EXPOSITION OF JOSHUA

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by

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Canonical Context

All 66 inspired books of the Protestant canon relate to the progressively revealed Messiah-redeemer-ruler metanarrative of the Bible, but not in the same way. Each book either *carries* the metanarrative,[1] *contributes* to it but does not carry it,[2] or *contemplates* the metanarrative.[3] A book's placement into one of these three categories does not necessarily depend on genre, even though a correlation frequently exists. Rather, a book's categorization depends on its contents and its relationship to other books.[4]

In the Messiah-redeemer-ruler metanarrative of Scripture, the following compose the major elements of the story:

Table 1: Elements of the Metanarrative of Scripture

Setting:	Heaven and earth	Gen 1–2
Hero:	God the Father	Gen 1–2
Hero's desire:	Image bearers to rule the earth	Gen 1:26–28
Problem:	Image bearers gave their rule to the serpent	Gen 3
Solution (the plot):	Promise seed will strike the serpent and restore rule to image bearers	Gen 3:15–Rev 19
Turning point:	The Cross	Gospels
Climax:	The Great Tribulation	Rev 6–19
Resolution / denouement:	Image bearers again rule the earth	Rev 20–22

[1] The carrier category refers to biblical books that carry the primary plotline of the Messiah-redeemer-ruler metanarrative of the Bible. Many books of historical narrative and certain parts of prophetic books fall into this category because they carry the Messiah-redeemer-ruler metanarrative. Such books describe the outworking of the promise in Genesis 3:15–16.

[2] The contributor category refers to biblical books that contribute to, but do not carry, the plot of the Messiah-redeemer-ruler metanarrative of the Bible. Most prophetic books and certain parts of the NT epistles fall into this category because while they do not carry the Messiah-redeemer-ruler metanarrative, they contribute important (often prophetic) information about that metanarrative. Additionally, certain historical narratives run in parallel to one another (e.g., Kings and Chronicles, the four Gospels). In these cases, 1–2 Kings function as the carrier and 1–2 Chronicles as the contributor. Among the Gospels, Matthew functions as the carrier and the other three as contributors.

[3] The contemplator category refers to biblical books that neither carry nor contribute to the plot of the Messiah-redeemer-ruler metanarrative of the Bible. Rather, these books reflect upon (contemplate) the realities of that narrative. Books of wisdom, poetry, and most NT epistles fall into this category, because in light of the Genesis 3:15 promised seed having come, they address how the people of God should live until he returns to establish his kingdom.

[4] For this reason, certain biblical books fit into more than one of these three categories.

As shown in Table 1, the Bible as a whole presents God as the hero of the story who desires his image bearers to rule the world on his behalf. This metanarrative begins in the book of Genesis and concludes in the book of Revelation. Genesis presents the setting,[5] the characters,[6] the plot problem,[7] and the beginning of the rising action. The problem identified in Genesis 3 did not change God's desire for his image bearers to rule the world. The prophecy of Genesis 3:15–16 indicates a war between the serpent's seed and the woman's seed. This battle is the central conflict in the entire biblical narrative; a conflict not resolved until Revelation 20. In this prophecy, God promised the seed of the woman—a man—would defeat the serpent, restore humanity to the garden, and restore rule of the earth to God's image bearers. The anticipation of this promised seed drives the plot of the biblical narrative. The entire plot of the metanarrative thus revolves around how Genesis 3:15–16 comes to fruition. This prophecy reaches the first phase of its fulfillment in Revelation 20 in the thousand-year kingdom of Christ on earth, and its final phase of fulfillment in Revelation 21–22 in the new heaven and earth.

In narrative (or a metanarrative such as the whole Bible), "The story is the meaning."[8] Every book must be interpreted in light of the plot problem, rising action, and resolution. Recent decades have seen advances in narrative criticism applied to biblical texts which have brought to light the complexity and skillful crafting of biblical narratives. Such complexity is not merely limited to individual biblical books. As one scholar noted, "Narrative structure, usually interconnected to plot or characterization, may extend across several books, supporting the evangelical concept that the divine author provides unity and continuity in the biblical story."[9] This paper, then, recognizes the place of Joshua in light of the divine author's total metanarrative. Indeed, "The Bible's total story sketches in narrative form the meaning of all reality."[10]

The entire Pentateuch forms a serial narrative in five parts which are all geared toward preparing the second generation of Israelites to possess the land of promise and live there in covenant faithfulness. Yahweh had told Abraham, "You must surely know that your descendants shall be as aliens in a land not their own. And they shall serve them and they shall oppress them four hundred years. And also the nation that they serve I will judge. Then afterward they shall go out with great possessions … And the fourth generation shall return here [Canaan]" (Gen 15:13–14, 16)."[11] That prophetic statement provides a basic outline for the books of Exodus through Joshua. The concluding chapters of Genesis explain how the family of Jacob / Israel came to live in Egypt, and the book of Exodus picks up from that point and describes the

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[5] Heaven and earth, Genesis 1–2.

[6] God, the hero of the story; mankind, the object of God's desire; and the antagonist, the serpent.

[7] Despite God's desire for mankind to rule the earth on his behalf, the man and woman gave their rule over to the serpent (Gen 3).

[8] Leland Ryken, *Words of Delight* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 88.

[9] J. Daniel Hays, "An Evangelical Approach to Old Testament Narrative Criticism," *BSac* 166 (2009): 8.

[10] Richard Bauckham, *God and the Crisis of Freedom: Biblical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 64.

[11] Unless otherwise stated, all English Bible quotations come from the Lexham English Bible (LEB).

outworking of that prophetic statement in Israel's sojourning, oppression, going out from that foreign nation with great possessions, and (the early stages of) returning to Canaan. Exodus concludes with the Israelites' tabernacle in the wilderness being filled with Yahweh's glory, while Leviticus and Numbers open with Yahweh speaking to Moses from that tabernacle. Numbers closes where Deuteronomy begins and ends, on the plains of Moab. Just as humanity was banished east of the garden (Gen 3), now the nation of promise camped on the eastern shore of the Jordan ready to head west into the Promised Land. Deuteronomy closes with the death of Moses, and Joshua begins, "After the death of Moses" (Josh 1:1) and recounts Israel's failed attempt to dispossess the Canaanites of the land, and closes with Joshua's death. Judges opens with, "After the death of Joshua" (Judg 1:1) and closes with the failure of the judges. 1–2 Samuel and 1–2 Kings successively trace Israel's history as the priests, kings, and prophets fail to produce covenant faithfulness in the nation. Just as post-flood humanity had descended into rebellion at the tower of Babylon (Gen 11), now the chosen nation was exiled east into the new Babylon, echoing the exile east of the garden.[12] Thus, Genesis through Kings *carry* the plot of the Messiah-redeemer-rule metanarrative.

If the entire Pentateuch points toward Israel possessing the land of Canaan and looking for the Promised Seed and The Prophet like Moses, Joshua offers plot twists on both accounts. The anticipation built up in the Pentateuch for possession of Canaan is quite anti-climactic in Joshua as Israel fails to dispossess the Canaanites and acquire all of the Promised Land. Although the Pentateuch sets Joshua up to be the successor of Moses, he will not be the expected prophet like Moses (Deut 18:18; 34:10–12). The failure is a result of unfaithfulness on the part of the Israelites, perhaps typified by Achan's sin which ends of the line of promise through Zerah. The failure of Joshua and the Israelites in the book of Joshua is in line with Yahweh's words (Deut 31:16–18), Moses' words (Deut 31:26–29), Moses' song (Deut 32), and following Joshua's death, the angel of Yahweh's evaluation of the Israelites' unfaithfulness (Judg 2:1–5). However, Joshua juxtaposes the unfaithfulness of the Israelites with Yahweh's faithfulness in transferring the line of promise from Achan (in the line of Judah through Zerah) to Rahab the Canaanite prostitute, and in his gracious giving of *some* of the Promised Land to the Israelites. This sets up the narrative expectation that Yahweh will ultimately fulfill his promises despite the unfaithfulness of Israel. Prophetically, the Exodus / Passover of Israel into the land the first time under Joshua (יְהוֹשׁוּעַ = Ἰησοῦς) foreshadows the last Exodus and fulfillment of the Passover[13] with the remnant of Israel under the new Joshua (Ἰησοῦς) in the eschaton.[14]

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[12] Gary E. Schnittjer, *Torah Story: An Apprenticeship on the Pentateuch*, second edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2023), 38.

[13] "And he [Jesus] said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you that I will not eat it until it [the Passover] is fulfilled in the kingdom of God" (Luke 22:15–16).

[14] The prophets describe a vast regathering of all Israelites in the eschaton; a "New Exodus." Yahweh brings them back to the promised land of Israel from all over the world. This company includes the resurrected Israelites. Many apparently come out of situations of captivity and distress. The Israelites weep as they return to the land and seek their way to Zion. So great and miraculous is this regathering, that this event replaces the Exodus under Moses and Joshua as the topic of discussion during the kingdom age. See Isa 11:11–12; 14:1–2; 27:13; 41:9; 43:5–7; 66:20; Jer 16:14–15; 23:3, 8; 29:14; 31:8–9; 32:37, 41; 39:27; 50:4, 19; Ezek 11:17; 20:34, 41; 34:12, 13, 16; 37:14, 26; Zeph 3:20; Zech 10:8–10.

