

## JOSHUA in the Torah

### Shemot 17

8 Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

9 Moses said to **Joshua**: "Choose men for **us**, and go out, fight with Amalek; tomorrow I will stand on the hilltop with the staff of God in my hand."

*\*W.G. Plaut: "us", not "me" – treating his junior, Joshua, as an equal. From this, we learn that teachers should hold a pupil as dear as themselves [Midrash].*

10 So **Joshua** did as Moses had said to him, to fight with Amalek; while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

11 When Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed; but when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

12 Moses' hands were heavy; so, they took a stone, put it under him, and he sat on it; Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on each side; and his hands were steady until the sun set.

13 And **Joshua** weakened Amalek and its people with the edge of the sword.

14 YHVH said to Moses: "**Write** this, a **memorial**, in the book; set it in **Joshua**'s ears: for I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under the heavens."

*\*Nahum Sarna: 1<sup>st</sup> reference to writing in Tenach; Zicaron more than remember; means "be mindful/pay heed"; a sharp focusing of attention; embraces concern; always leads to action.*

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### Shemot 24

12 YHVH said to Moses: "Come up the mount to Me and be there; I'll give you the tablets of stone, teaching and commandment, that I have written to teach them."

13 And Moses arose, and **Joshua who ministered to him**; and Moses went up to the Mountain of God

14 And to the elders he said: "Sit here for us, until we return to you; and behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has any matters may approach them."

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### Shemot 32

15 Moses turned and went down from the mountain [with] the two tablets of the testimony, inscribed from both their sides; inscribed on one side and the other.

17 When **Joshua** heard the sound of the people in their shouting, he said to Moses: "There is a sound of battle in the camp!"

18 But [Moses] said: "[It is] neither a sound shouting victory, nor a sound shouting defeat; I hear a sound of singing."

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### Shemot 33

7 Moses took the tent and pitched it for himself outside the camp, distancing [it] from the camp, and he called it the Tent of Meeting, and it would be that anyone seeking YHVH would go out to the Tent of Meeting, which was outside the camp.

9 And it would be that when Moses came to the Tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the Tent, and He [God] would speak with Moses.

11 Then YHVH would speak to Moses face-to-face, as a man would speak to his friend; and he would return to the camp, but **his minister, Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from inside the Tent.**

*\*Sarna: Joshua remained inside the Tent and did not share in Moses' direct experience with God.*

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## Bamidbar 11

- 11** Moses said to YHVH, "Why have You treated Your servant so badly? Why have I not found favour in Your eyes that You place the burden of all this people on me?"
- 14** Alone I cannot carry this entire people for it is too hard for me.
- 25** YHVH descended in a cloud and spoke to him. He increased some of the spirit that was on him and bestowed it on the 70 elders. And when the spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they did not continue.
- 26** Now two men remained in the camp; the name of one was Eldad and the name of the second was Medad, and the spirit rested on them. They were among those written, but they did not go out to the Tent and prophesied in the camp.
- 27** The lad ran and told Moses, saying, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp!"
- 28** **Joshua** the son of Nun, **Moses' minister from his chosen ones**, answered and said, "Moses, my master, restrain them!"
- \*Plaut: Joshua saw them as a source of dangerous competition to Moses. Moses disagreed. The ability to share is a sign of greatness; lesser leaders feel impelled to protect their status at all times.*
- 29** Moses said to him, "**Are you jealous** for my sake? If only all YHVH's people were prophets, that YHVH would bestow His spirit upon them!"
- \*Etz Hayim: Everyone is jealous of another's success (Freud), except a father of his child and a teacher of his pupil [TB Sanh. 105b].*
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## Bamidbar 13

- 2** "Send men; they will spy out the land of Canaan, which I give to the Bnei Yisrael; send one man each for his father's tribe, everyone a prince among them."
- 8** Of the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun.
- 16** These are the names of the men that Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, **Joshua**.
- \*Rashi: Y'hoshua – God will save; "May God save you from the malign influence of the other scouts."*
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## Bamidbar 14

