



**JOSHUA  
JUDGES  
& RUTH**



**St. Paul Bible College**

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## I. Introduction to Books of Deuteronomistic History

1. Martin Noth in 1943 proposed the theory of Deuteronomistic History and Chronicler's history.
2. Discovery of a book in the temple - great revival and renewal - an author takes this book (book of Deuteronomy) and *edits* the story of the people of Israel.

# 1. Deuteronomistic theology

→ Retrospective look at the history of Israel,

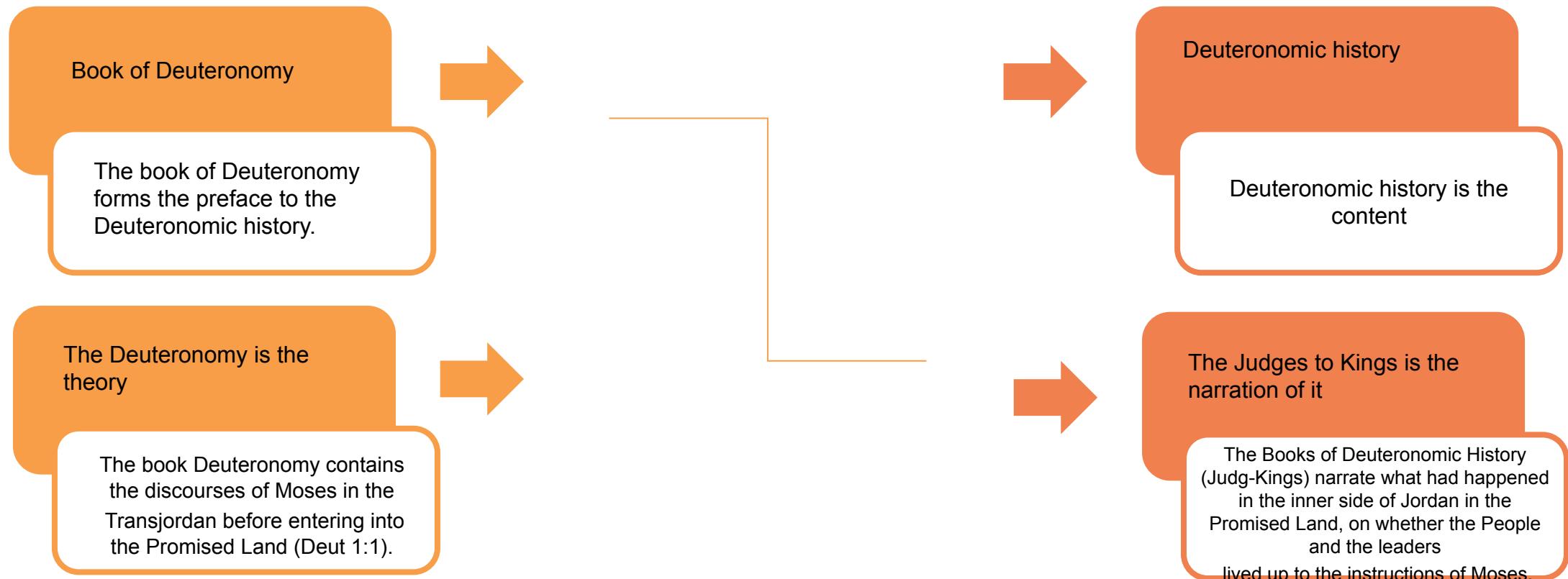
→ They also try to find out the reasons for the same.

**So the authors of these books call the people of Israel and Juda to return to the covenantal fidelity with God so that it may be saved.**

**The other basic principles of the Deuteronomistic history:**

1. God is unswervingly faithful to His promise. (Deut 9:1-6; 26:16-19)
2. Observance of the covenant is rewarded, Non - Observance is punished. (Deut 11:26-32; 28; 20:15-20).
3. God and God alone must be adored. (Deut 4:15; 6:4-19)
4. God is to be worshipped only in Jerusalem. (Deut 12:1-14)
5. The prophets are God's spokesmen and must be obeyed. (Deut. 18)
6. The structure of sin-suffering-repentance-deliverance and peaceful life, is found again and again.

### 3. Relation between the book of Deuteronomy and the Books of Deuteronomic history



Therefore, the Deuteronomistic history has to be read in the light of the book of Deuteronomy

# The Book of Joshua

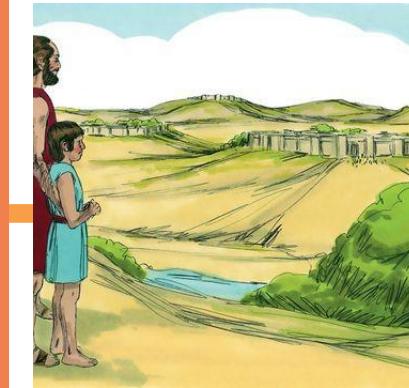
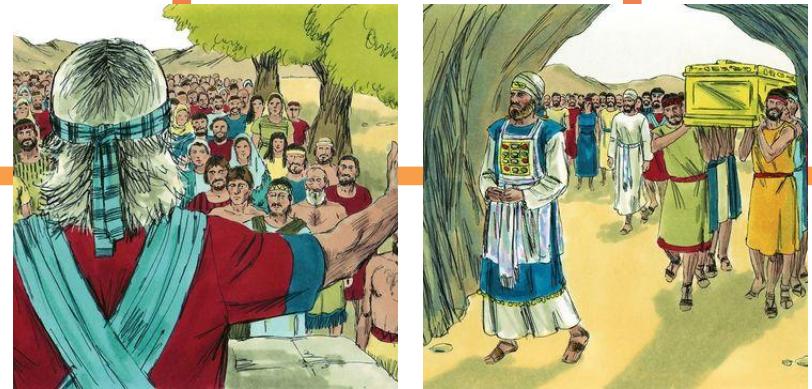
## The content

- Wars of conquest in Canaan between the years 1250 and 1225
- The subsequent division of the conquered territory among the twelve tribes.

## The Structure

The Book is divided into three parts

- a. The conquest of Canaan (Chs. 1-12)
- b. The division of the Promised Land (13-21)
- c. The return of the Transjordan tribes and Joshua's farewell address and Death (22-24).



# Some important events and their messages

## Part I: The Conquest of Canaan (Chs. 1-12)

### The role of Rahab (Josh 2)

- This personality is important from the perspective of the 'Plot' to enter into the promised land.
- She is going to be the ancestor of King David (Mt 1:5 and Ruth 4:18-22). The genealogy of Jesus mentions her name.
- God makes use of the Non - Jews and even a prostitute for the Salvation History and His plan, to be the ancestor of the Messiah.



- **The crossing of the river Jordan (Josh 3)**

1. Josh 3:5-13 is the prediction and Josh 3:15-17 narrates the event.
2. overhanging bank collapsed into the Jordan and dammed it up for several hours (for 16 hours in 1276 and for 21 hours in 1927).
3. It is not therefore unlikely that a similar cave-in took place *providentially* at Adamah damming up the river long enough for the Israelite army to pass over to the other side.
  - This they would have attributed to the hand of God.
  - Theologically it is similar to exodus event and thus shows Joshua as equal to Moses.



# Capture of Jericho (Josh 6)



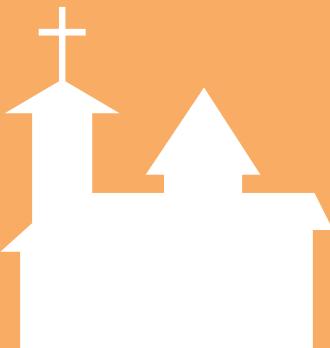
## Structure

Vs. 1-5 relates the unusual military plan for the taking of Jericho.

Vs. 20-21 narrates the even more unusual success of the plan.

## How to explain?

- (a) Psychological fall of Jericho's defences  
i.e., surrender.
- (b) An earthquake (which is quite possible in the Jordan valley)  
The extraordinary events that happen on their journey was seen by the faith community of Israel as the event wrought out by God himself with pre-plan and execution.





## **'Sun Miracle' (Josh 10)**

- This has two accounts: vs. 7-11 and 16-27 is prose account while vs. 12-15 is poetic account.
- Note the many things that happened in one day
- The possible scientific explanation could be eclipse. Or it could be that since there were lots of activities the day would have been seen as long and God did that for them.

