



JOSHUA

Hebrew יהוֹשׁוּעַ Yeh-ho-shu-ah “Jehovah is Salvation”
or “The Lord saves/gives victory” From יהָ (H3068)
and יָצַע (H3467)... yasha = save/savior/deliver/
help/preserve

Greek Ἰησοῦς = Jesus

Matthew 1.1

Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, υἱοῦ Δαβίδ, υἱοῦ
Ἀβραάμ

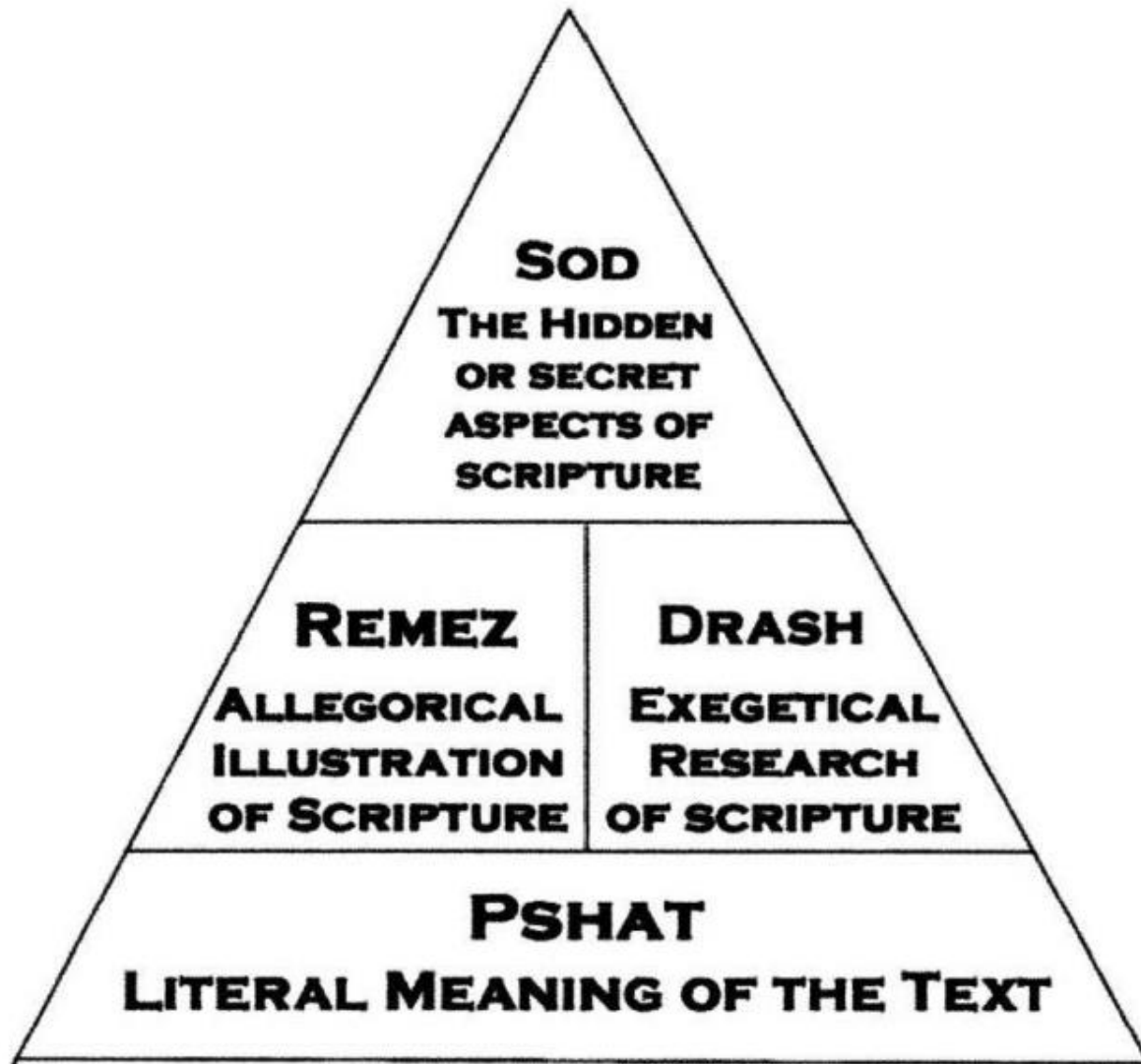


WHAT IS THE STORY OF
JOSHUA?

