

Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 16, Conquest and Settlement Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 16, Conquest and Settlement, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Phillips' lecture on the Book of Joshua covers the Israelite conquest and settlement of Canaan. **The lecture reviews** the accomplishments for the people of Israel up to this point, such as redemption from Egypt and establishment of a system of worship. **It also discusses** the Deuteronomistic history, geopolitical concerns of the time with Canaanite city-states, and the identity of the Habiru. **The lecture then explains** the conquest of Jericho and Ai, providing archaeological context, and then finishes with Joshua's final address to the people, urging them to choose to serve the Lord.

**2. 23 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 16 – Double
click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (Old Testament → OT Introduction → OT Lit).**



**Phillips_OTLit_Sessi
on16.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 16, Conquest and Settlement

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Elaine Phillips' lecture on the Book of Joshua.

Briefing Document: Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Lecture 16, Joshua

Overview:

This lecture provides an overview of the Book of Joshua, covering the conquest and settlement of Canaan by the Israelites. Dr. Phillips emphasizes the historical and geopolitical context, theological implications, and key themes within the book. She addresses the complexities of interpreting the text, particularly the challenging aspects of God's commands regarding the Canaanites, and relates the events to broader Old Testament themes and their relevance to contemporary understanding.

Key Themes and Ideas:

- **The Deuteronomistic History (DH):** Dr. Phillips introduces the concept of Deuteronomistic or Deuteronomic History: "As you look at the books Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings...they are written from the perspective of whether or not the people are obedient to the covenant." This framework highlights the consequences of obedience and disobedience to the covenant, especially as articulated in Deuteronomy. Disobedience leads to "war; there would be bloodshed; there would be famine; there would be disease and distress; and finally, exile."
- **Geopolitical Context:** Before the Israelites' arrival, Canaan was comprised of Canaanite city-states, each with surrounding villages, and part of the Egyptian sphere of influence. The El Amarna texts, letters from these city-state rulers to Egypt, reveal the political instability and the presence of a group called the Habiru or Apiru. The Habiru, often described as mercenary soldiers, are sometimes mistakenly conflated with the Hebrews. "When the term Hebrew is used in the Old Testament, it usually shows up when foreigners are referring to God's people. Otherwise, what are they called? Israelites."
- **The Conquest: Timeline and Interpretation:** The conquest of Canaan was not a swift, six-week event, but rather a process that took about seven years for the initial battles and much longer for settlement. Dr. Phillips addresses the tension between the portrayal of the conquest in Joshua and the accounts in Judges,

arguing that they can be reconciled by understanding the gradual nature of the settlement and the Israelites' early failures in obedience.

- **The "Herem" and the Destruction of the Canaanites:** This is a central and difficult issue in the Book of Joshua: "How could that God of the Old Testament command the kinds of things he commanded with regard to going in and wiping out Canaanites?" Dr. Phillips provides context:
- **The Vileness of Canaanite Culture:** The Canaanite culture was characterized by "vile polytheism," ritual prostitution, and other forms of moral degradation. This refers back to God's declaration that "the sin of the Amorites is not yet filled up" in Genesis 15.
- **Divine Judgment:** Dr. Phillips cites Leviticus 18.25, stating that "the land itself was so polluted that God would vomit the people out."
- **Protection of Israel's Holiness:** The command to destroy the Canaanites was, in part, to prevent the Israelites from being led astray into idolatry and sin. "For they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the Lord's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you." God wanted Israel to be "a people holy to the Lord."
- **The Meaning of "Herem":** The Hebrew word *herem* means "given over for destruction" in the context of intentional rebellion against God. Importantly, those who recognize God and seek refuge, like Rahab, are spared.
- **Application to Modernity:** The way that "God will do to make sure that we are his holy people" requires different application in modernity but is no less serious.
- **Structure of the Book of Joshua:** Dr. Phillips describes the book's structure as an ABA form: Action (conquest), Business (allotment of land), and Appeal (covenant renewal). While the allotment sections may seem tedious, they underscore God's faithfulness in fulfilling his promise to Abraham and providing an inheritance for his people.
- **The Significance of Joshua:** Joshua's name, *Yehoshua*, meaning "The Lord saves" or "The Lord is salvation," connects him to Jesus. Joshua's prior experiences, including serving as a commander against the Amalekites, being with Moses on Mount Sinai, and being one of the faithful spies, prepared him to lead Israel.