- 4** And they said to each other: "Let us put up a head and let us return to Egypt."
- 5** And Moses fell, and Aaron, on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the Bnei Yisrael.
- 6** And **Joshua**, son of Nun and Caleb, son of Yephunneh, from those who had spied out the land, **rent their clothes**.
- \*Sarna: Out of grief and distress for Moses' humiliation and implied rebellion against God. E.H.: Joshua and Caleb risk their lives by acting with integrity and standing up to a misguided majority.*
- 7** And they said to all the congregation of the Bnei Yisrael, saying: "The land through which we passed to spy it out, is a very, very, good land.
- 8** If YHVH delights in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it to us - a land which flows with milk and honey.
- 9** Only do not rebel against YHVH and **do not fear the people of the land**; they are our food; their protection has departed and YHVH is with us; **do not fear them**."
- 10** But all the congregation bade to stone them with stones, when the glory of YHVH appeared in the Tent of Meeting to all the Bnei Yisrael.
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## Bamidbar 27

15 And Moses spoke to YHVH, saying:

16 "Let YHVH, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation,

17 **who will go out and come in before them; who will lead them out and bring them in**; the congregation of YHVH will not be like sheep that have no shepherd."

*\*E.H.: Appoint a military leader who will lead the charge, not remain behind in safety. Appoint a person who will bear with every one of them according to his temperament [Tanh. Pinchas 10].*

18 And YHVH said to Moses: "Take you **Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom there is spirit**, and lay your **hand** on him;

19 and stand him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and command him in their sight.

20 **And you will put some of your authority on him, in order that all the congregation of the Bnei Yisrael will listen.**

*\*Sarna: Moses is empowered to transfer only his authority, not his spiritual powers. Only God, who endowed them, can transfer them.*

21 And he will stand before Eleazar the priest, who will inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before YHVH; **at his word will they go out**, and **at his word they will come in**, he and all the Bnei Yisrael with him, and all the congregation."

*\*Plaut: To communicate with God and ascertain His will, Joshua will need the help of the Urim and therefore he will also need the assistance of Eleazar, the Cohen Gadol.*

*\*Sarna: "Go out and come in" – i.e., for war. Only in military matters is Joshua commanded to consult the Urim through the agency of the High Priest.*

22 And Moses did as YHVH had commanded him; he took **Joshua** and stood him before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation.

23 And he laid his **hands** on him, and charged him, as YHVH had spoken by the hand of Moses.

*\*R.E.Friedman: Moses lay both hands on Joshua. It is as if he wanted to make his successor's appointment as visible and unmistakable as possible. In this way he also indicated that the appointment was his own choice. With one hand he fulfilled the divine command. The other hand was his own affirmation of Joshua, which bolstered Joshua's appointment and pre-empted anyone from criticising Joshua later as not having been Moses's choice. The successor to a great leader is always in a vulnerable position, and it is a gracious act by the great leader to support that successor.*

*\*Sarna: Authority and power could be transferred only by the laying on of both hands.*

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## Devarim 1

37 YHVH was also angry with me because of you, saying, "You also will not go there."

38 But **Joshua** the son of Nun, who stands before you, he will go there; **strengthen him**, for he will cause Israel to inherit it.

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## Devarim 3

21 And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, "Your eyes have seen all that YHVH, your God, has done to these two kings. So will YHVH do to all the kingdoms through which you will pass.

22 **Do not fear them**, for it is YHVH, your God, Who is fighting for you."

23 And I (Moses) pleaded with YHVH at that time, saying:

24 'O YHVH God, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness, and Your strong hand; for what god is there in heaven or on earth, that can do according to Your works, and according to Your mighty acts?

25 Let me go over, I pray You, and see the good land that is beyond the Jordan, that goodly hill-country, and Lebanon.'

26 But YHVH was angry with me for your sakes and did not listen to me; and YHVH said to me: 'Let it suffice you; speak no more to Me of this matter.

27 Get up to the top of Pisgah; lift up your eyes westward, northward, southward and eastward, and behold with your eyes; for you will not go over this Jordan.

28 But charge **Joshua**, encourage him, and strengthen him; for he will go over before this people, and he will cause them to inherit the land which you shall see.'

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## Devarim 31

7 Moses called **Joshua**, and said to him in the sight of all Israel: '**Be strong and of good courage**; for you shall go with this people to the land which YHVH swore to their fathers to give them; and **you will cause them to inherit it**.

8 And YHVH, He it is that goes before you; He will be with you, He will neither fail you, nor forsake you; **fear not and be not dismayed**.'

14 YHVH said to Moses, "**Your time is drawing near to die**. Call **Joshua** and stand in the Tent of Meeting, and I will charge him. Moses and **Joshua** went and stood in the Tent of Meeting.