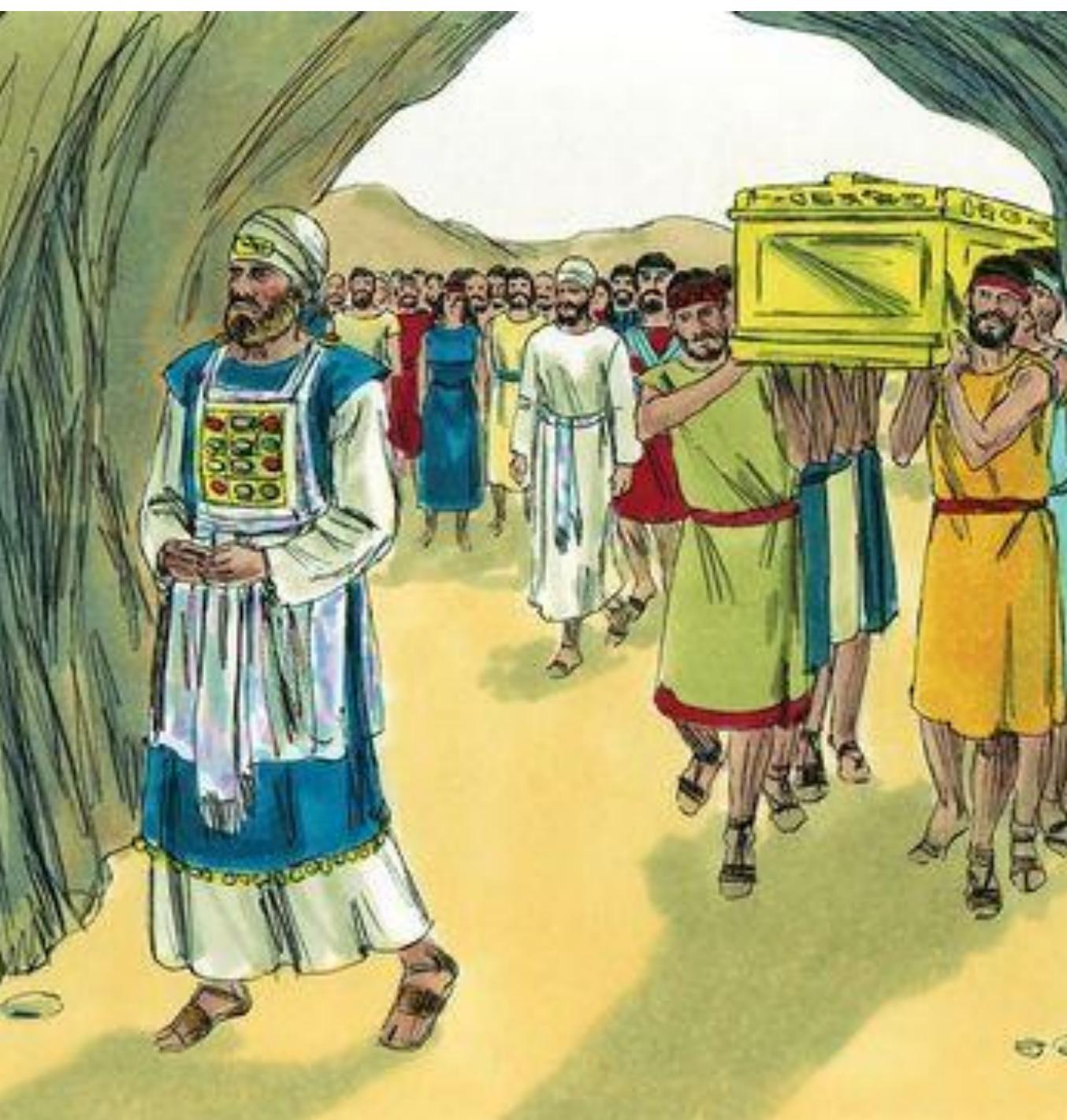
## PART II: The Division of the Land

(Josh 13-21)

The Lands that remained unconquered (Josh 13):

- The conquest was by no means complete and large sections of Canaan held out against the Israelites
- Theologically mean that they are to be loyal to God and his commandments if they want to posses the land completely.





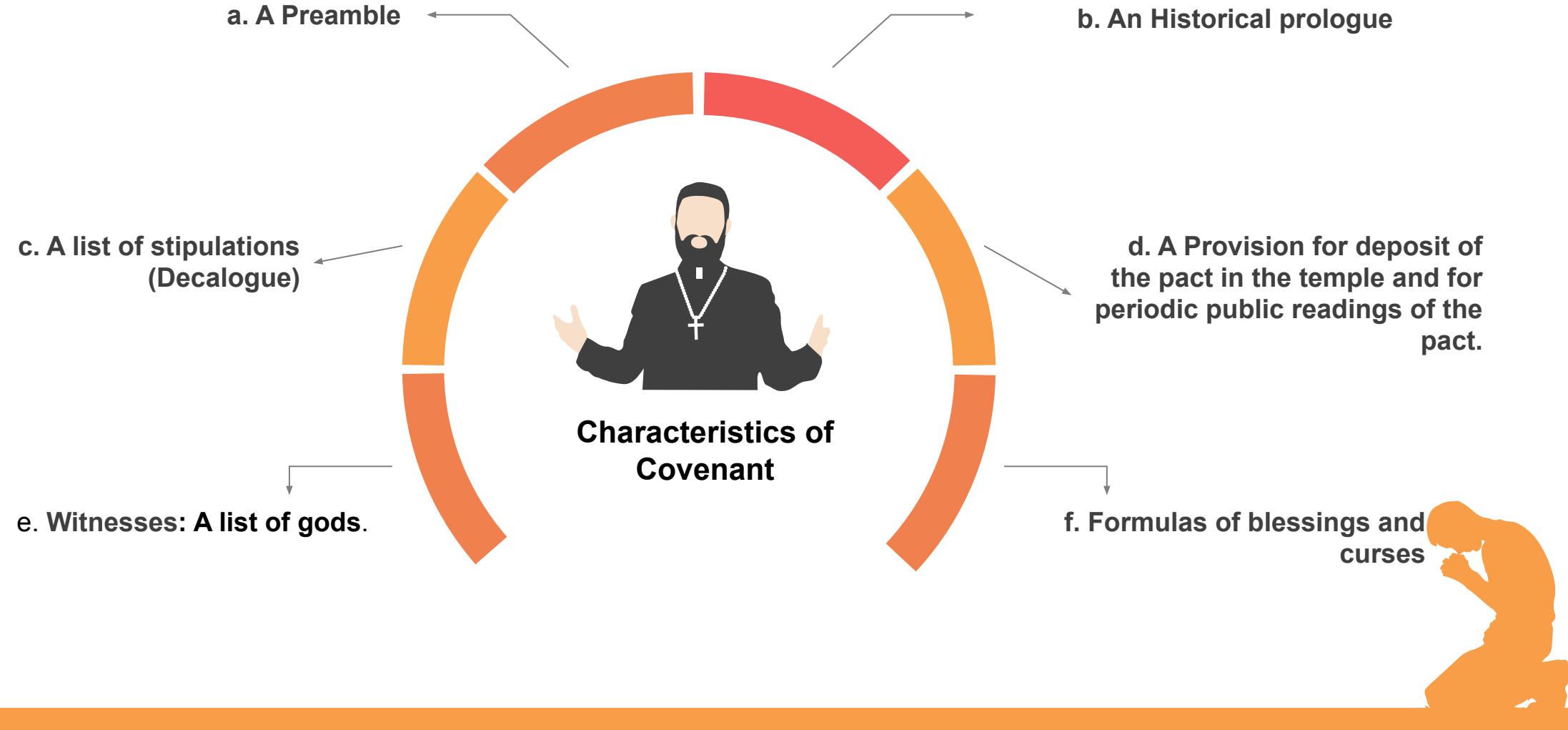
## **Part III: The return of the Transjordan tribes and Joshua's farewell address and Death (22-24).**

**The Transjordanian Tribes are sent home (Josh 22):**

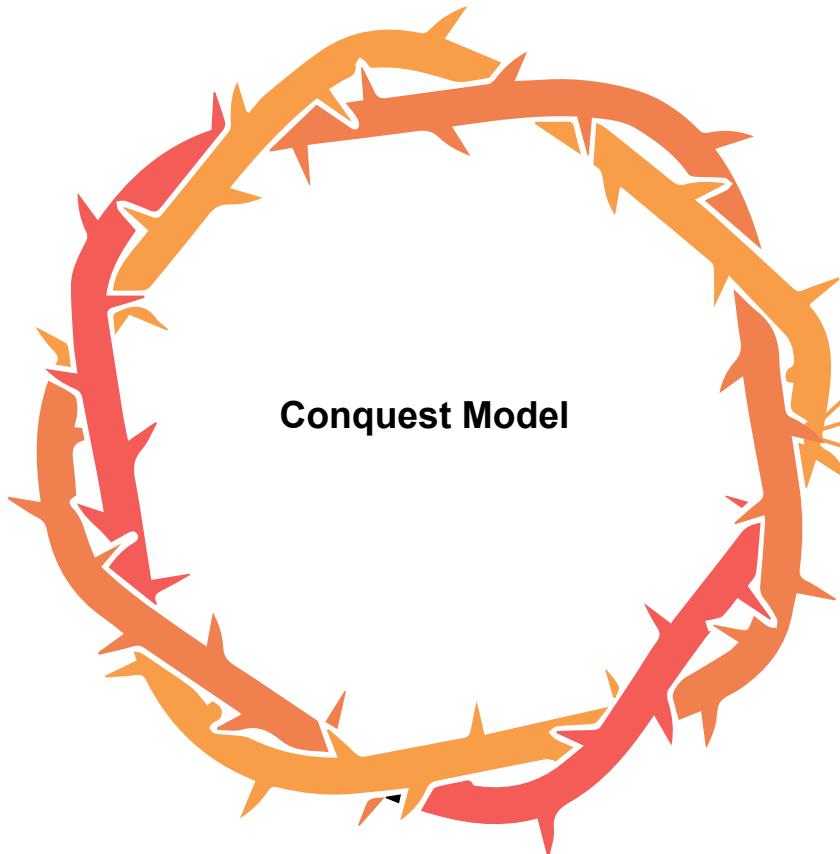
- The building of an altar of their own by these tribes
- The centrality of place of worship in Shiloh now and in Jerusalem latter.