Glossary of Literary Terms and Devices[15]

Acrostic: A poem in which the successive units begin with the consecutive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
Allegory: A work of literature in which some or all of the details have a corresponding other meaning and refer to either a concept or historical particular.
Alliteration: involves the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words in close proximity, used to create rhythm or emphasis.
Allusion: a reference to another work of literature, person, or event, often used to enhance meaning or provide deeper insight.
Ambiguity: the use of language that allows for multiple interpretations or meanings, adding complexity and depth to the narrative.
Anti-hero: a literary protagonist who exhibits an absence of the character traits that are conventionally associated with literary heroes.
Anti-romance: a work of literature, or part of a work of literature, that presents unideal experience; a literary world of total bondage and the absence of the ideal.
Anthropomorphism: the attribution of human characteristics, emotions, or behaviors to animals, inanimate objects, or deities.
Antagonist: the character or force that opposes the protagonist, thus creating conflict in the narrative.
Antithetic parallelism: a two-line poetic unit in which the second line states the truth of the first in the opposite way or introduces a contrast.
Aphorism: a short, memorable statement of truth.
Archetype: an image, plot motif, or character type that recurs throughout literature and is part of a reader's total literary experience.
Blazon: a love poem that praises the attractive features and / or virtues of the beloved by means of a catalogue or listing technique.
Calling stories: in the Gospels, stories in which Jesus calls a person to follow him or to respond to a command. Also called vocation stories.
Canonical form: the present or final form of the text as it appears within the canon of Scripture, as opposed to a hypothetical form the text may have had before it was placed in its present location in the canon of Scripture.
Characterization: the process by which the author reveals the personality, traits, and attributes of a character or group of characters in a narrative.
Climax: the moment of peak tension / plot conflict in the story.
Climactic parallelism: a form of parallelism in which the first line is left incomplete until the second line repeats part of it and then makes it a whole statement by adding to it.
Comedy: a story with a U-shaped plot in which the action begins in prosperity, descends into potentially tragic events, and rises to a happy ending.
Conflict / plot tension: the central struggle or problem between opposing forces that drives the plot forward. This can be internal (within a character) or external (between characters or between

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[15] This list is a composite of terms from four sources: (1) Ryken, *Words of Delight*, 513–17, (2) Schnittjer, *Torah Story*, 8–19, (3) Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., *Interpreting the Historical Books: An Exegetical Handbook,* edited by David M. Howard, Jr., Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2006), 227–31, and (4) David R. Klingler, "Bible Exposition Template and Instructions," unpublished manuscript, 2023.

a character and an external force). The plot tension generally revolves around the protagonist's desire and the antagonistic elements (see "antagonist") working against that desire.
Conflict stories: Gospel stories that narrate Jesus' controversies with an opposing person or group. Also called controversy stories.
Denouement: the last phase of a story, following the climax; literally the "tying up of loose ends."
Didactic: having the intention or impulse to teach.
Discourse: an address to an audience.
Dramatic monologue: a literary work in which a single speaker addresses an implied but silent listener and in which various details keep this dramatic situation alive in the reader's consciousness.
Dramatic structure: the arrangement of a story's scenes and episodes, sometimes distinguished in the story's discourse structure.
Emblem: a symbolic and sometimes pictorial image to which a person or thing is compared.
Emblematic blazon: a love poem that lists the features of the beloved and compares them to objects or emblems in nature or human experience.
Encomium: a work of literature that praises an abstract quality or a generalized character type.
Encounter stories: gospel stories in which a person is confronted with the claims of Jesus, which that person must either accept or reject.
Epic: a long narrative having a number of conventional characteristics.
Epiphany: a moment of heightened insight in a literary work.
Episode: An incident or a series of incidents that forms a distinct literary subunit in a narrative or story; an episode can include two or more scenes.
Epistle: a letter that attains literary status by virtue of the literary techniques used in it.
Epithalamion: a lyric poem that celebrates a wedding.
Epithet: an exalted title for a person or thing; a feature of the high style, especially as found in epic.
Explication: the literary term for close reading of a text. It implies not only careful analysis of a text but also putting one's analysis into organized form for written or oral presentation to an audience.
Exposition: the opening phase of a story in which the writer presents the background information that the reader needs in order to understand the plot that will subsequently unfold.
Expository writing: writing whose main purpose is to convey information.
Ellipsis: the author may drop an element of what is expected in the story in order to draw attention to it.
Extended Echo Effect: the repetition of parallel ordering, elements, or features in multiple narrative units (A-B-C, A-B-C). Similar to "typological pattern," but without the inclusion of prophetic expectation.
Flashback: a scene that interrupts the narrative to show events that happened at an earlier time, providing background or context.
Foil: a character who stands in contrast to another, thereby highlighting one or more of the latter's characteristics or traits.
Foreshadowing: involves hints or indications of what is to come later in the story, creating anticipation or suspense.
Folk literature: literature couched in the language of everyday speech and appealing to the common person. Also called popular literature.

Genre: a literary type or kind.
Hero: a protagonist who is exemplary and representative of a whole community.
Hero story, heroic narrative: a story built around the character and exploits of a protagonist who is exemplary and representative of a whole community.
Hybrid forms: narratives that combine elements of one or more genres.
Hyperbole: a figure of speech in which a writer uses conscious exaggeration for the sake of effect, usually emotional effect.
Imagery: descriptive language that appeals to the senses, helping to create a vivid mental picture for the reader.
Image: any concrete picture of reality or human experience, including any sensory experience, a setting, a character, or an event.
Inclusio: the bracketing of a unit of text identified by the repetition of features or elements at the beginning and end of the unit.
Interchange: an alternation of elements in the story which can cause heightened literary irony or develop comparative imaging.
Irony: a contrast between expectation and reality which can take various forms:

- **Verbal Irony:** occurs when a speaker says one thing but means another.
- **Situational Irony:** occurs when there is a discrepancy between what is expected to happen and what actually occurs.
- **Dramatic Irony:** a situation where the reader knows something which some or all the characters in a story are ignorant.

Janus: a bidirectional turning point looking both backward and forward.
Juxtaposition: placing two contrasting elements side by side to highlight their differences or create a particular effect.

- **Comparison:** the juxtaposition of similar elements such as words, imagery, or events.
- **Contrast:** the juxtaposition of dissimilar elements such as words, imagery, or events.

Lyric: a short poem containing the thoughts or feelings of a speaker. The emotional quality, even more than the reflective, is usually considered the differentia of lyric.
Metaphor: a figure of speech in which the writer makes an implied comparison between two phenomena.
Miracle stories: gospel narratives that focus on miracles that Jesus performed.
Motif: a recurring element, theme, or idea in a narrative that has symbolic significance and helps to develop the story's themes.
Narrative Perspective (Point of View): the lens through which the story is told, affecting the reader's perception. Common perspectives include:

- **First-Person:** the narrator is a character in the story, using “I” or “we.”
- **Second-Person:** the narrator addresses the reader directly using “you.”
- **Third-Person Limited:** the narrator is outside the story but knows the thoughts and feelings of one character.
- **Third-Person Omniscient:** the narrator knows all the thoughts and feelings of all characters.

Narrative space: narrators may employ physical space / locations as part of the setting, but may also assign symbolic meaning to certain physical spaces.
Narrative sequence: narrators may employ dischronological narrative in the form of previews or flashbacks in an advantageous way to the story.

Narrative time: in real history, time is a constant. But in narrative literature, the narrator may speed up (pass many years briefly) or slow down (focus an extended portion of text in a brief window of time) according to his discretion.
Narrative typology: a case in which, by design of the narrator, an earlier character or event supplies the pattern for a later character or event in the story.
Normative character: a character in a story who expresses or embodies what the storyteller wishes us to understand is correct.
Occasional literature: a work of literature that takes its origin from a particular historical event or a particular situation in the writer's life.
Ode: an exalted lyric poem that celebrates a dignified subject in a lofty style.
Paneled sequence: a literary structural technique where repeated elements appear in successive movements, yielding a structure of ABC // ABC.
Parable: a brief narrative that explicitly embodies one or more themes.
Paradox: an apparent contradiction that upon reflection is seen to express a genuine truth; the contradiction must be resolved or explained before we see its truth.
Parallelism: the verse form in which all biblical poetry is written. The general definition that will cover the various types of parallelism is as follows: two or more lines that form a pattern based on repetition or balance of thought or grammar. The phrase thought couplet is a good working synonym.

> **Stairstep parallelism:** a type of parallelism in which the last key word of a line becomes the first main word in the next line.
> **Synonymous parallelism:** a type of parallelism in which two or more lines state the same idea in different words but in similar grammatical form; the second line repeats the content of all or part of the first line.
> **Synthetic parallelism:** a type of parallelism in which the second line completes the thought of the first line, but without repeating anything from the first line. also called growing parallelism.

Parody: a work of literature that parallels but inverts the usual meaning of a literary genre or a specific earlier work of literature.
Passion stories: gospel stories that narrate the events surrounding the trial, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
Pastoral: literature in which the setting, characters, and events are those of the shepherd's world.
Personification: a figure of speech in which human attributes are given to something nonhuman, such as animals, objects, or abstract qualities.
Plot: the sequence of events in a story, usually based on a central conflict and having a beginning, middle, and end.
Plot Twist: an unexpected or surprising turn of events in a narrative that alters the direction of the story or changes the reader's understanding of the plot.
Poetic justice: the feature of stories by which good characters are rewarded and evil characters are punished.
Poetic license: figurative language that is not literally true or factual.
Proportion: highlighting a work's emphasis by the quantitative amount it occupies in the narrative.
Protagonist: the leading character in a story, whether sympathetic or unsympathetic.
Proverb: a concise, memorable expression of truth.

Pun: a play on words, often using a word that sounds like another word but that has a different meaning.
Repetition: the recurrence of similar or identical elements (words, actions, concepts).
Resolution: following the climax, the part of the story where the conflict is resolved and the narrative comes to a conclusion. It ties up loose ends and provides closure for the characters and the plot.
Rhetorical question: a figure of speech in which the writer asks a question whose answer is so obvious that it is left unstated; a question asked, not to elicit information, but for the sake of effect, usually an emotional effect.
Rising Action: rising action is the building of tension as the plot conflict escalates towards the climax.
Sarcasm: the use of irony to mock or convey contempt, often through exaggerated statements that are not meant to be taken literally.
Satire: the exposure, through ridicule or rebuke, of human vice or folly.
Satiric norm: the standard by which the object of attack is criticized in a satire.
Scene: a subunit of an episode; it records an incident that takes place in a different place and/or at a different time than the incidents that precede and follow it.
Setting: the time and place in which a story occurs.
Simile: a figure of speech in which the writer compares two phenomena, using the explicit formula "like" or "as."
Suspense: the feeling of anticipation or anxiety about what will happen next in the story, often created through uncertainty or danger.
Symbol: any detail in a work of literature that in addition to its literal meaning stands for something else.
Symbolism: involves the use of symbols to represent ideas or concepts beyond their literal meaning, often conveying deeper significance.
Temporal overlay: a literary technique where the narrator juxtaposes episodes or scenes that overlap chronologically, rather than presenting events in strictly chronological succession.
Theme: a generalization about life that a work of literature as a whole embodies or implies.
Tone: the attitude or emotional stance of the narrator or author towards the subject matter, conveyed through word choice and style.
Tragedy: a narrative form built around an exceptional calamity stemming from the protagonist's wrong choice.
Turning point (character): the place in a narrative where a character's characterization changes significantly due to events in the plot.
Turning point (plot): the point from which, at least in retrospect, the reader can begin to see how the plot conflict will be resolved.
Typological pattern: the prophetic expectation of similarities in character or events. Similar to "extended echo effect," but with the inclusion of prophetic expectation.
Voice: the distinct personality and style of the narrator or author, influencing how the story is perceived.
Well-made plot: a plot that unfolds according to the following pattern: exposition (background information), inciting moment (or inciting force), rising action, turning point (the point from which, at least in retrospect, the reader can begin to see how the plot conflict will be resolved), further complication, climax, and denouement.

