>The Israelites did not keep the anathema. It happened that Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, appropriated for himself some of the things consecrated by anathema, and because of this, the anger of Yahweh burned against Israel.

6:18

<sup>2</sup>Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which was near Bethaven, east of the city of Bethel. And he said to them: “Go up

even more contradictory to God’s plans. But they did this as a people who did not yet know the value of human life.

It is difficult to know really what is true in this story: see footnotes on Joshua 2:1.

- **7.1** All the spoils had been made “anathema,” i.e., consecrated to God. Whether they were burnt or deposited in the treasury of the Sanctuary, they were offered to Yahweh. Achan had robbed God and, in the manner of speaking and thinking of ancient peoples, the stolen thing turned into a curse which clung to his person and to his family. Perhaps this event should make us reflect on the seriousness of our commitment once we have decided to consecrate our time and person to God.

and explore the land.”<sup>3</sup> The spies said to Joshua on their return: “It would not be necessary to mobilize the whole army: some two or three thousand men will be enough to conquer the land. It would be useless to tire the people for that nation is but few in number.”

<sup>4</sup>So about three thousand men attacked Ai but were repulsed by the city’s defenders. <sup>5</sup>The people of Ai killed thirty-six men and pursued them outside the gate as far as Shebarim, defeating them on the slopes. Upon seeing this, all the people were disheartened.

<sup>6</sup>Then Joshua and all the leaders of Israel rent their garments, put ashes on their heads and remained prostrate before the Ark of Yahweh until evening. Joshua lamented: <sup>7</sup>“Alas, Yahweh, why have you made this people cross the river Jordan just to give us into the hands of the Amorites who will destroy us?”

It would have been better for us to remain on the other side of the Jordan.

<sup>8</sup>Yahweh, my God, what can I say when I see Israel fleeing from their enemies?

<sup>9</sup>The Canaanites and all the inhabitants of this land will know of this. They will unite to surround us and drive us out. And you, what are you going to do for the honor of your Name?”

<sup>10</sup>Yahweh answered: “Stand up! Why are you prostrate on the ground? <sup>11</sup>Israel sinned and has violated my covenant; Israelites have taken from what was set apart by anathema and have hidden stolen objects with their belongings. <sup>12</sup>So Israel cannot face its enemies, but shall flee from them, since it has come to be an anathema. I will not be with you anymore unless you remove the curse from your midst. <sup>13</sup>Go then, and sanctify the people. Say to them: ‘Cleanse yourselves for tomorrow. Yahweh, the God of Israel, says to you: Oh, Israel, the anathema is in your midst and you shall not face your enemies until you have removed the anathema from you. <sup>14</sup>Therefore in the morning you shall come near, grouped according to tribes. The tribe that Yahweh designates by lot shall present itself by families. And the family that Yahweh designates shall present itself by households, and the household by individuals.

<sup>15</sup>He who turns out to be responsible for this offense shall be burned, together with all his household goods, for having

violated the covenant of Yahweh and having done a detestable crime in Israel.”

<sup>16</sup>Joshua rose early in the morning and ordered the tribes of Israel to present themselves. <sup>17</sup>The lot fell on the tribe of Judah. Lots were drawn among the families, and the family of Zerah was left. Lots were drawn among the households of this family and the household of Zabdi was left. <sup>18</sup>And then lots were drawn among the members of this household which revealed that the guilty one was Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zoreh, of the tribe of Judah.

<sup>19</sup>Joshua then said to him: “My son, confess the truth before Yahweh, the God of Israel, and render him praise. Tell me what you have done without hiding anything.” <sup>20</sup>Achan answered: “It is true that I have sinned against Yahweh. This is what I have done: <sup>21</sup>I saw among the plunder a beautiful mantle from Shinar, two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels. I was tempted so I took them. Then I hid them in the ground inside my tent with the silver underneath.”

<sup>22</sup>Joshua then sent some messengers who ran to the tent of Achan and found the booty inside the tent with the silver underneath. <sup>23</sup>They took all these and presented them to Joshua and to the people; everything was put before Yahweh.

<sup>24</sup>Then Joshua took Achan together with the silver, the mantle and the gold, his sons as well as his daughters, his oxen, asses and sheep, his tent and all that he had. All Israel accompanied him and they brought them to the Valley of Achor. <sup>25</sup>There Joshua said to him: “Since you brought us misfortune, may Yahweh bring this misfortune upon you today.” Then all the people stoned him. <sup>26</sup>And of those that were his, some were crushed and others were burned. They piled on him a great heap of stones that remains to this day. Then the Lord turned from his anger.

Henceforth the place was called the Valley of Achor.

### Joshua conquers Ai

**8** <sup>1</sup>Then Yahweh said to Joshua: “Do not fear or be discouraged. March with all your warriors against the city of Ai. I will give into your hands its king and

32:11;  
Num  
14:13

1S 14:41

Num  
16:32;  
Dt 24:16

its people, the city and its territory. <sup>2</sup>You shall deal with Ai as you have dealt with Jericho and its king. But you may take possession of the plunder and all the animals. So now, prepare an ambush behind the city.”

<sup>3</sup>So Joshua left with all his warriors and went up to Ai. Then he chose thirty thousand valiant warriors, and sent them out by night. <sup>4</sup>And he commanded them: “Lie in ambush behind the city. Do not go very far and be ready.

<sup>5</sup>I and all the people who are with me shall close in on the city. But when they come out against us, as they did before, we shall flee from them. <sup>6</sup>Then they shall pursue us and go out far from the city, thinking that we are fleeing from them as before. <sup>7</sup>But then you shall rise from where you are hiding and occupy the city. Yahweh, our God, will give it to us. <sup>8</sup>After taking the city, you shall burn it according to what Yahweh has commanded. These are my orders.”

<sup>9</sup>So Joshua sent them out and they went to the place of ambush, between Bethel and Ai, to the west of the city, while Joshua slept that night in the midst of his people.

<sup>10</sup>Very early in the morning, Joshua rose and mustered his army, and then marched at the head of the people, accompanied by the leaders. <sup>11</sup>All the warriors who were with him went up and marched until they reached the front of the city. Then they encamped opposite the northern side of the city. The valley separated them from the city.

<sup>12</sup>(Then he took five thousand men whom he set in ambush between Bethel and Ai, to the west of the city.)

<sup>13</sup>The people then set up their camp to the north of the city and their rear-guard to the west. That night Joshua was in the valley.

### **Battle of Ai**

<sup>14</sup>When the king of Ai saw the situation, he made haste with all his people to attack Israel on the slope opposite the valley of Jordan, without knowing that the Israelites had prepared an ambush

behind the city. <sup>15</sup>Joshua and the Israelites pretended that they were being defeated, and so fled to the road leading to the wilderness. <sup>16</sup>Then all the people of the city began to shout and left to pursue them. <sup>17</sup>No one remained to defend the city, and they left the city open.

<sup>18</sup>Then Yahweh said to Joshua: “Stretch out toward Ai the javelin you have in your hand because I have given you this city.” <sup>19</sup>So Joshua did this, and at this sign the warriors rose out of their places in the ambush and ran to the city. They entered and seized the city, and set it on fire.

<sup>20</sup>The men of Ai looked back and saw the smoke of the city rising up to heaven, and at the same time, the Israelites who were fleeing turned back upon them. <sup>21</sup>They lost their courage as they were trapped by the Israelites: <sup>22</sup>for on one side were Joshua and all the people of Israel, and on the other, those who had just set the city on fire.

The Israelites killed them until none were left to survive or to escape. <sup>23</sup>Only the king of Ai was taken alive and they brought him to Joshua.

<sup>24</sup>The Israelites killed the inhabitants of Ai who went into the fields or who fled to the wilderness; they killed them all. Then they returned to the city and killed all by the sword. <sup>25</sup>The total of those who fell that day was twelve thousand. <sup>26</sup>Joshua did not give the order to stop the war until all the inhabitants of Ai had been killed in accordance with anathema. <sup>27</sup>But the Israelites took for themselves the livestock and plunder as Yahweh had commanded.

<sup>28</sup>Joshua burned the city and left it in ruins. That place has remained as it was to this day. <sup>29</sup>As for the king of Ai, Joshua had him hanged on a tree until the sun set. Then he had his body taken down; they cast it at the entrance of the city and raised over it a great heap of stones which can be seen to this day.

### **Joshua renews the Covenant in Shechem**

• <sup>30</sup>Joshua then built an altar to Yahweh, the God of Israel, on Mount Ebal.

Dt 11:29

• **8.30** What is the meaning of this covenant celebrated in Shechem? The bible presents the ancient history of Israel in a fictitious

form when it writes that the twelve tribes were together in Egypt, that they left together with Moses, and that all twelve tribes reached the

Dt 27: 31 He fulfilled what Moses had commanded the children of Israel. And according to what is written in the book of the Law of Moses, the altar was made of uncut stones and was built without the use of an iron tool. On this altar, he offered burnt offerings and peace offerings to Yahweh. 32 There in the presence of the Israelites he wrote upon the stones a copy of the Law which Moses had written.

33 All the people stood on both sides of the Ark, with their leaders, secretaries and judges. Opposite it were the priests and the Levites who carried the Ark of Yahweh. Israelites by birth and aliens were together. Half the people were in front of Mount Gerizim and the other half were near Mount Ebal according to Moses' commandment for the blessing of Israel.