# The Great Assembly at Sheckem (Josh 24)

This has a lot of similarities with the Sinai Covenant - Hittites pacts, between the King and the vassal Kings.



# Theories on Occupation of the Land



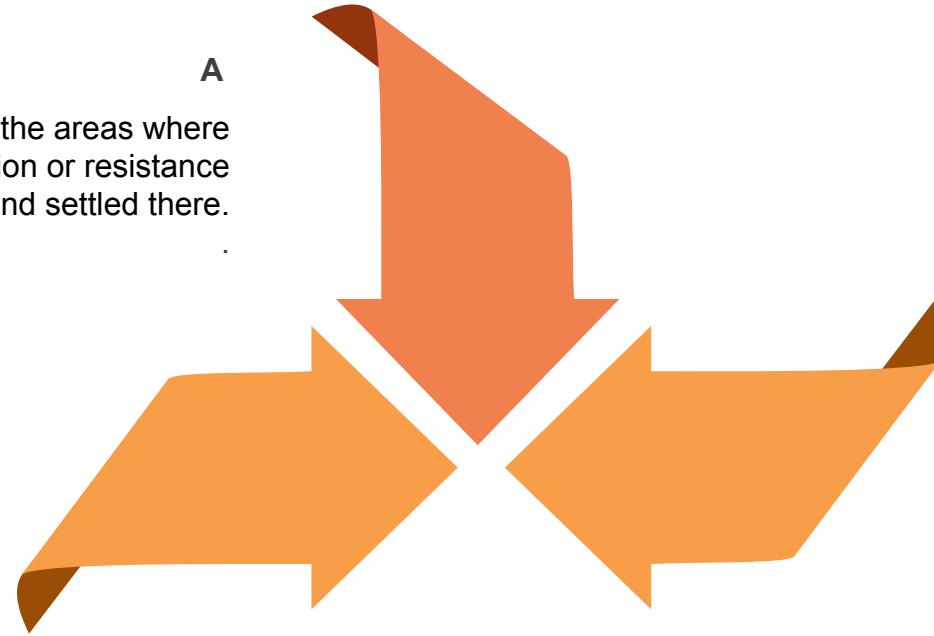
The military leadership of Joshua.

A holy war. The Book of Joshua supports it.

William F. Albright proposed it basing on the archaeology

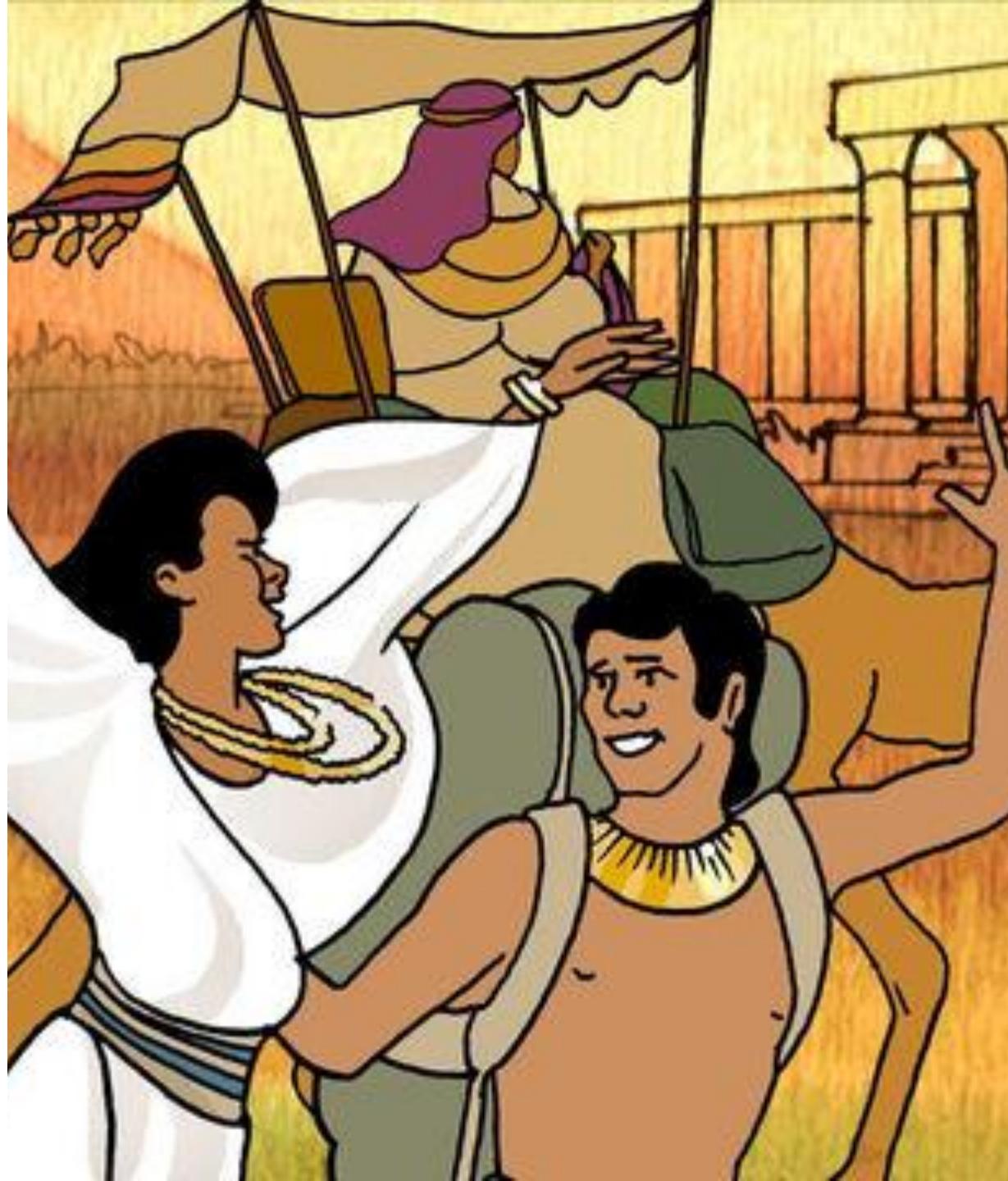
Joshua 13-19 speaks of only limited conquest, but not the compete victory.

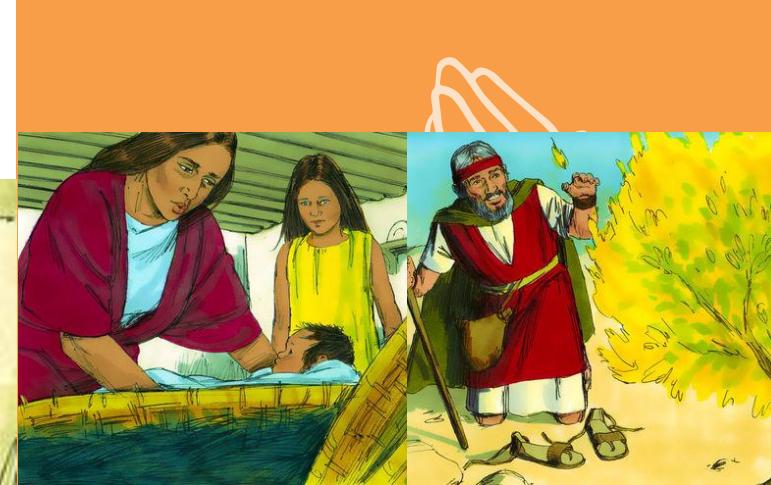
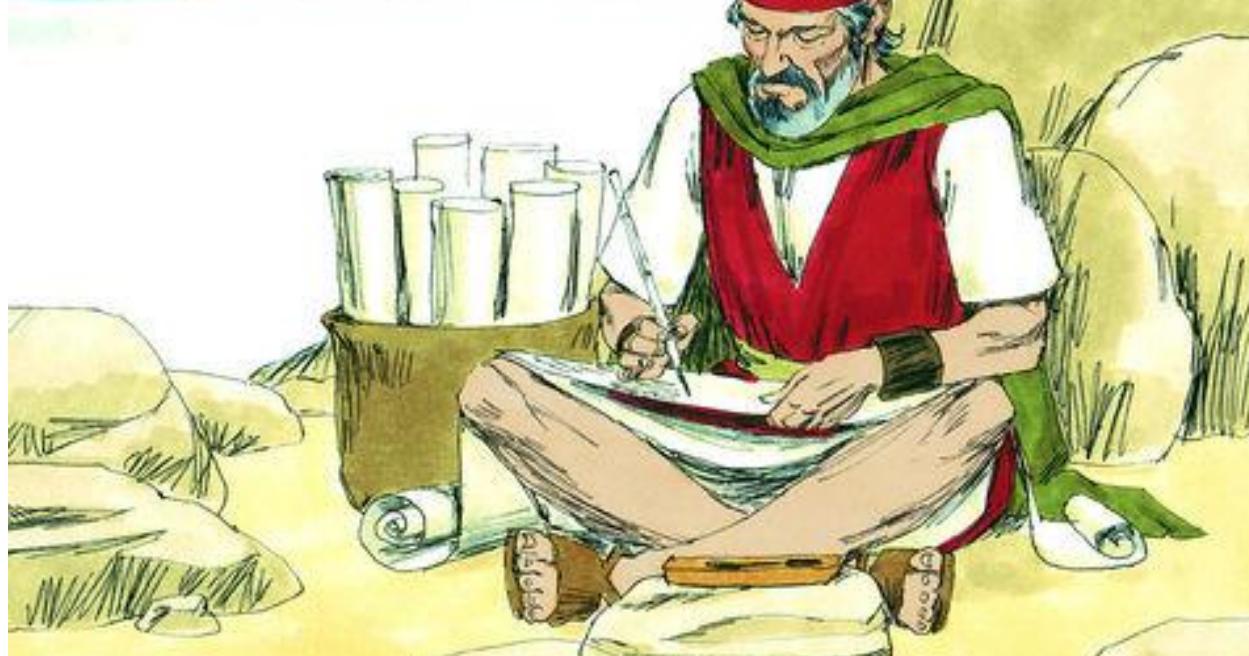
## ii. Gradual Settlement / Immigration model / Peaceful infiltration