Overview

- ▣ Joshua 1-2 – The Lord speaks to & through Joshua
- ▣ Joshua 3-4 – Crossing Jordan & stones at Gilgal גִּלְגָּל
- ▣ Joshua 5-6 – The destruction at Jericho
- ▣ Joshua 7 – The sin of Achan עֲזָנָה = “troubler”
- ▣ Joshua 8 – War, an altar at Ebal, the words of the Law
- ▣ Joshua 9 – The Gibeonite deception
- ▣ Joshua 10-12 – Lord fights for Israel- Cosmic Warfare
- ▣ Joshua 13-21 - The land divided among tribes
- ▣ Joshua 18 – Tabernacle set up at Shiloh
- ▣ Joshua 23-24 – Joshua’s last speech

Scriptural Interpretation



פַּרְדֵּס

Pardes - Orchard, Garden

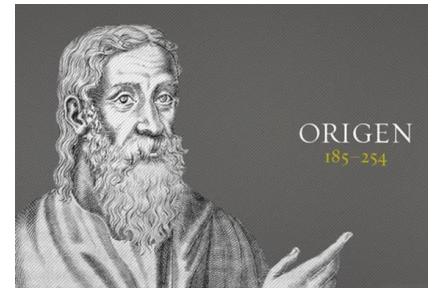
Hebrew	Letter	Meaning
פְּשָׁט	פ (p)	<i>P'shat</i> - Simple, literal
רֵמֶז	ר (r)	<i>Remez</i> - Hint, Suggestion
דְּרָשׁ	ד (d)	<i>D'rash</i> - Insight
סוֹד	ס (s)	<i>Sod</i> - Mystery

GOD AS A DIVINE WARRIOR



Early Christian Thinkers

- ▣ Origen (185-254)
- ▣ Joshua as Jesus- leading us on a battle against passions
- ▣ Moses' death is the death of the Law (*Orig. Hom. Jos. 1.3*)
- ▣ The battles are allegories relating to our battles with sin



See: Eric Seibert, *Disturbing Divine Behavior: Troubling Old Testament Images of God*, Fortress Press, 2009. See also Seibert, *The Violence of Scripture: Overcoming the Old Testament's Troubling Legacy*, Fortress Press, 2012. See also: Mark Chenoweth, *Origen's Interpretation of Violence in the Book of Joshua*, *The Christian Libertarian Review*, 2 (2019).

Joshua as Jesus - Origen

But why is it that when Jesus is first mentioned, the name of his father is not indicated, even in the second or third time? But when his father, Nun, is mentioned, Jesus is not called Jesus, but Hoshea. For his name is written as Hoshea among the list of those who were sent to spy out the land. It seems to me that possibly for the purpose of his office of spying, he is called Hoshea, not Jesus, and he is named the son of Nun. But when he returns after that work is completed and all the people are terrified, and when he alone encourages the people who stumbled and raises up their despair, then he was named Jesus by Moses. Not the son of Nun, but the one to whom Moses had said, "Lead the army and fight with Amalek." (*Orig. Hom. Jos. 1.2*)

GOD AS A DIVINE WARRIOR

Exodus 15:1-7 The Song of the Sea, or The Song of Moses

Deuteronomy 32:41-43

2 Nephi 6:17

Isaiah 42:13

Psalms 74:12-15



GOD AS A DIVINE WARRIOR

For extended surveys of this topic, see Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973); John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Bernard F. Batto, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster, 1992); Nicholas Wyatt, *Myths of Power: A Study of Royal Myth and Ideology in Ugaritic and Biblical Tradition* (Munster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996); Martin Klingbeil, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven: God as Warrior and as God of Heaven in the Hebrew Psalter and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999); Michael A. Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003).

GOD AS A CREATOR- CONQUERING CHAOS

BYU Professor of Ancient Scripture, Daniel Belnap, explained that throughout the Ancient Near East, the story of God's creation of the cosmos was often described as the Deity overcoming Chaos. In these traditions, Chaos was often equated with the "precosmic ocean," which was characterized as a serpent or a monster. The process of creation consisted of a battle between the warrior god and the chaos monster, wherein God kills the monster, then takes its carcass and shapes it into the cosmos, "thereby imposing 'order' on chaos."

