

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 8A, Joshua, Gibeonites, Sun Standing Still, Herem... Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 8A, Joshua, Gibeonites, Sun Standing Still, Herem..., Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

The lecture provides a detailed analysis of the book of Joshua, covering the conquest of Canaan, the renewal of the covenant at Shechem, and both the southern and northern campaigns. It explores the deception of the Gibeonites, the miracle of the sun standing still, and the division of the land among the tribes. **Vannoy presents three interpretations of the sun standing still, rationalistic legend, poetic expression, and literal explanations, each with supporting arguments.** Additionally, the lecture examines Joshua's last days, his exhortations to Israel, and the covenant renewal at Shechem, drawing parallels to the Hittite treaty form. **The theological themes of divine initiative, divine presence, the land as a gift, and the concept of "herem" are discussed, framing the conquest as an act of divine judgment and anticipated eschatology.** Ultimately, the lecture aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the book of Joshua within its historical, theological, and covenantal contexts.

2. 27 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 8A – 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 → Historical Books → Exodus to Exile).



Vannoy_ExttoExile_Session08A.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 8A, Joshua, Gibeonites, Sun Standing Still, Herem...

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided lecture notes on Joshua by Robert Vannoy:

Briefing Document: Robert Vannoy's "Exodus to Exile, Lecture 8A" on Joshua

I. Overview

This lecture focuses on the book of Joshua, covering the conquest of Canaan, the renewal of the covenant at Shechem, the southern and northern campaigns, the division of the land, and Joshua's last days. Vannoy analyzes key events and theological themes, providing different interpretations of controversial passages and emphasizing the importance of understanding the historical context and covenantal framework.

II. Key Themes and Ideas

- **Conquest of Canaan (Joshua 5-12):** The central narrative of the book is the Israelite conquest of Canaan under Joshua's leadership.
- **Renewal of the Covenant at Shechem (Joshua 8:30-35):** After the victories at Jericho and Ai, Joshua renews the covenant at Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, emphasizing obedience and the consequences of disobedience. This act echoes Moses' instructions in Deuteronomy.
- "So it seems to me that after those initial victories, Israel is recognizing the conditions under which they were to possess the land: obedience to the stipulations of the covenant and blessing if they obeyed, but curses if they disobeyed."
- **Southern Campaign (Joshua 9-10): Gibeonite Deception:** The Israelites are tricked into making a treaty with the Gibeonites, highlighting the importance of seeking God's guidance.
- "The men of Israel sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the LORD."
- **Sun Standing Still:** Vannoy presents three interpretations of the miracle of the sun standing still:
 1. **Rationalistic Legend:** The passage is a non-historical legend.
 2. **Poetic Expression/Heilsgeschichte:** The passage is a poetic or figurative expression of God's help.

- Vannoy critiques this approach: "If those words and deeds are simply an expression of Israel's faith or the faith of the early church...then the basis upon which Israel's faith and ours is grounded is destroyed." He insists that history is foundational to faith.
1. **Literal Explanation:** The event is historically reliable.
 - Within the literal explanation, he discusses interpretations regarding the *prolongation of light* (possibly through refraction) versus the *prolongation of darkness* (a cessation of light, supported by alternative translations of Hebrew words like *dom* and *amad*). Vannoy analyzes H.B. Blair's argument for interpreting the event as a cessation of light, fitting the context of an all-night march and hailstorm.
 - Regardless of the interpretation, Vannoy emphasizes that "the important thing is that the Lord intervened to give Israel the victory."
 - **Defeat of the 5 Kings:** Joshua defeats a coalition of southern kings, further securing Israelite control.
 - **Northern Campaign (Joshua 11:1-20):** Joshua defeats another coalition of northern kings. God commands Joshua to hamstring the horses and burn the chariots, symbolizing the need to trust in God rather than military might. Vannoy traces this theme through later books, showing how trust in military power becomes a problem in the monarchy.
 - "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God." (Psalm 20:7)
 - **Division of the Land (Joshua 13-22):** The land is divided among the tribes of Israel, with the tabernacle located at Shiloh. Vannoy acknowledges the detailed and sometimes challenging nature of these chapters.
 - **Joshua's Last Days (Joshua 23-24):** Joshua exhorts Israel to remain faithful to the Lord and warns of the consequences of disobedience. Chapter 24 is analyzed as a covenant renewal ceremony at Shechem, mirroring the structure of Hittite treaties with a preamble, historical prologue, stipulations, oath, witnesses, and a covenant document.
 - "But if you turn away and ally yourselves with the survivors of these nations that remain among you...then you may be sure that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations before you." (Joshua 23:12)