# *The Revolt model / Peasant Revolt*

- The city states acted as agents of power and dictatorship. The elite group lived within the protected city walls. They did not do manual work but controlled public affairs and procedures of decision making and extracted the surplus of the working class and involved them in the forced labour.
- The peasants were compelled for a ‘social revolt’ against this systematic structured exploitation. They did it by withdrawing from the plains and living in hill countries with their own means of protection and survival.
- During this time came the run away slaves or ‘Exodus group’ from Egypt. The model of liberation of Israel gave boast to the local peasants to assert themselves to react against the oppressive system. So the oppressed people together with Exodus group overthrew cultures of oppressive structures.
- The religion of Yahweh served as paradigm and source of liberation to other victims of oppression. God was again on the side of the poor and the oppressed to liberate and settle them in the land.





### III The Character of Joshua

**Two heads:**

**A. Joshua with Moses**

**B. Joshua, in the Book of Joshua.**

# **Joshua with Moses**



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## **A Great Warrior**

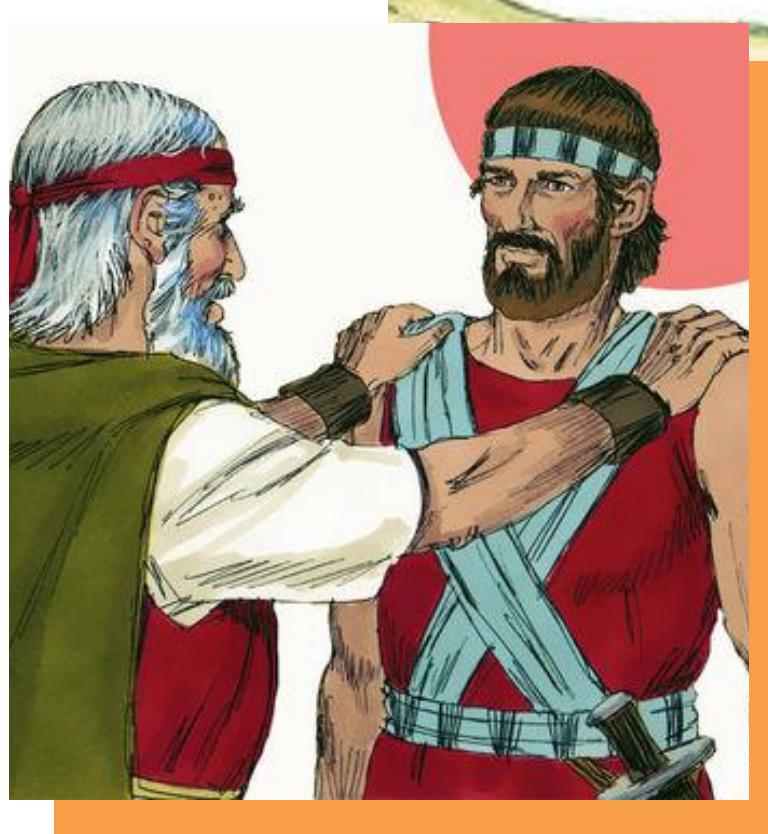
- An army chieftain (Exod 17:8-16) even when he was young. The power of God working through Joshua brought forth many victories to the Israelites.
- ‘Joshua’ exactly means like Jesus ‘saviour’ or ‘redeemer.’ He fought many battles for Israelites. He brought about liberation for the people of Israel.

## **Joshua, the Assistant of Moses**

- Exodus 24 - Sinai Covenant. It indicates the deep and close association of Joshua with Moses.
- Joshua accompanied Moses on all important occasions, witnessed his doings and had a direct and personal experience of him.

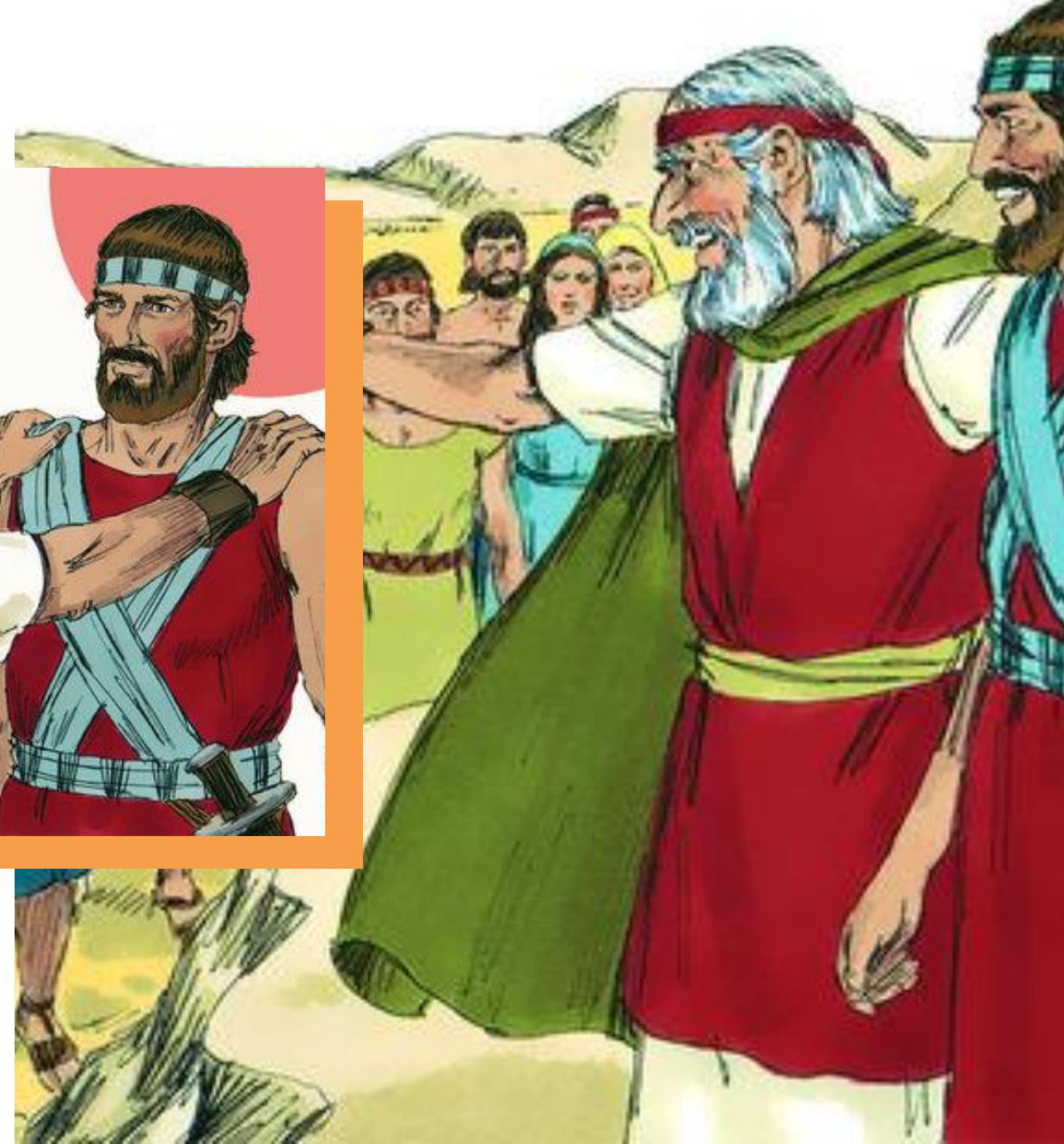
# **Joshua and the Tablets of the Covenant**

- Exod 32:15ff - when Moses came down from the mountain.
- Joshua's choice to leadership was not by mere chance. Moses properly prepared him a lot.



## **Joshua in the Tent with Moses**

- Exod 33:7-11 describes the encounter of Moses with God at the tent. The personal experience shaped his personality.
- Joshua was very passionately committed to the Lord.



# Faithful and Sincere Servant



## Faithful and Sincere Servant

- Moses sent many spies into Canaan to know the condition of the people and the land. But Joshua and Caleb stood firm for truth.
- Here again Joshua proved his firmness and courage, the qualities normally expected of a good leader (cf. Num 13-14).