(Daniel Belnap, ("I Will Contend with Them That Contendeth with Thee": The Divine Warrior in Jacob's Speech of 2 Nephi 6–10," *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Restoration Scripture* 17, no. 1–2 (2008): 23)



DEUTERONOMY 7

TOW`EBA AND HEREM

Something outside the covenant order is tow`eba,
especially tow`eba to Jehovah,

see Deut. 7:25. תועבה *tow`ebah*

DEUTERONOMY 7

TOW`EBA AND HEREM

The command in Deut. 7 is to *herem* them: “*Herem* them... show them no mercy” – Deuteronomy 7:2

חֶרֶם *charam or herem*

The word *herem* refers to removing something from human use. In the case of territories or cities, it normally implies giving that thing to a deity for the deity to use. (Walton, *Lost World*, p. 220)

How to view Joshua

John Walton, *The Lost World of the Israelite Conquest*, p. 243

	Old Testament Element	New Testament Recapitulation	Objective
Territory Subject to <i>Herem</i>	Canaanite cities captured; captives and spoils destroyed (in accordance with the established procedure of the ancient Near Eastern devotion ritual)	The personal selves of members of the Christian community ("crucified with Christ"), represented by baptism	Place where the presence of God is located is turned over to God to use as he sees fit
What Is Driven Out of the Territory in Order to Remove It from Use	Canaanite armies defeated, people displaced	The "old self," "former nature," "the flesh," etc.	Removal of elements currently using the territory that prevent or impede intended divine use
Identities Outside the Community Subject to <i>Herem</i>	Canaanite nations within the boundaries of the land	Personal or corporate identities other than "Christian" within the church or its members (Jew, Greek, slave, free, male, female, etc.)	Removal of elements that will lead to identity contamination of the community through syncretism
Identities Inside the Community Subject to <i>Herem</i>	Individuals or communities within Israel who defy the covenant order (typically idolaters)	Self-identified members of the Christian community who deviate from the parameters the community has established for itself (heretics)	Restoration of the health of the community from identity contamination that has already taken place
Not Subject to <i>Herem</i> of Any Kind	Cities and nations outside the land	Persons or identities outside the membership of the church (nonbelievers, other religions)	

DEUTERONOMY 7

TOW`EBA AND HEREM

The reference to nations (Deut. 7:2, 17, 22), peoples (Deut. 7:16,19), and even survivors (Deut. 7:20) all refer to community identities, not individuals. This is especially the case with the kings (Deut. 7:24), who are the embodiment of the identity of the community they lead (which is why they are specifically killed throughout Joshua's campaigns) and whose names (identity) are "wiped out... from under heaven" (Deut. 7:24).

DEUTERONOMY 7

HEREM

If herem means “remove from use,” then removing an identity from use depends on what identity is used for. How does one disband an organization? After World War II, when the Allies destroyed the Third Reich, they did not kill every individual German soldier and citizen; they killed the leaders specifically and deliberately (compare to the litany of kings put to the sword in Joshua 10-13).

DEUTERONOMY 7

HEREM

They also burned the flags, toppled monuments, dismantled the government and chain of command, disarmed the military, occupied the cities, banned the symbols, vilified the ecology, and persecuted any attempt to resurrect it – but most of the people were left alone... this is what it means to *herem* an identity. (John Walton, *The Lost World of the Israelite Conquest*, p. 176)

Passages such as Josh 11:23, 21:41-43, 23:1 all emphatically claim that Yahweh gave the Israelites all the land that he had promised to the forefathers and that the land was now conquered and at rest. Yet passages such as Josh 13:1-3, 15:63, 16:10, 17:12-13, Judges 1, etc.. all indicate that the “enemies” have not all been conquered and the land was not at rest.

Did they drive out Canaan or not?

YES! CANAAN IS GONE!

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Joshua 21:41-43 – All the land!

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NOT SO MUCH

Joshua 13:1-6 – Still some enemies left.