- **Theology of Joshua:** Vannoy draws from his own article on the theology of Joshua, highlighting Koorevaar's structural analysis of the book. Koorevaar argues that the book's purpose is structurally revealed in the division of the land, with the location of the Tent of Meeting at Shiloh being central. The movement is described as "cross, take, divide, and serve the Lord".
- **Herem and Anticipated Eschatology:** Vannoy addresses the problematic issue of "herem" (the command to exterminate the inhabitants of Canaan).
 - He argues that it should be understood as divine judgment on the Canaanites for their wickedness, rather than as sub-Christian aggression.
 - "Israel's destruction of the Canaanites is not an example of sub-Christian aggression...Rather, it is to be seen as the administration of divine judgment on wicked people steeped in sin."
 - He rejects the term "holy war" and prefers "Yahweh war".
 - He interprets the conquest as "anticipated eschatology," a foreshadowing of the ultimate Day of the Lord when God will judge evil.

III. Key Contrasts and Interpretations

- **The Extent of the Conquest:** Vannoy reconciles the apparent contradiction between Joshua 11:23 ("Joshua took the entire land") and Joshua 13:1 ("there are still very large areas to be taken over") by suggesting that Joshua broke the Canaanite resistance in major campaigns, but the tribes had to complete the conquest individually. This is compared to modern warfare, where initial victories must be followed by occupation and control.
- **The Miracle of the Sun Standing Still:** As outlined above, Vannoy presents three main interpretations, ranging from legendary to literal, with varying explanations within the literal view (prolongation of light vs. prolongation of darkness). The key point, regardless of the interpretation, is God's intervention.
- **Literal Historical Interpretation vs. Salvation History/Theological Interpretation:** The document highlights the tension between understanding the biblical text as a record of historical events versus interpreting it primarily as a theological statement or expression of faith. Vannoy leans toward the former, emphasizing the historical basis of faith.

IV. Overall Emphasis

The lecture emphasizes the importance of understanding the book of Joshua within its historical and covenantal context. It highlights the themes of God's faithfulness, Israel's obedience, and the consequences of disobedience. Vannoy provides a nuanced analysis of controversial passages, offering multiple interpretations and encouraging a critical and informed reading of the text.

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 8A, Joshua, Gibeonites, Sun Standing Still, Herem...

Joshua: Conquest and Covenant - A Study Guide

I. Review Questions (Short Answer)

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What was the significance of the renewal of the covenant at Shechem, and how did it relate to the instructions Moses gave in Deuteronomy?
2. How were the Israelites deceived by the Gibeonites, and what were the consequences of this deception?
3. Describe the different interpretations of the miracle of the sun standing still in Joshua 10.
4. What were Joshua's instructions regarding the horses and chariots captured during the northern campaign, and what is the significance of those instructions?
5. How does David Howard describe the nature of Israel's victories in Joshua 6-12?
6. How do Joshua 11:23 and 13:1 seem to contradict each other and how can the contradiction be resolved?
7. What was the role of Shiloh in the narrative of Joshua?
8. What warning does Joshua give in his last address to the people in Joshua 23?
9. What elements of the Hittite treaty form can be found in Joshua 24?
10. What does Vannoy mean by "anticipated eschatology" regarding the conquest of Canaan?