## Joshua: The Successor of Moses

- The great responsibility of leading the congregation was entrusted to Joshua by Moses at Lord's command (Num 27:18-23 and Deut 31:1-8).

## Joshua, A Wise Successor

- When Moses laid his hands on Joshua, he was filled with the spirit of wisdom (Deut 34:9).
- The people also obeyed him and promised to do as the Lord had commanded through Moses.

# Joshua, in the Book of Joshua

## Joshua, the Successor of Moses

- Successor of Moses
- Follow the footsteps of Moses
- He had to be strong and very courageous, being careful to act diligently.

## The Parallelism between Joshua and Moses

Moses	Joshua
<b>Moses divided the Red Sea into two.</b>	Joshua dried up the river (Josh 3:7-4:24)
<b>Moses consecrated the people (Exod 19:14),</b>	Joshua also consecrated them by way of circumcision (Josh 5:2-9).
<b>The Lord exalted Moses</b>	The Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of the people and said “I will be with you as I was with Moses” (Josh 3:7; 4:14).
<b>Moses spoke to the Lord and the Lord listened to him (Deut 9:19; 10:10).</b>	Joshua spoke to the Lord and the Lord heeded his voice (Josh 10:12, 14).
<b>Moses had revelation and was asked to remove the sandals from his feet (Ex 3:5).</b>	Joshua too had an extraordinary revelation. He too was asked to remove the sandals from his feet (Josh 5:15).
<b>Moses had a deep relationship with Yahweh so to say, “the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend” (Exod 33:11).</b>	After speaking to the Lord, Joshua made the sun and moon to stand still (Josh 10:12-14). It demonstrates the intimacy of the relationship between Joshua and Yahweh.

# Joshua in the Distribution of the Land

**Joshua distributed the land to the different tribes of Israel**

**One needs audacity and boldness to fulfill this task.**

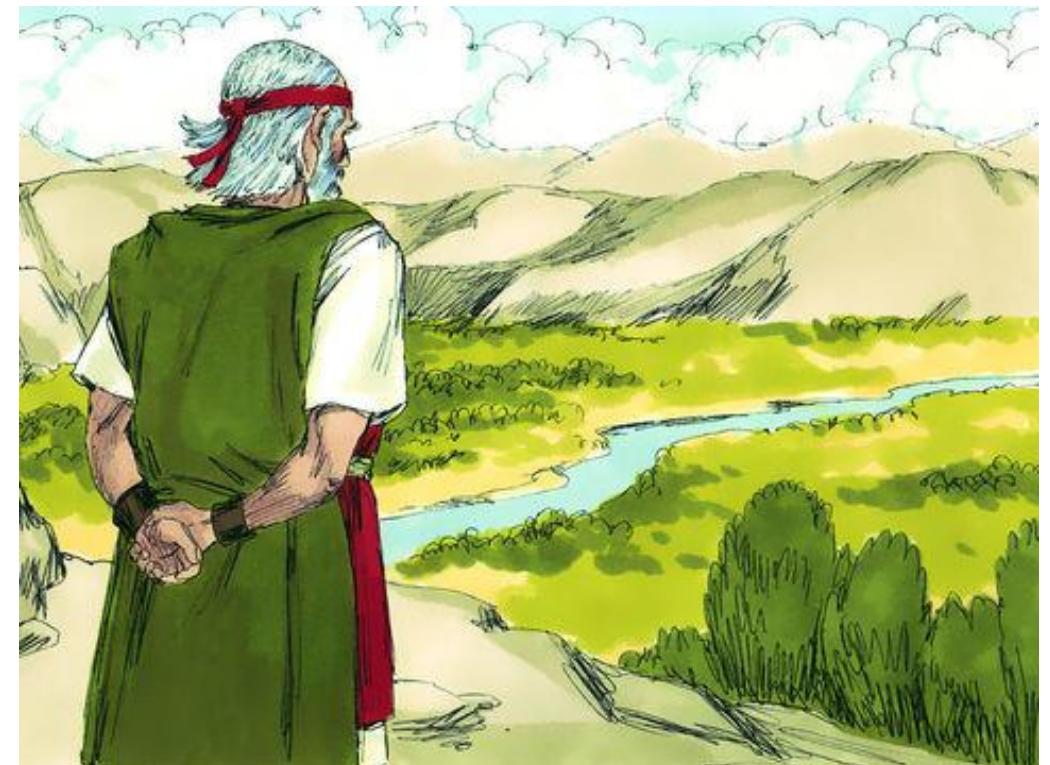
**They were content with his leadership and administrative abilities (Josh 14:6-15; 17:4, 14-18).**

## His Option for God

Strong commitment to the Lord -“... as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord” (Josh 24:15).

He acknowledged the hand of God openly (Josh 6:20; 10:10-14).

He also instilled in the people a strong belief and admonished them to be grateful to the Lord by walking in his ways (Josh 8:30-35).



# The Book of Judges

“



## Who are the Judges?

- Hebrew term ‘*Sophetim*’ and its Greek equivalent ‘*Kritai*’.
- They were more charismatic and at the same time aggressive in character.
- Guardians or the protectors of God’s people. They were also the army leaders.
- They helped the people to discern the will of God and follow it.

# •The Stage of Transformation

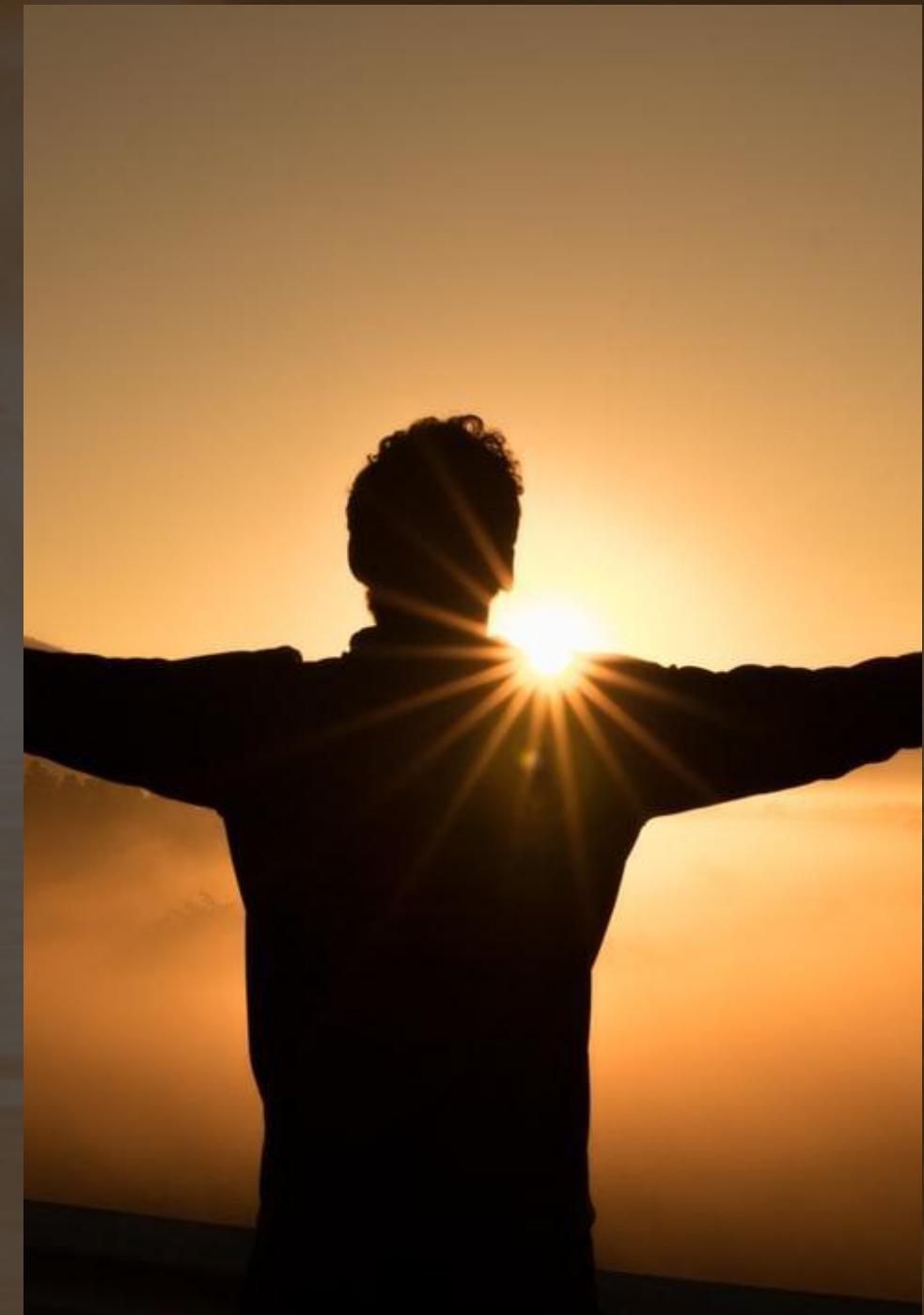
Chronologically we can situate the time of Judges as given below.