34 Joshua proceeded to read the words of blessing and curse, and all that is written in the book of the Law. 35 He did not omit any word from all that was written by Moses. He read it with a loud voice before the assembly of all Israel, including women, children and foreigners who lived among them.

### The ruse of the Gibeonites

Jdg 1:9 **9** 1 The kings who lived west of the Jordan, on the mountain, on the plain and on the seacoast heard of these events. The Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites 2 made a pact and came to an agreement to fight as one against Joshua and Israel.

3 The inhabitants of Gibeon came to know what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, 4 and decided to deceive the Israelites. They prepared provisions for themselves, loaded some worn-out, torn and mended sacks and wineskins on their asses, 5 put on worn-out and

patched sandals and clothes. For their journey, they brought some dry bread, broken into pieces. 6 Then they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him: "We come from a far land to make a pact with you."

7 The Israelites answered: "Do you live near us? If so, then we cannot make a pact with you." 8 They answered Joshua: "We are your servants." And Joshua asked them: "Who are you? Where do you come from?" 9 They answered: "Your servants come from a very far country and through the greatness of Yahweh, your God, we came to know of his power and all that he did in Egypt 10 and with the two kings of the Amorites who reigned in the eastern part of the Jordan—Sihon, the king of Heshbon, and Og, the king of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroath. 11 The leaders and the rest of the inhabitants of our country told us: 'Take provisions for a long journey, go out to meet them and say to them: We are your servants; may you make a covenant with us.' 12 Look at our bread which was warm when we took it from our houses to come and meet you, but see how dry it has become and how it has broken into pieces. 13 These wineskins that we filled up with wine were new, now they are ripped and worn-out. The clothes and sandals that we use have worn out because of the very long journey." 14 The Israelites shared their food with them without having asked Yahweh what must be done. 15 Joshua made a covenant with them without waiting for any answer from Yahweh. So he as well as the leaders of the community promised to let them live.

16 Three days later, the Israelites learned that these people lived near their own territory. 17 On hearing this, the Israelites set out and entered their cities:

Promised Land with him. At best, the whole history of the Exodus is that of a much smaller group who freed themselves with Moses' leadership and went through the decisive experience of an encounter with the Saving God.

Later, in the oasis of Kadesh, they encountered other Hebrew groups who had also been in Egypt and who accepted their faith (see commentary on the map of Exodus).

Subsequently, when they settled in Palestine, they allied themselves with other tribes from their own race who were already living in

the midst of the Canaanites. It was then that Israel first became a people of twelve tribes. Among them, Ephraim and Manasseh were the predominant tribes. Later, however, in the south, the tribe of Judah developed. It was formed from diverse groups particularly the Calebites (Jdg 1:12; Num 13:30) and the Kenites (Jdg 1:16).

Finally, the Covenant at Shechem could have been the occasion when all of them accepted the faith and the commandments given by Moses.

Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth and Kiriath-jearim. <sup>18</sup>They spared their lives because of what the leaders of the people had sworn to them by the name of Yahweh. <sup>19</sup>But all the people criticized their leaders. Then all the leaders said to them: “We have sworn by the name of Yahweh, therefore, we cannot kill them. <sup>20</sup>But this we can do: we shall let them live so that the anger of Yahweh may not be upon us, <sup>21</sup>but they shall serve by cutting firewood and fetching water for the community of Israel.”

<sup>22</sup>Then Joshua summoned the Gibeonites and told them about the decision of the leaders: “Why did you deceive us and say to us that you come from very far when in fact, you live right in our midst? <sup>23</sup>Henceforth, you are cursed and shall always cut wood and fetch water for the House of my God.” <sup>24</sup>The Gibeonites answered: “We came to know that Yahweh had commanded Moses to destroy all the inhabitants of the land he gave you. We were afraid so we opted for this measure. <sup>25</sup>And now, we are in your hands: do with us whatever seems good and just to you.”

<sup>26</sup>Joshua fulfilled his promise and did not let the Israelites kill them. <sup>27</sup>But from that day on, they cut firewood and fetched water for the whole community and for the altar of Yahweh in the place he would choose.

#### “The sun stood still”

**10** • <sup>1</sup>Adonizedek king of Jerusalem came to know how Joshua had conquered and leveled Ai, doing to it and its king what he had done to Jericho and its king. He also knew how the Gibeonites had made peace with the Israelites and were living in their midst. <sup>2</sup>He feared greatly, for Gibeon was a very important city, a royal city greater than Ai and its men were very brave.

<sup>3</sup>In view of this, Adonizedek sent for Hoham king of Hebron, for Aram king of Jarmuth, for Japhia king of Lachish and for Debir king of Eglon saying: <sup>4</sup>“Come and help me conquer Gibeon for it has made a pact with Joshua and the Israelites.”

<sup>5</sup>So the five kings of the Amorites—the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon—joined forces and set out, each one with troops. They encamped opposite Gibeon and surrounded it.

<sup>6</sup>The Gibeonites sent word to Joshua at the camp in Gilgal: “Do not leave us alone, but come and help us, for all the Amorite kings who live on the mountains have united against us.”

<sup>7</sup>So Joshua left Gilgal that day with all his valiant warriors. <sup>8</sup>Then Yahweh said to Joshua: “Do not be afraid because I have placed them in your hands and no one among them will be able to stand up against you.” <sup>9</sup>Joshua marched from Gilgal, journeying throughout the night and came upon the Amorites by surprise.

<sup>10</sup>Yahweh defeated them. The Israelites gained a great victory in Gibeon and pursued the Amorites by the slope of Beth-horon up to Azekah and Makkedah.

<sup>11</sup>As they were fleeing, Yahweh rained huge hailstones on them and pursued them up to Azekah, and they were killed. There were more who died because of the hailstones than by the sword of the Israelites.

<sup>12</sup>On that day when Yahweh gave the Amorites over to them, Joshua addressed Yahweh and said in the sight of all Israel:

“Sun, stand still at Gibeon, and you, moon, in the valley of Aijalon.”

<sup>13</sup>And the sun stood still and the moon stopped until the people had taken revenge on their enemies: so it is written in the Book of the Just, “The sun stood

Sir 46:  
4-6;  
Is 28:21

Is 28:17

Hab 3:11

2S 1:18

• **10.1** The sun of Gibeon has caused enough worry to those who take everything they read in the Bible literally.

Some thought that at that moment the sun stood still in the sky. Later, when people learned that it is the earth that revolves around the sun, they thought the earth must have stopped turning. But this explanation is not acceptable either; for, had the earth suddenly

stood still, the resulting momentum would have caused total destruction. Therefore, we have to remark that the Bible is citing in this case poetic literature, the “Book of the Just,” and that the poets are led by their imagination and do not write in the manner of historians or scientists. Hence, they may have wanted to say that simply it was a great day.

still in mid-heaven and did not hasten to set for almost a whole day. <sup>14</sup>There has not been a day like this before or after in which Yahweh obeyed the order of a man. It was Yahweh who fought for Israel.”

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

<sup>16</sup>But the five kings fled and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah. <sup>17</sup>And so it was told to Joshua: “We have found the five kings. They are hiding in a cave at Makkedah.”

<sup>18</sup>So Joshua ordered: “Roll great stones against the entrance of the cave and set men to guard it. <sup>19</sup>But do not stay there. Pursue your enemies and fall upon their rear. Do not let them return to their cities for Yahweh, our God, has placed them in our hands.”

<sup>20</sup>Joshua and the Israelites destroyed and finished them off. Only a few survivors were left who took refuge in the fortified cities <sup>21</sup>while all Israel returned unscathed to the camp with Joshua. Henceforth, no one dared challenge them.

<sup>22</sup>Then Joshua ordered: “Open the entrance of the cave, take the five kings out and bring them to me.” <sup>23</sup>They did this and brought the five kings before Joshua: the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Lachish, Jarmuth and Eglon. <sup>24</sup>Joshua assembled all Israel and said to the captains of the troops: “Come here and step on the necks of these kings.”

So they came near and put their feet on the necks of the kings.

<sup>25</sup>Then Joshua said to them: “Do not be afraid or lose courage, be valiant and firm, for Yahweh will do so to all your enemies against whom you will fight.”

<sup>26</sup>Joshua immediately put them to death by hanging them on five trees until evening. <sup>27</sup>At nightfall, they took down the bodies of the kings and threw them into the same cave where they had hidden and closed it with great stones which remain there to this day.

### Joshua conquers the southern part of Canaan

<sup>28</sup>On that same day Joshua seized Makkedah. He slew its king and its inhabitants. And he consecrated it and all that was in it in anathema to Yahweh, without sparing anyone. The king suf-

fered the same fate as did the king of Jericho.

<sup>29</sup>Then Joshua and all Israel went to attack Libnah. <sup>30</sup>Yahweh gave the city and its king to the Israelites, and they put to the sword all its inhabitants without sparing anyone. The king met the same fate as the king of Jericho. <sup>31</sup>From Libnah Joshua went to Lachish, laid siege to it and attacked it. <sup>32</sup>Yahweh also gave them this city and its king and inhabitants suffered the same fate as Libnah. <sup>33</sup>Then Horam king of Gezer came to help Lachish but Joshua destroyed him together with all his people without leaving anyone alive.

<sup>34</sup>From Lachish he then went to Eglon; he besieged it and conquered it on the same day. <sup>35</sup>The king and the inhabitants of Eglon were also put to death by the sword. They consecrated the city in anathema as they had done to Lachish.