*\*E.H.: God appeared to Joshua in a cloud. When it lifted, Moses asked Joshua, "What did YVH say to you?" Joshua replied, "When YHVH spoke to you, did you share the message with me?" At that moment, Moses became reconciled to his imminent death, saying to himself, "It is a hundred times better to depart now than to be jealous of my successor" [Deut. R. 9:9].*

24 And it was, when Moses finished writing words of this Teaching in a scroll, until the very end,

25 that Moses commanded the Levites, who carried the Ark of the Covenant of YHVH, saying:

26 "Take this scroll of Teaching and place it alongside the Ark of Covenant of YHVH, your God, and it will be there as a **witness** against you"

*\*Friedman: The scroll that Moses wrote stayed beside the Ark for 600 years until the reign of King Josiah. All the Jewish kings were measured by whether they fulfilled the laws of Devarim, and Josiah was rated the highest. To this day, the measure of a Jewish leader must be the degree to which (s)he lives by the Torah and draws others to do so as well.*

*\*Sarna: The Torah doesn't testify to Israel's betrayal of God after settling down. It is evidence that they accepted the T&Cs of the Covenant; this will enable them to understand their misfortunes.*

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## Devarim 34

8 And the Bnei Yisrael wept for Moses in the plains of Moab 30 days; and the days of weeping in the mourning for Moses were ended.

9 **Joshua**, son of Nun, **was full of the spirit of wisdom**; for Moses had laid his hands on him; **the Bnei Yisrael listened to him** and did as YHVH had commanded Moses.

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## JOSHUA 1

6 "Be strong and of good courage; for you will cause this people to inherit the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.

7 Only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the teaching, which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go.

8 **This book of instruction will not depart from your mouth, and you will meditate on it day and night**, so that you observe to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then **you will have good success**.

*\*Deut.17:19 – Let it (the Teaching) remain with him (the king) and let him read in it all his life, so that he may learn to revere YHVH his God, to observe faithfully every word of this Teaching...*

9 Have I not charged you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid or dismayed: YHVH your God is with you, wherever you go."

*\*Michael Fishbane: Success in battle depends on faithfulness to the Torah. Physical courage alone is not enough. Only scrupulous study and fulfilment will ensure divine favour in the campaigns. This is hardly the language of a military exhortation and reflects later notions of Torah piety. God had informed the people in Deut.11:8 that observance of the divine mitzvot will enable them to "enter and take possession of the land." God enjoins Joshua to combine action and contemplation, asking him to be a man of power AND piety. Becoming a new Moses through study makes Joshua the first "keeper of Tradition." Revelation sets the tasks that traditions must realise. Moses received God's teaching directly, but his successor received it via study and interpretation. Joshua recited the divine words and in so doing he renewed their instruction for future generations. Thus, he was the first to extend the authority of Moses beyond the latter's lifetime.*

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### JOSHUA 3

**7** And YHVH said to **Joshua**: 'This day will I begin to magnify you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.'

**8** You will command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying: When you come to the edge of the waters of the Jordan, you will stand still in the Jordan.'

**13** And it will come to pass, when the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of YHVH, Master of all the earth, will rest in the waters of the Jordan, that the waters of the Jordan will be cut off, even the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand in one heap.'

*\*Robert Alter: The "wonder" that God is about to perform will in fact replicate a miracle done for Moses – the crossing over the Reed Sea on dry land.*

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### JOSHUA 5

**1** When all the Amorite kings that were beyond the Jordan westward, and all the Canaanite kings that were by the sea, heard how YHVH had dried up the waters of the Jordan before the Bnei Yisrael, until they were passed over, **their heart melted, and there was no longer any spirit in them because of the Bnei Yisrael.**

**2** At that time YHVH said to **Joshua**: 'Make you knives of flint and circumcise again the Bnei Yisrael a second time.'

**5** For all the people that came out were circumcised; but all the people that were born in the wilderness after they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised.

**9** And YHVH said to **Joshua**: 'This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you.' And he called the name of that place, Gilgal, unto this day.

*\*Alter: The shame or disgrace of Egypt may have a double meaning, referring to Egyptian slavery and to the Israelites' uncircumcised condition.*

**10** And the Bnei Yisrael encamped in Gilgal; and they made the Passover on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month, in the evening, in the plains of Jericho.