Joshua 1250 – 1225 Period of Conquest

Judges 1225 – 1025 period of Transformation

Samuel 1025 – 965 Period of consolidation and expansion

The book of Judges is a **stage of transformation** for Israel.



# We can visualize three kinds of transformation

## Political Transformation

During the time of exodus and conquest the tribes were led by Moses or Joshua.

During the time of Judges, Israel consisted of a loose confederation of tribes.

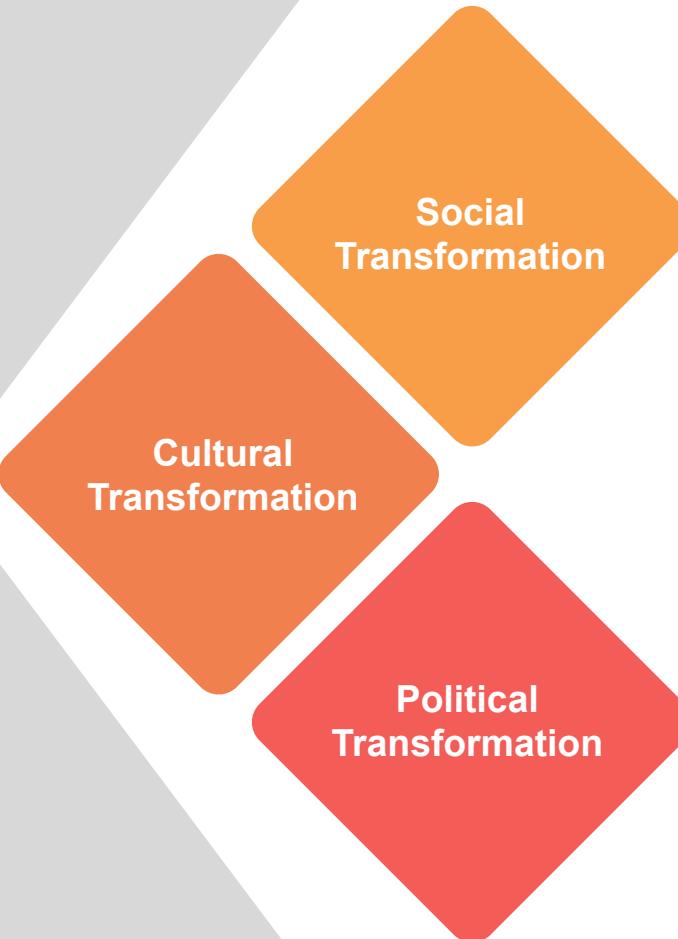
Under Samuel, the tribes realized the necessity of a central government (kingdom and kingship) if they were to survive. This led to the institution of monarchy in Israel.

## Cultural Transformation

- Invasion and conquest of a civilized land (city culture) by people who were semi-nomads and culturally barbarians.
- Events 'barbaric in nature' (cfr. Judge 1:7, 8:16, 9:5, 11:31, ch 19).
- Understandable in the time 3000 years from now, and in the context of each race trying to establish itself and working for its survival.

## Social Transformation

- The history of Israel began as family - grew as a nation, - a semi-nomadic - an agricultural life - from loose confederation to a unified kingdom.

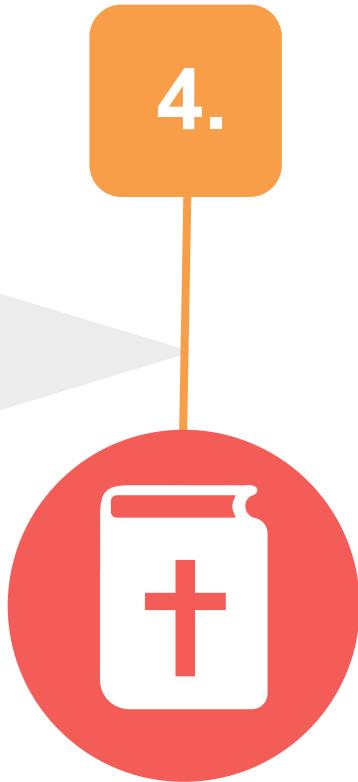


# Some of the Characteristics of the Book



- The book does not narrate a secular history. It is basically a religious book.
  - It displays how God was involved in their life of struggle and led them to freedom.
  - The historical events were given a religious connotation.
- 
- The role of the minor judges is described only in few verses.
  - The major judges have lengthy description.
  - We have 6 minor and 6 major judges.
- 
- Samuel is the author of the book of Judges. But it is very improbable.
  - It is the collection of the events that took place for many centuries.

# Some of the Characteristics of the Book



## The Formation of the Book

### A. The First Phase

- Stories narrating the adventures of the heroic persons, and royal families.
- These stories were circulated and preserved orally.
- Used for cultic celebrations and in the family circles.
- This phase goes back to 12-11 century BCE.

### B. The Second Phase

- These oral traditions were codified and put in written form in the Deuteronomistic style.
- It was the time of David and Solomon.

### C. The Third Phase

- After the fall of the Northern kingdom (722/721 BCE), they were compiled and edited by the Deuteronomistic author according to his style. It was the first edition of this book.
- The book contains repetitions of sayings and formulae, historical explanation, and covenant. Eg. sin-suffering-repentance-deliverance and peaceful life
- However, this redactor could have omitted some event which did not suit his purpose (Eg. Judg 9 and 16 deal with the minor prophets). But later, another editor would have collected these abandoned materials and inserted them into the prior edition. This might have taken place in 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

### D. The Fourth Phase.

- The chapters 17 and 18 dealing with the shrine at Dan and chapters 19-21 narrating the internal wars might be of a later period.
- These chapters might have been written after the Babylonian captivity (587 BCE).



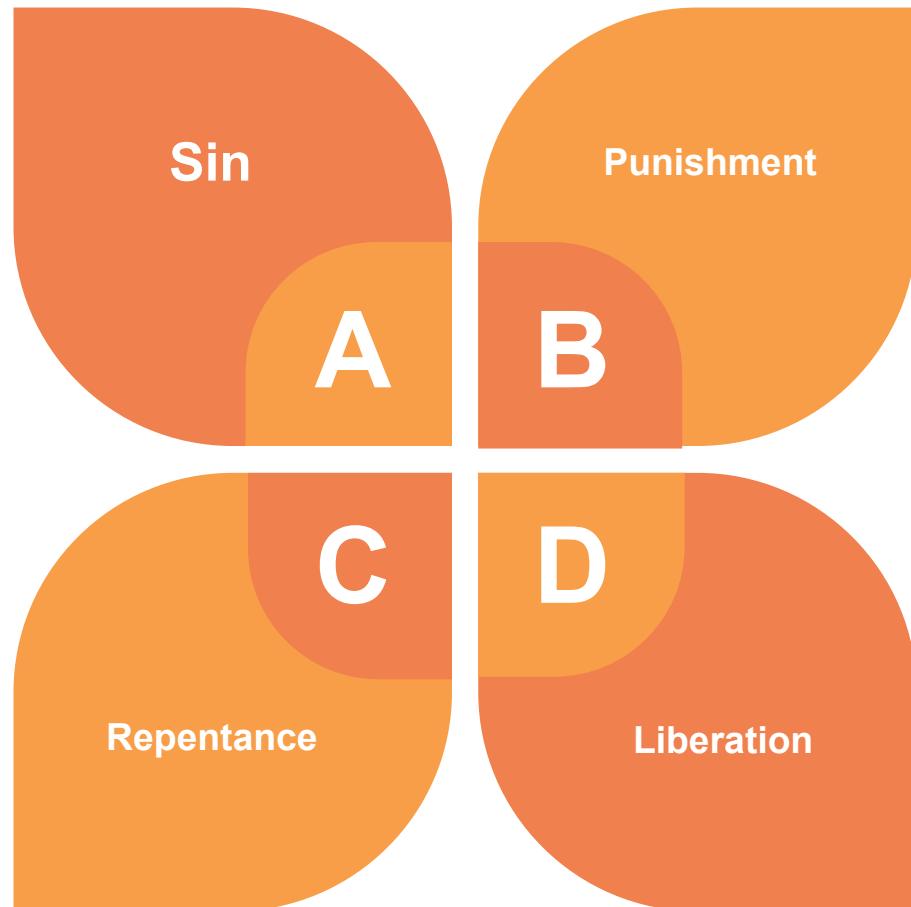
# The Literary Style



- The literary style of ‘heroic narrations’.
- The secondary aim could be for increasing the patriotism of the people of Israel.
- The battle and wars are narrated in detail and the victories are magnified. - every now and then the mockery of the enemies.

# The Theological Message

Four parts (cf. 3:7-11, 3:12-15, 4:14, 6:1-6, 10:6-10).