<sup>36</sup>From Eglon they went to Hebron. Joshua conquered it together with <sup>37</sup>all the towns which were subject to it, put to the sword its king and all its inhabitants, without letting anyone survive. He consecrated it in anathema as he had dealt with Eglon.

<sup>38</sup>Joshua and all Israel with him turned back to Debir and attacked it. He took it as well as the towns subject to it. <sup>39</sup>He put to the sword its king and inhabitants, consecrating them in anathema, without sparing anyone. Debir and its king received the same punishment as Hebron and Libnah.

<sup>40</sup>In this way, Joshua struck the whole region of the Mountains, the Negeb Desert, the Plains and the mountain slopes with their kings.

He did not let anyone survive but consecrated all living beings in anathema according to what Yahweh had commanded. <sup>41</sup>Joshua destroyed them all from Kadesh-barnea to Gaza and from Goshen to Gibeon. <sup>42</sup>Joshua defeated all these kings and seized all these lands in one single campaign because Yahweh fought for Israel.

<sup>43</sup>Then he and all Israel returned to their camp at Gilgal.

### Conquest of the North

**11** • <sup>1</sup>When Jabin king of Hazor came to know all this, he sent ambassa-

2K 20:10

Ps 110:1

Dt 21:22

1K 9:16

Jdg 1:9

Dt 7:1

dors to Jobab king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, to the king of Achshaph, <sup>2</sup>to the kings in the northern mountains, on the steppes to the south of Chineroth in the plains, and in the heights of Dor on the west, <sup>3</sup>to the Canaanites in the east and the west, to the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites and Jebusites in the mountains, and the Hivites at the foot of Mount Hermon in the region of Mizpah. <sup>4</sup>And they set out with their troops, a multitude as numerous as the sand of the sea, accompanied by a great number of horses and chariots ready for combat. <sup>5</sup>All these kings joined forces and encamped together at the spring of Merom to attack Israel.

<sup>6</sup>Then Yahweh said to Joshua: “Do not be afraid, for tomorrow at this hour I will give them to you that you may sacrifice them to me. Cut the hocks of their horses and burn their chariots of war.”

<sup>7</sup>So Joshua and all the armed men with him went to Merom and attacked them by surprise. <sup>8</sup>Yahweh gave them into the hand of Israel; the Israelites destroyed and pursued them as far as Great Sidon and Misrephoth-maim and as far as Mizpah to the east, without leaving anyone alive. <sup>9</sup>Joshua also carried out what Yahweh had commanded—cutting the hocks of the horses and burning the chariots.

<sup>10</sup>At once Joshua turned back and conquered Hazor, and killed its king. At that time, Hazor was the capital of all those kingdoms. <sup>11</sup>He put to the sword all the inhabitants of that city, consecrating it in anathema. No one was left alive, and they immediately set the city on fire.

Dt 20:16

<sup>12</sup>Joshua took all the cities of these kings and all their kings, and consecrated them in anathema according to what Moses, the servant of Yahweh, had commanded.

<sup>13</sup>Israel set on fire all the cities except those lying on the slopes and on the heights; of these only Hazor was burned by Joshua.

<sup>14</sup>The Israelites divided among themselves the plunder and the livestock of

these cities, but they put to the sword the whole population without sparing anyone. <sup>15</sup>So what Yahweh had commanded Moses, and what Moses had entrusted to Joshua was completely fulfilled: Joshua did not neglect anything that Yahweh had commanded Moses.

<sup>16</sup>So Joshua conquered all this land: the mountains, the Negeb, Goshen, the plains, the steppes, and the mountains of Israel with its plains. <sup>17</sup>From the region of the mountain range that rises up to Seir, as far as Baalgad in the valley of Lebanon, to the foot of Mount Hermon, he destroyed all their kings—vanquishing and killing them.

<sup>18</sup>The war Joshua waged against these kings lasted a long time; <sup>19</sup>there was no city that made peace with the Israelites except the Hivites of Gibeon; all were conquered.

<sup>20</sup>Yahweh gave all of them courage to fight against Israel, so that at the end, they could be consecrated in anathema and destroyed without pity as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

<sup>21</sup>At that time, Joshua came back and wiped out the Anakim from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab and from all the mountains of Judah and Israel. They and their cities were given in anathema.

<sup>22</sup>No Anakim was left in the land of Israel except in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod. <sup>23</sup>Joshua seized the whole land as Yahweh had directed Moses and gave it as an inheritance to the Israelites to be distributed among their tribes. With this, the land rested from war.

**12** <sup>1</sup>These are the kings of the country whom the Israelites defeated, taking their land beyond the Jordan eastward, from the valley of Arnon to Mount Hermon, including all the lowland.

<sup>2</sup>Sihon, king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon, and ruled from Aroer, which is on the edge of the Arnon (the border was at the middle of the valley), as far as the Jabbok river, that was the boundary with the Ammonites. <sup>3</sup>To him

9:3

Jdg 1:  
10-15

• **11.1** In chapter 11, Joshua's campaign in the north of Palestine is described. There he captured Hasor which, with its 40,000 inhabitants, could be called a big city. We are given

the impression that he conquered the entire country. Yet, chapters 13–19 show that each tribe had to conquer a section of land in a series of individual operations.

belonged half of Gilead and the lowland from the east side of the Lake of Chinneroth to the Beth-jeshimot road, on the east side of the sea of the lowland, that is the Salt Sea, at the foot of the slopes of Pisgah.

<sup>4</sup>Og, king of Bashan, one of the survivors of the Rephaim, who lived at Ashtaroth and Edrei, <sup>5</sup>ruled over Mount Hermon, Salecah and all Bashan to the boundary of the Geshurites and Macathites, and over half of Gilead beyond the land of Sihon, king of Heshbon. <sup>6</sup>Moses, the servant of Yahweh, with the Israelites, defeated them and Moses gave their land to the Reubenites, the Gadites and half the tribe of Mannaseh as their inheritance.

<sup>7</sup>Now these are the kings of the country whom Joshua and the Israelites defeated on the west side of the Jordan, from Baalgad, in the valley of Lebanon, to Mount Halak rising toward Seir. This is the land that Joshua divided among the tribes of Israel: <sup>8</sup>the hill country and the

lowlands, the Arabah, the hillsides, the wilderness and the Negeb. This land had belonged to the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. And these were the defeated kings:

<sup>9</sup>king of Jericho, king of Ai near Bethel.

<sup>10</sup>king of Jerusalem, king of Hebron.

<sup>11</sup>king of Jarmuth, king of Lachish.

<sup>12</sup>king of Eglon, king of Gezer.

<sup>13</sup>king of Debir, king of Geder.

<sup>14</sup>king of Hormah, king of Arad.

<sup>15</sup>king of Libnah, king of Adullam.

<sup>16</sup>king of Makkedah, king of Bethel.

<sup>17</sup>king of Tappuah, king of Hopher.

<sup>18</sup>king of Aphek, king of Sharon.

<sup>19</sup>king of Madon, king of Hazor.

<sup>20</sup>king of Symoon, king of Achshaph.

<sup>21</sup>king of Taanach, king of Megiddo.

<sup>22</sup>king of Kedesh, king of Jokneam in Carmel.

<sup>23</sup>king of Dor on the hillsides of Dor.

king of Gooim in Galilee, <sup>24</sup>and king of Tirzah.

Total number of all these kings: thirty-one.

## II. DIVISION OF THE LAND AMONG THE TRIBES

### Joshua divides the country of Canaan

Gen 49:  
Dt 33

**13** <sup>1</sup>Now Joshua had grown old and advanced in years. Yahweh said to him, "You are old now, yet much of the land is still unconquered, including:

<sup>2</sup>All the territory of the Philistines and the Geshurites. <sup>3</sup>All the land from the river east of Egypt, to the boundary of Ekron in the north that is considered Canaanite territory. (The five chief towns of the Philistines: Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron; the Avvites also in the south.)

<sup>4</sup>The whole country of the Canaanites from Arah, which the Sidonians hold, to Aphekah at the Amorite border, <sup>5</sup>and then the country of the Gebalites with all Lebanon eastward from Baagad at the foot of Mount Hermon to the Pass of Hamath. <sup>6</sup>All the land of the Sidonians



• **13.1** Joshua divides the Promised Land among the twelve tribes.

Different peoples left together, as we read in Exodus 12:38. In Palestine, others joined

them (see Jos 8:33). They did not belong to one race nor were they a closely-knit group; and they were certainly not yet an organized nation. Nevertheless, they were already a



who live in the highlands from Lebanon to Misrephoth-maim westward.

I myself will drive them all out before the Israelites. In the meantime, share out the land among the Israelites by drawing lots as I have commanded you. <sup>7</sup>The time has come to divide this land among the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasse: from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea westward you shall give it to them; the Mediterranean will mark their boundary.”

<sup>8</sup>As for the other half tribe of Manasse, they and the tribes of Reuben and Gad had already received the land given them by Moses on the east side of the Jordan River. Moses the servant of Yahweh had given them <sup>9</sup>the land as far as Aroer, which lies on the edge of the Arnon valley, with the city in the middle of that valley and all the high, flat land from Medeba to Dibon. <sup>10</sup>All the towns of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had reigned in Heshbon, were included, as far as the boundary of the Ammonites. <sup>11</sup>Gilead and the territory of the Geshurites and Maacathites with all the highlands of Hermon and with the whole of Bashan as far as Salecah. <sup>12</sup>In Bashan the whole kingdom of Og, who reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei and was the last survivor of the Rephaim. Moses had conquered these people and driven them out. <sup>13</sup>But the Israelites did not drive out the Geshurites or the Maacathites, and therefore Geshur and Maacah still live in the midst of Israel to this day.