Joshua 15:63 – Still some Jebusites (Canaanite tribes)

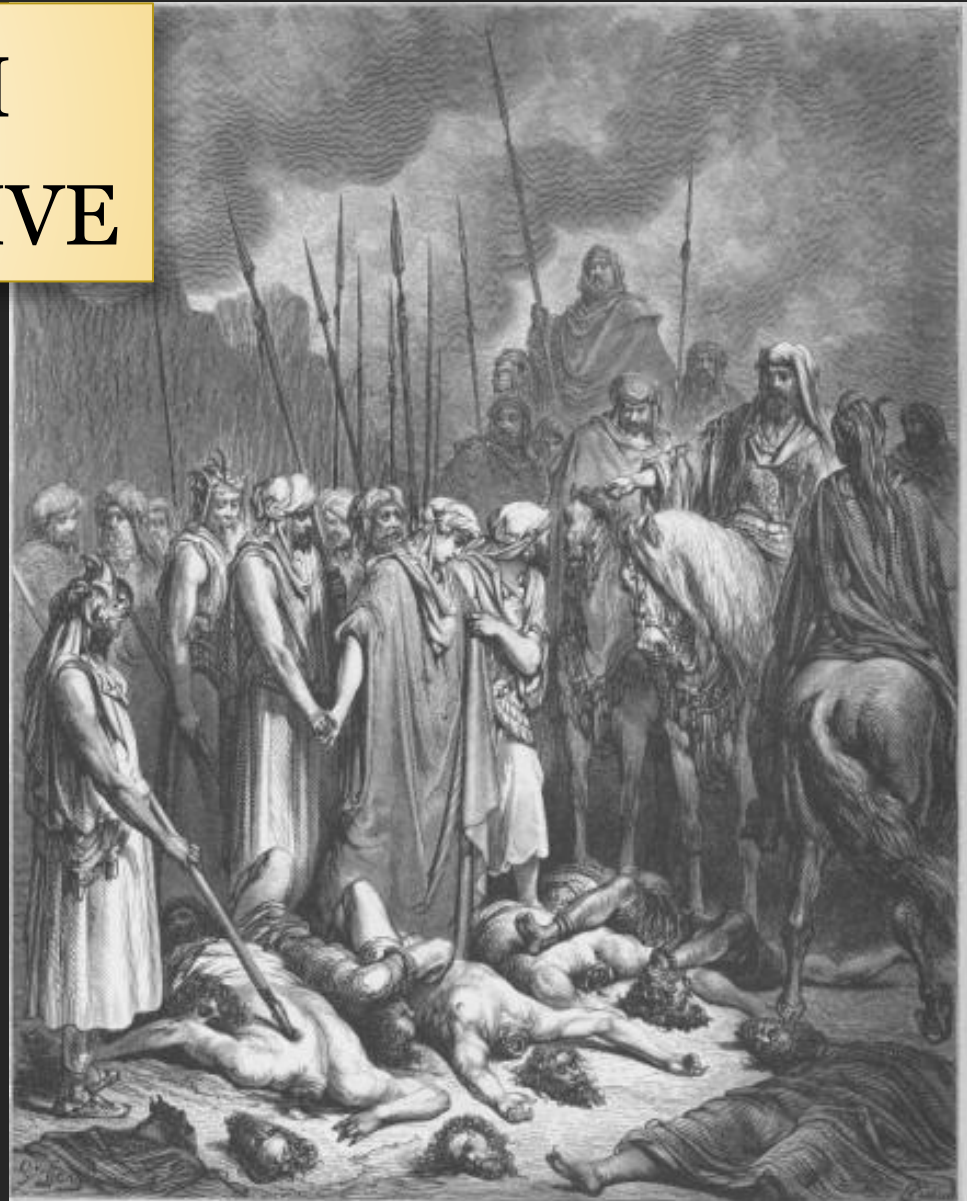
Joshua 16:10; 17:12-13 – Still Canaanites serving tribute

Judges 1:19-21

PROBLEMS WITH JOSHUA'S NARRATIVE

There is probably no issue more debated by today's biblical scholars than that of Israel's origins. (James Kugel, *How to read the Bible*, p. 376)

PROBLEMS WITH JOSHUA'S NARRATIVE



JOSHUA SPARES RAHAB

And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household . . . because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho . . . (Joshua 6: 25)

PROBLEMS WITH JOSHUA'S NARRATIVE

How do we interpret this narrative?

