

A Practical Study of JOSHUA

“The Path of Obedience Leads to Victory”

Study Number Nine – Joshua 9:1-27

Here’s a review the four main points of the book of Joshua:

1. The **INVASION** of the land—chapters 1-5.
2. The **SUBJECTION** of the land—chapters 6-12.
3. The **DIVISION** of the land—chapters 13-22.

And then Joshua gives two messages. He called it:

4. The **CONCLUSION**

Chapter 23—message number one.

Chapter 24—message number two.

We’ve divided the book into three parts and we took the first eight chapters of the book in part 1 and so we’re picking up at chapter 9. But in order to catch everyone up, let’s go back and review. We’ve given a title to every chapter and summarized each one.

1. Chapter 1, Moses died and God **COMMISSIONS**

JOSHUA to take the people into the land. They were here 40 years before and chose not to go in. Now it's time for them to go in and possess what God had given them through the Abrahamic covenant.

2. Chapter 2—General Joshua sends his TWO SPIES into Jericho to look over the place. And remember we met Rahab and saw the beautiful demonstration of God's grace in that woman's life.

3. Chapter 3—the CROSSING OF THE RIVER. Two and a half million go across on 20 miles of dry riverbed, the marvelous miracle of God's performance to provide them an opportunity to get into the land.

4. Chapter 4—we looked at what we called the TWO MEMORIALS. There was a stone memorial in the bed of the river where the priests had stood and there was a stone memorial at Gilgal—which is about 5 or 6 miles from the river—very close to the seat of Jericho. Gilgal forms the base where they're going—where all their military operations are going to take place.

5. Chapter 5—A CONSECRATION OF THE PEOPLE in anticipation of them taking the land and having the various victories.

That brought us to a division in the outline. Chapters 1-5—INVASION of the land. Then chapters 6-12, which is the section we're going to start in, we've called the SUBJECTION

of the land.

There are all kinds of battles involved in possession of the land. It's the Lord's battle. These people are under God's judgment. They've had years and years and years to respond. They're basically made up of several different tribes, as we're going to see in just a few minutes. And now it's time for God's judgment for them. They've had their chance and their opportunity. They've refused and it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

6. Chapter 6—JERICHO FALLS.

7. Chapter 7—Achan stole some things from Jericho, and as a result they **LOST THEIR SECOND BATTLE** at the city of Ai.

8. Chapter 8—the last chapter we looked at together, they had **VICTORY** in Ai because they dealt with the problem in chapter 7.

And we left them between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal reading the scriptures. That's a great place to leave anybody where the time we take a little break to be reading the Word, to be in fellowship with God and everything's going great.

Now they have gone back to Gilgal and we are now ready for chapter 9. We've called this **GIBEON**—the city of Gibeon, which is the next one.

If we took these three battles so far we would have in picture form the three enemies that every Christian faces when he decides he's going to begin to grow in his Christian life—the world, the flesh and the devil.

The WORLD in chapter 6 wants us to conform to it.

The FLESH in chapter 7—our old nature—wants to satisfy itself. And Achan is a graphic illustration of that.

And naturally SATAN wants to keep us out of the Word and away from our prayer time. And if we've not had time today to be in the Word and in prayer we've fulfilled his purpose so we probably haven't bumped into him today. We just feel very comfortable because we're cooperating fully with his plan by the fact that we have lived this much of today and we haven't had time yet to be in the Word and in prayer.

He knows that if he can keep us off our knees and keep us out of the book, he's rendered us ineffective and that's his whole purpose. We're going to see a lot of his strategies and a lot of the things that he does in this study.

Now what we'd like to do is to take our maps and get a location so we can get a handle on where we're going and then we'll get right back into the chapter.

We have the two maps. We have Canaan before the conquest and then we have the physical features of Canaan.

Now on the one on the left—Canaan before the conquest—find Gilgal on there. Notice there's two spots where they believe that it is—just above the Dead Sea. Then Jericho right there in the middle. That was the first battle. And then just run a pencil across there west and north and there's Ai. And that's where we left them having victory at Ai.

They then move north for the reading of the scriptures between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim—those two little spots up there—and then now have come back to Gilgal as the scene of the chapter opens.

Now notice just below Ai—south and west—we have Gibeon. There's the focal point for our study. Now turn to the next page for just a second and on this page there are four pictures of the conquest.

What is Joshua's strategy in taking the land? Well as a good military General he's going to drive a wedge through the middle in a central campaign and then going to head south and have a southern campaign and then north in having a northern campaign. We'll be looking at those in future studies.

See what he's done on the wedge so far, is taken Jericho, went straight west to the north 20 miles—took Ai—and then is going to drop down and Gibeon is the next town on the sweep of the tornado. And they know it and are fully aware of it and that's what creates the problems in our study.

So let's get back to it now and get ready to dig in for just a

little bit.

There are a lot of people who don't believe that Satan exists and naturally they're the ones that are cooperating so fully with his plan that they haven't run into him lately. And the minute they make a decision to get serious the screws are going to come loose and the wheels are going to come off, and struggles and problems are going to be facing that individual.

Listen to these verses:

2 Corinthians 2:10, 11

But whom you forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ, in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

Then Luke 22—this is Jesus talking about Simon Peter in verses 31 and 32:

Luke 22:31, 32

“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

Joshua and his armies are facing a time when they've had a great victory at Ai. They're in fellowship with God, they're

reading the Word. There is a principle that we all need to learn and that is at the moment of our greatest victory is when we're the most vulnerable.