<sup>14</sup>To the tribe of Levi alone no land was given; Yahweh the God of Israel was their inheritance, as he had told them.

#### **Land given to Reuben, Gad and Manasseh**

<sup>15</sup>Moses had given the tribe of Reuben a part of the land according to their clans. <sup>16</sup>The land they received stretched from Aroer, on the edge of the Arnon Valley, including the town within the valley itself, and all the high, flat land up to Medeba, <sup>17</sup>and Heshbon and all the towns on the high, flat land: Dibon, Bamoth-baal, Beth-baal-meon, <sup>18</sup>Jahaz, Kedemoth Mephaath, <sup>19</sup>Kiriathaim, Sibmah and Zereth-shahar in the highlands of Gor; <sup>20</sup>Beth-peor, the slopes of Pisgah, Beth-jeshimoth, <sup>21</sup>all these towns and the whole kingdom of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon; he had been defeated by Moses, and with him the princes of Midian, Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, who had ruled the land for king Sihon who used to live in this country. <sup>22</sup>As for Balaam son of Beor, the seer, the Israelites had put him to the sword with others they had killed. <sup>23</sup>Thus the land of the Reubenites stretched to the Jordan River. This was the inheritance of the tribe of Reuben according to their clans, with the towns and their outlying villages.

<sup>24</sup>Moses had given the tribe of Gad, a part of the land according to their clans: <sup>25</sup>Jazer, all the towns of Gilead, half the country of the Ammonites as far as Aroer facing Rabbah, <sup>26</sup>and from Heshbon to

Dt.33:20

group of tribes of unequal strength. Two of these tribes assumed a predominant role: Ephraim in the north, and Judah down south.

Among nomads such as these, the members of each tribe all claimed to be descendants of the founder of their tribe, a prestigious man of the past whose name they bore. Inasmuch as the Israelites considered themselves descendants of Jacob-Israel, each of the twelve tribes considered itself as descending from one of the sons of their ancestor, Jacob, from whom they had received their name.

In reality, there were thirteen tribes in all and not twelve. Let us compare the list of Jacob's sons in Genesis 35:23 with that of the twelve tribes listed in the present book. The list shows agreement in the following names: Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher and Benjamin. The “house of

Joseph” formed two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh (Jos 16:4). Including the tribe of Levi, there were thirteen. But this last tribe was formed by families traditionally dedicated to religious cult who did not have their own territory (Jos 21:10). In this way, the number twelve will be restored when Joshua divides the land.

They apportioned the land by casting lots. In this manner, the lesson is imparted that the Promised Land is a gift from God (Psalm 16 uses the same imagery). Each tribe receives a portion which they did not choose and which they must now conquer in order to own. Each of us has received from God his or her own share in life. We have to accept our share in the same way the tribes accepted their “share of their inheritance.” Then we must achieve our destiny with courage and confidence in God just as they did.

Ramathmizpeh and Betonim, and from Mahanaim as far as the territory of Lodebar,<sup>27</sup> and lastly, in the Jordan valley: Beth-haram, Bethnimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon the king of Heshbon. The Jordan River was their western border as far north as the Sea of Galilee, on the eastern side of the Jordan.<sup>28</sup> This was the inheritance of the tribe of Gad according to their clans, with the towns and their outlying villages.

<sup>29</sup>Moses had given half the tribe of Manasseh a part of the land according to their clans: <sup>30</sup>from Mahanaim right through Bashan, including the whole kingdom of Og the king of Bashan and all sixty villages of Jair in Bashan. <sup>31</sup>Half of Gilead as well as Ashtaroth and Edrei, the royal cities of Og in Bashan, were given to half the families from Machir, son of Manasseh.

<sup>32</sup>This was how Moses divided the land when he was in the plains of Moab, beyond the Jordan east of Jericho. <sup>33</sup>But to the tribe of Levi, Moses had given no land; Yahweh the God of Israel is their inheritance, as he has told them.

Num 35:1

**14** <sup>1</sup>The land of Canaan was divided among the Israelites by Eleazar the priest and by Joshua son of Nun and by the heads of the families of the tribes of Israel. <sup>2</sup>They divided the land by drawing lots as Yahweh had commanded through Moses for the nine. <sup>3</sup>(Remember that Moses had given the two and a half tribes beyond the Jordan their own property; to the Levites, he had given no land, <sup>4</sup>but the sons of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim.) The Levites were given no share of the land except certain towns to live in, with pasture lands nearby for their cattle and property. <sup>5</sup>In dividing the land, the Israelites did as Yahweh had commanded Moses to do.

#### Land given to Caleb

<sup>6</sup>When the sons of Judah came to Joshua at Gilgal, Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, said to him, "You know what Yahweh said to Moses, the man of God, at Kadesh-barnea concerning you and me. <sup>7</sup>I was forty years old when Moses, the servant of Yahweh, sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy on this land, and I

made an honest report about it to him. <sup>8</sup>But the men who had gone with me discouraged the people, whereas I myself faithfully obeyed Yahweh my God. <sup>9</sup>That day Moses made this promise to me, 'Because you have obeyed Yahweh my God, the land your foot may walk upon shall be the land which you and your children will own forever.' <sup>10</sup>From then till now, Yahweh has kept me alive in accordance with his promise. It is forty-five years since Yahweh made this promise to Moses (Israel was then journeying through the wilderness), and now I am eighty-five years old. <sup>11</sup>Today I am still as strong as the day when Moses sent me out on the raid; for fighting, for going and coming, I am as strong now as then. <sup>12</sup>Give me then the highlands that Yahweh promised me. You know that there are a race of giants called the Anakim and their towns are great and strong. But if Yahweh is with me, I shall drive them out as Yahweh said."

<sup>13</sup>Joshua blessed Caleb, son of Jephunneh, and gave him the city of Hebron as an inheritance. <sup>14</sup>And hence Hebron down to the present day belongs to the descendants of Caleb son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, because he obeyed Yahweh the God of Israel. <sup>15</sup>The name of Hebron in earlier times was Kiriath-arba. Arba had been the greatest man of the Anakim.

And the country had rest from war.

#### Boundaries of the tribe of Judah

**15** <sup>1</sup>The land given to the tribe of Judah according to their clans was near the border of Edom from the wilderness of Zin to Kadesh southwestward. <sup>2</sup>Their southern border began at the end of the Dead Sea; <sup>3</sup>went south from the Ascent of Akkrabbim and crossed through Zin. It went south of Kadesh-barnea, passed Hezron, went up to Addar and from there turned toward Karka, <sup>4</sup>skirted Azmon, came out at the stream on the border of Egypt and ended at the Mediterranean.

<sup>5</sup>On the east, the border was formed by the Dead Sea as far as the mouth of the Jordan.

<sup>6</sup>On the north the border began at the Sea Tongue at the mouth of the Jordan. This border went up to Beth-hoglah, passed through the north of Beth-arabah

and reached the Stone of Bohan of Reuben. <sup>7</sup>The border then went up to Debir from Acor Valley and turned toward the circle of stones opposite the Ascent of Adummim, south of the valley; the border went on to the waters of En-shemesh and ended at Enrogel. <sup>8</sup>Then it went on up the Benhinnom Valley on the south side of the hill where the Jebusite city, that is to say, Jerusalem, was located. The border then climbed to the top of the mountain on the west side of Hinnom Valley and at the northern end of the plain of Rephaim. <sup>9</sup>From the mountain the border bent toward the source of the waters of Nephtoah, passed from there toward Mount Ephron and then turned toward Baalah, that is to say, Kiriath-jearim. <sup>10</sup>From Baalah the border bent westward to the mountain country of Seir, went on the northern slope of Mount Jearim, that is to say, Chesalon, went down to Beth-shemesh and through Timnah, <sup>11</sup>reached the north side of Ekron, turned toward Shikkeron, passed by the Hill of Baalah, then on to Jabneel, and ended at the Big Sea, that is, the Mediterranean.

<sup>12</sup>The western border was the Big Sea itself. This was the border that enclosed the lands given to the clans of the tribe of Judah.

<sup>13</sup>Caleb son of Jephunneh was given part of the territory of Judah, as Yahweh had commanded Joshua to do. Joshua gave him Kiriath-arba, the chief city of the Anakim, which is now Hebron. <sup>14</sup>Caleb drove the descendants of Anak out of it: the clans of Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmi. <sup>15</sup>From there he marched up to attack the people living in Debir, the name of which was once Kiriath-sepher. <sup>16</sup>Then Caleb said, "To the man who conquers and captures Kiriath-sepher, I will give my daughter Achsah as wife." <sup>17</sup>Othniel, son of Kenaz, Caleb's brother conquered the city; Caleb gave him his daughter Achsah in marriage. <sup>18</sup>When she came to her husband, he urged her to ask her father for a field. When she jumped down from her donkey, Caleb asked her, "What do you want?" <sup>19</sup>She answered, "Grant me a favor; since you have sent me away to the wilderness of the Negeb, at least grant me some springs of water." So he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

### List of the cities of Judah

<sup>20</sup>This was the land given to the tribe of Judah according to their clans.