- **Sin**  
(usually sin of idolatry)
- **Punishment**  
(invasion by the surrounding nations)
- **Repentance**  
(usually expressed by the words, “and they cried out to God” - acknowledgment of sin and prayer for divine intervention)
- **Liberation**  
(God hears them by sending one of the Judges to save and liberate them from their oppressors)

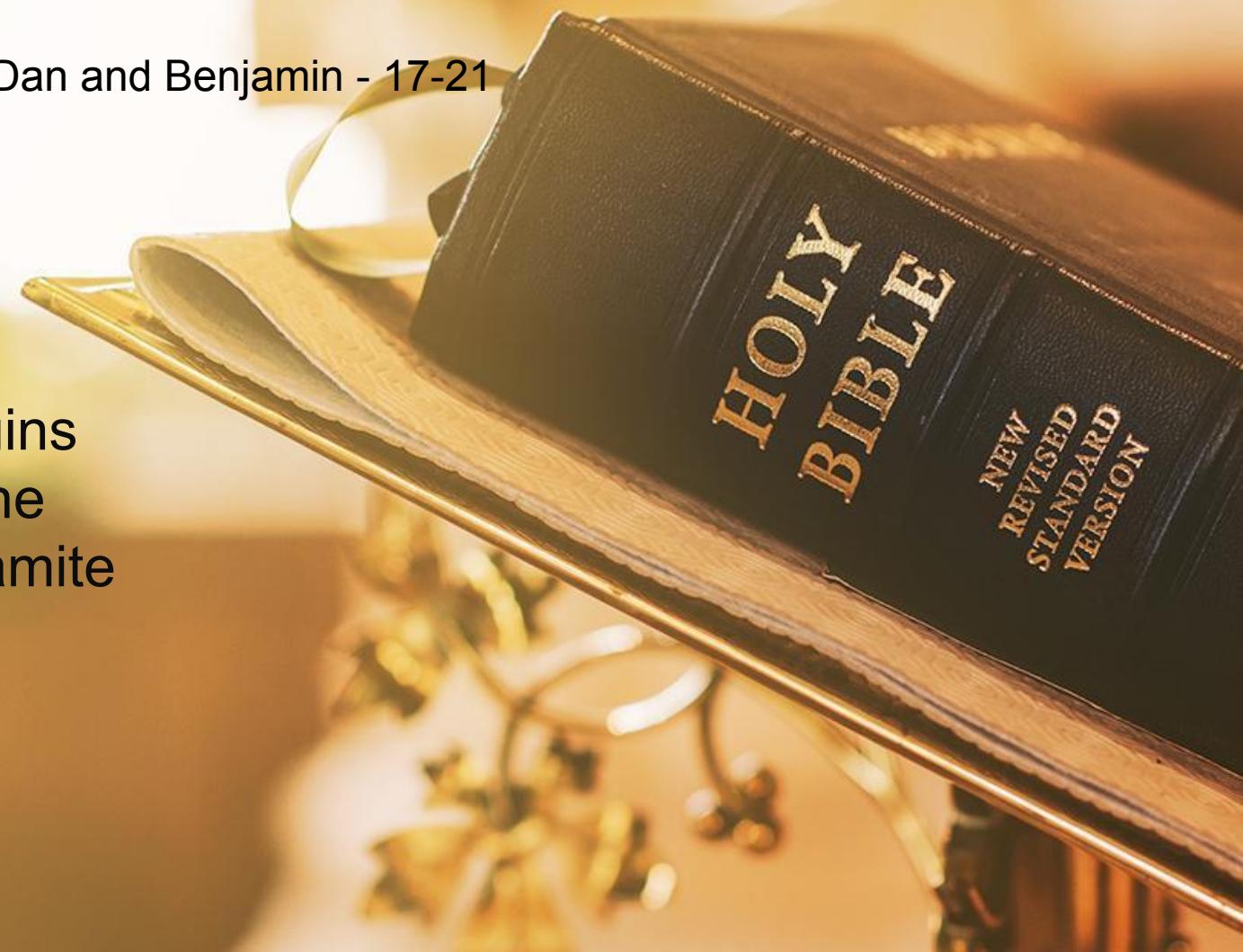
# The Division of the Book



- **Part I** Link with the book of Joshua and the theology of the author - 1:1-3:6
- **Part II** Stories about the Judges - 3:7-16:31
- **Part III** Appendices concerning the tribes of Dan and Benjamin - 17-21

***The arrangement of the plot:*** begins with one tribe helping other tribe - the book ends with fight between Ephramite and Benjaminit.

- The end of the book also paves way for the monarchy.

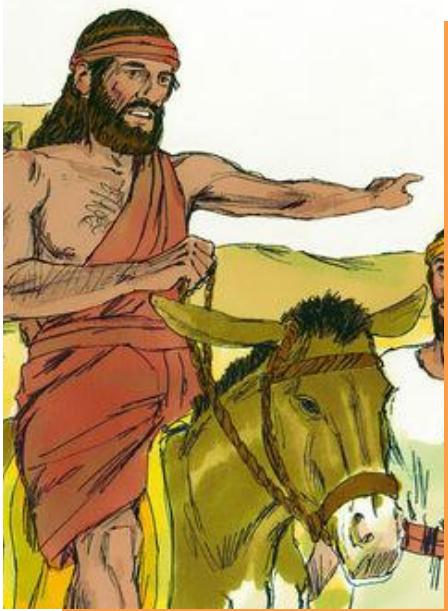




## IV. Some of the Important Judges

### 1. Deborah (Judg 4-5).

- i. **The Historical and Political Background**
- Cultural role of women - beautiful, pious, docile and wise.
- But Bible portrays some characters that defy these ideals for the liberation of Israel. Deborah and Jael are examples for it.
- **Identity of Deborah**
- Deborah, the *wife* of Lappidoth, was a *prophetess* and she was *judging* the Israel at that time.
- God exceptionally chose Deborah to be his instrument and through her displayed his power.
- Sitting under the trees and rendering justice is a sign of leadership.
- She bore the title, “mother in Israel” (Judg 5:7) as she advised those who sought her help (2 Sam 20:19).
- **Deborah, the Liberator of Israelites**
- Deborah summoned Barak to bring warriors.
- She prophesied that the Lord would give Sisera into his hands.
- Barak agreed to do so if only she would accompany him. She accepted his condition.
- This story began with a woman (Deborah) and ended with another woman (Jael).
- **The Song of Deborah**
- At the conquest, they praised God for his mighty deeds. They identified God who was always favoring them and protecting them from the hands of the enemies.
- He even had exercised his power over the nature to protect them.
- It is an ancient Hebrew song, containing ancient Hebrew culture, literature, history and religion.



## IV. Some of the Important Judges

### 2. Gideon

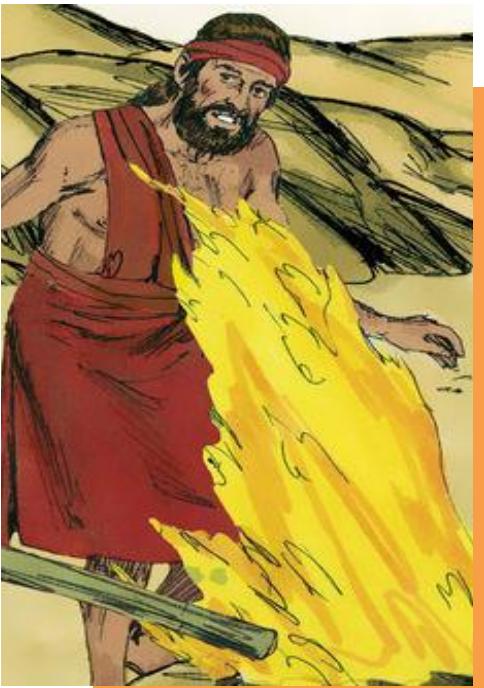
#### i. The Background

The Midianites and the Amalekites oppression - They destroyed the produce of the land and left the Israelites without any sustenance.

#### ii. The Call of Gideon (Judg 6:11-24)

The pattern of call narratives

1. The *encounter* between the messenger and the one who is to receive the message vv. 11-13
2. Message from the messenger of YH vv.14
3. The *fear* of the one who is called vv.15
4. Assurance from the messenger vv.16
5. *Sign is asked* by the one who is called vv.17ff
6. The *sign is given* vv.20-21
7. The message or the *mission is accepted* and a happy conclusion (Vv. 22-24).



## IV. Some of the Important Judges

### 2. Gideon

#### iii. Roots of Monarchy (Judge 8:22-23)

- Two trends
- Pro-monarchist faction trying to make him a King, justifying kingship.
- Anti-monarchist faction refusing kingship saying that the Lord should rule over Israel.

#### vi. The Snare and the Fall of Gideon (Judge 8:24-27)

- Gideon also failed in his loyalty to Yahweh. He turned back to his old life of idolatry.
- He made an ephod of them and placed it in his town, Ophrah. This act of idolatry became a snare to him and his family (Juge 8:24-28).
- Even the very blessings could turn out to be the curses and snares for us, unless we are alert and aware of our call in each moment of our life.



## IV. Some of the Important Judges

### 3. Samson

- **The Name ‘Samson’**
  - Hebrew word ‘Semes’ which means ‘sun.’
  - ‘Samson’ could be understood as ‘Sun’, ‘like the sun’ or ‘son of the sun.’
- **The Background**
  - The hands of the Philistines for forty years.
- **The Adventures of Samson**
  - Difference between Samson and the other judges of Israel. Other judges fought for the deliverance collectively. Samson, on behalf of the Israelites, fought all alone against the Philistines.
- **Samson The Nasserite:**
  - Nasserite is the one dedicated for a time or for life to lead a simple and mortified life, abstaining from alcoholic liquors and refraining from cutting the hair.
  - The author in the story of Samson narrates how he was going away from the Nazarite vow.
  - The power is not in his hair but in what it symbolized: his Nazairte vow.
  - In the prison he repents (16:28) and God restores his strength.