That's why the scripture constantly warns us: "Watch yourselves, take heed lest you fall." (ref. 1 Corinthians 10:12)

Elijah comes blowing off Mount Carmel after winning the Super Bowl against the prophets of Baal and he ends up out in the wilderness of Judea under a juniper tree saying, "I want to die because I'm not any better than my fathers," in the pit of depression. (see 1 Kings 19:4)

How quick things change in one's life in how these things happen. Yet we scratch our heads and we're amazed, but they do because the evil one is very, very active.

There are actually **FOUR THINGS** we need to notice as we walk through the chapter.

1. The evil one's strategy is one of **DECEPTION**—verses 4 and 5.
2. He doesn't have a problem **LYING**—verse 6.
3. And he uses **FLATTERY**—verse 9.
4. And the sad part of the whole story is **JOSHUA MAKES A COVENANT**. He actually goes along with the problem here in the passage.

There's going to be some really solid stuff in these verses.

v. 1 Now when all the kings west of the Jordan heard about these things—those in the hill country, in the western foothills, and along the entire coast of the Great Sea as far as Lebanon (the kings of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites)—

“Now when all the kings west of the Jordan heard about these things—those in the hill country, in the western foothills, and along the entire coast of the Great Sea as far as Lebanon (the kings of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites)—”

Now all these “kings west of the Jordan,” once they got into the land—two and a half million of them—the kings on the west bank get upset. They heard “these things.” What'd they hear? Well they heard of the miraculous crossing, they heard of the wipeout of Jericho and Ai, and they're concerned about it.

Now these names here—“the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites”—those are all descendants of Canaan the son of Ham who was the son of Noah. It's all part of the cursed line and they represent the inhabitants of the land. There's only one group that's left out—there are seven of them—and the GIRGASHITES are not mentioned here.

If we took the HITTITES we could put them up in Asia Minor and then they have a large holding of real estate down on the west banks of the Dead Sea.

If we took the CANAANITES we would throw them all over on the coast of the Mediterranean—over where Tel Aviv and those cities are located today—would be the Canaanite stronghold.

The AMORITES were a mountain people so they would be in the hill country. They were very war-like. They were on both sides of the river. Heshbon and Og were already wiped out on the east bank and so it's the rest of them that are mentioned here in these passages.

And the rest of the fellows—the PERIZZITES—are village dwellers. Or they're kind of like gypsies.

And then the HIVITES are the people we're going to talk about here. The people who live in Gibeon and the surrounding area are also called HIVITES.

And the JEBUSITES, they're the very, very staunch people that held the city of Jerusalem. When David became king he had to establish his capital in Jerusalem and he had to deal with the Jebusites who actually used that as a fortress and a military stronghold clear up until the time of David.

So those are the groups that are in the land. What happens to

them?

v. 2 they came together to make war against Joshua and Israel.

“they came together to make war against Joshua and Israel.”

They decided, “Hey, if we’re going to whip two and a half million people after they’ve already gotten Jericho and Ai we better get together or we’re not going to survive this.” And so they all decide to make a big alliance and they’re going to war against Joshua. We’ll get into that in our next study.

v. 3 However, when the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai,

“However, when the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai,”

v. 4 they resorted to a ruse: They went as a delegation whose donkeys were loaded with worn-out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended.

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Now why does Gibeon decide to separate themselves from the rest of them? Why don’t the Hivites go along with the rest of the crew?

Well when we look at the map and we realize their strategic position, they already have it figured out. What is Joshua's strategy? Wipe out Jericho, head straight west, get Ai and guess what? We're in the path of a tornado. Let's get Gibeon.

And they know they're 6 or 8 miles away from certain demise. And they're saying to the rest of their relatives—the other tribes—“Y'all can sit around and negotiate and plan your strategy for war. We've got to do something now! I mean we're it! We're next! So if we don't do something different than what you're talking about, we're going to get wiped out.”

Notice the words “they resorted to a ruse.” Understand that? That means a trick. It means a strategy, a wile. It's a way of fooling someone. They've decided they're going to do this.

Now the geographical location between the people is they are in Gibeon and 18 miles back over here close to the river now in Gilgal is where Joshua and all the troops are. After they finish the little scripture reading up at Ebal and Gerizim, they've gone back home to home base at Gilgal, and we're getting ready for this next deal.

So over here they're forming a delegation in Gibeon. And what is their delegation going to be like? Well their delegation's going to have some old hay-burners that are probably from way back and been around for a long time. They look around for some donkeys that really look raunchy. Their fur's all worn off and they just look terrible.

And then get some old saddle blankets that have been long overdue and they put that on there. And then they get some worn out gunny sacks and hang those on their donkeys and then some “old wineskins, cracked and mended.” And so it really looks bad.

Now they have the material and equipment to fool Joshua and his people.

v. 5 The men put worn and patched sandals on their feet and wore old clothes. All the bread of their food supply was dry and moldy.

“The men”— this is a Hollywood deal. They’re going to play for the Oscar here, they—“put [on] worn and patched sandals on their feet and they wear old clothes.”

And then on top of that:

“All the bread of their food supply was dry and moldy.”

So we have a picture of a delegation that has been on the road for months to get there. And that’s the picture they’re trying to create here.

Ephesians 6:11

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the tricks of the devil.

The wiles, the strategies of the evil one. They're doing that. He can pull the wool over their eyes so quickly, and here's the picture.