The options look bleak. If we reject the biblical account as simply propaganda, describing what Israel did but having no teaching for us, we face the prospect of a flawed or inconsistent method of interpretation when we try to take other parts of the Bible seriously. If we reject select elements in the biblical portrait of God, we go against the claims of Jesus to actually be the God of the Old Testament, and we resign ourselves to picking and choosing from the biblical material to simply shape God as we want him to be. If we accept both God and conquest as providing marching orders, somehow providing guidelines for us today, how do we avoid the appropriation made by fanatics? (John and Harvey Walton, *The Lost World Of the Israelite Conquest*, p. 2)

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DEALING WITH JOSHUA'S NARRATIVE

How do we deal with this narrative?

1. The Old Testament is no longer relevant to modern readers.
2. Morality has no internal logic.
3. “Just Cause” - God will always act justly, no matter the circumstance.
4. The “Greater Good.”
5. Culture!
6. The Theocratic State.
7. A Permissive Deity – God wanted a moral story, but permitted this one as it was the reality of 1200 B.C.

HOW THE ANE DEPICTED THEIR ENEMIES IS EXACTLY WHAT WE SEE IN THE BIBLE

How do we deal with this narrative?

The Hebrew word *Rephaim* has two distinct meanings: first, in poetic literature it refers to departed spirits whose dwelling place was Sheol. It is a figurative description of the dead, similar to our concept of a ghost. The second meaning of *Rephaim* is “a mighty people with tall stature who lived in Canaan.” The word doesn’t seem to be ethno-centric like “Jew” or “Egyptian” but is more of a descriptive term.

HOW THE ANE DEPICTED THEIR ENEMIES IS EXACTLY WHAT WE SEE IN THE BIBLE

The first reference to the Rephaim is Genesis 14:5, when the Rephaim, Zuzim and Emim people were defeated in a battle with Kedorlaomer and his allies. When the Israelites first approached the Promised Land after the Exodus from Egypt, they were afraid to enter the land because it was filled with “giants” (the word used in Numbers 13:33 is Nephilim), the sons of Anak. Giants were widely scattered through Canaan, but were known by different local names, including Rephaim, Zuzim, Emim, and Anakim. Deuteronomy 2:20–21 says the Rephaim were strong and tall, like the Anakites. Og, king of Bashan, was described as the last of the Rephaim in his land (Deuteronomy 3:11), and his bed was thirteen feet long and six feet wide.

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Is it possible that the *Rephaim* were literal giants?

The Septuagint uses the Greek words *gigas* and *titanes* (the source of the English *titan*) to translate these and other verses, so the ancient Jews certainly considered them to be giants. They are described generally as being between 7 and 10 feet tall and are called “mighty men.” The Egyptians wrote about giants who lived in the land of Canaan, and the folklore of other nations is full of such references. The people of the ancient world accepted the presence of giants as a fact of history, and the Bible presents them as enemies who were destroyed either by the judgment of God or in battle with men. (See Karel Van Der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter Van Der Horst, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*)

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The idea of people existing outside the bounds of order is part of the cognitive environment of the ancient world. In Assyrian and Babylonian literature, the word used to describe them is ERIN-man-da, or Umman-manda. In the Babylonian Cuthaeen Legend of Naram-Suen, the Umman-manda are depicted as birdlike, subhuman monsters, the offspring of the chaos monster Tiamat. Besides their appearance and destructive tendencies, they also exhibit deviant behavior.

HOW THE ANE DEPICTED THEIR ENEMIES IS EXACTLY WHAT WE SEE IN THE BIBLE

Assyrian descriptions of the Umman-manda include a disdain for treaties and a habit of breaking oaths. Additionally, A Sumerian document called the Marriage of Martu describes liminal peoples as follows: “Their hands are destructive and their features are those of monkeys; he is one who eats what Nanna (a goddess) forbids and does not show reverence. They never stop roaming about...; they are an abomination to the god’s dwellings.

HOW THE ANE DEPICTED THEIR ENEMIES IS EXACTLY WHAT WE SEE IN THE BIBLE

Their ideas are confused; they cause only disturbance. He is clothed in sack-leather... lives in a tent, exposed to wind and rain, and cannot properly recite prayers. He lives in the mountains, and ignores the places of the gods, digs up truffles in the foothills, does not know how to bend the knee, and eats raw flesh. He has no house during his life, and when he dies he will not be carried to a burial place.” (Marriage of Martu, lines 127-41. See also: *The Lost World of the Israelite Conquest*, p. 138-139). Compare this to Mosiah 9:12, 2 Nephi 5:24, Alma 3:5, 43:20

PROBLEMS WITH JOSHUA'S NARRATIVE

Problems with PESHAT – Literal Reading

1. The Walls of Jericho
2. The text of Joshua and Judges is contradictory
3. The El Amarna Letters

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Judges 1:19-21

What are the El Amarna Letters?