<sup>21</sup>These are the furthestmost towns of the tribe of Judah, toward the boundary of Edom in the Negeb: Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur, <sup>22</sup>Kinah, Dimon, Adadah, <sup>23</sup>Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan, <sup>24</sup>Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, <sup>25</sup>Hazor-hadattah, Keriioth-hezron (that is to say, Hazor), <sup>26</sup>Amam, Shema, Moladah, <sup>27</sup>Hazar-gaddah, Heshmon, Beth-pelet, <sup>28</sup>Hazar-shual, Beer-sheba, Biziothiah, <sup>29</sup>Baalath, Lim, Ezem, <sup>30</sup>Eltohad, Chesil, Hormah, <sup>31</sup>Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah, <sup>32</sup>Lebaoth, Shilhim, Enrimmon. In all, twenty-nine towns, with their outlying villages. <sup>33</sup>In the lowlands there were fourteen towns with their villages: Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah, <sup>34</sup>Zanoah, En-gannim, Tappuah, Enam, <sup>35</sup>Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah, <sup>36</sup>Shaaraim, Adithaim, Gederah.

<sup>37</sup>Zenan, Hadashah, Migdalgalad, <sup>38</sup>Dilean, Mizpah, Joktheel, <sup>39</sup>Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon, <sup>40</sup>Cabbon, Lahmas, Chitlish, <sup>41</sup>Gederoth, Beth-dagon, Naamah, Makkedah, altogether sixteen towns with their villages.

<sup>42</sup>Libnah, Ether, Ashan, <sup>43</sup>Iphtah, Ashnah, Nezib, <sup>44</sup>Keilah, Achzib, Mareshah, altogether nine towns with their villages.

<sup>45</sup>Ekron with its towns and villages near Ashdod.

<sup>46</sup>From Ekron to the sea, <sup>47</sup>Ashdod and Gaza with their towns and villages as far as the stream on the border of Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea.

<sup>48</sup>In the highlands: Shamir, Jattir, Socoh, <sup>49</sup>Dannah, Kiriath-sannah, which is now Debir, <sup>50</sup>Anab, Eshtemoth, Anim, <sup>51</sup>Goshen, Holon, Giloh—eleven towns with their villages.

<sup>52</sup>Arab, Dumah, Eshan, <sup>53</sup>Janum, Beth-tappuah, Aphekah, <sup>54</sup>Humtah, Kiriath-arba, which is now Hebron, Zior—nine towns with their villages.

<sup>55</sup>Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah, <sup>56</sup>Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah, <sup>57</sup>Kain, Gibeath, Timnah—ten towns with their villages.

<sup>58</sup>Halhul, Beth-zur, Gedor, <sup>59</sup>Maarath, Beth-anoth, Eltekon—six towns with their villages.

Tekoa, Ephrathah, which is now Bethlehem, Peor, Etam, Kulon, Tatam, Sores, Carem, Gallim, Bether, Manach—eleven towns with their villages.

<sup>60</sup>Kiriath-baal, which is now Kiriath-jearim, and Rabbah—two towns with their villages.

<sup>61</sup>In the wilderness: Beth-arabah, Mid-din, Secacah, <sup>62</sup>Nibshan, the City of Salt and Engedi—six towns with their vil-lages.

<sup>63</sup>But the people of Judah could not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jeru-salem; the Jebusites lived there side by side with the sons of Judah, as they still do today.

### The tribe of Ephraim

**16** <sup>1</sup>The land given by lot to the des-cendants of Joseph stretched from the Jordan opposite Jericho eastward. From Jericho onward the southern border climbed the highlands into the hill country as far as Bethel; <sup>2</sup>it left Bethel and Luz and went on toward the border of the Archites of Ataroth; <sup>3</sup>then it went westward to the area of the Japhletites as far as the area of Lower Beth-horon. From there it went to Gezer, and reached the Mediterranean Sea. <sup>4</sup>The tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim, descendants of Joseph, divided this inheritance among themselves.

<sup>5</sup>The border of the tribe of Ephraim ran from Ataroth-addar as far as Upper Beth-horon, <sup>6</sup>and it ended at the Mediter-ranean Sea. Michmethath was to the north. From there the border turned east towards Tanaath-shiloh and ran beyond it on the east to Janoah. <sup>7</sup>Then it went down from Janoah to Ataroth and Na-arah, touched Jericho and ended at the Jordan. <sup>8</sup>From Tappuah the border went westward to the stream Kanah and ended at the Mediterranean Sea. This was the land given to the tribe of Eph-raith according to their clans, <sup>9</sup>as well as the towns set apart for the Ephraimites inside the territory of the descendants of Manasseh, all those towns and their vil-lages. <sup>10</sup>The Canaanites living in Gezer were not driven out; they have lived among the Ephraimites to the present day, but are submitted to obligatory works.

### The tribe of Manasseh

**17** <sup>1</sup>A part of the land awarded to Ma-nasseh, who was Joseph's first-born son, was given to Machir, Manas-seh's eldest son and father of Gilead. To

him was given, as was fitting for a mili-tary hero, the country of Gilead and Bashan. <sup>2</sup>Land was also given to other families descended from Manasseh ac-cording to their clans: the families of Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hepher, Shemida. These were the clans of the male descendants of Manasseh son of Joseph.

<sup>3</sup>Zelophehad son of Hepher, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manasseh, had no sons, only daughters, whose names are: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Mil-cah and Tirzah. <sup>4</sup>These daughters went to the priest Eleazar and to Joshua the son of Nun and to the leaders, and said, "Yahweh commanded Moses to give us some of the land among our brothers as our own." According to Yahweh's com-mand, therefore, they were given land along with their male relatives.

<sup>5</sup>In this way Manasseh received ten shares besides the country of Gilead and Bashan which lies across the Jordan, <sup>6</sup>since Manasseh's female descendants received a share in the land as well as his male descendants. The country of Gilead itself belonged to the rest of the descen-dants of Manasseh.

<sup>7</sup>The border of Manasseh stretched from Asher to Michmethath, which is op-posite Shechem. From there the border went south to the spring of Tappuah. <sup>8</sup>The land surrounding Tappuah be-longed to Manasseh, but the town of Tap-puah on Manasseh's border belonged to the descendants of Ephraim. <sup>9</sup>The bor-der passed down to the stream, south of the river, where the towns set apart for Ephraim from among the towns of Man-asseh were situated. The border of Man-asseh passed north of the stream and ended at the sea. <sup>10</sup>Ephraim was to the south and Manasseh to the north, and both were bounded on the west by the Mediterranean Sea. They touched Asher to the north and Issachar to the east. <sup>11</sup>Within the territories of Issachar and Asher, Manasseh had Beth-shean and Ibleam with their surrounding towns, as well as Dor and Endor, Taanach and Megiddo and their surrounding towns, and a third of the Nepheth. <sup>12</sup>But the peo-ple of Manasseh could not conquer these towns, and the Canaanites continued to live there. <sup>13</sup>However, when the Israelites became stronger, they forced the Cana-

anites to work for them, but they never drove them out.

<sup>14</sup>The descendants of Joseph spoke to Joshua, “Why have you given us only one share of the land when there are so many of us because Yahweh blessed us?” <sup>15</sup>Joshua answered, “If your people are so many, go up to the forest and clear out a place for yourselves in the land of the Perizzites and the Rephaim, since the highlands of Ephraim are too small for you.” <sup>16</sup>The descendants of Joseph answered, “The highlands are not enough for us, and, in the plain, the Canaanites have iron chariots, and so have those in Beth-shean and its surrounding towns, and those in the plain of Jezreel.” <sup>17</sup>Joshua said to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, “You are a numerous people and very powerful; you will not be left with only this share <sup>18</sup>for you will go up to the forest and clear it. All the land shall be yours, and you will drive out the Canaanites despite their iron chariots and great strength.”

#### Joshua divides the rest of the land

**18** <sup>1</sup>After they had conquered the land, the whole community of Israel gathered at Shiloh, and the Tent of Meeting was set up there.

<sup>2</sup>Among the Israelites were seven tribes which had not yet been given their share of the land. <sup>3</sup>Then Joshua said to them, “How much longer will you wait before going in and taking possession of the land which Yahweh, the God of your fathers has given you? <sup>4</sup>Choose three men from each tribe. I will send them out to make a survey of the whole territory so that it can be divided. <sup>5</sup>They must divide the land into seven parts, because those of the tribe of Judah have already their territory to the south, and those of the tribe of Joseph have their territory to the north. <sup>6</sup>You are to survey the land in seven divisions and bring your findings to me here, so that I can cast lots for you before Yahweh our God. <sup>7</sup>The Levites have no share in the land with the rest of you; their share is to serve as priests of Yahweh, and the tribes of Gad and Reuben and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their land beyond the Jordan eastward, as Moses, Yahweh’s servant, gave it to them.”

<sup>8</sup>To those who were to survey the

country, Joshua gave this command before they started on their way: “Go, survey and map the whole country, and then come back to me. Here in Shiloh I will consult Yahweh for you by drawing lots.”

<sup>9</sup>So the men left and went all over the country, making a list of all the towns and how they were to be divided into seven parts. When they brought it back to Joshua in the camp at Shiloh, <sup>10</sup>he drew lots to consult Yahweh for them and divided the land among the Israelites according to their clans.