Witness stories: gospel stories in which either Jesus or another character testifies about Jesus or his works. Also called testimony stories.

Occasion

Who and When?

The authorship of Joshua and its date of composition are intrinsically linked. Neither are explicitly mentioned. Many have assumed a date contemporary to Israel's monarchic period (ca. mid-11th cent. BC) and so suggest the editorial work of Samuel.[16] They point to the recurring phrase, "to this day" (4:9; 5:9; 6:25; 7:26; 8:28–29; 9:27; 10:27; 13:13; 14:14; 15:63; 16:10) as suggesting composition at a time far removed from the original events.[17] However, one of the cited verses notes that Rahab was still alive and living in Israel "to this day" (6:25). Assuming she was at least a teenager during her work as a prostitute in Joshua 2, her being alive at the time of writing makes it highly unlikely that much more than half a century had elapsed. Furthermore, Caleb was 40 (Josh 14:7) when he spied out the land from Kadesh Barnea as reported in Numbers 13. He and Joshua were the only two of that generation (aged twenty and older) who would survive the 40 years of wilderness wanderings. So Joshua was at least twenty, but more reasonably he would have been closer in age to Caleb since all the twelve spies were called "leaders" (נָשִׂיא) in their tribes (Num 13:1–2). It's unlikely a twenty-year-old would carry that designation. So assuming a similar age to Caleb, Joshua would have crossed the Jordan around age eighty and then died at 110, thus providing approximately thirty years for the events recorded in the book of Joshua. Even if Joshua were ten years older than Caleb, this would still allow for a settlement period of twenty years to account for all the events recorded in the book. As an eyewitness to almost all the events recorded in the book, Joshua was in a position to accurately portray its contents. Testimony within the book itself even mentions Joshua's scribal activities: "Joshua wrote these words in a scroll of the law of God" (24:26; also 8:32).

Various other historical and textual factors support an early date for the composition of Joshua. First, the mention of Sidon does not include Tyre (13:6), suggesting a time prior to Tyre becoming a significant city.[18] Second, Jerusalem was still a Jebusite stronghold at the time of writing (15:63), something only resolved during David's day. Third, archaic toponyms were used of Canaanite cities. Fourth, the detailed descriptions of events and use of the pronoun "we" (5:1) suggest the author's status as an eyewitness. Certain portions were clearly written after the death of Joshua, and these can be possibly attributed to Eleazar the High Priest or his son Phinehas.[19] Later editorial work, if any, was probably of the minor sort. This paper, then,

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[16] R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969), 673.

[17] Tremper Longman, III, and Raymond B. Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, second edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 124.

[18] "According to ancient tradition, Sidon was the first Phoenician city to be founded, and the absence of Tyre from the list of cities conquered by Tuthmosis III about 1485 B.C. has been taken by some scholars as an indication that it had not been founded at that time as a colony of Sidon. If the narrative in Joshua describes the situation at all correctly, it would point to a time when Tyre was still a comparatively minor Phoenician port, and not the formidable stronghold that it subsequently became (2 Sam. 24:7; cf. Josh. 19:29)" (Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 672).

[19] For detailed discussions of authorship and date, see Longman, III and Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 122; Donald K. Campbell, "Joshua," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, edited by J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 325–26; and Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 666–73.

assumes the primary authorship of Joshua, although allowance for later inspired revisions is acceptable.[20] This would place the date of writing most likely within a few decades (likely thirty years or so) of the entry into Canaan, and thus seventy years after the Exodus. The two most commonly accepted dates for the Exodus and subsequent wilderness wanderings are either the late 15th century BC or the late 13th century BC.

The name "Joshua," יְהוֹשֻׁעַ or יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, means "Yahweh saves" or "Yahweh is salvation." Joshua had established himself as a military leader (Exod 17:9–15), the assistant of Moses (Exod 24:13; 33:11; Deut 1:38) since his youth (Num 11:28), who alone went up the mountain with Moses (Exod 32:17). He also served as a spy alongside Caleb (Num 13:8–33) and the two of them alone were distinguished as faithful and trusting Yahweh (Num 13:30; 14:6–9). Yahweh promised Joshua and Caleb the exalted positions of being the only two of their generation who would enter the Promised Land (Num 14:30, 38; 26:65; 32:12). Moses then commissioned Joshua to succeed him as leader of Israel following his death (Num 27:18–23; 32:28; Deut 3:21–28; 31:7, 14) who would lead the Israelites into the Promise Land (Deut 1:38; 31:3) and apportion each tribes' inheritance (Num 34:17). Yahweh had commanded Joshua to "be strong and courageous" (Deut 31:23), and he was "full of the spirit of wisdom because Moses had placed his hands on him" (Deut 34:9).

To Whom?

Joshua's primary audience was the generation after him. If the first generation of Israelites were characterized by Mosaic leadership in the Exodus and the second generation by the leadership of Joshua, the Israelites living in Canaan after Joshua's death constitute the third generation. Secondarily, he most likely intended the book for future generations of Israelites as well. This is similar to Moses' dual audience in the Pentateuch: he wrote primarily for the second generation about to enter Canaan, and secondarily intended the Pentateuch for all future generations of Israelites.

Where?

Assuming authorship of Joshua in the latter years of his life, he probably wrote the book from his camp at Shiloh where he apparently lived for many years. Alternatively, he may have written the book from his inheritance at Timnath Serah in the hill country of Ephraim (19:49–50).

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[20] Presumably the editorial work, if any, was of the minor sort. This argument for Joshua, as with all Bible arguments by this present author, reject wholesale the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis of JEDP composition of the Pentateuch / Hexateuch. The hypothesis suffers from several fatal flaws. First, they applied a biological evolutionary framework—all the rage in the nineteenth century—to the development of religion, from simple to complex. Second, they had rationalistic prejudices against the supernatural. Third, they committed the gross logical fallacy of begging the question, commencing (and concluding) with their *a priori* beliefs. They were selective in highlighting evidence if it aligned with their view and ignoring or downplaying that which that did not. Fourth, they blatantly ignored developments in archaeology and other fields that would have forced them to revise their views. Fifth, they freely emended or excised portions of text inimical to their theory. Sixth, the use of names of God as deterministic of authorship has long since been shown as fallacious. Lastly, Graf and Wellhausen, as with other German liberals of their century, exhibited an arrogant over-assurance in their own work. They employed circular logic, assuming their starting hypothesis as true and then forcing all the evidence to support it. See Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 505–42.

Why?

Near the end of his life (13:1; 23:2, 14), Joshua recognized that much land remained to be conquered (13:1–6) and that the Israelites had failed to drive out many of the land's Canaanite inhabitants (15:63; 16:10; 17:12–13, 18) due to a lack of strength and courage in following the Law (18:3).[21] By demonstrating Yahweh's faithfulness in (1) maintaining the line of promise through a Canaanite prostitute (chs. 2–7) and (2) in fulfilling his promises to Israel regarding the land (21:45; 23:14),[22] Joshua intended his book (24:26) to serve as a witness (24:27) against the third generation of Israelites. The third generation (and beyond) were meant to read the book of Joshua and cast judgment (epideictic rhetoric of praise and blame) upon the second generation as a censurable example, thus bolstering the third generation's covenant faithfulness. Essentially, he wanted the third generation to read the book and say, "Our parents' generation was unfaithful, and that's why they didn't possess all the land. Heaven forbid we should be like them! We will do better: we will stay faithful and we will possess all the land by completing the work they left unfinished." Since this is decidedly *not* what happened in Judges and beyond, the book will therefore function as a condemning "witness" (24:27) against the third generation. The book of Joshua, then, juxtaposes Yahweh's faithfulness with Israel's unfaithfulness.[23] If the Promised Land was typified as a return to Eden, the presence of the Canaanites and failure to possess all the land deeply blemished that hope. Likewise, since Joshua was not the Greater Moses but a Lesser Moses, the Israelites thus continued to long for the promised seed (Gen 3:15) and The Prophet like Moses (Deut 18:18; 34:10–12).

Genre

The book of Joshua was written as an historical narrative.

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[21] *HALOT* notes two meanings of the verb רפה in hithpael form: (1) to show oneself lax; (2) to show oneself without courage (*HALOT*, s.v. רפה). Joshua 18:3 is listed under the first meaning. However, being strong and courageous is a central theme in Joshua (1:6–7, 9, 18, etc.). This strength and courage (in obeying the Law, 1:7) is tightly connected to possession of the land (1:6). Therefore, the second option is the much more likely meaning in 18:3—that is, their failure to take all the land demonstrated their lack of being strong and courageous in following the Law.

[22] Not that the entire land promise given to Abraham in Genesis 15 was fulfilled. Rather, the promise that the Israelites' success in the land depended on their faithfulness (1:7–8) was fulfilled: the Israelites demonstrated half-hearted faithfulness, and their mixture of success and failure reflected that.

[23] At this point, I acknowledge with gratitude the invaluable contributions of Warren Truesdale and Dr. David Klingler's podcast series on the book of Joshua in helping me understand the overall message of Joshua and many of its finer points as well (Warren Truesdale and David Klingler, "The Book of Joshua," *Teach Me The Bible Podcast*, 12 episodes [Brenham, TX: Teach Me The Bible, 2023]).