One of the neat things about this study is that there is so much archeological evidence about these cities. They found the city of Gibeon and they have actually found jars in Gibeon with the name Gibeon on it.

Gibeon was the Napa Valley of the day. Ernest and Julio Gallo might have had relatives there. It was a very fertile area filled with vineyards and they found incredible numbers of wineskins and jars because wine was their key means of existence.

And so here we have the wineskins. They just went out to the old barn where they've been producing this stuff and they found an old cracked one and some stuff that'd been hanging there for a long, long time and fixed it all up. And so they're all ready to do their thing.

Go way back to the book of the Genesis chapter 3 and listen to the record of the evil one working on Eve:

Genesis 3:1-7

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened...

It isn't any different! And here's a picture of him again operating in the same way, behind the mask.

v. 6 Then they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and the men of Israel, “We have come from a distant country; make a treaty with us.”

“Then”—after they got all the stuff ready—“they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal”—that’s an 18 mile trip east now over toward the river—“and said to him and the men of Israel, ‘We have come from a distant country; make a treaty with us.’”

Now what’s wrong with that? Well it’s just a bold-faced lie! And he is a liar. John 8:44 describes him to a T—this is Jesus speaking:

John 8:44

You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.

The first thing they say when they come truckin' into town is, "We're from a distant country."

v. 7 The men of Israel said to the Hivites, "But perhaps you live near us. How then can we make a treaty with you?"

"Now the men of Israel said to the Hivites,"—now these are guys from Gibeon—"But perhaps you live near us. How then can we make a treaty with you?"

When we're in the realm of temptation and when we're facing something that's questionable, we get queasy inside. It just doesn't fall together. It feels awkward. It's just not right. There's hesitation. There's a sense of "Do I really have my head on straight? Is this really right?" It's the red lights on the dashboard coming on saying, "Stop it or you'll burn it up!"

And we have those feelings. And Joshua does. He feels inside a little sense of uneasiness about this delegation coming into camp. And so he says: "perhaps you live near us." And that statement is really close to the truth. If he would have just dropped on his knees and prayed and talked to God about it.

We'd think these guys would have learned their lesson? They got blown out of the tub at Ai when they went up there with 3,000 men instead of praying and came with 36 casualties there in chapter 7. He should have learned that when we don't pray and we don't check in with God, there are consequences from that.

There's another thing too. That is when we don't learn our lesson the first time, we get a second time to learn it, and sometimes a third and a fourth time when we're real slow learners. And God will pass by another opportunity. And here comes another shot! And they should have prayed when they had those bad feelings about it, but they didn't.

Now notice their answer.

v. 8 “We are your servants,” they said to Joshua. But Joshua asked, “Who are you and where do you come from?”

“We are your servants,”— they overuse that.

“We are your servants,’ they said to Joshua. But Joshua asked, ‘Who are you and where do you come from?’”

Now shouldn't a General who's getting ready to possess the land be excited about having a political alliance with somebody who could help him in his military endeavors? Why of course that's hitting him right where he lives. He has a

chance now to have some additional help militarily. And this delegation's saying, "We're from a far country and we are your servants." In other words, "We're going to help you. We're on your side. We want a treaty of peace with you." That's hitting him right where he lives. That's exactly what he would like to hear.

But he comes back at them and he has TWO QUESTIONS:

1. I want to know who you are?
2. Where do you come from?

Now how does the evil one handle straight on questions for information that we really need to know to make a decision? Watch him blow smoke and fog. It is something.

Verse 9—the answer says absolutely nothing.

v. 9 They answered: "Your servants have come from a very distant country because of the fame of the Lord your God. For we have heard reports of him: all that he did in Egypt,

"They answered:"—boy you talk about politicians—"Your servants"—there it is again—"have come from"—WHAT?—"from a very distant country because of the fame of the Lord your God. For we have heard reports of him: all that he did in Egypt,"

Now does that say anything?

“[We’ve] come from a very distant country”

“Hey listen you guys, where’d you come from? Come on tell me! Do you come from Lebanon? Do you come from Asian Minor? Do you come from Syria? Where in the world did you come from? Don’t give me this very distant bit! Did you come from the east, the west, the north or the south?”

And they’re gullible! They’re willing to buy it because they know they can’t tell. They can’t give specifics and so they have to try to fog it some more.

And what did they do? As soon as they fog it by not saying something they turn around and flatter them.

“We’ve heard of your God and all of the great things that he did for you while you were in Egypt.”

In other words, “We know all about those plagues down there in Egypt and we know all about the opening of the Red Sea.”

And then they go on further and they say something more in verse 10, but notice they don’t say enough.

v. 10 and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan—Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth.

“and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan—Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth.”

Now hold that kind of verse in the hopper for another time because we’re going to get into those two kings.

When Moses and them came up to the east bank—the Amorites immediately wanted war and they formed that whole east bank and they wiped out these two kings. And that’s where the two and a half tribes had their inheritance already. We’re going to get into that further as we go along.

Now this delegation says **TWO THINGS**:

1. We heard about what happened in Egypt and
2. We heard about what happened on the east side of the river.

What do they leave out?

They don’t mention a thing about what happened on the west side or they’d tip their hand. They have no way of knowing about Jericho or Ai. If they’d said it, then they’d know, “Hey, you’re local residents because the news wouldn’t have gotten that far.”

And see how cool they are? They not only planned their

uniform and everything to go with it, they planned their speech and how they were going to say it. And they knew exactly how much to say and how much not to say.