#### The tribe of Benjamin

<sup>11</sup>The first share of land went to the tribe of Benjamin according to their clans: their territory lay between that of the tribes of Judah and Joseph.

<sup>12</sup>The northern border began at the Jordan, climbed to the northern side of Jericho, rose through the hill country westward and ended at the wilderness of Beth-aven. <sup>13</sup>From there it continued toward the south side of Luz which is now called Bethel; then downward to Ataroth-addar, on the mountain south of Lower Beth-horon. <sup>14</sup>The border then curved, and on the western side of this mountain turned southward and ended at Kiriath-baal, which is now called Kiriath-jearim, a city of the tribe of Judah. This was the western border.

<sup>15</sup>The southern border ran from the edge of Kiriath-jearim toward Gasin, and to the spring of Nephtoah. <sup>16</sup>It continued to the foot of the mountain facing the Valley of Ben-hinnom, at the north end of Rephaim Valley. It then went south through the Valley of Hinnom, south of the mountainside of the Jebusites and reached En-rogel. <sup>17</sup>It then curved northward to En-shemesh coming out at the circles of stones facing the Ascent of Adummim, <sup>18</sup>then on to Cheteph in sight of the Arabah and down to the Arabah and <sup>19</sup>the stone of Bohan (Bohan was a son of Reuben) and from there passed north of the mountainside overlooking the Jordan Valley. The border ended at the bay of the Dead Sea, at the mouth of the Jordan. This was the southern border. <sup>20</sup>The Jordan itself was the eastern border. Such was the land given to the tribe of Benjamin, with the borders defining it.

<sup>21</sup>The towns of the tribe of Benjamin,

according to their clans, were Jericho, Beth-hoglah, Emek-keziz; <sup>22</sup>Beth-arah, Zemaraim, Bethel; <sup>23</sup>Avvim, Parah, Ophrah, <sup>24</sup>Chephar-ammoni, Ophni, Geba: twelve towns and their surrounding villages. <sup>25</sup>Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth; <sup>26</sup>Mizpeh, Chephirah, Mozah; <sup>27</sup>Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah; <sup>28</sup>Zela, Haeleph, Jerusalem, Gibeah and Kiriath: fourteen towns with their surrounding villages. This was the land given to the tribe of Benjamin, according to their clans.

### The share of the other tribes

**19** <sup>1</sup>The second share of land went to the tribe of Simeon, according to their clans; their land was encircled by the land of the tribe of Judah. <sup>2</sup>For they had Beer-sheba, Shema, Moladah; <sup>3</sup>Hazarshual, Balah, Ezem; <sup>4</sup>Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah; <sup>5</sup>Ziglag, Beth-marcaboth, Hazar-susah; <sup>6</sup>Beth-lebaoth and Sharuhēn—thirteen towns and their surrounding villages. <sup>7</sup>Ain, Rimmon, Ether and Ashan—four towns and their surrounding villages. <sup>8</sup>Moreover, they were given all the villages lying outside these towns as far as Baalath-beer, Ramah of the Negeb. This was the land given to the tribe of Simeon according to their clans.

<sup>9</sup>This land was taken from the territory of Judah, because their share of these was too large for them; this is why the tribe of Simeon was given land within the territory of the tribe of Judah.

<sup>10</sup>The third share of land went to the tribe of Zebulun according to their clans; their border reached as far as Sarid. <sup>11</sup>From there the border climbed westward to Maraalah, touching Dabbesheth first and then the stream east of Jokneam. <sup>12</sup>From Sarid it went eastward toward the sunrise to the border of Chesulloth-tabor, then to Dobrath and to Japhia. <sup>13</sup>From there it continued eastward to Gathhepher and Ittah-kazin; it came out at Rimmon and turned toward Neah. <sup>14</sup>On the north the border bent toward Hannathon and ended at the valley of Iphtahel. <sup>15</sup>It included Kattath, Nahalal, Shimron, Iralah and Bethlehem—twelve towns with their surrounding villages. <sup>16</sup>This was the land received by the tribe of Zebulun according to their clans: these towns and their surrounding villages.

<sup>17</sup>The fourth share of land went to the

tribe of Issachar, according to their clans. <sup>18</sup>Their border reached to Jezreel and included Chesulloth and Shunem; <sup>19</sup>Hapharaim, Shion, Anaharath; <sup>20</sup>Dobrath, Kishion, Ebez; <sup>21</sup>Remeth and En-gannim, En-haddah and Beth-pazzez. <sup>22</sup>Their border touched Tabor and Shahazimah and Beth-shemesh, and ended at the Jordan: sixteen towns with their surrounding villages. <sup>23</sup>This was the land given to the tribe of Issachar, according to their clans: the towns with their surrounding villages.

<sup>24</sup>The fifth share of land went to the tribe of Asher, according to their clans.

<sup>25</sup>Within their territory were Helkath, Hali, Beten, Achshaph, <sup>26</sup>Allammelech, Amad and Mishal; on the west their border touched Carmel and the stream of the Libnath; <sup>27</sup>on the other side it went eastward to Beth-dagon, touching Zebulun and the Valley of Iphtahel on the way north to Beth-emek and Neiel. It continued north to Cabul, <sup>28</sup>Abdon, Rehob, Hammon and Kanah as far as Sidon the Great. <sup>29</sup>The border then turned back toward Ramah reaching the fortress city of Tyre. From there it turned to Hosah and ended at the Mediterranean Sea. It included Mahalab, Achzib, <sup>30</sup>Acco, Aphek, Rehob: twenty-two towns with their surrounding villages. <sup>31</sup>This was the land given to the tribe of Asher, according to their clans; these towns with their surrounding villages.

<sup>32</sup>The sixth share of land went to the tribe of Naphtali according to their clans.

<sup>33</sup>Their border went from Heleph and the Oak of Zanaanim to Adami-negeb, to Jabneel as far as Lakkum, and ended at the Jordan. <sup>34</sup>From there the border ran west to Aznoth-tabor and went on to Hukkok, touching Zebulun on the south, Asher on the west and the Jordan on the east. <sup>35</sup>The fortified towns were Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Chinnereth; <sup>36</sup>Adamah, Ramah, Hazor; <sup>37</sup>Kedesh, Edrei, En-hazor; <sup>38</sup>Yiron, Migdalel, Horem, Beth-anath, Beth-shemesh: nineteen towns with their surrounding villages. <sup>39</sup>This was the land given to the tribe of Naphtali according to their clans.

<sup>40</sup>The seventh share of the land went to the tribe of Dan according to their clans, <sup>41</sup>Within their territory were Zorah, Eshtaol, Irshemesh; <sup>42</sup>Sha-alabbin, Aijalon, Ithlah; <sup>43</sup>Elon, Timnah, Ekron, <sup>44</sup>Eltekeh, Gibbethon, <sup>45</sup>Baalath; Jehud,

Bene-berak, Gathrimmon; <sup>46</sup>Mejarkon and Rakkon with the land around Joppa.

<sup>47</sup>But the territory of the tribe of Dan was too small for them; and therefore they went up and attacked Leshem and captured it and killed its people. Having seized the town they settled in it, and changed the name of Leshem to Dan after Dan their ancestor. <sup>48</sup>This was the land of the tribe of Dan, according to their clans: these towns with their surrounding villages.

<sup>49</sup>When the Israelites finished distributing the land by drawing lots, they gave Joshua son of Nun a part of the land as his own; <sup>50</sup>at the command of Yahweh, they gave him the town he had asked for, Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim; he rebuilt the city and settled there.

<sup>51</sup>These are the shares of land which Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the heads of each family divided among the tribes of Israel by drawing lots at Shiloh, in Yahweh's presence, at the door of the Tent of Meeting; and thus they finished dividing the land.

### The cities of refuge

21:13;  
Num  
35:9;  
Dt 19:1

**20** <sup>1</sup>Yahweh said to Joshua, <sup>2</sup>"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: Choose the cities of refuge about which I told you through Moses, <sup>3</sup>towns where a person who kills someone accidentally may find safety; they are to be your refuge from the dead person's relative who is looking for revenge.

<sup>4</sup>The man who has killed may run away to one of these towns; he shall appear at the entrance to the town and explain his case to the elders of the place. They shall welcome him and assign him a place to live among them. <sup>5</sup>If the person who wants revenge follows him there, they are not to hand him over, since he has killed his neighbor accidentally and not out of hatred.

<sup>6</sup>The man who has killed must remain in that town until he has received a public trial and until the death of the high priest then in office. Only then may the man who has killed go back to his own town and his own house, to the town from which he has escaped."

<sup>7</sup>For this purpose they set aside Kedesh in Galilee, in the hill country of Naphtali, Shechem in the highlands of

Ephraim, and Kiriath-arba, which is now Hebron, in the hill country of Judah.

<sup>8</sup>East of the Jordan, in the desert east of Jericho, they chose Bezer in the territory of Reuben, Ramoth-gilead in the territory of Gad, and Golan in Bashan in the territory of Manasseh. <sup>9</sup>These were the towns set aside for all the Israelites and for any foreigner living among them, where anyone who had killed a person accidentally could find safety from the dead person's relative looking for revenge, until he had been given a public trial.