Proposed Message Statement

In order to address his upcoming death and the Israelites' failure to drive out the Canaanites and possess all the land promised to Abraham, Joshua wrote an historical narrative from Shiloh for the third generation of Israelites—and future generations—in order that they would recognize Yahweh's faithfulness in (1) maintaining the line of promise through a Canaanite prostitute, and (2) fulfilling his promises of land to Israel in proportion to their faithfulness, so that they would live in complete covenant fidelity and take total possession of the Promised Land.

Proposed Outline

I. Introduction (1:1–18)
II. The faithful prostitute (2:1–7:26)
III. The incomplete conquest (8:1–12:24)
IV. Partial allotments of land and cities (13:1–21:45)
V. The Transjordan tribes (22:1–34)
VI. Joshua's farewell address (23:1–24:33)

Use of Rhetoric in Joshua

Classical rhetoric employs three modes and three species of rhetoric. The three modes of rhetoric include *logos*,[24] *pathos*,[25] and *ethos*.[26] The three species include judicial,[27] epideictic,[28] and deliberative[29] rhetoric.[30] As will be demonstrated in the proposed argument exposition below, the author of Joshua employed all three species of rhetoric. Judicially, he intended to persuade his third generation Israelite audience of the guilt and unfaithfulness of the second generation. In

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[24] The rhetoric of *logos* employs logical arguments intended to appeal to rational principles found within the author's discourse.

[25] The rhetoric of *pathos* employs arguments intended to arouse an emotional reaction and play upon the audience's feelings.

[26] The rhetoric of *ethos* makes ethical appeals on the basis of credibility: good character or authority.

[27] With judicial rhetoric, the author seeks to persuade the audience to make a judgment about events that occurred in the past. This judgment often deals with questions of truth or justice, and can be positive (a defense or "apology" of correctness / innocence) or negative (a prosecution, emphasizing guilt).

[28] With epideictic rhetoric, the author seeks to persuade his audience to hold or reaffirm a certain point of view in the present time. The author wants to increase (or decrease / undermine) his audience's asset to a certain value or belief. To this end, epideictic rhetoric will frequently use examples of *praise* and *blame*.

[29] With deliberative rhetoric, the author seeks to persuade the audience to take (or not take) some action in the (often near) future. Deliberative rhetoric deals with questions of self-interest and future benefits for the audience, and appears in the form of exhortation (positive) or warning (negative).

[30] For a complete discussion of classical rhetoric in biblical studies, see George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, Studies in Religion (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

other words, “They were guilty.” Epideictically, he cast that second generation as a censurable example in order to shape the values of the third generation—he intended that they recognize the virtue of covenant fidelity and the problems associated with compromise. Here, the message is, “Don’t be like them.” Deliberatively, the author intended to drive future action, “Choose whom you will serve” by attempting to persuade the third generation to covenant fidelity and therefore possession of all Canaan. These three species create a cohesive rhetorical structure which drives the narrator’s selective inclusion (and exclusion) of events. This would serve Joshua’s overall deliberative purpose that the third generation (and beyond) live in covenant fidelity to the Law and take total possession of the Promised Land.

Proposed Argument Exposition

In his **introduction (1:1–18)**, the narrator (Joshua)[31] established the literary setting for the book. This scroll connects to the ongoing metanarrative begun in Genesis and continued through the end of Deuteronomy by a vav-consecutive (1:1). Just as Moses had died at the close of the Pentateuch (Deut 34:5–7), the narrative in Joshua begins “after the death of Moses” (1:1). The Pentateuch had also developed the character of Joshua by setting him up as a warrior, leader, a man of faith, and the successor to Moses.[32] The introduction also established Joshua as the main human character. Up to this point in the biblical metanarrative, only Moses has been called a servant of Yahweh (עֶבֶד יהוה; Deut 34:5), and in this book, Joshua will be called an עֶבֶד יהוה upon his death (24:29). Yahweh’s promise to be with Joshua as he had with Moses (1:4) established the author’s portrayal of Joshua as a new Moses, although he will not be The Prophet like Moses (Deut 18:18), but rather a lesser Moses (see Table 3 below). The promises Yahweh spoke to Joshua reflect promises already delivered in Deuteronomy. See Table 2 below.

Table 2: Promises in Deuteronomy repeated in Joshua

Deuteronomy	Joshua
Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, it shall be yours (Deut 11:24)	Every place that the soles of your feet will tread, I have given it to you (1:3)
Your boundary shall be from the desert and Lebanon from the river, the river Euphrates, on up to the western sea (Deut 11:24)	From the wilderness and the Lebanon, up to the great river, the river Euphrates, all of the land of the Hittites, and up to the great sea in the west, will be your territory (1:4)
No one can take a stand against you (Deut 11:25)	No one will stand before you all the days of your life (1:5)

[31] Throughout this exposition, the author, Joshua, will be referred to as the “narrator” to avoid confusion between Joshua as the narrator, Joshua as the character, and Joshua as the name of the book.

[32] Joshua had established himself as a military leader (Exod 17:9–15), the assistant of Moses (Exod 24:13; 33:11; Deut 1:38) since his youth (Num 11:28), who alone went up the mountain with Moses (Exod 32:17). He also served as a spy alongside Caleb (Num 13:8–33) and the two of them alone were distinguished as faithful and trusting Yahweh (Num 13:30; 14:6–9). Yahweh promised Joshua and Caleb the exalted positions of being the only two of their generation who would enter the Promised Land (Num 14:30, 38; 26:65; 32:12). Moses then commissioned Joshua to succeed him as leader of Israel following his death (Num 27:18–23; 32:28; Deut 3:21–28; 31:7, 14) who would lead the Israelites into the Promise Land (Deut 1:38; 31:3) and apportion each tribes’ inheritance (Num 34:17). Yahweh had commanded Joshua to “be strong and courageous” (Deut 31:23), and was “full of the spirit of wisdom because Moses had placed his hands on him” (Deut 34:9).

The command to cross the Jordan (1:2) established the physical setting in the plains of Moab near the Jordan River. That they were just opposite Jericho will become apparent in ch. 2. This is also the location of the Israelites at the close of the book of Numbers and throughout the book of Deuteronomy.

Yahweh's identification of borders for the Promised Land is a reiteration of the land promised in the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 15:18–21). Even though the speech of Yahweh was directed to Joshua alone (1:1), the promised borders are given in the second person plural (1:3, 4) and thus apply to the entire nation. The third generation Israelite audience would immediately recognize that the extent of the land promise (1:4) *far* exceeded the land they actually possessed. This would cause them to wonder why this was the case. Had Yahweh been unfaithful? Had he not kept his promises?

The promises seem so absolute up to 1:6, but in 1:7, the definition of "strong and courageous" is given as diligently keeping the Law of Moses. The bulk of Exodus through Deuteronomy was written to impress the importance of living in covenant fidelity in the Promised Land to the Law delivered by Moses and written in those books. The book of Joshua thus continues in this same tradition of exhortation to covenant fidelity. That Yahweh was giving land (1:2, 6, 11, 12, 14, 15) and giving rest (נוח, 1:13, 15) connected life in the Promised Land back to the hope for rest from sorrow (Gen 5:29) by means of the promised seed and suggests the Promised Land as a type of Eden. However, success in conquering the Canaanites and possessing the land was connected to obedience to the Law (1:7, 8). The repetition of "be strong and courageous" (1:6, 7, 9, 18) reinforced the importance of faithful adherence to the Law. In a case of dramatic irony, the audience knew more than the characters at this point in the story: the audience knows they have not received the entire inheritance, despite Yahweh's promise, and they will be forced to conclude that the nation had turned aside from Yahweh's laws (1:7). Otherwise, they would have succeeded on account of their wise and faithful living (1:7–8).[33] Thus, there exists an awkward tension between on the one hand, what the audience already knows in hindsight, and on the other, what the narrative portrayed. The audience knows of failure in possessing the whole land, but the narrative portrays such optimistic and robust promises.[34]

The promise of the people to obey Joshua just as they had "fully" obeyed Moses (1:17) is ironically true (verbal irony). The first generation under Moses held a miserable track record of faithfulness: despite their verbal vows to obey everything (Exod 24:3, 7), they consistently disobeyed. Such a statement in 1:17 already alerts the audience to expect unfaithfulness in the second generation under Joshua. It also supports their previous expectation of unfaithfulness due to knowing the land boundaries have not been fulfilled. The promise of death for those who rebel against Joshua (1:18) will come to pass for Achan in ch. 7.

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[33] שׂכל in Hiphil form (1:7, 8) carries the nuances of wisdom, insight, and understanding (*HALOT*, s.v. שׂכל). The verb is used in Genesis 3:6 of the fruit making the woman "wise." Given that 1:8 already includes the verb צלח which definitively means "to succeed," the more likely nuance of שׂכל in 1:7 and 1:8 is being wise. That is, in 1:7, the not turning aside from the whole Law of Moses was so that the Israelites would be wise in everywhere they go, and this would result in their success and wisdom (1:8).

[34] Note: this is not the same as narrative tension, which will develop in ch. 2 with the unfaithfulness of the spies. Nevertheless, the tension the audience would surely feel produces the expectation that the narrative will reveal unfaithfulness on the part of the Israelites.

Thus, the introduction (1:1–18) not only establishes the narrative setting, but also the basis for the author's rhetorical method. The audience becomes aware of the covenant infidelity of the second generation because of the tension between the reality they know (incomplete possession of Canaan) and the promises of Yahweh: victory in Canaan linked to obedience. They must conclude that the second generation failed to obey. This conclusion prepares the third generation (the audience) to join the narrator in judicially condemning the second generation as a censurable example. This condemnation then serves the narrator's overall deliberative purpose by functioning as the impetus for the third generation to live in covenant fidelity and possess the fullness of the land promised to Abraham. In this way, this section contributed to the narrator's overall deliberative purpose that the third generation (and beyond) live in covenant fidelity to the Law and take total possession of the Promised Land.

Table 3 below identifies how the author portrayed Joshua as a "lesser Moses" throughout the book.