II. Review Question Answer Key

1. The renewal of the covenant at Shechem (Joshua 8:30-35) was a public reaffirmation of Israel's commitment to the Mosaic Law after the victories at Jericho and Ai. It emphasized the blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience, following the instructions Moses gave in Deuteronomy 11 and 27.
2. The Gibeonites deceived the Israelites by pretending to be from a distant land, leading the Israelites to make a treaty with them without consulting God (Joshua

- 9). As a result, the Israelites were bound by oath not to harm the Gibeonites, but they were forced to make them servants, performing menial tasks.
3. The miracle of the sun standing still (Joshua 10) has three primary interpretations: (1) a rationalistic legend, viewed as non-historical; (2) a poetic expression, seen as a subjective lengthening of the day; and (3) a literal explanation, with possible mechanisms including divine suspension of the earth's rotation, light refraction or a call for prolonged darkness rather than light.
4. Joshua was instructed to hamstring the horses and burn the chariots of the defeated enemies (Joshua 11:6), reflecting a distrust in military might and a reliance on God. This contrasts with later kings like Solomon, who amassed horses and chariots, showing a shift in reliance from God to military strength.
5. David Howard emphasized that Israel's victories in Joshua 6-12 were not due to their military prowess, but to God's direct intervention on their behalf. According to Howard, God alone was the victor in these matters against the enemy.
6. Joshua 11:23 states that Joshua took the entire land, while Joshua 13:1 says there were still large areas to be taken. The apparent contradiction is resolved by understanding that Joshua broke the Canaanite resistance in major cities, but the individual tribes still needed to complete the conquest of their assigned territories, as described in Judges 1.
7. Shiloh was the location where the Israelites gathered to set up the Tent of Meeting (Tabernacle) after the conquest was largely complete (Joshua 18:1). It served as the central religious site for Israel during the period of the Judges until the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant.
8. In his last address, Joshua warns the people against turning away from the Lord and making alliances with the remaining Canaanite nations. He warns that disobedience will bring God's judgment and cause them to perish from the good land.
9. Joshua 24 contains several elements of the Hittite treaty form: (1) a preamble, (2) a historical prologue summarizing God's past acts, (3) stipulations outlining obligations of loyalty and obedience, (4) an oath, (5) witnesses, and (6) the presence of a covenant document.

10. When Vannoy speaks of "anticipated eschatology," he is saying that the herem was an example of divine judgment on sin. He says not to look at herem as something ethically sub-horror level, with the true Scripture rising to a new level in the New Testament.

III. Essay Questions

Consider the following questions and develop well-supported essays.

1. Discuss the role of obedience to the covenant in the book of Joshua. How does obedience or disobedience affect Israel's success in conquering and possessing the land?
2. Compare and contrast the different interpretations of the miracle in Joshua 10:9-15. Which interpretation do you find most compelling, and why?
3. Analyze the significance of the cities of refuge in the book of Joshua. What do they reveal about God's character and his concern for justice?
4. Explore the theme of divine warfare in the book of Joshua. How does God fight for Israel, and what does this reveal about his relationship with his people?
5. Examine the ethical challenges raised by the practice of *herem* (devoting to destruction) in the book of Joshua. How can this practice be understood in light of God's character and purposes?

IV. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Ai:** A Canaanite city that Israel initially failed to conquer due to Achan's sin, but later conquered after Achan was judged.
- **Aijalon:** A valley mentioned in connection with the miracle of the sun standing still (Joshua 10:12).
- **Amad:** A Hebrew word that means "to stand," but can also mean "to cease."
- **Amorites:** A dominant people group in Canaan at the time of the Israelite conquest.
- **Anticipated Eschatology:** A perspective that views certain Old Testament events as foreshadowing the ultimate judgment and redemption to come.

- **Beth-Horon:** A town on the road used during the pursuit of the five kings of the Amorites (Joshua 10:10-11).
- **Book of Jashar:** A lost book of Hebrew poetry mentioned in Joshua 10:13.
- **Covenant:** A binding agreement or treaty, often between God and his people.
- **Ebal:** A mountain where half of the tribes of Israel stood to pronounce curses according to Deuteronomy 27.
- **Gerizim:** A mountain where half of the tribes of Israel stood to pronounce blessings according to Deuteronomy 27.
- **Gibeon:** A Canaanite city whose inhabitants deceived Israel into making a treaty, becoming servants of Israel.
- **Gilgal:** The initial Israelite camp in Canaan, serving as a base of operations for the conquest.
- **Goshen:** A region in the hill country of Judah.
- **Hazor:** A major city in northern Canaan, ruled by King Jabin.
- **Heilsgeschichte:** A German term referring to salvation history, the narrative of God's saving acts in history.
- **Herem:** The practice of dedicating things or people to God through complete destruction, often applied to the Canaanites in the book of Joshua.
- **Hittite Treaty Form:** A common treaty structure in the ancient Near East, including elements such as a preamble, historical prologue, stipulations, and blessings/curses.
- **Jordan River:** The river that the Israelites crossed to enter the Promised Land, mirroring the Exodus from Egypt.
- **Joshua:** Moses' successor as leader of Israel, who led the Israelites in conquering Canaan.
- **Karath Berit:** A Hebrew phrase meaning "to cut a covenant."
- **Kadesh Barnea:** The southern boundary of the area subdued by Joshua.
- **Keyom tammim:** A Hebrew phrase meaning "about a whole day."
- **Khirbet Nisir:** A proposed identification of the site of Ai.