*\*Alter: Of all the stipulated festival sacrifices, it was the Pesach that confirmed full participation in the kehilla. For a male, being circumcised was a pre-requisite for taking part in the rite [Ex.12:44].*

**11** And they did eat of the produce of the land, on the morrow after the Passover, unleavened cakes and parched corn, in the selfsame day.

**12** And the manna ceased on the morrow, after they had eaten of the land's produce; and there was not manna again for the Bnei Yisrael; but they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

**13** When **Joshua** was by Jericho, he raised his eyes and saw a man standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand; and Joshua went to him, and said to him: 'Are you for us or for our adversaries?'

**14** He said: 'No. I am captain of YHVH's host; now I have come.' **Joshua** fell on his face to the earth, bowed down, and said: 'What says my master to his servant?'

**15** And the captain of YHVH's host said to Joshua: 'Take off your sandal from your foot; for the place on which you are standing is holy.' And Joshua did so.

*\*Fishbane: Joshua, performing the rite of circumcision before the Pesach sacrifice, is presented as a righteous observer of the law, a faithful follower of Moses. Joshua's encounter with an angelic messenger who orders him to remove his sandals recalls a similar command to Moses at the Burning Bush (Ex. 3:5).*

*\*Alter: Both stories are dedication episodes as a leader is about to embark on his mission. BUT Moses is addressed by God Himself, as is appropriate for the greatest of prophets and lawgivers. Joshua is the legitimate heir of Moses but a lesser figure and no prophet. So, he is addressed by the commander of God's army and there is no pyrotechnic display on his holy ground.*

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## JOSHUA 7

- 2 Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, near Bet-Aven, E. of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying: 'Go up and spy out the land.' The men went up and spied out Ai.
- 4 So, there went up there of the people about 3,000 men; and they fled before the men of Ai.
- 5 Ai smote about 36 men; they pursued them from the gate to Shevarim and smote them at the descent; **the heart of the people melted and was like water.**
- 6 **Joshua** tore his clothes, fell to the earth on his face before YHVH's Ark until the evening, the elders of Israel and him; and they put dust on their heads.
- 7 And **Joshua** said: **"Alas, O YHVH GOD, why have You brought this people over the Jordan, to give us into the hand of the Amorites, to cause us to perish? Would that we had been content and dwelt beyond the Jordan!"**
- \*Alter: Joshua's complaint is distinctly reminiscent of the Israelites' complaints to Moses. The echo may suggest that Joshua is not quite as fit a leader as Moses.*
- 8 Oh, YHVH, what shall I say, after Israel turned its back before its enemies?!
- 9 When the Canaanites and all the land's inhabitants hear, they will surround us and cut off our name from the earth; what will You do for Your great name?"
- \*Alter: God's reputation as all-powerful deity is contingent on the success of His Chosen People. Moses uses the same argument when God in His anger threatens to wipe out Israel.*
- 10 And YHVH said to Joshua: "Get yourself up; why are you fallen on your face?"
- 11 Israel has sinned; they have **also** transgressed My covenant which I commanded them; they have **also** taken of the banned thing; and have **also** stolen, and dissembled **also**, and they have **also** put it among their own stuff.
- \*Alter: These repetitions of 'gam' vividly express God's wrathful indignation.*
- 12 The Bnei Yisrael are unable to stand before their enemies, they turn their backs before their enemies, because they themselves have come under the ban; **I will not be with you any more if you do not destroy the banned things from among you.**
- 13 Up, sanctify the people, and say: Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow; for thus says YHVH, the God of Israel: There is a curse amongst you, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies, until you remove the accursed thing from your midst.
- 14 In the morning, you will approach by your tribes; and it will be that the tribe which YHVH takes will approach by families; and the family which YHVH takes will approach by households; and the household which YHVH takes will approach man by man.
- 15 And it will be that he that is taken with the devoted thing will be burnt with fire, he and all that he has; because he has transgressed YHVH's covenant, and because he has done a wanton deed in Israel."
- 19 **Joshua** said to Achan: "My son, please give glory to YHVH, God of Israel; make confession to Him; tell me now what you have done; hide nothing from me."
- 20 And Achan answered **Joshua** and said: 'I have truly sinned against YHVH, the God of Israel, and this and this have I done.
- 21 When I saw among the spoil a goodly Shinar mantle, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and behold, they are hidden in the earth within my tent, and the silver is under it.'
- 22 **Joshua** sent messengers and they ran to the tent; behold, it was hidden in his tent and the silver under it.
- 23 And they took them from the midst of the tent, and brought them to **Joshua**, and to all the Bnei Yisrael; and they laid them down before YHVH.
- 24 And **Joshua**, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the mantle, the wedge of gold, his sons and his daughters, his oxen, his asses and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had; and they brought them up to the valley of Achor.
- \*Alter: The lining up of human beings, material treasure and animal possessions is disturbing. It is assumed that the family members have been contaminated by Achan's violation of the ban, and hence they must perish with him. Achan has considerable possessions which makes his crime all the more heinous. Nevertheless, the collective punishment is troubling.*
- 25 **Joshua** said: 'Why have you troubled us? YHVH will trouble you this day.' All Israel stoned him; they burned them with fire and stoned them with stones.
- \*Alter: Achor means trouble. Me: God warned Joshua in 6:18 that coveting and taking banned things would only stir up trouble for Israel.*
- 26 And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day; and YHVH turned from the fierceness of His anger.