Table 3: Joshua portrayed as the Lesser Moses

Moses	**Joshua**
	Yahweh with Joshua as with Moses (1:4; 3:7)
Israelites promise to obey Moses (Exod 24:7)	Israelites promise to obey Joshua (1:17)
Sent twelve spies into the Promised land (Num 13:2–16)	Sent two spies into the land (2:1)
Commands the Israelites' consecration (Exod 19:10–22; Num 11:18)	Commands the Israelites' consecration (3:5)
Splits a sea (Exod 14:21–22)	Splits a river (3:15–17)
Celebrate the Passover (Exod 12)	Celebrate the Passover (5:10)
Removed sandals while standing on holy ground (Exod 3:5)	Removed sandals while standing on holy ground (Josh 5:13)
Gave Israel a choice (Deut 30:11–20)	Gave Israel a choice (24:15)
Made a farewell address (Deut 31:14–29)	Made a farewell address (23:1–24:28)
Lived 120 years (Deut 34:7)	Lived 110 years (24:29)

In his section on **the faithful prostitute (2:1–7:26)**, the narrator revealed how the line of promise was, ironically, transferred from the "unfaithful" Achan in the line of Zerah to Rahab the "faithful" Canaanite prostitute.

That Joshua sent two spies into the land instead of twelve portrays him as a lesser Moses, but it also represents an act of unfaithfulness. Yahweh had giving sweeping promises that did not require the sending of spies—they simply needed to go and take their possession while being faithful to the Law. This introduces narrative tension into the book's plot—Joshua was acting unfaithfully. That the spies were sent from the city of Shittim (2:1) is foreboding because Shittim has only been mentioned in the entire metanarrative in connection with Israel's harlotry with the daughters of Moab (Num 25:1). Other toponymous mentions of Israel's location east of the Jordan include the Plains of Moab (Num 35:1), the land of Moab (Deut 34:5), and beyond the Jordan opposite Jericho (Num 35:1; Deut 32:49). Only here does an author identify their location as "Shittim" (2:1), thus drawing the audience's attention back to the Israel's harlotry associated with that location. The audience can therefore expect harlotry to occur, which plays right into the expectation of infidelity generated in ch. 1. Indeed, the spies, instead of following the instructions to "spy out the land," proceed immediately from the city associated with harlotry to the house of a harlot—Rahab (2:2). The spies' physical infidelity displays their cavalier attitude

for the seed of Israel by spreading it to a Canaanite woman, and also foreshadows the nation's spiritual infidelity. Like the Hebrew midwives who lied to Pharaoh to save the lives of Israelite males (Exod 1:15–21), Rahab is another example of a woman who lied to a king to save Israelite men (2:4–6). Just as Yahweh had blessed the Hebrew midwives, the audience could now expect a blessing to come upon Rahab.

Yahweh had promised that his terror (אֵימָה) would fall on Israel's enemies (Exod 23:27), and now Rahab noted that the inhabitants of Canaan lived under the terror (אֵימָה) of Israel (2:9). This demonstrated Yahweh's faithful commitment to his words. With situational irony, Rahab's remark about Yahweh being God of the heavens and earth (2:11) is unexpected from a Canaanite, and is a verbatim quote from Deuteronomy 4:39.[35] Conversely, such a proclamation would be expected from the Israelites, but their infidelity betrayed their disbelief. Thus, she rejected her Canaanite king and her Canaanite gods. In a case of situational irony, the harlot "played the harlot" with her people and her gods and instead cleaved to Yahweh. With more situational irony, Israel will do just the opposite when they abandon Yahweh and worship the gods of Canaan. Additionally, Rahab's appeal for a vow was based on the loyal love and faithfulness (חֶסֶד and אֱמֶת), the very words used of Yahweh's character in his self-revelation to Moses (Exod 34:6). She also understood the nature of the חֵרֶם, "ban" with the total destruction of the Amorite kings east of the Jordan (2:10). It is situationally ironic that the Canaanite prostitute cared more about these things than the Israelites. With even more situational irony, part of the ban included not making a covenant with the inhabitants of Canaan (Deut 7:2), a command the spies broke by swearing an oath with her (2:12–14). She thus displayed a striking amount of knowledge about Yahweh and his purposes for Israel and the nations. The city of Jericho was also known as the city of palms, "Tamarim" (עִיר הַתְּמָרִים), and the spies had met a "Tamar"—a Canaanite woman who committed morally questionable acts out of devotion to Yahweh and his promises for the seed of Israel. With situational irony, (1) the Israelite spies' unfaithfulness led to the salvation of a Gentile woman and her family,[36] and (2) the spies were now bound by the Law to keep a vow (Deut 23:21) to someone whose existence was contrary to the Law (Deut 7:2). The crimson cord (תִּקְוַת חוּט הַשָּׁנִי, 2:18) with Rahab, the "new" Tamar, takes the reader back to the crimson cord in the original Tamar with the birth of Zerah (Gen 38:28). This will be important because Achan is a descendant of Zerah. The word Joshua used for "cord," תִּקְוָה, is also a wordplay (pun) on the homonym תִּקְוָה, which means "hope" or "expectation." This prepares the reader for the hope in the metanarrative to be removed from the line of Zerah and tied to Rahab's house instead.

The spies' comment that Yahweh had surely given the land to the Israelites (2:24) actually demonstrates their unfaithfulness. Yahweh had repeatedly promised to give them the land, beginning in Genesis 15, yet the word of a Canaanite woman was what convinced the spies. Gideon will make a nearly identical mistake in Judges 7.

The mention of the Israelites setting out from Shittim (3:1), as with the spies (2:1), recalls the harlotry of the Israelites (Num 25:1) and foreshadows the second generation's infidelity. The list of nations Yahweh will drive out (3:10) is similar to what Yahweh promised

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[35] "So you shall acknowledge today, and you must call to mind that *Yahweh is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath*" (emphasis added, Deut 4:39).

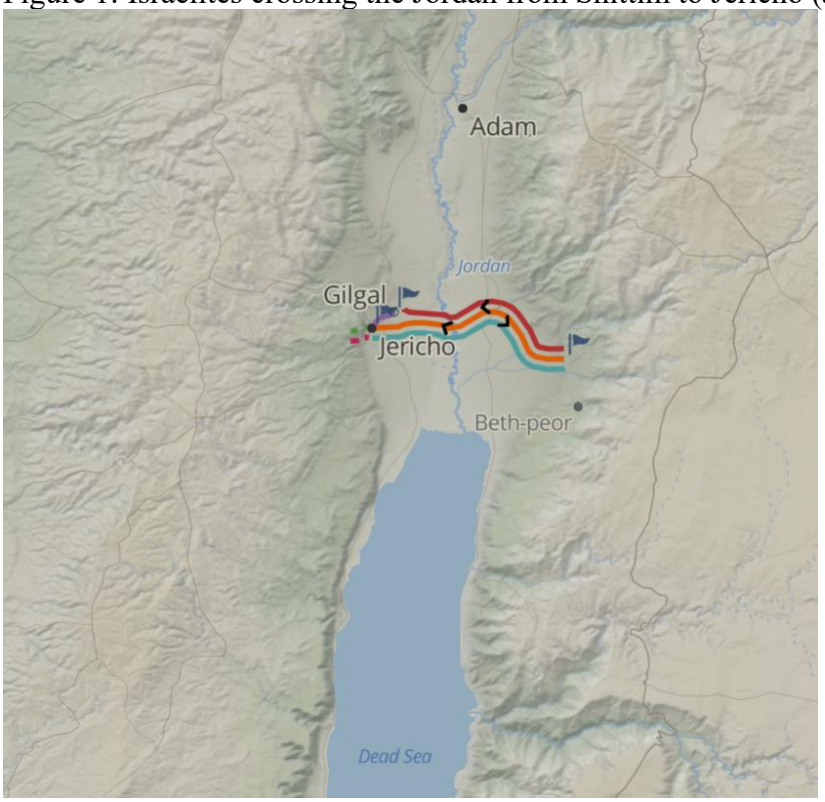
[36] See the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32:21 for a similar pattern.

Abraham (Gen 15:19–21).[37] Joshua's proclamation of what would happen (3:10–13) and its actual occurrence (3:14–17) continued to establish the pattern of Yahweh's faithfulness to his words. Yahweh fulfilled his word just as he had promised.

The twelve stones served as a sign, אות (4:6) of Yahweh's faithfulness in bringing the Israelites across the Jordan on dry ground. Rhetorically, this sign functioned epideictically for the third generation audience because it would force them to recognize the second generation's unfaithfulness (blameworthiness) despite Yahweh's faithfulness. In doing do, it contributed to Joshua's deliberative purpose of having the third generation live faithfully in the land by causing the audience to wonder how the previous generation could live unfaithfully despite Yahweh's faithfulness. The exaltation of Joshua (4:14) continued the narrator's portrayal of him as the New Moses. The date of crossing the Jordan (10th day of the first month) is significant as the beginning of the Passover, the feast which commemorated the Exodus. The date thus links the crossing of the Jordan back to the beginning of the Passover in their departure from Egypt some forty years earlier. Likewise, Joshua's words connected the drying up of the Jordan to the drying up of the sea with Moses (4:23). That these events were intended for the peoples of the earth to know about Yahweh's strong hand and for the Israelites to fear Yahweh (4:24) is situationarly ironic because it is in fact the kings of the land whose hearts melt in fear (5:1). The audience would pick up the unspoken point here: unlike the Canaanites, the Israelites did not appropriately fear Yahweh.

[37] As compared to Genesis 15, Joshua 3:10 adds the Hivites, but does not have the Kenites, Kennizites, Kadmonites, and Rephaim.

Figure 1: Israelites crossing the Jordan from Shittim to Jericho (Josh 2–5)[38]



The circumcision at Gilgal (5:2–9) revealed the disobedience of the first generation to circumcise their children in the second generation (5:5). Joshua expected his audience to identify this act of unfaithfulness from the first to the second generation. The toponym was apparently renamed Gibeath-Haaraloth, גִּבְעַת הָעֲרָלוֹת, "hill of the foreskins" (5:3). The toponym Gilgal, גִּלְגָּל, is a pun on the verb גלל, "to roll away" (5:9), and it signified the rolling away of Israel's shame of slavery (5:9)—that part of their history had officially ended. Circumcising the fighting force of Israel (the men) while already in enemy territory actually reflected an act of faith, because the Israelites would largely be defenseless during the men's recovery time.[39] Circumcision was also a requirement in order to celebrate the Passover (Exod 12:48). This implies that the Passover had not been celebrated for forty years while in the wilderness.