We're going to find in our Christian life there are a lot of things that are going to come down the pike that look awfully good and look awfully right but they're awfully wrong for us. And that's exactly the way the evil one works.

We can fall into things so quickly we can't believe how messed up we can get. There are a lot of Christian friends that are really in trouble in business and the reason is that they have a division between the sacred and the secular.

They say, "On Monday I go to work in the pits. That is secular. On Sunday I'm sacred."

That's not true.

Men don't do that. They just expect to fly by the seat of their pants and their brains and their sensitivities and they go ahead and make business deals and do things without ever consulting with their Father. And they end up in some pretty sad situations.

A lot of kids do that too. They know the Bible says, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers as the manner is" but they end up married to them. (ref. 2 Corinthians 6:14)

As a result of that violation they suffer the rest of their lives

for doing that. They just go right into it because their emotions are involved. They don't pray about it. They just go ahead. Oh man they're in love—it has to be. “Eventually this guy will come to know the Lord. I know he will later on!” And boy they suffer for those kinds of things.

Well don't get too mad at these guys. They're listening to the story and they're buying the whole line here. And the sad part is yet to come.

v. 11 And our elders and all those living in our country said to us, ‘Take provisions for your journey; go and meet them and say to them, “We are your servants; make a treaty with us.”’

“And our elders and all those living in our country said to us, “Take provisions for your journey; go and meet them and say to them, ‘We are your servants; make a treaty with us.’””

Now have they said one thing about answering the question of WHO and WHERE? They have answered absolutely nothing in what they've had to say. But they've set them up by saying, “We've been sent as a delegation, we're your servants, make a treaty with us.”

v. 12 This bread of ours was warm when we packed it at home on the day we left to come to you. But now see how dry and moldy it is.

“This bread of ours was warm when we packed it at home on

the day we left”—is that true?—“to come to you.”

You see, it’s a lie!

“But now see how dry and moldy it is.”

v. 13 And these wineskins that we filled were new, but see how cracked they are. And our clothes and sandals are worn out by the very long journey.”

“And these wineskins that we filled were new, but see how cracked they are. And our clothes and sandals are worn out by the very long journey.”

Now here comes the tragedy—verse 14.

v. 14 The men of Israel sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the Lord.

“The men of Israel sampled their provisions”—why’d they do that? Well everybody knows that aged wine is better than the more recent stuff so they want to check them out and see if it really is old stuff. And so they taste the wine and they probably take a whiff of the moldy bread. And what’s the sad part? It comes after the word “but” in the verse:

“they did not inquire of the Lord.”

They didn’t talk to the Lord about it.

The woman in the garden didn't either:

Genesis 3:6

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

It's an amazing thing when we're caught in the throws of temptation. The last thing we think about doing is praying. It's all about satisfying the desire! It's all about doing the thing! It's being pressed to go for it! Take the bait! But above all, don't pray! Because if we pray, we'd get our head together and we wouldn't do it and we'd be victorious in the temptation.

And there's the big mistake. Satan knows that he can get us and nail our hide to the wall as soon as we stop praying and stop reading the Word of God. He knows that and that's what they do.

“The men of Israel sampled the provisions but did not inquire of the Lord.”

The Lord is left out of all the negotiations. They assume the mind of the Lord without asking.

Here's a principle.

A situation can look right and good and we can fall into it if we don't pray.

Judy Viorst wrote a book called *Necessary Losses*. It's from a secular point of view. This is what she said:

(Necessary Losses by Judith Viorst)

At several points in our life we may insist: I'll do it myself. I'll live by myself. I'll solve it myself. I'll make my own decisions. And, having made *that* decision, we then may find ourselves scared to death of standing alone.
(source unknown)

They're like that. They are probably scared to death of what they've done.

M. Scott Peck wrote a book called *People of the Lie*. He's the first psychiatrist to recognize the existence of evil. He says the existence of evil manifests itself in the human race in two ways. Laziness and selfishness.
(source unknown)

Joshua says, "Oh why go to the hassle of having to check in with the Lord on this. We've been walking with Him long enough that I already know what He wants. We'll just assume that this is alright and go along. We don't have to pray."

So he's cool, selfish—just plain lazy. He doesn't want to go to the trouble of talking to the Father about making a treaty

which is in direct violation of what the Lord said. “Don’t make a treaty with any of the people in the land.”

v. 15 Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath.

“Then Joshua”—WHAT?—“made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by an oath.”

Know what that means? That means they put the stamp of the Lord of hosts on it. They said, “We’re making a treaty of peace with you and we’re ratifying this in the name of the Lord of hosts—the One who is our God and who has brought us into the land.” And they’re just putting His okay on the whole deal.

Now don’t get too hard on them. We make plans and programs and then we ask God to help fulfill those plans and programs without checking with Him first about what His plans and programs are.

We do that all the time! We think this is the way God wants it done and we make our plans and our programs and we think “God blessed my plans. He made it all work out after I’ve got it all figured out.”

v. 16 Three days after they made the treaty with the Gibeonites, the Israelites heard that they were

neighbors, living near them.

“Three days after”—it takes about that long.

“Three days after they made the treaty with the Gibeonites, the Israelites heard that they were neighbors, living near them.”

Always amazing when finally the truth comes out and we see it.

Lewis B. Smedes has written a book called *Choices: Making Right Decisions in a Complex World*. And he says this:

(Choices: Making Right Decisions in a Complex World by Lewis B. Smedes)

Soren Kierkegaard, that complicated Danish philosopher, once said a prayer that went something like this:

Lord, I have to make a choice, and I'm afraid that I may make the wrong one. But I have to make it anyway; and I can't put it off. So I will make it, and trust you to forgive me if I do wrong. And, Lord, I will trust you, too, to help make things right afterward. Amen.