# End of Book of Judges

- Judges 17: 6 states that “In those days there was no king in Israel, and everyone did as he saw fit” (also cf. 18:1; 19:1 and 21:25).
- These chapters 17 – 21 narrates many evils in Israel
  - The entirely human origin of Micah’s sanctuary (17:1-5),
  - The making of an idol (17:3),
  - The purely arbitrary choice of one of his sons as priest,
  - Gibeah’s Crime (Judge 19:22-30)
  - Israel’s war with the tribe of Benjamin.
- The author goes to argue that if there had been a king, such abuses would not have happened.
- The last statement of the Book of Judges is the fitting preparation for the book of Samuel and kingship.





# The Book of Ruth

- The events took place in the time of the Judges.
- The book is read in the synagogue for the Feast of the weeks.



## 1. The Content

- The purpose of this book is to establish the genealogy of king David by showing that he is descended from among others, a Moabite woman.
- Ruth renounced her own people and joined that of her husband accepting their Jewish faith.
- In Judah Ruth met Boaz, a relative of her dead husband. She was married to him.
- It was both the combination of levirate marriage and the law of redemption. Boaz justified the loyalty of Ruth to Yahweh.

## 2. Literary Genre



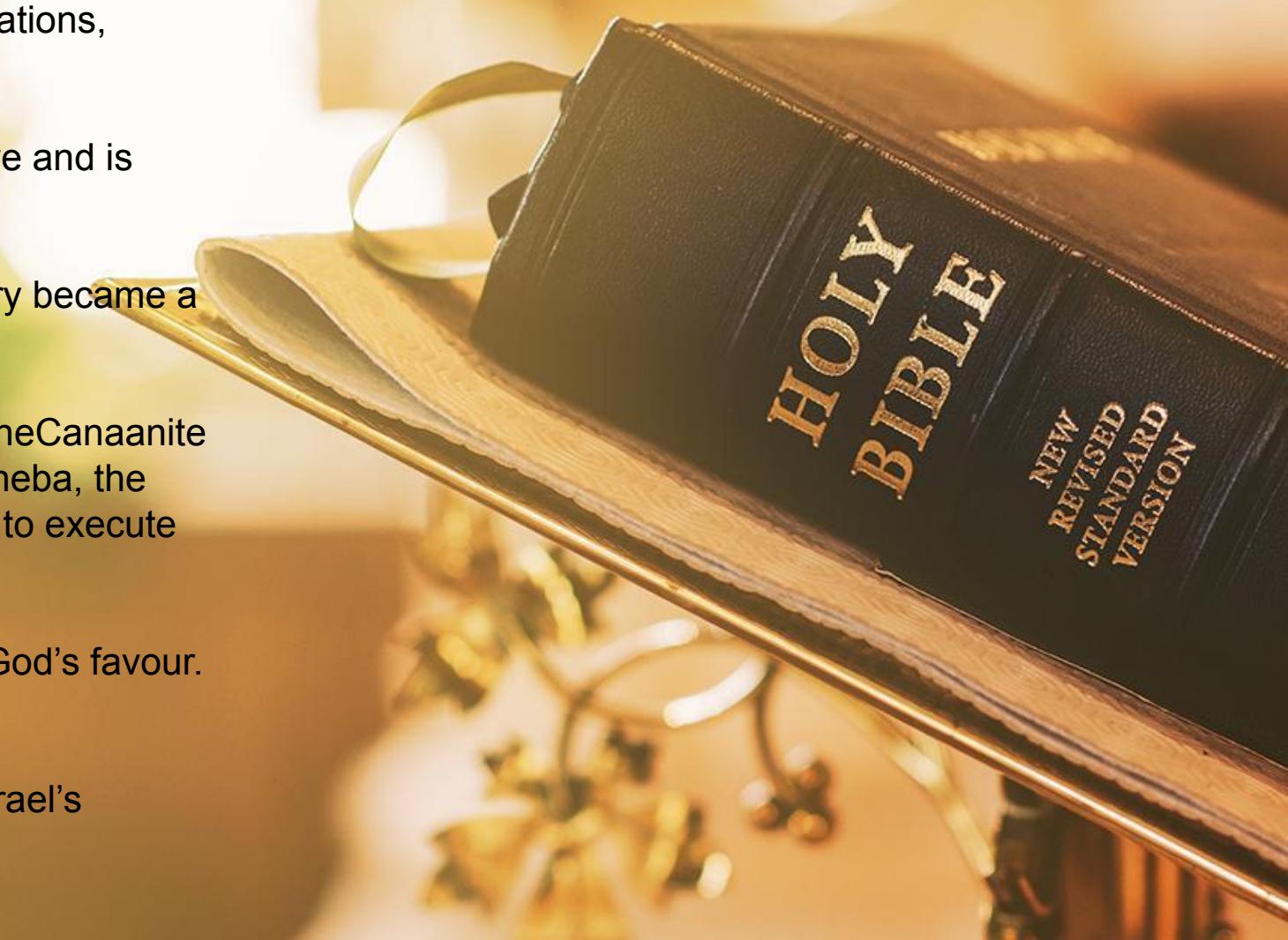
- It belongs to the class of popular legends with features of the novella.
- The names are symbolic:
  - Ruth means companion.
  - Orpah, Ruth's Moabite sister-in-law, means disloyal.
  - Naomi, the mother-in-law of Ruth, is peaceful.
  - Boaz means strength.



# 3. Message of the Book



- i. Relationship between family members, between nations, between God and Israel.
- ii. The attitude of book to the non-Israelites is positive and is similar of that of Jonah.
- iii. What really counts is the choice of faith. The story became a paradigm for conversion in the faith.
- iv. Foreign-born women in Biblical History: (Tamar, the Canaanite (Gen 28), Rahab the Canaanite (Josh 2-6), Bathsheba, the Hittite (2 Sam 11)) - God chose Ruth, the Moabite to execute the salvific plan of God.
- v. Her commitment and friendship with Naomi won God's favour. God used her to build up the house of Israel.
- vi. The book also underlines the role of women in Israel's history.



# The Theological and Inspirational Message of the Books

## 1.The Loving God

- The book of Joshua narrates the loving care of God.
- He delivers the promise of giving them a land, settles them, and sees to their safety and security.

- The Book of Ruth justifies that in God there is no Jew or non-Jew, no man or woman.

- Thus, the non-Israelites play a vital role in the salvation history. It is faith that unites all of them and not race.



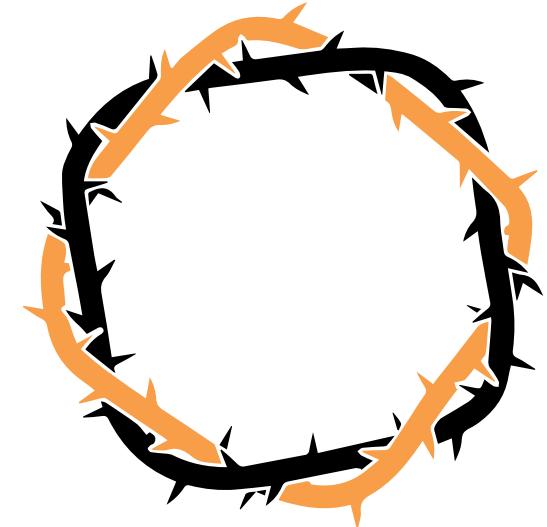
## 2.The God of the Universe

# The Theological and Inspirational Message of the Books

## 3.The Just God

- According to the author of Judges, the Israelites suffered due to their disloyalty to the covenantal relationship.
- As a just God, He punished them by handing them over to slavery and suffering.

- In their suffering they cried out to the Lord. God in His peerless mercy acted in their favour.
- He chose the human instruments, the Judges, to express his mercy, care and concern for the people.



## 4.The Merciful God

# The Theological and Inspirational Message of the Books

## 5.The Powerful God

- Though the Judges were leading the Israelites it was actually Yahweh who fought for them.
- His immeasurable power was expressed in his abiding presence amidst the people.

- The Judges are to:
- To liberate the people from the oppressive hands of the enemies.
- To turn the people away from the idol worships.
- To instruct the people to have firm faith only in Yahweh and get hold of him very strongly.
- To vindicate the tolerance of Yahweh for the people who were unable to come out from the culture and rituals of Canaanites and other surrounding people.
- To demonstrate the significant qualities of Yahweh such as his justice, mercy, power and so on.
- To invite the people to be sincere and responsible to the Lord who has a lot of concern for them. God's grace is both a gift and a task.

6.God Functions through Human Instruments like Judges



# The Theological and Inspirational Message of the Books

## 7.The Patient God

- The characters of Israelites i.e. only in their difficult and oppressed life, they cried out to God asking for his help. But in prosperity they forgot the blessings of God and turned back to their old life.
- The description of the people found in Pentateuch as “stubborn, stiff-necked, rebellious” seems to be proper and appropriate. It is well explained in the book of Judges.

- The shortcomings and weaknesses found amidst Israelites: taking revenge, jealousy, lust, etc.
- Even the Judges were not free from vices. Eg. Gideon, Samson.

8.God Understands his People



# Thank You



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