## JOSHUA 8

**30** Then **Joshua** built an altar to YHVH, the God of Israel, on Mt Ebal

**31** as Moses, the servant of YHVH, commanded the Children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of unhewn stones, upon which no man had lifted up any iron; and they offered on it burnt offerings to YHVH, and sacrificed peace-offerings.

*\*Alter: The altar refers to Shemot 20:22 – “And when you make for Me an altar of stones, you shall not build them of hewn stones, lest you wield your sword upon it and desecrate it.”*

**32** And he wrote there on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote before the Bnei Yisrael.

**33** All Israel, its elders, officers and judges, stood on both sides of the Ark opposite the Levitical Priests, the bearers of the Ark of YHVH’s Covenant, the stranger as well as the home-born; half in front of Mt Gerizim and half in front of Mt Ebal; as Moses, YHVH’s servant, had commanded that they should bless the people of Israel first.

*\*Alter: this ceremony invokes the two mountains of blessing and curse mentioned in Devarim 11:26-32.*

**34** And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law.

**35** There was not a word that Moses ordered, which Joshua did not read before all Israel, the women, the little ones, and the strangers that walked among them.

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## JOSHUA 9

**3** When the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what **Joshua** had done to Jericho and Ai,

**4** they also did work wilily, went and made as if they had been ambassadors, took old sacks upon their asses, and wineskins, worn and torn and patched up;

**5** and worn shoes and clouted upon their feet; and worn garments on them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and was become crumbs.

**6** And they went to **Joshua** to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him, and to the men of Israel: “We have come from a far country; now make a covenant with us.”

**7** And the men of Israel said to the Hivites: “Lest you dwell among us; and how shall we make a covenant with you?”

**8** And they said to **Joshua**: “We are your servants.” And **Joshua** said to them: “Who are you? And from where do you come?”

**9** They said to him: “From a very far country your servants have come because of YHVH, your God; we have heard of His fame, and all that He did in Egypt,

**10** and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, who was at Ashtarot.

**11** And our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying: Take provision in your hand for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them:

We are your servants; and now make a covenant with us.

**12** This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and is become crumbs.

**13** And these wineskins, which we filled, were new; behold they are torn. And these, our garments and our shoes, are worn by reason of the very long journey.”

**14** And the men took from their provision and did not counsel YHVH.

*\*Alter: They did not consult an oracle. Without such guidance, Joshua and the Israelites were taken in by the deception.*

**15** And **Joshua** made peace with them, and made a covenant with them, to let them live; and the princes of the congregation swore to them.

**16** At the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them, they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them.

**18** And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the LORD, the God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes.

**19** But all the princes said unto all the congregation: “We have sworn to them by YHVH, the God of Israel; now we may not touch them.

*\*Alter: Vows made in the name of the deity are irrevocable and cannot be re-negotiated.*

**20** This we will do to them and let them live; lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we swore to them.”

**21** The princes said concerning them: 'Let them live'; they will be hewers of wood and drawers of water for all the congregation, as the princes had spoken.

**22** And **Joshua** called for them, and he spoke to them, saying: “Why have you beguiled us, saying: We are very far from you, when you dwell among us?”

**23** Now, you are cursed, and there will never fail to be of you bondsmen, both hewers of wood and drawers of water, for the house of my God.'

**24** They answered **Joshua**, and said: “Because it was certainly told to your servants, how YHVH your God commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you; **we were very afraid for our lives because of you** and have done this thing.