- **Emphasis on Torah:** Dr. Phillips highlights the importance of the Torah, noting that Joshua 1.8, "Do not let this word of the Torah depart from your mouth. Meditate on it day and night," mirrors the beginning of the book of Psalms.
- **The Crossing of the Jordan:** This event is presented as a parallel to the crossing of the Red Sea, with the Ark of the Covenant leading the way on dry ground. The Jordan River, wider and more formidable in antiquity due to flood season, presented a significant obstacle. The crossing is a sign that God affirms Joshua's leadership after Moses.
- **Conquest Campaigns and Key Cities:** Jericho and Ai are central to the early conquest narratives. Jericho's location in the center of Canaan provided a strategic advantage, while the conquest of Ai, despite its ruined state, is significant. The Gibeonite deception and the subsequent treaty led to the Southern Campaign. The Northern Campaign centered on the defeat of Hazor, the largest city in the region, ruled by a king.
- **Archaeological Evidence:** Dr. Phillips touches on the archaeological debates surrounding the conquest of Jericho, mentioning the discoveries of late Bronze Age settlements and fallen mud-brick walls that may have facilitated the Israelite entry.
- **The Sin of Achan:** The story of Achan illustrates the principle that one person's sin can have devastating consequences for the entire community, echoing Paul's admonition to remove leaven from the church.
- **Tribal Allotments and Cities of Refuge:** The lecture concludes with a discussion of the tribal allotments of land and the establishment of cities of refuge for those who committed involuntary manslaughter, as well as cities for the Levites.

Quotes:

- "As you look at the books Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings, in other words, spanning the whole time period that the people are in the land before the exile, they are written from the perspective of whether or not the people are obedient to the covenant."
- "When the term Hebrew is used in the Old Testament, it usually shows up when foreigners are referring to God's people. Otherwise, what are they called? Israelites."

- "How could that God of the Old Testament command the kinds of things he commanded with regard to going in and wiping out Canaanites?"
- "The land itself was so polluted that God would vomit the people out."
- "For they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the Lord's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you."
- "Do not let this word of the Torah depart from your mouth. Meditate on it day and night."
- "As for me and my household, we're going to serve the Lord."

Implications:

This lecture provides a framework for understanding the Book of Joshua within its historical, cultural, and theological contexts. It also highlights the enduring challenges of interpreting difficult passages and applying biblical principles to contemporary life. Dr. Phillips encourages her students to continue studying the Old Testament and grapple with its complexities.

4. Study Guide: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 16, Conquest and Settlement

Joshua: Conquest and Settlement Study Guide

Quiz: Short Answer Questions

1. What is the Deuteronomistic History, and which books does it encompass?
2. What were the geopolitical conditions in Canaan prior to the Israelite conquest, and what role did the El Amarna texts play in understanding this period?
3. Who were the Habiru/Apiru, and how were they viewed in relation to the Hebrews?
4. Explain the significance of Gilgal as it relates to the Israelite settlement.
5. Why did God command the Israelites to "wipe out" the Canaanites?
6. What does the Hebrew word *herem* mean, and how does it apply to the conquest narratives?
7. Describe the ABA structure of the Book of Joshua and its significance.
8. What is the meaning of the name Joshua (Yehoshua), and what New Testament figure does it relate to?
9. How did the crossing of the Jordan River mirror the Exodus event?
10. Explain the significance of the tribal allotments.

Quiz: Answer Key

1. The Deuteronomistic History is a perspective on history, spanning Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, and 1 & 2 Kings, written from the viewpoint of whether the people are obedient to the covenant, particularly Deuteronomy. When the people are disobedient they experience war, bloodshed, famine, disease, distress, and exile.
2. Canaan consisted of independent city-states, often vying for power. The El Amarna texts are letters from Canaanite rulers to Egypt, complaining about the lack of Egyptian control and the rise of unrest.
3. The Habiru/Apiru were a people group often associated with military roles or mercenary work. While the term sounds similar to "Hebrew," they are not the same, though outsiders may have perceived the incoming Israelites similarly.