The last word about choices is this: nothing you do wrong can get God to love you less than he did when you did things right. Nothing needs ever separate you from the love of God. After all is said and done, being right is not the most important

thing in the world. Being forgiven is.
p. 121

The beauty of the remainder of these verses is that God can take this in us and still make something beautiful out of it. He can take the mistake and turn it around and still accomplish His purpose with His people. It's an amazing thing that God can do that. See verse 17?

v. 17 So the Israelites set out and on the third day came to their cities: Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth and Kiriath Jearim.

“So the Israelites set out and on the third day came to their cities: Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth and Kiriath Jearim.”

v. 18 But the Israelites did not attack them, because the leaders of the assembly had sworn an oath to them by the Lord, the God of Israel. The whole assembly grumbled against the leaders,

“But the Israelites did not attack them, because the leaders of the assembly had sworn an oath to them by the Lord, the God of Israel. The whole assembly grumbled against the leaders,”

v. 19 but all the leaders answered, “We have given them our oath by the Lord, the God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now.

“but all the leaders answered, ‘We have given them our oath

by the Lord, the God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now.”

Why didn't they attack them and wipe them out? “Y'all tricked us and we've got a right now to trick you too and we're going to just wipe you out.”

When we make a vow and we make an oath, God means for us to keep it. We can't just change our mind and cancel it and as a result make it right.

This covenant is so serious. To show some of the ramifications of it—when Saul becomes king later, Samuel tells him he's not going to have his kingdom anymore because he didn't destroy the Amalekites like he was supposed to. What does Saul do? He goes out and just for spite wipes out a bunch of the Gibeonites who are living here in the land.

What happens during the reign of David?

Under the reign of David there's an economic crisis. There's been no rain for three years. Finally God says to David that it's because Saul broke the covenant against the Gibeonites.

What happened to Saul? He lost seven of his sons as judgment for what he did against the Gibeonites.

God means that when we make a vow we keep it. And when fairer days come and we forget what we promised Him when things were rough, God still hasn't forgotten and we're

responsible for keeping our promise.

Listen to Bob Foster when he speaks on this:

(When the Ceiling is Zero by Robert D. Foster)

Do you think that God, who believes in keeping a vow at any cost, will deal lightly with a man who will not keep up his end of the deal? Have you made a resolution in days gone by that you have put off and put off? Months have run into years and that pledge to God still needs to be fulfilled.

Promises made in times of difficulty are too often forgotten when fairer days come along. The psalmist reminds us that those vows are still waiting to be fulfilled. “I will pay thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble” (Psalm 66:13-14).
(source unknown)

v. 20 This is what we will do to them: We will let them live, so that wrath will not fall on us for breaking the oath we swore to them.”

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v. 21 They continued, “Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers for the entire community.” So the leaders’ promise to them was kept.

“They continued, ‘Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers for the entire community.’ So the leaders’ promise to them was kept.”

Joshua has a hard decision to make. He says, “Y’all kept talking about wanting to be servants. Well I’m going to tell you. Y’all are going to be servants. You’re going to be cutting wood and carrying water for the Lord’s house.”

They needed a lot of wood cut because they burn a lot in the burnt offerings. And they’re carrying a lot of water for the labor and all the washings that took place. These boys are going to spend the rest of their lives being servants of the people of Israel in fulfilling this function at the Lord’s house and carrying out that function.

v. 22 Then Joshua summoned the Gibeonites and said, “Why did you deceive us by saying, ‘We live a long way from you,’ while actually you live near us?”

“Then Joshua summoned the Gibeonites and said, ‘Why did you deceive us by saying, “We live a long way from you,” while actually you live near us?’”

He comes back with the same confrontation. He says, “Why y’all going to lie to us? Why’d you tell us that?”

Now they’re going to give us the answer.

v. 23 You are now under a curse: You will never cease to serve as woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God.”

“You are now under a curse: You will never cease to serve as woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God.”

v. 24 They answered Joshua, “Your servants were clearly told how the Lord your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you the whole land and to wipe out all its inhabitants from before you. So we feared for our lives because of you, and that is why we did this.

“They answered Joshua,”—here it comes—“Your servants were clearly told how the Lord your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you the whole land and to wipe out all its inhabitants from before you. So we feared for our lives because of you, and that is why we did this.”

We did this because we were scared. Since they were scared, why didn't they come and acknowledge the living God like Rahab did and escape the whole judgment?

None of these tribes are willing to acknowledge God for who He is and His right to their lives. And they are willing to do anything they can to avoid real repentance, a broken heart, to make things right with God. And they did it. This is their plan.

v. 25 We are now in your hands. Do to us whatever seems good and right to you.”

“We are now in your hands. Do to us whatever seems good and right to you.”

v. 26 So Joshua saved them from the Israelites, and they did not kill them.

“So Joshua saved them from the Israelites, and they did not kill them.”

v. 27 That day he made the Gibeonites woodcutters and water carriers for the community and for the altar of the Lord at the place the Lord would choose. And that is what they are to this day.

“That day he made the Gibeonites woodcutters and water carriers for the community and for the altar of the Lord at the place the Lord would choose. And that is what they are to this day.”