**25** Now, see, we are in your hand: do as it seems good and right to you to do to us.”

**26** And so did he to them and **delivered them out of the hand of the Bnei Yisrael, that they did not slay them.**

**27 Joshua** made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of YHVH, to this day, in the place that He would choose.

*\*Alter: This is an elaborate aetiological tale that betrays the shaky historical basis of the conquest. By calling for a radical separation from the pagans of the land, Devarim enunciated a programme of genocide. It was never carried out. Israel and the Canaanites frequently mingled and the Israelites were often open to cultural and religious influences. The author was trying to resolve a contradiction – how the Gibeonites were not only living cheek by jowl with the Israelites but were performing subservient duties at an Israelite sanctuary at Gibeon.*

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## JOSHUA 23

**2 Joshua** called for all Israel, for their elders, heads, judges and officers, and said to them: “I am old and well stricken in years.

*\*Alter: Joshua’s valedictory address stands in a line with those made by Moses, Samuel and David.*

**3** You have seen all that YHVH your God has done to all these nations because of you; for YHVH your God, He has fought for you.

**5** YHVH your God, He shall thrust them out from before you and drive them from out of your sight; and you will possess their land, as YHVH your God spoke to you.

**6** Be very strong to keep and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that you turn not aside from it to the right or the left;

*\*Alter: Here, as in much of the speech, the phraseology is strongly reminiscent of Devarim.*

**7** that you do not come among these nations that remain among you; **do not mention the names of their gods, swear by them, serve them, or worship them**

**8** but cleave to YHVH, your God, as you have done to this day;

**9** YHVH has driven out before you great nations and mighty; but as for you, no man has stood against you to this day.

**11** Take good heed of yourselves, that you love YHVH your God.

**12** Else if ye do go back and cleave to the remnant of these nations that remain among you, and **make marriages with them**, and go into them, and they to you;

**13** Know for sure that YHVH your God will no more drive these nations from out of your sight; but they will be a snare and a trap for you, and a scourge in your sides, and pricks in your eyes, until you perish from off this good land which YHVH your God has given you.

**14** And, behold, this day **I am going the way of all the earth**; know in all your heart and in all your soul, that not one thing has failed of all the good things which YHVH your God spoke concerning you; all has come to pass for you, not one thing has failed of it.

*\*Alter: On his deathbed, David uses the same language (1 Kings 2:2).*

**15** And it shall come to pass, that as all the good things are come upon you of which YHVH your God spoke to you, so shall YHVH bring upon you all the evil things, until He have destroyed you from off this good land which YHVH your God has given you.

*\*Alter: The notion that Israel will be driven from its land if it betrays its pact with God is pre-eminently Deuteronomistic. National existence in Eretz Yisrael had come to seem painfully precarious.*

**16** When you transgress the covenant of YHVH your God, which He commanded you, and go and serve other gods, and worship them; the anger of YHVH will be kindled against you, and you will perish quickly from off the good land which He has given to you.”



## JOSHUA 24

**1** Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, called for the elders of Israel, their heads, judges and officers; and they presented themselves before God.

**13** “I [God] gave you a land on which you had not toiled and cities which you did not build and you dwell in them; of vineyards and olive-groves which you did not plant, do you eat.

**14** Now, fear YHVH, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth; and remove the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt; and serve YHVH.

**15** And if it seems evil in your eyes to serve YHVH, choose today whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell; but as for me [Joshua] and my house, we will serve YHVH.”

*\*Alter: There is surely a note of sarcasm here from Joshua: if you really want to serve foreign gods, just take your pick between Mesopotamian and Canaanite deities.*

**16** The people answered and said: “Far be it that we would forsake YHVH, to serve other gods;

**17** for YHVH our God, He brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the peoples through the midst of whom we passed;

**18** and YHVH drove out all the peoples, even the Amorites that dwelt in the land, from before us; we also will serve YHVH; for He is our God.”

**19** And Joshua said unto the people: “You cannot serve YHVH for He is a holy God, a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgression or your sins.

*\*Alter: Joshua expresses grave doubt. YHVH makes severe demands of exclusive loyalty, and I don't believe you will be able to meet these demands.*

**20** If you forsake YHVH, and serve strange gods, then He will return and do you evil, and consume you after that He has done you good.”