- **Laqah:** A Hebrew word meaning "to take or attack."
- **Lebo:** A Hebrew word meaning "to come or enter."
- **Makkedah:** A cave where the five kings of the southern coalition hid after their defeat.
- **Mount Ebal:** The place where the altar was built by Joshua.
- **Shechem:** A city where Joshua renewed the covenant with Israel (Joshua 24).
- **Shiloh:** The location where the tabernacle was set up after the conquest.
- **Tel El-Makatir:** Another proposed identification of the site of Ai.
- **Theocracy:** A form of government in which God is recognized as the supreme ruler, and religious law is used to govern the state.
- **Waters of Merom:** A location in northern Canaan where the northern kings gathered to fight against Israel.
- **Yahweh War:** A war that takes place under God's direction, and with his direct help.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 8A, Joshua, Gibeonites, Sun Standing Still, Herem..., Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Why was Israel defeated at Ai after their victory at Jericho?

- Achan had taken some of the "devoted things," violating God's command and bringing judgment upon Israel. This disobedience resulted in defeat until Achan was found and judged.
- **What significant act did Joshua perform at Mount Ebal after the victory at Ai, and why was it important?**
- Joshua built an altar to the Lord on Mount Ebal and renewed the covenant at Shechem (Joshua 8:30-35). This involved copying the Law of Moses onto stones, reading the blessings and curses, and reminding Israel of the conditions for possessing the land: obedience to the covenant. It was a symbolic and literal act of acknowledging God's law as the foundation of their life in the land.
- **How did the Gibeonites deceive the Israelites, and what were the consequences of this deception?**
- The Gibeonites pretended to be from a distant country and tricked the Israelites into making a treaty with them without consulting the Lord (Joshua 9). As a result, the Israelites were bound by oath not to attack them, but they made the Gibeonites woodcutters and water carriers for the community.
- **What are the different interpretations of the "sun standing still" incident in Joshua 10?**
- There are three main interpretations:
 1. **Rationalistic Legend:** Views the passage as a non-historical legend because such events don't occur.
 2. **Poetic Expression:** Interprets it as a poetic or figurative description of God's help, where Joshua's prayer was answered with renewed vigor in his soldiers. Some view it as a subjective lengthening of the day where it only seemed that the day was prolonged because of the great work accomplished.
 3. **Literal Explanation:** Holds that the event actually happened, with debate over whether Joshua asked for a prolongation of light or darkness.

- **Why did God command Joshua to hamstring the horses and burn the chariots of their enemies?**
- God commanded this to prevent Israel from trusting in military might (horses and chariots) rather than in Him. It was a reminder that their victories came from the Lord, not from their own strength or weapons.
- **What was the main theological message of Joshua 6-12 according to David Howard?**
- Howard emphasizes that God fought for Israel and gave the enemies into their hands. The victories were not due to Israel's superior military force but to God's work on their behalf.
- **How can Joshua 11:23 ("Joshua took the entire land") be reconciled with Joshua 13:1 ("There are still very large areas to be taken over")?**
- Joshua's campaigns broke the Canaanite resistance and took major cities, but the individual tribes still needed to complete the conquest in their assigned territories. Joshua broke the will of the Canaanites to resist.
- **What is the concept of "herem" and how should it be understood in light of God's character?**
- "Herem" refers to the practice of devoting things (including people) to God by totally destroying them. It is understood as God's judgment on the extreme wickedness of the Canaanites, whose sins had defiled the land. Israel was the instrument of this divine judgment. It can be seen as an example of "anticipated eschatology," foreshadowing the ultimate Day of the Lord when God will judge all evil.