Alan Redpath says that God overcomes our mistakes and makes something beautiful out of them:

(Victorious Christian Living by Alan Redpath)

Oh, the wonder of the love of God! Oh, the matchless grace of Jesus! Oh, the amazing providence of God which takes us, with all our mistakes, all our defeats, and all our

sins, and overrules them all to His glory! He has looked into our face and we have looked into His, and we have said, “Lord, I’m sorry I have blundered. But, Lord, I believe you can restore the years that the cankerworm has eaten. I will refuse to allow the devil to drag me down and keep me down. I will forget the things which are behind and press on to those that are before.

I have discovered that the thing in which I have blundered, the sin that I have committed, the wrong that I have done, though the memory of it often haunts my life, is what now drives me daily to the Cross for cleansing, for forgiveness, for power. The wretched man who once was bound by sin discovers that the very sin which bound him is now the blessing which, more than anything else, brings him to consecrated service to his Saviour. What a wonderful Saviour we have!

p. 145

Out of that chapter we have ten lessons.

Lesson #1: Satan is CUNNING and CRAFTY and COVERS THE CONSEQUENCES.

We always find in his initial encounter he’ll never speak of the consequences involved in what he’s recommending. He’s cunning, he’s crafty and he covers the consequences.

Lesson #2: We are most vulnerable for attack at a time of victory.

We're saying, "Hey, man I'm cool. I've got it together." All of a sudden WHAM!

Lesson #3: How sensitive we need to be to the strategies of Satan on one hand and the Spirit's leadership on the other.

We can just tell. He always overdoes it. It is a very far country. It's overkill. We need to be very sensitive to the strategies of Satan and the Spirit's leadership in our life.

Lesson #4: Lies and deception are two of Satan's greatest tools.

Here are some verses on that in the New Testament:

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

And no marvel for Satan's ministers are transformed into ministers of righteousness, angels of light whose end shall be according to their works.

Lesson #5: A situation can look good and right, and we can fall into it if we don't pray.

1 Corinthians 10:12

Watch yourselves, take heed lest you fall.

Lesson #6: Satan gets at us when we fail to read the Word and pray.

Lesson #7: The Lord is left out of all the negotiations.

Lesson #8: They assumed the mind of the Lord without asking.

Joshua just felt like he'd been a leader long enough and he already knew what the Lord wanted without asking Him. So he just goes right ahead, forms a treaty with these people from this distant country.

Lesson #9: When a vow is made, God intends for us to keep it.

Lesson #10: How good God is at taking our mistakes and salvaging them into something for our good.

Now here's a passage in the New Testament.

James 1:13-16

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt any one. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own desires. Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. [And then the warning] Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

The desire is the sperm—it's the seed. And when it conceives it gives birth not to life, but to death. It literally is the satchel

underneath the bed. It explodes and the ramifications and the consequences are incredible.

John Davis probably summarized the whole chapter in his commentary the best when he said:

(Conquest and Crisis by John J. Davis)

The practical lessons from this chapter should be obvious to the child of God. First of all, he should recognize that his enemy is cunning and deceitful. Secondly, he should trust every decision of life into the hands of the Lord who knows the beginning from the end. [And third], he should never permit the glow of victory to blind his clear perception of the situations about him, for very quickly, victory can be turned into tragic defeat through complacency and lack of obedience. pp. 61-62

Ruth Harms Calkin has a couple of poetic pieces that really fit our study.

(Lord, It Keeps Happening...And Happening by Ruth Harms Calkin)

How patiently You wait, dear God
Until having battered myself
Against the impregnable wall
Of my own selfishness and rebellion
I turn at last
Broken and bruised

Into Your wide-open arms.
It is then that I learn
That all my struggling, my panic
My foolish pretenses were unnecessary—
Had I simply fallen trustingly
Into Your waiting arms
At the very beginning.
p. 28

O God
You have driven me into a corner
Where I cannot escape.
I come to You penitently
For today I've sinned grievously.
I have betrayed my highest ideals.
I have been false to my inner convictions.
I know I have broken Your heart.
Thank You for dealing with me
In the privacy of Your [own] personal Presence
For my sin has been against You alone.
Cleanse me, Lord.
Change me.
Sin is so hideous, so outrageous!
Renew me until I am spiritually contagious.
p. 20

Father, we come to You and recognize the passage is very sober. It's also a serious matter to talk about the warfare that we face. Lord, we recognize that when we get sick and fed up with our mediocrity, our shallow Christian profession, that

we're going to face the enemies of the world around us that want us to conform and the flesh within us that wants to be satisfied, and the devil himself who wants to keep us childish and carnal and out of the Word and off our knees. Help us to recognize these enemies and to wage war in the power of the Spirit and in the name of the Lord of hosts—the Lord Jesus—and to gain victory. To be a demonstration to the world around us that Jesus Christ is still alive and that He lives in us. Father, perhaps there's someone that's never really gotten their act together with You. They've never really received Christ as Savior. We would pray urgently for them right now that they'd open their hearts to Jesus Christ and experience the joy of knowing Him. Perhaps our Father there are some Christians that really have fouled it up. They've formed the treaties, they've gone along with the plans for peace when You intended for war against the evil one. Enable them to acknowledge this and to turn to You, having recognized the strategies of the evil one, to recover themselves and to carry on a victorious warfare. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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A Practical Study of JOSHUA

“The Path of Obedience Leads to Victory”

Study Number Nine – Joshua 9:1-27

NOTES

v. 1 Now when all the kings west of the Jordan heard about these things—those in the hill country, in the western foothills, and along the entire coast of the Great Sea as far as Lebanon (the kings of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites)—

v. 2 they came together to make war against Joshua and Israel.