Discovered in 1887 (these are dated to 1350-1334 BCE)

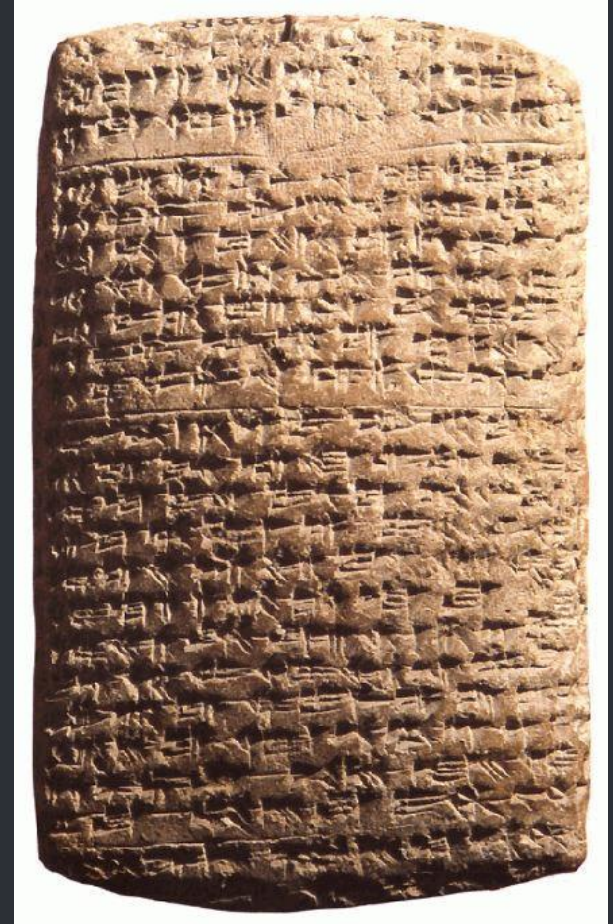
Written by Canaanite vassals to Akhenaten, or his father Amenhotep III.

The vassals frequently complain about a group of marauders, scattered throughout the land of Canaan. The letters refer to these marauders as *'apiru* or *habiru*.

The El Amarna Letters

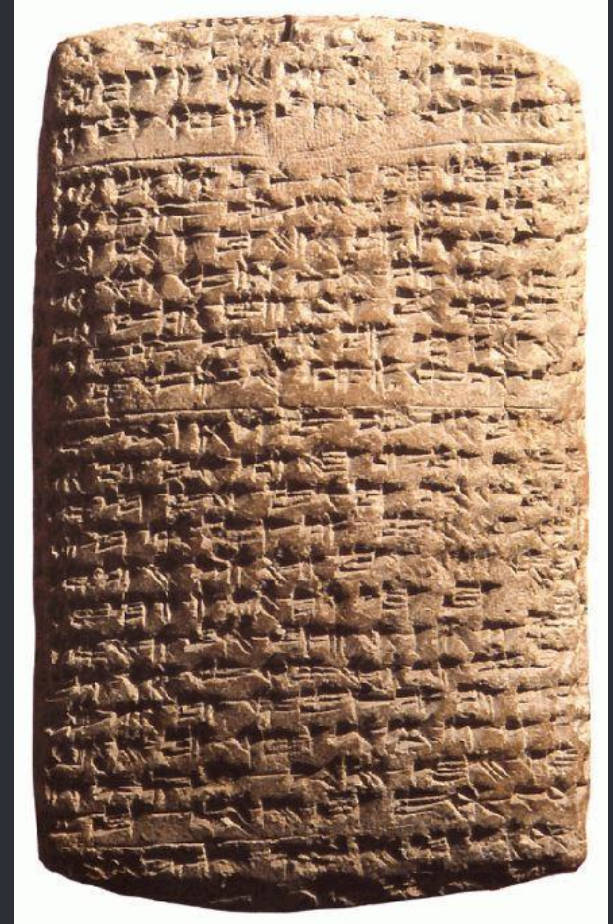
“The war, however, of the
‘apiru against me is severe...
The apiru killed Aduna, the
king of Irgata, but there was
no one who said anything to
Abdi-Ashirta, so they go on
taking territory for
themselves... I am afraid...