4. Gilgal served as the Israelites' major camp in the Jordan Valley, from which they launched raids and campaigns into Canaan. It was located relatively close to Jericho.
5. God commanded the destruction of the Canaanites due to their vile polytheism, ritual practices (including sacred prostitution), and the overall moral degeneracy of their culture to protect Israel from being led astray.
6. *Herem* means to devote something irrevocably to God for destruction, often in the context of rebellion and wickedness. It was applied to cities and people who had intentionally rejected God and defied moral law.
7. The Book of Joshua follows an ABA structure: Action (conquest), Business (division of the land), and Appeal (covenant renewal). This structure helps emphasize the phases of taking the land and solidifying the Israelite presence.
8. Joshua (Yehoshua) means "The Lord saves" or "The Lord is salvation." It is the Hebrew form of the name Jesus, highlighting parallels between Joshua's leadership and Jesus' role as savior.
9. The crossing of the Jordan River mirrors the Exodus event through the parting of the waters and the Israelites crossing on dry ground. The Ark of the Covenant was carried across on dry ground, just like the crossing of the Red Sea.
10. The tribal allotments were significant because they represented the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham regarding the land. It also revealed the importance of the line of Judah in the inheritance, in which it was a monumentally huge inheritance compared to other tribes.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the ethical challenges presented by the conquest narratives in the Book of Joshua. How does the lecture address these challenges, and what theological considerations are offered to contextualize the events?
2. Analyze the role of obedience and disobedience in the Book of Joshua. How does the concept of the Deuteronomistic History inform our understanding of the consequences of these actions for the Israelites?
3. Compare and contrast the roles of Joshua and Moses as leaders of the Israelites. How did God affirm Joshua's authority, and what parallels can be drawn between their experiences?

4. Examine the significance of the major battles in the Book of Joshua, including Jericho, Ai, and Hazor. What strategic and theological lessons can be learned from these accounts, and how did they shape the course of the conquest?
5. Discuss the significance of the covenant renewal ceremony at Shechem. What does this event reveal about the relationship between God and the Israelites, and how does it underscore the importance of faithfulness and obedience?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Deuteronomistic History/Deuteronomic History (DH):** The history of Israel from Joshua through 2 Kings, written from the perspective of covenant obedience as articulated in Deuteronomy.
- **Canaanite City-States:** Small, independent cities and their surrounding villages that comprised the geopolitical landscape of Canaan before the Israelite conquest.
- **El Amarna Texts:** Letters written in Akkadian from rulers of Canaanite city-states to Egypt, detailing their pleas and frustrations with Egypt's lack of control in the region.
- **Habiru/Apiru:** A group of people mentioned in ancient Near Eastern texts, often associated with military roles or mercenary work; not directly equivalent to Hebrews but potentially viewed similarly by outsiders.
- **Gilgal:** The primary Israelite camp located in the Jordan Valley, serving as a base for their initial raids and campaigns into Canaan.
- **Herem:** Hebrew term for devoting something or someone irrevocably to God, often involving destruction as a consequence of rebellion and wickedness.
- **ABA Form:** A musical analogy used to describe the structure of Joshua: Action (conquest), Business (division of the land), and Appeal (covenant renewal).
- **Yehoshua:** The Hebrew name for Joshua, meaning "The Lord saves" or "The Lord is salvation," equivalent to the Greek name Jesus.
- **Nevi'im:** The second major division of the Hebrew Bible, containing the books of the prophets, including historical books like Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, as well as the writing prophets.
- **Cities of Refuge:** Cities designated as safe havens for individuals who had committed involuntary manslaughter.