Mention of eating produce from the land the day after the Passover (5:11) and the cessation of manna (5:12) showed Yahweh's faithfulness to provide for Israel's needs during the entire forty-year Exodus. The produce of the land represented food the Israelites neither planted nor harvested, and it signified a major transition point in Israel's history: Yahweh had faithfully brought the nation out of Egypt and into the Promised Land.

That the commander of Yahweh's hosts responded that he was neither for the Israelites nor their enemies, but Yahweh (5:13–14), causes the reader to question whether Joshua

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[38] Image captured by screenshot from Logos Bible Software Atlas tool.

[39] For example, the men of Shechem were easily overpowered by Simeon and Levi because of their handicap (Gen 34).

will be on Yahweh's side or not. Ambiguity about his faithfulness (and Israel's) has been present since ch. 1.

The conquering of Jericho (6:1–27) continues the pattern of Yahweh's faithfulness in response to Israel's obedience. The priests blowing trumpets during warfare (6:4–20) had been a statute established by Moses (Num 10:9).[40] The supernatural crumbling of Jericho's defensive wall indicated Yahweh's hand in the battle. With the exception of Rahab's house, the entire city was placed under the ban, חֵרֶם, and destroyed.[41] Because of the spies' vow to Rahab (2:12–17), the Israelites spared everyone in her house. Failure to adhere to the ban would result in one being banned himself and putting the camp of Israel under the ban (6:18) and bringing trouble, עכר, upon it. The narrator employed a wordplay (pun) with the verb עכר and Achan's name, עָכָן. This warning in 6:18 foreshadows Achan's sin and the upcoming trouble upon Israel. The curse upon anyone who would rebuild Jericho (6:26) was fulfilled centuries later with Hiel the Bethelite (1 Kgs 16:34). Rahab's placement outside the camp of Israel (6:23) was initially suitable because of her status as an unclean Canaanite (see Deut 23:1–14). However, later mention of her dwelling in the midst of Israel "to this day" (6:25) signified a change of status. This was the final canonical mention of Rahab until the genealogy of Christ where Matthew identified her as the wife of Salmon son of Nahshon and the mother of Boaz (Matt 1:5). The destruction of the house of Achan (ch. 7) and the tying of the crimson cord around Rahab's house (2:18) identify her as the carrier of the promise. While not stated in the book of Joshua, Rahab apparently married Salmon and their son Boaz would later marry Ruth (Ruth 4:13) from whom king David would come.

The narrator juxtaposed by contrast faithful Rahab who understood the ban (2:10), with the unfaithful Israelites who ignored the ban (7:1). She therefore functioned as a literary foil to the spies and to Israel. Such unfaithfulness in Israel meets the expectation of the audience, who has been anticipating infidelity since ch. 1. In a case of dramatic irony,[42] Achan is singled out by the narrator as the guilty party who broke the ban and led to Israel's defeat at Ai (7:2–5). Achan's genealogy connected him to the line of Zerah (7:1), and thus the line carrying the promise.[43] With situational irony, whereas the Canaanites' hearts melted (מסס) at the Israelites' defeat of Sihon and Og (2:11) and at their crossing the Jordan (5:1), now the Israelites' hearts melted (מסס) at this singular defeat near Ai (7:5). Even Joshua's response to the defeat (7:7–9) and Yahweh's rebuke (7:10) betrayed his lack of faith. His question, "Why did you bring this people across the Jordan to give us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us?" (7:7) echoes

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[40] "When you go into battle in your own land against an enemy who is oppressing you, sound a blast on the trumpets. Then you will be remembered by the LORD your God and rescued from your enemies" (Num 10:9, NIV).

[41] חֵרֶם means the dedication of something or someone to either (1) exclusive cultic usage, or (2) destruction. In either case, things or people under the ban should not have any other purpose (i.e., secular usage or being allowed to live). In the case of Jericho, the precious items of gold and silver, etc. under the ban entered Yahweh's treasury (6:19), while the people under the ban were destroyed.

[42] The reader knows more than the characters in the narrative.

[43] In Genesis 38, the text actually leaves some ambiguity as to which twin of Judah and Tamar (Zerah or Perez) would carry the promise. Here in Joshua, the focus on Achan and his ancestry seems to imply that Zerah carried the promise. However, Achan's entire household will be destroyed, and the crimson cord tied to Rahab. Rahab will later marry into the line of Perez and carry the line of promise.

similar complaints voiced by the Israelites throughout their Exodus from Egypt.[44] He instead should have asked the question, who sinned to bring about the failure in battle?

Achan's confession that he saw (ראה) a robe that was beautiful (טוב) and coveted it (חמד) and took it (לקח) is a lexical repetition from Genesis 3:6, suggesting the similarity of Achan's sin to Eve's.[45] Moses had instructed the Israelites not to covet (חמד) and take (לקח) objects under the ban, nor bring them into their house, lest the Israelite also come under the ban and be destroyed (Deut 7:25–26). According to the Law, destruction is thus exactly what the audience can expect for Achan. The narrator's identification of Achan as the "son of Zerah" (7:24)[46] recalls the crimson cord at Zerah's birth (Gen 38:28) now tied around Rahab's house (2:18). That Achan and his entire family were stoned and buried (7:25) signals the end of that family line carrying the promise, now transferred to Rahab. The mounting tension on account of Yahweh's burning anger (7:1) is resolved by his appeasement at the burial of Achan (7:26). The two notes of Yahweh's anger form an inclusio for this particular scene.

Rhetorically, this section on the faithful prostitute (2:1–7:26) functions judicially to persuade the audience of the second generation's guilt, while contrasting it with Yahweh's faithfulness. On the one hand, Yahweh's gracious continuance of the Israelite line of promise through a Canaanite prostitute demonstrates his faithfulness to his promises. On the other, Achan's disregard for the ban demonstrates the obvious connection between covenant disobedience and the defeat at Ai. Achan's sin, however, serves as a foreshadow and a prototype for the Israelites' failure to commit the Canaanites to the ban, among other covenant violations. Yahweh had explicitly connected the Israelites' success in defeating the Canaanites and possessing their land to covenant faithfulness (1:4-8). But because Yahweh demonstrated his faithfulness vis-à-vis Rahab, none could charge Yahweh with breaking his promises. Rather, the audience could only conclude that Israel's failure to possess the land resulted from her unfaithfulness to the Law. This section would thus impel the third generation to covenant fidelity by causing them to cast blame on the unfaithfulness of the second generation (epideictic) and therefore vow to do better than their parents' generation.[47] In this way, this section contributed to the narrator's overall deliberative purpose that the third generation (and beyond) live in covenant fidelity to the Law and take total possession of the Promised Land.

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[44] Exodus 17:3; Numbers 11:20; 14:3; 20:4–5.

[45] These three verbs and the noun טוב all appear in Genesis 3:6 of Eve seeing, desiring, and taking the "good" fruit.

[46] The narrator here skips the middle generations and ties Achan directly to Zerah.

[47] The epideictic approach is akin to "reverse psychology:" the narrator wanted the audience to cast blame on the second generation and essentially say, "Heaven forbid that we should be unfaithful like our parents."

In his section on **the incomplete conquest (8:1–12:24)**, the narrator portrayed the mixed successes and failures of the Israelite conquest in Canaan. Table 4 below tabulates the successes and failures.

Table 4: Successes and failures in the Israelite conquest of Canaan

Successes	Failures
Victory at Ai (8:1–29)	Defeat at Ai (7:5–6)
	Gibeonite covenant (9:3–27; 11:19)
	Saving the Gibeonites from destruction (10:6–10)
Defeating the five Amorite kings (10:1–27)	Surviving Amorites (10:20)
Southern campaign (10:28–43)	
Northern campaign (11:1–20)	
Defeating the Anakites (11:21)	Surviving Anakites (11:22)
Lands east of the Jordan (12:1–6)	
Lands west of the Jordan (12:7–24)	Large portions of land remain to be possessed (13:1)

The fact that Israel did not experience complete success indicates a lack of covenant fidelity. The narrator had prepared the audience since ch. 1 to expect unfaithfulness, and by the close of ch. 12, the audience has now seen both the unfaithfulness and its result—an incomplete possession of the land.

During the covenant renewal ceremony at Mount Ebal, the building of the altar (8:30), the sacrifice of burnt offerings and peace offerings (8:31), and Joshua's writing the Law on stones (8:32) were in direct obedience to Moses' commands (Deut 27:2–8). The narrator emphasized the entirety of Israel hearing the whole Law of Moses (8:30–35). Several situational ironies ensued: (1) the Israelites would hear the Law and then immediately break it by entering a covenant with the Hivites (9:1–14; see Deut 7:2),[48] (2) the Israelites would appeal to the Law regarding not breaking oaths as a means to continue their breaking of the law regarding covenants (9:18), and (3) the Israelites would then be required to save the Gibeonites—the people they were meant to destroy—from the Amorites in order to fulfill their vow (Deut 23:21–23) in order to do something which broke the covenant (Deut 7:2). Dramatic irony occurs where the audience knows the Gibeonites are near neighbors of the Israelites while the characters in the story do not (9:3–6). The Gibeonites' comment to "Do to us whatever seems good and right to you" (9:25) implicitly condemns the Israelites because the Law commanded that they do what was "good and right in the eyes of Yahweh" (Deut 6:18; 12:28), not their own. Since Yahweh had determined to judge the Canaanites and wipe them out, the decision of the Israelites regarding the Gibeonites—to let them live—reflected a direct contradiction of Yahweh's will and thus exemplified their covenant infidelity.