EA 75



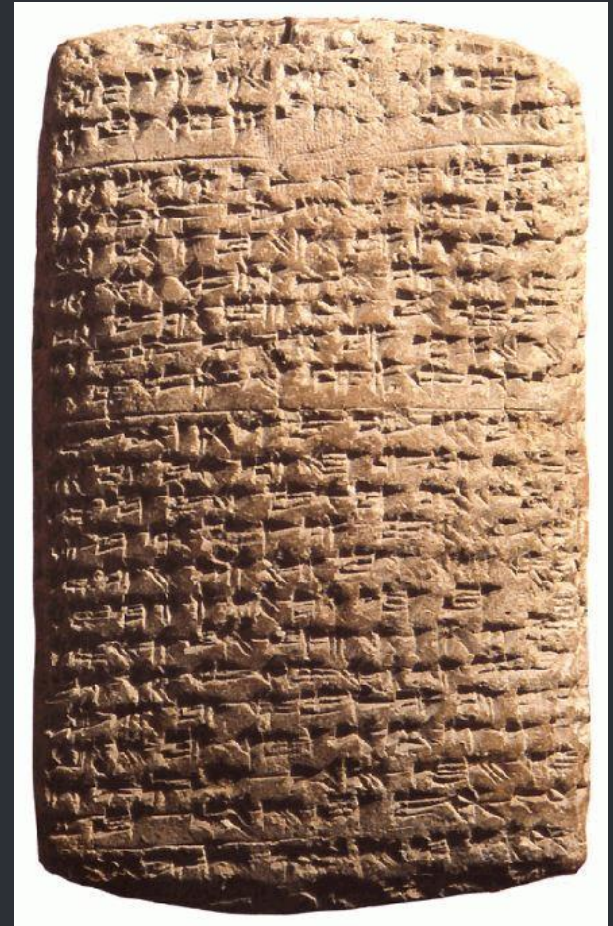
The El Amarna Letters

“Listen to me! Why are you negligent so that your land is being taken? Let it not be said in the days of the commissioners, “The ‘apiru have taken the entire country.” EA 83



The El Amarna Letters

The El Amarna Letters *may* have nothing to do with the 'apiru/Habiru-Hebrew connection in the exodus narrative. After all, the El Amarna letters themselves are dated approximately a century before the usual dating for the exodus. (Kugel, *How to read the Bible*, p. 380-381)



POSSIBLE ORIGINS OF ISRAEL

Reading Joshua with Western Eyes

1. The Biblical narrative is 100% historical.
2. Israel were semi-nomadic invaders.
3. Israel was composed mostly of Canaanite rebels that formed a popular uprising.
4. Escapees from Egypt came to Canaan and formed a revolt (very similar to #1, with some adjustments to the numbers of invaders involved).

POSSIBLE ORIGINS OF ISRAEL

It is worthy to note that the archaeologist Israel Finkelstein has pointed to the absence of pig bones in hilltop sites starting in the Iron I period (roughly 1200-1000 BCE) and continuing through Iron II; before that, in Bronze Age sites, pig bones abound. (Finkelstein and Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 2001: 119-120)

The Division of Land

Numbers 26:54 specifically states that the size of land appointed to each tribe is to be determined by each tribe's number:

“To a larger group give a larger inheritance, and to a smaller group a smaller one. Each tribe is to receive its inheritance according to the number of those numbered among them.”

But this is not what happens when the land is allotted in Joshua 13-19. The largest tribe does not receive the largest inheritance, and likewise the smaller does not receive the smaller sizes. As a visual aid, here are the numbers/sizes of each of the tribes according to the census of Numbers 26, in descending order.