**21** And the people said unto Joshua: “No. We will serve YHVH.”

**22** And Joshua said to the people: “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen for yourselves YHVH, to serve Him.” And they said: “Witnesses.”

**23** “Now, remove the strange gods among you, and incline your heart to YHVH, God of Israel.”

**24** And the people said to Joshua: “We will serve YHVH our God, and to His voice will we listen.”

**25** So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day and set them a statute and ordinance in Shechem.

*\*Alter: The same phrase is used in Shemot 15:25.*

**26** And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God; he took a great stone and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of YHVH.

**27** And Joshua said to all the people: “Behold, this stone will be a witness against us; for it has heard all the words of YHVH which He spoke to us; it will be a witness against you, lest you deny your God.”

**28** So Joshua sent the people away, every man to his inheritance.

**29** And it came to pass after these things, that **Joshua** the son of Nun, **servant of YHVH**, died, being 110 years old.

*\*Alter: Here, at the end of the book, Joshua is given the same epithet as Moses.*

**30** And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnat-Serach, which is in the hill-country of Ephraim, on the north of Mt Gaash.

**31** **Israel served YHVH all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all YHVH's work that He had done for Israel.**

**32** They buried in Shechem, the bones of Joseph, which the Bnei Yisrael brought up out of Egypt, in the parcel of ground which Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for a hundred pieces of money; and they became the inheritance of the Bnei Yosef.

**33** And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him in the Hill of Pinchas his son, which was given to him in Mt Ephraim.

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- The Israelites had left Egypt on the first night of Pesach, 15 Nisan. Moses was 80 and Aaron was 83. Both died 40 years later, never to cross into Canaan.
  - Joshua was a “young man when he waited on” Moses and had to be at least 20 to be a fighting man. So, he was probably 30 - 40 when he fought Amalek.
  - Moses sent 12 spies to Canaan sometime after 13 months from the Exodus (20 Iyyar in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the Exodus (Num. 10:11)). If they left on 20 Sivan, that would have been exactly 14 months after leaving Egypt.
  - 40 days later, the spies returned from their mission. That would bring us to the end of Tammuz, 1 years + 3.5 months after the Exodus (c. 1.3 years).
  - After the revolt, the people were condemned to spend the remainder of 40 years in Sinai = c. 38.7 years.
  - On his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday, Caleb reminded Joshua of God's promise to allot him Hebron (Joshua 14:10), after the two of them had defied the rebellious mob.
  - Caleb told Joshua he was already 40 when he was one of the spies (Joshua 14:7). The expedition had taken a full 40 days to complete. He was now possibly around 40.5 years old. He had had to wait c. 44.5 years for God's promise to be fulfilled. He would have been c. 79.2 [40.5 + 38.7] years old when he crossed the River Jordan on 10 Nisan (Joshua 4:19).
  - So, the conquest took c. 5.8 years (44.5 - 38.7 or 85.0 – 79.2) from the time that the Bnei Yisrael crossed the Jordan with Joshua and Caleb.
  - Joshua would have been 31 – 41 when he spied out Canaan, 70 – 80 when he crossed the Jordan, and 76 – 86 when he ceased his invasion campaign.
  - Joshua died aged 110. The people had 24 – 34 years of peace under his leadership.

## ISSUE NO. 1 – WHY WAS SO MUCH OF THE LAND NOT CONQUERED?

### JOSHUA 13

- 1** Now **Joshua was old and well stricken in years**; YHVH said to him: “You are old and well stricken in years, and **there remains yet very much land to be possessed**.
- 2** This is the land that yet remains: all the regions of the Philistines, and all the Geshurites;
- 3** from the Shihor, which is before Egypt, even to the border of Ekron northward, which is counted to the Canaanites; the five lords of the Philistines: Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gittim and Ekron; also the Avvim
- 4** on the south; all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that belongs to the Zidonians, to Aphek, to the border of the Amorites;
- 5** and the land of the Gebalites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrising, from Baal-gad under Mt Hermon to the entrance of Hamat;
- 6** all the inhabitants of the hill-country from Lebanon to Misrephot-Mayim, even all the Zidonians; I will drive them out from before Bnei Yisrael; only allot it to Israel for an inheritance, as I commanded you.”
- 13** Nevertheless, the Bnei Yisrael did not expel the Geshurites or the Maachathites; but the Geshurites and Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day.
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### JOSHUA 15