5. FAQs on Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 16, Conquest and Settlement, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided text:

FAQ on the Book of Joshua

- **What is the "Deuteronomistic History," and why is it important for understanding the Book of Joshua?**
- The "Deuteronomistic History" (DH) is a term used by biblical scholars to describe the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, and 1 & 2 Kings. These books are understood to be written from the perspective of the covenant established in Deuteronomy. The historical narrative is presented through the lens of obedience and disobedience to this covenant. Blessings and curses are applied based on the nation's fidelity to God's law, making Deuteronomy a crucial framework for interpreting the events in Joshua and subsequent books.
- **What geopolitical situation existed in Canaan before the Israelite conquest, and how do the El Amarna texts illuminate this situation?**
- Before the Israelites arrived, Canaan was composed of numerous small city-states rather than unified political entities. The El Amarna texts, letters written in Akkadian found in Egypt, reveal that these Canaanite city-state rulers appealed to Egypt for help in controlling unrest and the activities of a group called the Habiru/Apiru. These texts suggest that Egypt's influence in Canaan was waning due to the Pharaoh Akhenaten's focus on religious reforms, leading to instability and setting the stage for the Israelite conquest.
- **Who were the Habiru/Apiru, and what is their possible connection to the Hebrews?**
- The Habiru/Apiru were a group of people mentioned in various ancient Near Eastern texts, including the El Amarna letters. They were often described as military mercenaries or people with a military role. While the term "Habiru" sounds similar to "Hebrew," scholars generally agree they are not the same. However, it is possible that outsiders perceived the incoming Israelites as being similar to the Habiru, who were already a known group in the region. The term Hebrew is typically used in the Old Testament when foreigners are referring to God's people.

- **How long did the conquest and settlement of Canaan actually take, and how does this understanding reconcile the apparent discrepancies between the books of Joshua and Judges?**
- Contrary to a rapid, complete takeover as sometimes perceived, the conquest and settlement of Canaan was a gradual process that spanned approximately seven years. The initial major battles established a foothold, but full settlement and control unfolded over time. This understanding helps resolve apparent contradictions between Joshua and Judges. Joshua describes the initial conquests, while Judges illustrates the ongoing struggles and incomplete control of the land due to Israel's disobedience.
- **Why did God command the Israelites to "totally destroy" the Canaanites, and how can this command be understood in light of God's character?**
- The command to "totally destroy" (herem) the Canaanites is one of the most challenging aspects of the Book of Joshua. The Canaanite culture was characterized by vile polytheism and morally degenerate practices. God gave the Canaanites centuries to repent (as mentioned in Genesis 15), but their wickedness persisted. The destruction was meant to prevent Israel from being corrupted by these practices and turning away from God. Additionally, the term "herem" is used in the context of people being intentionally rebellious against God and what they ought to know from general revelation. It is also important to remember that if anyone recognized who God was, recognized who the Israelites were as God's people, and asked for refuge, they were given it.
- **What is the significance of the word "herem" in the context of the conquest narratives?**
- The Hebrew word "herem" refers to something devoted to destruction or irrevocably given over to the Lord. It is used in the context of intentional rebellion against God. The destruction or offering of things was not on a whim that God happened to have, but because the people or things had been intentionally rebellious against God.

- **What are some of the key events and theological implications of the crossing of the Jordan River and the conquest of Jericho?**
- The crossing of the Jordan River mirrors the crossing of the Red Sea, with God parting the waters to allow the Israelites to pass on dry ground. This demonstrates God's continued presence and leadership through Joshua. The conquest of Jericho, achieved through unconventional means (marching around the city, the walls falling down), highlights God's power and sovereignty in granting victory. Jericho being devoted to God as the "first fruits" of the land is a demonstration of giving God the first fruits of the conquest. Rahab's story illustrates that repentance and faith in God can lead to salvation, even for those outside of Israel.
- **What is the significance of the tribal allotments in the Book of Joshua, and which tribes are most important to know?**
- The tribal allotments demonstrate God's faithfulness in fulfilling his promise to give the land to Abraham's descendants. The division of land signifies that God has given them an inheritance, but they are tenants on land owned by Him. Judah's inheritance is monumental compared to the others and is important to know because the Davidic line comes through this tribe. Benjamin, Ephraim, Manasseh, Reuben, Gad, and Dan are also important to know. The Levites did not receive a land inheritance; they were stationed throughout the land in different towns to teach the Torah to the rest of the people.