ALLOTMENT OF THE LAND (JOSH 13-19)

Division of the Land

Land given by size

Numbers 26:54

9.5 and 2.5 TransJordan

Numbers 32:32-33

Numbers 34:13

Joshua 13:7



Judahites	76,500
Danites	64,400
Issacharites	64,300
Zebulunites	60,500
Asherites	53,400
Manassehites	52,700
Benjaminites	45,600
Naphtalites	45,400
Reubenites	43,730
Gadites	40,500
Ephraimites	32,500
Simeonites	22,200

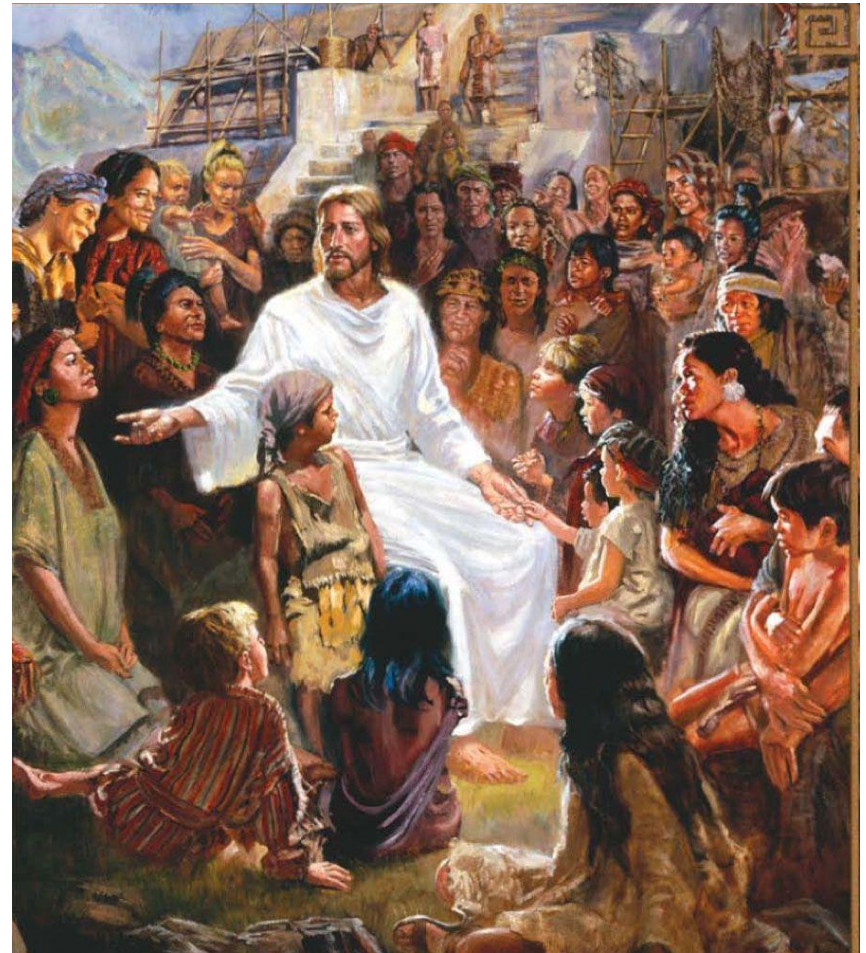
ALLOTMENT OF THE LAND (JOSH 13-19)



Why Peshat isn't the answer

Taking Joshua literally has inspired genocide: The Crusades, war on natives of the Americas, the Inquisition, the multiple attacks on Jews.

“Ye need not any longer hiss, nor spurn, nor make game of the Jews, nor any of the remnant of the house of Israel; for behold, the Lord remembereth his covenant unto them, and he will do unto them according to that which he hath sworn.” – Jesus (3 Ne. 29.8. See also 2 Ne. 29.5)



The Book of Mormon on Warfare

- ▣ The Book of Mormon is Inspired Midrash on the Book of Joshua
- ▣ Mormon commands Nephites to avoid offensive warfare – Mormon 3.9-16.
- ▣ Defend your families even unto bloodshed – Alma 43.45-47.
- ▣ Defensive war is admonished – 3 Nephi 3.21
- ▣ Capt. Moroni avoided killing – Alma 43.54-Alma 44 – read his speech.
- ▣ Capt. Moroni worked to take cities w/out bloodshed – Alma 58.38 (Manti).

Application

1. Condemned Texts- what does this mean?
2. God is not a mass-murderer. He is not MegaTron.
3. The Conquest is a template for interpreting the New Testament. (re: Origen)
4. This is a “re-creation” story.
5. This is a surrendering of our former identity to Jesus Christ.
6. Current revelation supersedes past revelation. The “cultural packaging” matters.
7. The Book of Mormon is inspired midrash on these texts. **The Book of Mormon is THE INTERPRETIVE LENS** of our day.