- 63** The Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Bnei Yehudah couldn't drive them out; the Jebusites dwelt with the Bnei Yehudah in Jerusalem, until this day.
- \*Alter: After David's conquest, many Jebusites remained as land-holding residents of the city. David bought a threshing floor from a Jebusite as a cultic site (2 Sam 24: 18-25).*
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### JOSHUA 16

- 10** They didn't drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt among the Ephraimites to this day, and they became servants under tribute.
- \*Alter: In keeping with the historiographical agenda, whatever Canaanite population that was not destroyed or driven out became subjugated to the Israelites. It is questionable whether this corresponds to historical reality.*
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### JOSHUA 17

- 12** And the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of these cities, but the Canaanites were content to dwell in this land.
- 13** And it came to pass, when the Bnei Yisrael became strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, but did not drive them out.
- 17** **Joshua** spoke to the house of Joseph, to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, "You are a numerous people, and have great power; you shall not have just one lot.
- 18** But the mountain shall be yours, for it is a forest, and you shall cut it down; and its outgoings shall be yours, for **you shall drive out the Canaanite, even though he has iron chariots, and even though he is strong**.
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## ISSUE NO. 2 – DOES A HOLY WAR MEAN A GENOCIDE IS INEVITABLE?

### JOSHUA 6

**17** And the city (of Jericho), and all that is in it, will be under the ban (herem) to YHVH.....

**18** Only keep from the ban, lest you cause yourselves to be banned when you take of the ban, and put the camp of Israel under the ban, and make trouble for it.

**21** And they put under the ban (completely destroyed) all that was in the city, from man to woman, from lad to elder, ox, sheep and ass, with the edge of the sword.

*\*Alter: The total prescription of destruction, herem, annihilating a population and its animals, is the grimmest aspect of this triumphalist story. The enactment of herem is in keeping with the reiterated injunction in Devarim to exterminate the native population of Canaan. For the Deuteronomist, it is a brutal way of expressing the absolute separation from the pagan population called for in his programme of uncompromising monotheism. The herem was not an Israelite invention, as there is archaeological evidence that it was sometimes practised by various Canaanite people.*

### JOSHUA 8

**24** And it was when Israel made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the desert where they chased. them, and when they had all fallen by the edge of the sword until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned to Ai and smote it with the edge of the sword.

**25** And so it was, that all that fell that day, both of men and women, were twelve thousand, all the people of Ai.

**26** And **Joshua** did not draw back his hand that he had stretched out with the spear, until he had put under the ban (completely destroyed) all the inhabitants of Ai.

**29** And the king of Ai he hanged on a gallows until evening, and as the sun set, **Joshua** gave orders, and they took his carcass down from the gallows, and they threw it at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raised upon it a great heap of stones to this day.

### JOSHUA 10

**10** And YHVH confused them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon ...

*\*Alter: A vivid illustration of the system of dual causation. The soldiers of the five kings were panicked by Joshua's surprise attack, but now the panic was due to God's direct intervention.*

**11** ...YHVH cast down great stones from heaven upon them .... and they died. There were more who died with the hailstones than the Bnei Yisrael slew with the sword

**20** When **Joshua** and Bnei Yisrael had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter until they were consumed.....

**24** When they brought out those kings to **Joshua**, that **Joshua** called for all the men of Israel, and said to the chiefs of the men of war that went with him, "Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings." And they came near and put their feet upon their necks.

*\*Alter: As both Egyptian and Assyrian art abundantly demonstrates, this was a symbolic gesture by the victors for subjugating the defeated enemies.*

**26** Afterward **Joshua** smote them, slew them, and hanged them on five poles; and they were hanging on the poles until the evening.

**27** It was at the time of the setting of the sun; **Joshua** commanded and they took them down off the poles, cast them into the cave where they had been hiding, and laid great stones on the mouth of the cave until this very day.

### JOSHUA 11

**6** And YHVH said to **Joshua**, "Be not afraid of them, for .... I will deliver them up all slain before Israel. You will cripple their horses and burn their chariots with fire."

**8** And YHVH delivered them into the hand of Israel, and they smote and chased them, ..... and they smote them until they left them none remaining.

**9** And **Joshua** did to them as YHVH had bidden him: he crippled their horses and burnt their chariots with fire.

**14** ..... every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they destroyed them, they did not leave over a soul.

## ISSUE NO. 3 – LAST BUT NOT LEAST, WHY WAS THERE NO SUCCESSION PLANNING?