### The Levitical towns

**21** <sup>1</sup>The heads of families among the Levites came to Eleazar the priest and to Joshua son of Nun and to the heads of families of all the tribes of Israel. <sup>2</sup>At Shiloh in the land of Canaan, they said to them, "Yahweh commanded through Moses that we should be given towns to live in, with the pasture land around them for our cattle."

<sup>3</sup>In accordance with Yahweh's command, the Israelites gave the Levites certain cities and pasture lands out of their own territories.

<sup>4</sup>First among the Levite clan of Kohath, the families descended from Aaron the priest, were given thirteen towns from the territories of Judah, Simeon and Benjamin; <sup>5</sup>the other Kohath families received, clan by clan, ten towns from the territories of Ephraim, Dan and half the tribe of Manasseh. <sup>6</sup>The clan of Gershon was given thirteen towns from the territories of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali and half the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan. <sup>7</sup>The families of the clan of Merari were given twelve towns from the territories of Reuben, Gad and Zebulun.

<sup>8</sup>These towns and the pasture lands near them the Israelites gave to the Levites by drawing lots, as Yahweh had commanded through Moses.

<sup>9</sup>These are the towns of Judah and Simeon that Joshua gave <sup>10</sup>to the descendants of Aaron who were of the Kohathite clan of the Levites, the first to be given some cities.

<sup>11</sup>They gave them Kiriath-arba, the chief city of the Anakim, which is now Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, with the pasture lands around it. <sup>12</sup>But the fields and surrounding villages of this

Num 35:  
1-8;  
6:39-66

town had already been given to Caleb son of Jephunneh as his property.<sup>13</sup> To the descendants of Aaron the priest, they gave Hebron, a city of refuge, and the pasture lands near it; also Libnah with its pasture lands,<sup>14</sup> and Jattir, Eshtemoa,<sup>15</sup> Holon, Debir,<sup>16</sup> Ashan, Juttah and Beth-shemesh, each with its pasture lands: nine towns taken from these two tribes.<sup>17</sup> From the territory of Benjamin four towns: Gibeon and Geba with their pasture lands,<sup>18</sup> Anathoth and Almon with theirs.<sup>19</sup> The towns of the priests, the descendants of Aaron, were thirteen towns in all, with their pasture lands.

<sup>20</sup>Some towns from the territory of Ephraim were given to the other families of the Levite clan of Kohath: <sup>21</sup>the city of refuge, Shechem, with its pasture lands, in the hill country of Ephraim, together with Gezer, <sup>22</sup>Kibzaim and Beth-horon, each with its pasture lands: four towns. <sup>23</sup>From the territory of Dan, Elteke, Gibbethon, <sup>24</sup>Aijalon and Gathrimmon with their pasture lands: four towns. <sup>25</sup>From the territory of half the tribe of Manasseh they were given two towns: Taanach and Jibleam with their pasture lands. <sup>26</sup>In all, ten towns with their pasture lands were given to the families of the clan of Kohath.

<sup>27</sup>To the Levite clan of Gershon were given the city of refuge Golan in Bashan and also Ashtaroth, each with its pasture lands: two towns, both from the territory of the half tribe of Manasseh. <sup>28</sup>From the territory of Issachar four towns: Kishion, Dobrath, <sup>29</sup>Jarmuth and En-gannim, each with its pasture lands. <sup>30</sup>From the territory of Asher four towns: Mishal, Abdon, <sup>31</sup>Helkath and Rehob, each with its pasture lands. <sup>32</sup>From the territory of Naphtali three towns: Kedesh, the city of refuge in Galilee, Hammoth-dor and Rakkath, each with its pasture lands. <sup>33</sup>The Gershonites according to their clans were given thirteen towns in all with their pasture lands.

<sup>34</sup>To the clans of Merari, the rest of the

Levites, were given four towns with their pasture lands from the territory of Zebulun: <sup>35</sup>Jokneam, Kartah, Rimmon and Nahalal. <sup>36</sup>From the territory of Reuben, beyond the Jordan four towns: the city of refuge Bezer, Jahaz, <sup>37</sup>Kedemoth and Mephaath, each with its pasture lands. <sup>38</sup>From the tribe of Gad four towns: the city of refuge Ramoth-gilead, Mahanaim, <sup>39</sup>Heshbon and Jazer, each with pasture lands. <sup>40</sup>A total of twelve towns were given to the clan of Merari.

<sup>41</sup>The towns thus given to the Levites from the Israelite inheritance were <sup>42</sup>forty-eight, with their pasture lands. All these towns, as well as the pasture lands around them, were given to the Levites.

<sup>43</sup>So it was that Yahweh gave the Israelites all the land he had solemnly promised to give their ancestors. They took possession of it and began to live there. <sup>44</sup>Yahweh gave them peace throughout their land just as he had promised their ancestors. Not one of their enemies was able to stand against them; Yahweh gave them victory over all their enemies <sup>45</sup>and kept all the promises he had made to the people of Israel.

### The question of the altar across the Jordan

**22** • <sup>1</sup>Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh <sup>2</sup>and said to them, <sup>3</sup>“You have observed all that Moses, the servant of Yahweh ordered you, and you have obeyed me constantly. You have never deserted your brothers over this long period of time; at every point you have obeyed the orders of Yahweh your God. <sup>4</sup>Now that Yahweh your God has granted your brothers the rest he promised them, go back to your tents, to the land given into your possession by Moses the servant of Yahweh, beyond the Jordan.

<sup>5</sup>But take care above all to keep the commandments of the Law which Moses the servant of Yahweh gave you: love

Num  
32:20

• **22.1** The situation of the tribes settled towards the east of the Jordan was ambiguous: they were outside the Promised Land with the Jordan as its boundary (see note Jos 3). Chapter 22 affirms the rightful claim of Transjordanian tribes as belonging to the people of Is-

rael and wants to justify the existence in those times of the provincial sanctuaries. It was only in the time of Josiah, at the end of the seventh century B.C., that all cult would be centered at the sanctuary of Jerusalem.



Yahweh your God, follow his paths always, keep his commandments, be faithful to him and serve him with all your heart and all your soul.”<sup>6</sup> So Joshua blessed them and sent them away; they went home to their tents.

3:21;  
12:35

<sup>7</sup>Moses had given territory in Bashan to one half of the tribe of Manasseh; because of this Joshua gave land to the other half of Manasseh among their brothers on the west bank of the Jordan. As Joshua sent them home to their tents he blessed them<sup>8</sup> and said to them, “You are going back to your tents with great wealth, with cattle in plenty, with silver and gold, bronze and iron and great quantities of clothing; these are the spoils of your enemies that you shared with your brothers.”

Dt 12

<sup>9</sup>The Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh went home again; they left the Israelites at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, and made their way back to the land of Gilead, the territory which belonged to them and where they had settled in accordance with the order of Yahweh given through Moses.<sup>10</sup> When they came to the circles of stones at the Jordan which are in Canaanite territory, the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh built there beside the Jordan, an imposing altar of great size.<sup>11</sup> The Israelites were told, “The Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh have built this altar facing the land of Canaan near the circles of stones at the Jordan, beyond the territory of the Israelites.”

<sup>12</sup>At this news the children of Israel summoned the whole community at Shiloh, ready to make war on them.

<sup>13</sup>The Israelites sent the priest Phinehas son of Eleazar to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, in the land of Gilead,<sup>14</sup> and with him ten leading men, one leader from each tribe in Israel; every one of them was head of his family among the clans of Israel.<sup>15</sup> When they came to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh in the land of Gilead, they said to them:

<sup>16</sup>“The whole community of Yahweh asks you: What do you mean by this treachery committed against the God of Israel? Why turn aside from Yahweh today, building yourselves an altar? You are sinning against Yahweh himself.

<sup>17</sup>Was the sin at Peor not enough, the sin from which we are not cleansed even now, in spite of the plague that ravaged the whole community of Yahweh?<sup>18</sup> You have stopped following Yahweh today, and you have set yourselves in revolt against him today. Tomorrow his anger will be roused against the whole community of Israel.

<sup>19</sup>Do you think your land is unclean? Then cross over into the territory of Yahweh, where his Holy Tent is and come to live among us. But do not rebel against Yahweh or set yourselves apart by building an altar to vie with the altar of Yahweh our God.<sup>20</sup> When Achan, son of Zerah betrayed his trust in the matter of the anathema, did not Yahweh vent his anger on the whole community of Israel, although he was only one man? Did he not have to die for his sin?”

<sup>21</sup>The Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh answered the heads of the clans of Israel:

<sup>22</sup>“Yahweh is the God of gods! Yahweh well knows, and let Israel know it too: Let Yahweh punish us immediately if there has been defiance or treachery on our part against Yahweh.<sup>23</sup> Let Yahweh punish us if we have built an altar to turn away from Yahweh and offer holocaust and oblation and communion sacrifice on it.<sup>24</sup> We made it to prevent what might happen one day when your children say to ours: ‘What link have you with Yahweh the God of Israel?’<sup>25</sup> Has not Yahweh set the boundary of the Jordan between us and you, you sons of Reuben and sons of Gad? You have no share in Yahweh.’ Thus your children might make us turn aside from Yahweh.