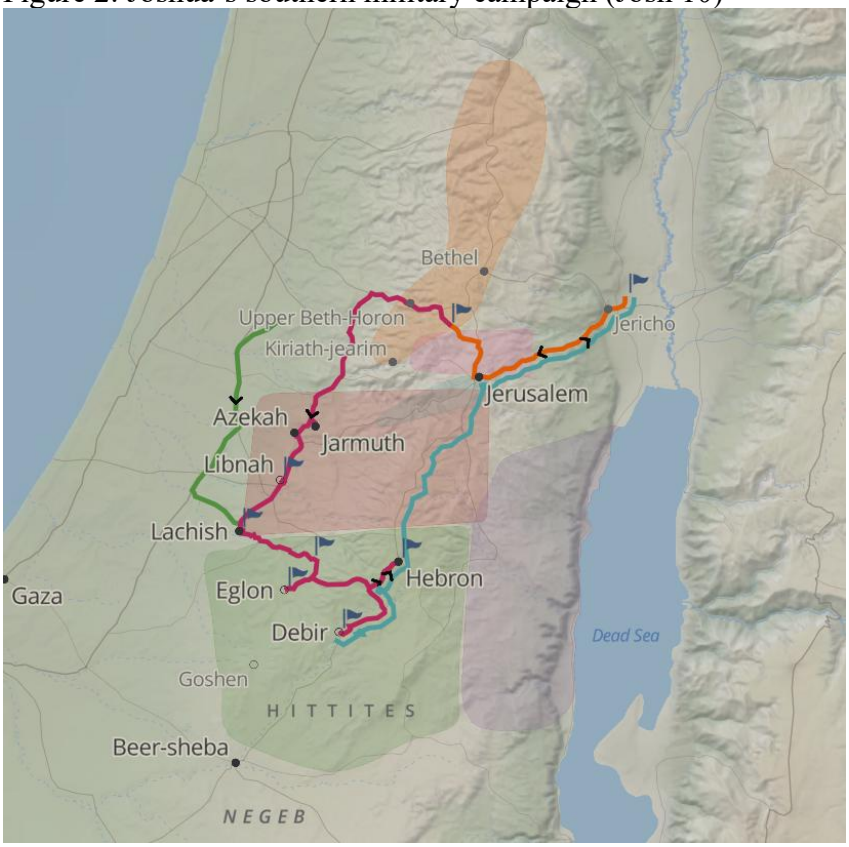
With his portrayal of the divine prolonging of sunlight for the battle against the five kings (10:1–15), the narrator demonstrated Yahweh's faithfulness as he promised Joshua victory (10:8) and "Yahweh fought for Israel" (10:14). Yahweh's hurling of stones (אֶבֶן) of hail (10:11) continues the stone imagery of salvation and judgment developed by the narrator. In the book of Joshua, stones function as (1) a memorial of Yahweh's faithful work in bringing the Israelites to Canaan (4:3–22), (2) as a means of judgment for Achan (7:25) and a memorial of his folly

[48] The narrator's note that the Israelites did not inquire of Yahweh regarding the Gibeonites (9:14) employs epideictic rhetoric and expects the audience to notice this problematic phrase and condemn the second generation.

(7:26), (3) as a memorial judgment over the king of Ai's dead body (8:29), (4) as a memorial of the Law of Moses (8:32), (5) as a judgment on the Amorite armies (10:11), (6) as a memorial of judgment against the Amorite kings (10:27), and (7) as a witness of the Law of Yahweh against Israel (24:27). The narrator implicitly intended the audience to experience the salvation of Yahweh[49] through covenant faithfulness rather than being judged due to disobedience.[50]

Joshua's command for his men to place their feet on the necks of the Amorite kings alludes to Genesis 3:15. They, as the nation of promise and seed of the woman, were striking the heads of the kings of the serpent seed nations—those who were ruling with the serpent (Gen 4:7). The act also points back to Yahweh's promise that everywhere their feet trod, victory was given to them (1:3). However, the note of survivors escaping to fortified cities (10:20) indicates some failure on Israel's part due to their covenant infidelity. The narrator expected his audience to notice the incoherence in the narrator's exaggerated concluding statement of great success in the southern campaign[51] as compared with his previous report of the surviving Amorites escaping to fortified cities (10:20). This dissonance pointed to (1) the faithfulness of Yahweh in performing his word, but also (2) the unfaithfulness of Israel in keeping the Law.

Figure 2: Joshua's southern military campaign (Josh 10)[52]



[49] That is, long life and blessing in the land of promise.

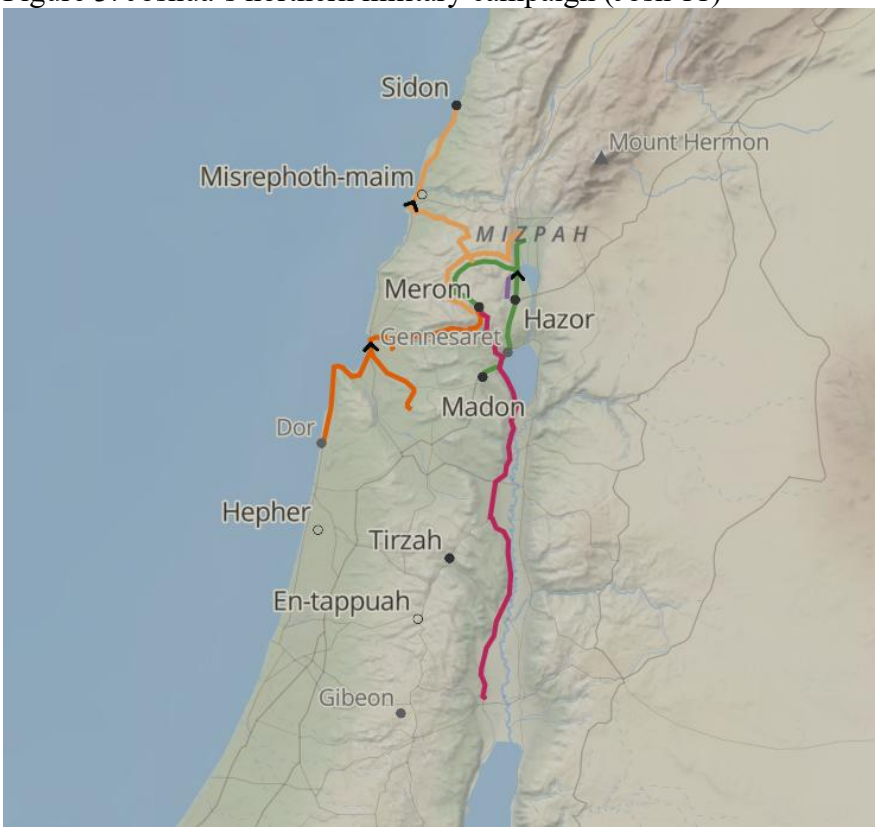
[50] In Joshua, the stones crushed many of the judged.

[51] "No survivors" (10:40), destroying "everyone who breathed" (10:40), "all the land" (10:41).

[52] Image captured by screenshot from Logos Bible Software Atlas tool.

The northern campaign (11:1–23) echoed the southern campaign (10:1–43) in that the author used verbal irony by claiming complete victory (e.g., 11:11, 20, 21, 23) while intending another meaning. Indeed, the narrator left hints of survivors who should have been destroyed (11:22).[53] Furthermore, the audience already knows that contrary to the narrator's claims (11:15, 23), "all the land" has not yet been taken, there was not rest from war, and Joshua certainly did not do everything Yahweh had commanded. This is also verbal irony on the part of the narrator. This pattern hints at the idea that the Israelites claimed to be following the Law but in reality, they were not. The summary of land taken and kings defeated east of the Jordan (12:1–6) and west of the Jordan (12:7–24) may sound impressive upon initial reading, but this land represents only a fraction of the total area promised as far as the River Euphrates (1:4). The narrator intended his audience to recognize both the faithfulness of Yahweh and the infidelity of Israel based on the amount of land conquered by Joshua.

Figure 3: Joshua's northern military campaign (Josh 11)[54]



Rhetorically, this section on the incomplete conquest (8:1–12:24) functions judicially to impel the third generation to cast blame on the unfaithfulness of the second generation. Epideictically, it celebrates victories—a good value to inculcate in the audience—but also functions to warn the audience of committing similar errors of covenant infidelity.

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[53] The Anakite giants who survived settled in Gath (11:22). Later on in David's time, the giant Goliath is from Gath (1 Sam 17:4).

[54] Image captured by screenshot from Logos Bible Software Atlas tool.

Deliberatively, this section's hints of incompleteness provide pressure for the audience to complete the task of possessing the land by living in covenant faithfulness. In this way, this section contributed to the narrator's overall deliberative purpose that the third generation (and beyond) live in covenant fidelity to the Law and take total possession of the Promised Land.

In his section on **partial allotment of land and cities (13:1–21:45)**, the narrator's description of the boundaries for each tribal inheritance, the inheritance of leaders like Caleb and Joshua, and the appointment of Levitical cities and cities of refuge, function to demonstrate (1) the faithfulness of Yahweh in giving land, and (2) the failure of Israel to maintain covenant fidelity. Continued mention of Canaanite inhabitants dwelling among the Transjordan tribes (13:13), in Judah (15:63), Ephraim (16:10), Manasseh (17:12–13), Benjamin (18:16),[55] and the lax attitude of the remaining seven tribes toward taking their land (18:2–3) all point to the infidelity of the tribes. Even Joshua, as leader of the Israelites, wavered in his faithfulness: his command to the sons of Joseph to clear the forest (17:14–18) contradicted the Law: Yahweh allowed trees to be cut down to provide siege works (Deut 20:19–20), but with situational irony, Joshua twisted this command so Ephraim and Manasseh could make living space in the forest to *avoid* attacking the Canaanites. The failure to place all the inhabitants under the ban, חֵרֶם, was a violation of the Law (Deut 7:1–2). The narrator's statement that the Israelites grew strong and put the inhabitants of Canaan to forced labor (17:13) is verbal irony ("spoken" by the narrator) because real strength, in the book of Joshua, was obedience to the Law and it would result in complete victory. In reality, the result of forced labor meant the Israelites were decidedly *not* strong, that is, not following the Law. Joshua's question of the seven tribes, "How long will you be slack (רפה) about going to take possession of the land?" (18:3) is (1) situational irony because the verb רפה in hithpael form means, "to show oneself without courage,"[56] and in the context of Joshua it means they had not followed the Law, and (2) further situational irony because Joshua himself was also failing to keep the Law.

Against Joshua, the narrator employed juxtaposition by contrast with Caleb, who functions literarily as a character foil. While Joshua was acting unfaithfully (see above) and described as "old and advanced in years" (13:1), Caleb, at eighty-five years old, was "still strong" (14:11).[57] His selection of the hill country for his inheritance represented the most difficult portion of the land because it contained the fearsome Anakite giants (14:12, 15; 15:13-15; cf. Num 13:33). While the audience may have expected an ensuing battle scene, Caleb's "strength" (faithfulness) resulted in Hebron becoming his inheritance "because he remained true to Yahweh the God of Israel" (14:14). The narrator implicitly contrasted Caleb's faithfulness with the other tribes failing to take areas of lesser resistance due to their own unfaithfulness.