v. 3 However, when the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai,

v. 4 they resorted to a ruse: They went as a delegation whose donkeys were loaded with worn-out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended.

v. 5 The men put worn and patched sandals on their feet and wore old clothes. All the bread of their food supply was dry and moldy.

v. 6 Then they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and the men of Israel, “We have come from a distant country; make a treaty with us.”

v. 7 The men of Israel said to the Hivites, “But perhaps you live near us. How then can we make a treaty with you?”

v. 8 “We are your servants,” they said to Joshua. But Joshua asked, “Who are you and where do you come from?”

v. 9 They answered: “Your servants have come from a very distant country because of the fame of the Lord your God. For we have heard reports of him: all that he did in Egypt,

v. 10 and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan—Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth.

v. 11 And our elders and all those living in our country said to us, ‘Take provisions for your journey; go and meet them and say to them, “We are your servants; make a treaty with us.”’

v. 12 This bread of ours was warm when we packed it at home on the day we left to come to you. But now see how dry and moldy it is.

NOTES

v. 13 And these wineskins that we filled were new, but see how cracked they are. And our clothes and sandals are worn out by the very long journey.”

v. 14 The men of Israel sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the Lord.

v. 15 Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath.

v. 16 Three days after they made the treaty with the Gibeonites, the Israelites heard that they were neighbors, living near them.

v. 17 So the Israelites set out and on the third day came to their cities: Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth and Kiriath Jearim.

v. 18 But the Israelites did not attack them, because the leaders of the assembly had sworn an oath to them by the Lord, the God of Israel. The whole assembly grumbled against the leaders,

v. 19 but all the leaders answered, “We have given them our oath by the Lord, the God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now.

v. 20 This is what we will do to them: We will let them live, so that wrath will not fall on us for breaking the oath we swore to them.”

v. 21 They continued, “Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers for the entire community.” So the leaders’ promise to them was kept.

v. 22 Then Joshua summoned the Gibeonites and said, “Why did you deceive us by saying, ‘We live a long way from you,’ while actually you live near us?

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v. 26 So Joshua saved them from the Israelites, and they did not kill them.

v. 27 That day he made the Gibeonites woodcutters and water carriers for the community and for the altar of the Lord at the place the Lord would choose. And that is what they are to this day.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Joshua 9:1-27 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What happens in verses 1 & 2?

3. Describe what the people of Gibeon did to Joshua and the children of Israel in verses 3-13.

4. What mistake did the men of Israel make, according to verse 14?

5. What did Joshua do, according to verse 15?

6. What did they find out later, according to verse 16?

7. What was finally done to the Gibeonites, according to verse 21?

8. How did the Gibeonites explain their action, according to verse 24?

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Satan is cunning and crafty and covers the consequences.

LESSON #2: We are most vulnerable for attack at the time of victory.

LESSON #3: How sensitive we must be to the strategies of Satan and the Spirit's leadership in our lives.

LESSON #4: Lies and deception are two of Satan's greatest tools.

LESSON #5: A situation can look right and good, and we can fall into it if we don't pray.