<sup>26</sup>So we said to each other, ‘Let us build this altar, not for holocausts or other sacrifices<sup>27</sup> but as a witness between us and you and among our descendants after us. It will prove that we, too, worship Yahweh with our holocausts, our victims and our communion sacrifices in his presence. So that your children will never be able to say to ours: You have no share in Yahweh.’<sup>28</sup> For, in this case, we should say to them: Look at this structure, Yahweh’s altar made by our ancestors not for holocausts or other sacrifices but as a witness between us and you.’<sup>29</sup> We have no intention of defying Yahweh or turning away from him

today. We are not building an altar for holocaust or oblations or sacrifices to compete with the altar of Yahweh our God that stands before his tabernacle!”

<sup>30</sup>When Phinehas the priest, and the leaders of the community who were with him, heard the answer of the sons of Gad and of Reuben and of Manasseh, they approved of them. <sup>31</sup>Then the priest Phinehas son of Eleazar said to the sons of Reuben and sons of Gad and sons of Manasseh, “Now we clearly see that Yahweh is among us, because you have not sinned against him; you have saved the children of Israel from the punishment of Yahweh.”

<sup>32</sup>The priest Phinehas son of Eleazar and the leaders left the Reubenites and the Gadites and returned from the land of Gilead to the land of Canaan, and they brought back this answer to the Israelites. <sup>33</sup>The Israelites were pleased to hear this; they gave thanks to God and spoke no more of making war and ravaging the country where the sons of Reuben and of Gad had settled. <sup>34</sup>The Reubenites and the Gadites named the altar: ‘Witness’, “Because,” they said, “it will be a witness between us that Yahweh is God.”

**Joshua’s last discourse**

**23** <sup>1</sup>A long time after Yahweh gave peace to Israel in all its borders, <sup>2</sup>Joshua, who was now very old and burdened with age, summoned all Israel—their elders, leaders, secretaries and judges—and he said to them: “I am now very old. <sup>3</sup>You have seen all that Yahweh has done to all these nations for your sake and how he himself has fought for you. <sup>4</sup>See, I have distributed to you the territory of all these nations that we destroyed from the Jordan to the Great Sea, as well as those nations that still remain. <sup>5</sup>Yahweh, our God, will continue driving them back before you and will deprive them of their lands that you may take them as Yahweh has promised you.

<sup>6</sup>Therefore be very valiant and have

the determination to do all that is written in the book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside from it either to the right or to the left. <sup>7</sup>Do not intermingle with these nations that are left among you. Do not call upon their gods or swear by their name. Do not serve them or bow before them, <sup>8</sup>but remain united to Yahweh, our God, as you have done to this day. <sup>9</sup>For that reason, Yahweh has driven away before you many powerful nations: no one was able to stand before your presence. <sup>10</sup>One of you pursued a thousand since Yahweh, our God, fought for you as he had promised. <sup>11</sup>So then, be very careful to love Yahweh, your God.

<sup>12</sup>But if you separate yourselves from him and become one with the rest of these nations that still remain among you, if they come to be your relatives and you intermarry with them, <sup>13</sup>know very well that Yahweh shall no longer drive out these nations before you, but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a scourge on your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this beautiful land Yahweh, our God, has given you.

<sup>14</sup>I am now about to go the way of all creatures, so I say to you: know in your soul and in your conscience that all the promises of Yahweh, our God, have been fulfilled; not one of them has failed. <sup>15</sup>But just as all these promises of Yahweh in your favor have been fulfilled, so shall Yahweh bring all the evil he has threatened against you until you have been wiped out from this magnificent land he has given you, <sup>16</sup>if you break the covenant that Yahweh, our God, has given us. If you follow and serve other gods and bow before them, the wrath of Yahweh shall rise against you, and you shall suddenly perish from this fertile land he has given you.”

**The Covenant renewed at Shechem**

**24** <sup>1</sup>Joshua summoned all the tribes of Israel in Shechem, and assembled the elders, leaders, judges and secretaries. And together they presented themselves before God.

23:13;  
Jer 5:7

Dt 28:15

Dt 11:16

• **24.1** By the time Joshua disappears, the presence of Israel in the hills and plains of Palestine was well-established. They had asserted themselves either by peaceful infiltration

or conquest. What is even more important, they were aware of their common destiny.

The twelve tribes gather together in Shechem in Central Palestine, where the tribes of

Gen  
11:27

<sup>2</sup>Addressing the people, Joshua said to them: “Yahweh, the God of Israel, commands me to say to you: Your ancestors lived beyond the Euphrates River—Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor—serving other gods. <sup>3</sup>But I brought Abraham your father from beyond the Euphrates and led him through the whole land of Canaan. Then I gave him a son Isaac, that he might have numerous descendants. <sup>4</sup>And to Isaac, I gave two sons: Esau and Jacob. Esau received the mountains of Seir as his inheritance, while Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt.

<sup>5</sup>Then I sent Moses and Aaron to punish Egypt in the way that you know, that you might leave. <sup>6</sup>Then I brought your ancestors out of Egypt and you came to the sea. The Egyptians pursued you with chariots and horses as far as the Red Sea. <sup>7</sup>Then you cried to Yahweh, and he put immense darkness between you and the Egyptians. He made the sea go back on them and they were drowned. You have witnessed all the things he did in Egypt, and then you lived in the desert for a long time. <sup>8</sup>Then I brought you to the land of the Amorites who were on the east of the Jordan. You fought them but it was I who gave them into your hand; you destroyed them and you seized their lands.

<sup>9</sup>Balak, the son of Zippor, king of Moab, declared war on Israel and commanded Balaam son of Beor to curse you. <sup>10</sup>But I would not listen to him, so Balaam blessed you and I saved you from the hands of Balak.

<sup>11</sup>Then you crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho. And the landlords of Jericho fought against you: the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites and Jebusites declared war on you, but I gave them to you. <sup>12</sup>The two Amorite kings fled from you because of the swarm of hornets that attacked them and not because of your sword and bow. <sup>13</sup>I gave you lands which you have not tilled, cities which you did not build but in which you now live. I gave you vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant but from which you now eat.

<sup>14</sup>So fear Yahweh, and be sincere and faithful in serving him. Set aside those gods your ancestors worshiped in Mesopotamia and Egypt. Serve only Yahweh. <sup>15</sup>But if you do not want to serve Yahweh, make known this very day whom you shall serve—whether they be the gods your ancestors served in Mesopotamia or the gods of the Amorites who formerly occupied the land in which you now live. As for me, I and my household will serve Yahweh.”

<sup>16</sup>The people answered: “May God not permit that we ever abandon Yahweh to serve other gods! <sup>17</sup>For it was he who brought us and our ancestors out of Egypt, the house of slavery. It was he who did those great wonders that we have seen; he protected us on the way and through all the land where we passed, <sup>18</sup>driving away before us all the nations especially the Amorites who lived in this land. So we shall also serve Yahweh: he is our God!”

Ezk 20:7

Joseph have settled and are stronger and keep the memory of Moses alive zealously. Here the Covenant celebrated by Moses is renewed. See Exodus 24 and last chapters of Deuteronomy.

After recalling the interventions made by Yahweh to help Israel, Joshua invites the assembly to

choose Yahweh and to reject foreign gods. The law of the Covenant is committed to writing.

Remembrance of the Covenant of Shechem will keep alive the aspiration for unity and fidelity to Yahweh during those dark moments after Joshua's death, that is, during the period of the Judges.

34:14 <sup>19</sup> Joshua asked the people: "Will you be able to serve Yahweh? He is a Holy God, a Jealous God who does not tolerate wickedness or faults. <sup>20</sup> If you abandon Yahweh to serve other gods, he will turn against you and just as he has done you so much good, so shall he punish you and destroy you." <sup>21</sup> The people replied: "No, may it not be as you say. We will serve Yahweh." <sup>22</sup> Joshua said: "You yourselves are witnesses that you have chosen Yahweh to serve him." They answered: "We are witnesses."  
<sup>23</sup> Joshua then said, "Remove now from your midst any other gods and serve Yahweh, the God of Israel, with all your heart." <sup>24</sup> The people answered: "We will serve Yahweh, our God, and obey his commands."

23:21;  
24:3

Gen  
35:2;  
1S 7:3

Dt 29:11;  
31:26;  
Ne 8:18;  
9:3

<sup>25</sup> On that day at Shechem, Joshua made a covenant with the people and fixed laws and ordinances. <sup>26</sup> He also wrote down everything expressed in the book of the Law of God; he chose a great stone and put it under the oak tree in the sacred

place of Yahweh. <sup>27</sup> Then Joshua said to the people: "This stone shall be a witness to all that Yahweh said to us, for it heard all these words. It shall be a witness against you, lest you deal falsely with Yahweh."

Gen  
31:48;  
Is 59:13

<sup>28</sup> Joshua immediately sent the people away and everyone returned to his land.

Jdg 2:6

<sup>29</sup> After all these deeds, Joshua, son of Nun and servant of Yahweh, died at the age of a hundred and ten. <sup>30</sup> They buried him in his land at Timnath-serah, in the hill country of Ephraim, to the north of Mount Gaash. <sup>31</sup> Israel served Yahweh throughout the whole life of Joshua and of the elders who outlived Joshua and who had witnessed all the wonders Yahweh did for Israel. <sup>32</sup> The Israelites brought from Egypt the bones of Joseph. They buried them at Shechem in a place in the field which Jacob bought from the children of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for a hundred pieces of money. This became the possession of the children of Joseph.

Jdg 2:  
8-10

Jdg 2:7

<sup>33</sup> Eleazar the son of Aaron also died and they buried him on the hill given to his son Phinehas on the mountains of Ephraim.