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[55] The city of Jerusalem is referred to as "the Jebusite city" (18:16; cf. 18:28) because the Jebusites would continue living there until David's time (2 Sam 5:6–7).

[56] *HALOT* notes two meanings of the verb רפה in hithpael form: (1) to show oneself lax; (2) to show oneself without courage (*HALOT*, s.v. רפה). Joshua 18:3 is listed under the first meaning. However, being strong and courageous is a central theme in Joshua (1:6–7, 9, 18, etc.). This strength and courage (in obeying the Law, 1:7) is tightly connected to possession of the land (1:6). Therefore, the second option is the much more likely meaning in 18:3—that is, their failure to take all the land demonstrated their lack of being strong and courageous in following the Law.

[57] In Joshua, "strength" is defined as faithful adherence to the Law (1:7-8).

Caleb's success contrasts with the weak excuses such as the Canaanites' determination to live there (17:12), and their possession of iron chariots (17:16-18). Yahweh had already demonstrated the ability to defeat iron chariots (11:4; Exod 14) and had commanded in the Law to not fear them (Deut 20:1). Caleb's offering of his daughter to the man who captured Kiriath Sepher (15:16) identifies Othniel (a future judge, Judg 3:7-11) as a man of faithfulness and strength. The extensive list of cities possessed (e.g., 15:21-62) represents a fulfillment of Yahweh's promise to bring the Israelites into Canaan and give them large cities and houses they did not build themselves (Deut 6:10-12).

The narrator's note that the Israelites "finished assigning the land according to its borders" (19:49) is verbal irony; while the Israelites had indeed divided a portion of the Promised Land between the tribes, the "borders" actually should have extended as far as the Euphrates River (1:4; Gen 15:18). Likewise, following his enumeration of Levitical towns (21:1-42), the narrator's four-fold conclusion regarding the fulfillment of Yahweh's promises (21:43-44)[58] is also verbal irony. Verbal irony is defined as saying one thing, but meaning another. In this case, the narrator's statements about "all" the land, taking possession of it [all], and having rest "all around" (21:43-44) are intended as verbal irony. The attentive reader obviously knows the statements cannot be taken at face value. With the multiple occasions where the narrator ostensibly reports completion and fulfillment, he actually expected the audience to recognize the unfinished work which has been revealed throughout the narrative. The tension between the so-called "fulfillment statements" and other narrative portions portraying an incomplete conquest serve the author's rhetorical purposes and actually function to *highlight* the Israelites' partial success. He expected his audience to recognize that tension and consider why it existed. From the beginning of Joshua, the narrator portrayed Yahweh as faithful (1:3, 5, 9). Yahweh's continuing the line of promise through a Canaanite prostitute despite Israel's unfaithfulness (chs. 2–7) demonstrated that faithfulness. Therefore, the Israelites could not blame Yahweh's unfaithfulness for the incomplete land possession. Failure therefore lay at the feet of the covenantally unfaithful Israelites. Indeed, "Not a word fell from all the good words which Yahweh had spoken to the house of Israel; everything happened" (21:45, author's translation). Here, the narrator did *not* use verbal irony. The "good words which Yahweh had spoken" included his promises of Joshua's success, but conditioned it upon Joshua's "strength and courage," which he defined as adherence to the Mosaic Law (1:7-8).[59] Thus, Yahweh's fulfillment of promises corresponded proportionately to the Israelites' faithfulness. In this way, Yahweh was exactly true to his word: *if* the Israelites stayed strong and courageous by adhering to the Law, they would be victorious. Yet their halfhearted fidelity resulted in only partial victories, meaning two simultaneous realities: (1) Yahweh was faithful, and (2) the Israelites did not possess the entirety of the Promised Land. Understanding the so-called fulfillment statements as verbal irony means taking a "literary" reading of the text which recognizes the narrative and literary devices used by the author.

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[58] (1) "Yahweh gave to Israel all the land that he swore to give to their ancestors" (21:43), (2) "They took possession of it and settled in it" (21:43), (3) "Yahweh gave them rest on every side" (21:44), (4) "Nobody from all their enemies withstood them" (21:44).

[59] "Do not turn aside from it, to the right or left, so that you may succeed wherever you go. The scroll of this law will not depart from your mouth; you will meditate on it day and night so that you may observe diligently all that is written in it. For then you will succeed in your ways and prosper" (1:7-8).

Rhetorically, this section of the narrative on the partial allotment of land and cities (13:1–21:45) contributes to the author's overall deliberative purpose in exhorting the third generation of Israelites to covenant fidelity. He did this by causing the audience to recognize the deserved failure of the second generation (judical condemnation). By framing Joshua and the second generation—except for Caleb—as a censurable examples to avoid (epideictic rhetoric of praise and blame), the author warned the audience through their example to avoid that same infidelity. Instead, they should see Caleb as the lone praiseworthy example to follow. His strength / faithfulness to the Law led to him easily driving out the Canaanites (15:13-17). The third generation could do the same (the author's overall deliberative purpose) if only they would be faithful like Caleb. In this way, this section contributed to the narrator's overall deliberative purpose that the third generation (and beyond) live in covenant fidelity to the Law and take total possession of the Promised Land.

Figure 4: Allotment of land to the twelve tribes (Josh 13–19)[60]

The narrator's scene on **the Transjordan tribes (22:1–34)** revealed a series of actions and statements completely misaligned with the Law. Joshua's praise that the Transjordan tribes had done all that Moses commanded (22:2) is verbal irony because they had failed to dispossess the inhabitants east of the Jordan and they "live[d] among Israel to this day" (13:13). His exhortation to carefully keep the Law (22:5) went unheeded because the altar they built (22:10) did not align with Moses' prescriptions for one altar on Mount Ebal (Deut 27:2–7) and one at the place of Yahweh's choosing (Deut 12:26–27). Claiming that Yahweh made the Jordan a boundary between the tribes (22:25) was also untrue—the tribes made it so themselves. Even the response by Phineas the priest and the Israelite leaders accepting the altar (22:30) did not

[60] Image from John H. Walton, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Old Testament): Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 96.

agree with Moses. Indeed, Phineas' statement that now they knew Yahweh was with them because the Transjordan tribes were not unfaithful (22:31) indicates an ironic misunderstanding of the Law. They would know Yahweh was with them *if* they had possessed all the Promised Land (1:4–8). But as it was, many Canaanites withstood them (see the contrast in 1:5) and they did not possess all the land (see 1:4). The narrator expected the audience to recognize that while Yahweh remained faithful to his promises, he was not "with" the Israelites fully because of their covenant infidelity. With situational irony, the altar set up by the Transjordan tribes that Yahweh is God (22:34) will within a generation be a witness against them, for they will soon go after other gods.

Rhetorically, this section of the narrative contributes to the author's overall deliberative purpose in exhorting the third generation of Israelites to covenant fidelity in the land by causing them to recognize the failure of the second generation (judicial condemnation). By framing Joshua, Phineas, and the second generation as a censurable examples to avoid (epideictic rhetoric of praise and blame), the author intended the audience to condemn the second generation and thus avoid that same kind of infidelity. In this way, this section contributed to the narrator's overall deliberative purpose that the third generation (and beyond) live in covenant fidelity to the Law and take total possession of the Promised Land.

The narrator's portrayal of **Joshua's farewell address (23:1–24:33)** is filled with verbal ironies: (1) Yahweh had not given them rest from their enemies (23:1), (2) Joshua did not conquer all the nations between the Jordan and the Mediterranean (23:5), (3) the Israelites had not stayed faithful to Yahweh up to this day (23:8; see the idolatry in 24:14, 23), (4) the nations were able to withstand the Israelites (23:9), (5) Joshua himself had allied with the survivors of the nations (23:12), (6) Joshua's statement that Yahweh would no longer drive out the nations was already a persistent reality for the Israelites (23:13), (7) Yahweh had indeed been faithful to his promises, including to not be with the Israelites should they be unfaithful (23:14–15)—which is exactly what happened, and (8) Israel had not faithfully served Yahweh throughout Joshua's lifetime (24:31). The threat of quickly perishing from the land due to worshiping other gods (23:16) is situational irony because the Israelites had *already* kept idols of foreign gods among them (24:14, 23). The recounting of Israel's history (24:2–13) demonstrated Yahweh's faithfulness to bring about his promises. Any shortcoming in fulfillment was thus due to Israel's disobedience. Joshua's offer of a choice to serve Yahweh or other gods (24:14–15) was an echo of Moses' offer of choice between life and death (Deut 30:1–20), and the presence of foreign gods among the Israelites (24:14, 23) seems to indicate an early fulfillment of Moses' prophecy of the Israelites upcoming corruption (Deut 31:29). The burying of Joseph's bones at Shechem (24:32) was the fulfillment of Joseph's request at the end of his life (50:25) and is a redeeming, positive act.

The extensive list of verbal ironies in this final section portray a negative outlook for Israel's future. This is juxtaposed, however, with the hope of the crimson cord of the line of promise being tied around Rahab's house (2:18). Moses had served Yahweh (Deut 34:5) but he suffered personal failure (Num 20:12). Now Joshua had served Yahweh as well (24:29), but his halfhearted faithfulness is evident throughout the book of Joshua. Israel had ostensibly served Yahweh (24:31), but in reality, they too, acted unfaithfully. The narrator intended his audience to recognize this pattern and to act in covenant fidelity while waiting and hoping for the one servant, prophet, and promised seed who would bring true righteousness to Israel and restore humanity to the garden. Using literary devices like verbal irony for a rhetorical purpose, the

author forced his third-generation Israelite audience to recognize the discrepancy between the full boundaries of the Promised Land and the actual land their parents (the second generation) had taken. He wanted them to judicially condemn the unfaithfulness of their parents and so be convicted to live in fidelity to the Law and complete the unfinished task of claiming all the Promised Land. In this way, this section contributed to the narrator's overall deliberative purpose that the third generation (and beyond) live in covenant fidelity to the Law and take total possession of the Promised Land.

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