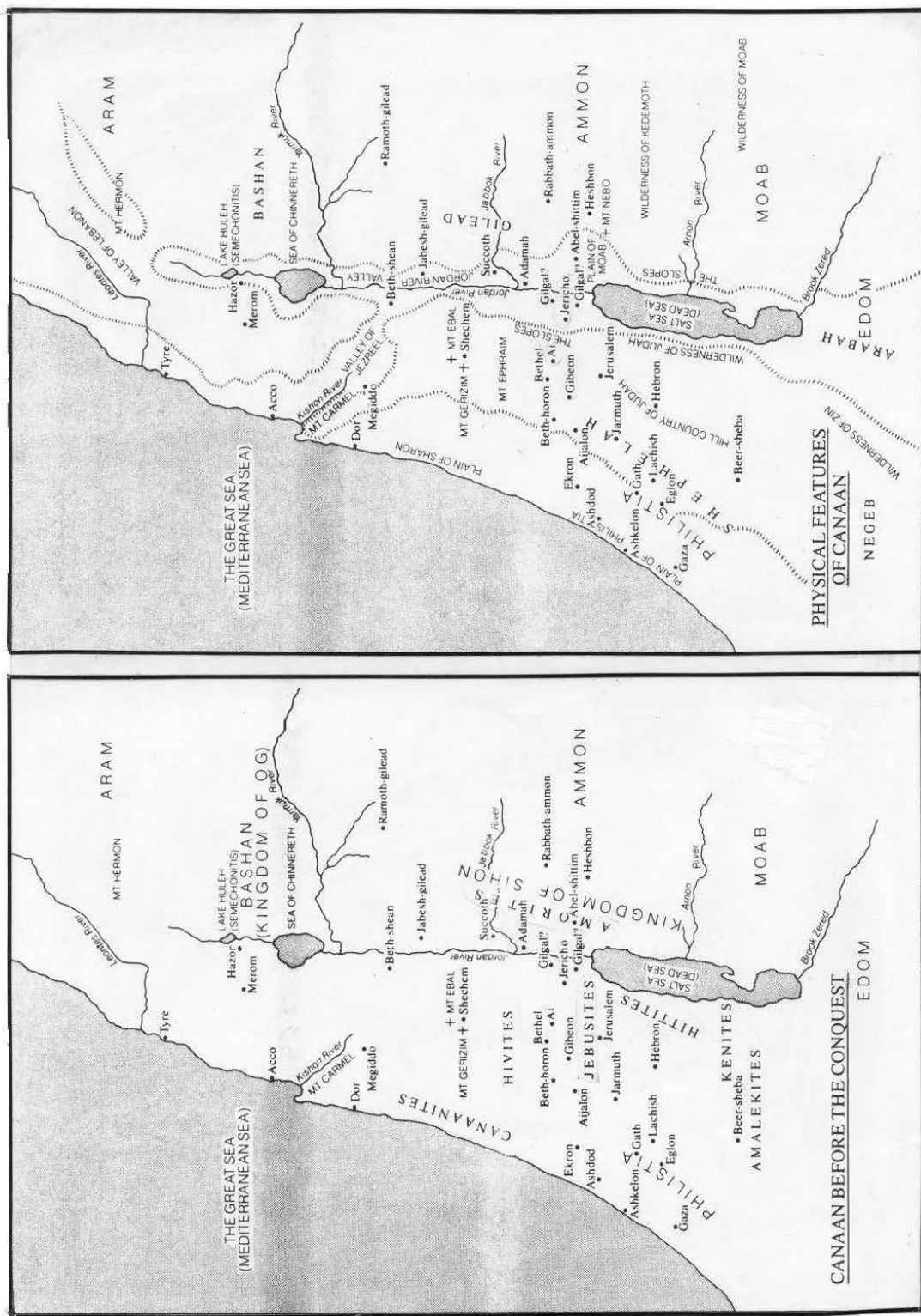
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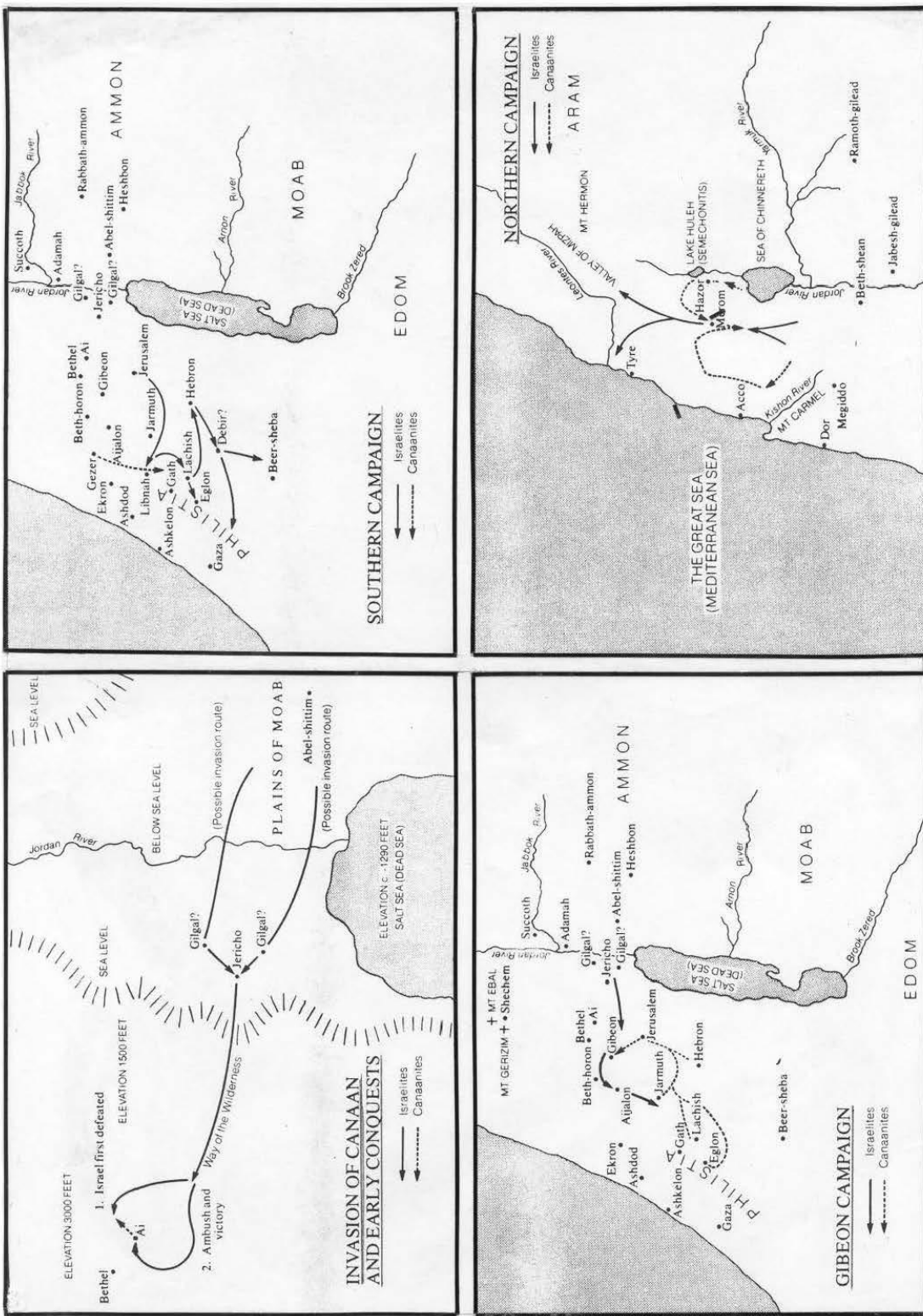
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