We turn now to the books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. The book of Joshua stands at the head of what we have in the English Bible as the “Historical Books” or we’ve talked about it as the “Former Prophets” as it agrees with the terminology used in the title of this course. It is Joshua through Esther, actually, that takes us then all the way through the end. But Joshua through II Kings is a unit of Former Prophets of Historical Books, itself. Now the Prophetic Books in the Hebrew canon follow right after II Kings, so that we would have the Former Prophets in Joshua through II Kings and then Isaiah through Malachi would come next and they are called the “Latter Prophets.” In the English Bible, these books are split up, because they want all the other Historical Books and Poetic Books before we get to the Prophetic Books which end with Malachi near the end of Old Testament History. In Chronicles, we have another history as we have mentioned. And in the Hebrew Bible, we have the end of the Bible coming with the end of II Chronicles. So we have a different arrangement of the canon. And II Chronicles was probably finished later on in the 400s BC or down into the 300s a little bit. The point is that this is a much later writing that we get in Chronicles and Ezra and Nehemiah and so on.

Now in Joshua, beginning what are called the Historical Books, we want to look first at Joshua 1:6-9 with Joshua 23:6 and Joshua 24:25-28 and talk about the connections between these passages as framing the book of Joshua. Joshua 1:6-9:

Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous. Be careful to do according to all the Law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go.
So the Law is the basis of them having success.

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night.”

The term meditate means “to mull it over,” to kind of mumble under your breath about it constantly. It is something that is on your mind. You are preoccupied with it. “So that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” This call to be strong and courageous frames the beginning and the end of this passage, because what Joshua is commissioned to do is to actually go into war and take the land—the conquest of Canaan.

Now toward the end when we get to the end of Joshua’s life in Joshua 23, we have an address that he makes. And we come back and look at that address at this point. Starting in Joshua 23:1:

“Now it came about after many days, when the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their enemies on every side, and Joshua was old, advanced in years that Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders and their heads and their judges and their officers, and said to them, I am old, advanced in years” (Joshua 23:1-3).

Then Joshua 23:6: “Be very firm, then, to keep and do all that is written in the book of the Law of Moses, so that you may not turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left.” So he is reaffirming what God had said to Him right at the beginning. “You must continue now after I die,” he is saying, “and follow the Law of Moses.” This is essential to the future of the nation.

In chapter 24, which is the last chapter of the book, we have an important section that talks about what happens with the covenant document that comes out of the covenant renewal in Joshua 24. In Joshua [24:25-26], we read this:

“So Joshua made a Covenant with the people of that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. And Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God.”

Now we have the Law of God already by Moses. And Joshua wrote
the words of this covenant document in Joshua 24 in that book. Joshua 24:26-28:

>And he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord. Joshua said to all the people, “Behold, this stone shall be for a witness against us, for it has heard [it is using the stone, kind of like a marker] all the words of the Lord which He spoke to us; thus it shall be for a witness against you, so that you do not deny your God.” Then Joshua dismissed the people, each to his inheritance.

Now in 24:26, it says that Joshua wrote these words in the book—in the scroll of the Law of God—which has already been referred to as the Mosaic Law back in chapter 1 and so on. Now the point here is that that Joshua adds these materials to the Book of the Law. It is growing. The canon is growing. We have the Law. It is already canonical in his mind. It is already authoritative. He adds more material. And this is a process of accretion whereby things get added stage-by-stage as it grows. It is the growth process. That's what the word accretion means. As we go on then to I Samuel 10, we see a similar kind of thing. In I Samuel 10:25: “Then Samuel told the people the ordinances of the kingdom, and wrote them in the book [in the scroll] and placed it before the Lord.” So again there is adding to the combined authoritative Scripture in the process of accretion as it grows through the Old Testament Period.

We see references to this along the way of this kind of process. It is very important to understand that the covenant and the oath that are made in Joshua 24 are based upon the fact that you have to have witnesses for making a legal bond like a covenant. And so you get the stone as a witness. You get the writing of it down. All of this is recorded in such a way that there is a commitment to it. The point is that obedience to the Law of Moses is the key to the success of the nation. That, of course, is based upon the curses and the blessings of the covenant articulated in Leviticus 26 and then again in Deuteronomy 28. If you follow the Lord, you will have the blessings. If you don’t, you will have the curses which will chastise you so that the Lord can drive you back to Himself. It is the Lord’s discipline on a rebellious nation.

The focus of the Law is on faithfulness to the Lord Himself. The passages, for example, in Joshua 23:6-8:

>Be very firm, then, to keep and do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, so that you may not turn aside from it to
the right hand or to the left, so that you will not associate with these nations, these which remain among you, or mention the name of their gods, or make anyone swear by them, or serve them, or bow down to them. But you are to cling to the Lord your God.

Now the word that is used here is the same word that is used in Genesis 2:24: “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave (or cling) to his wife.” He is to grab a hold, pull close, and cherish that relationship. They are supposed to do that with the Lord—cling to the Lord. Joshua 23:9-11:

For the Lord has driven out great and strong nations from before you; and as for you, no man has stood before you to this day. One of your men puts to flight a thousand, for the Lord your God is He who fights for you, just as He promised you. So take diligent heed to yourselves to love the Lord your God.

Remember, you shall “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind” (Deuteronomy 6). The theology of Deuteronomy is coming through here. Joshua 23:12-13:

For if you ever go back and cling [same word] to the rest of these nations, these which remain among you, and intermarry with them, so that you are associated with them and they with you, know with certainty that the Lord your God will not continue to drive these nations out from before you; but they will be a snare and a trap to you, and a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good land which the Lord your God has given you.

Now this is part of the theme of the book of Joshua and on into the book of Judges: They were supposed to drive out the remnants of the nations that were still left in the land. Well what happened was they didn’t. So they became a trap to them. And so we get these cycles of oppression and so on that get developed on through the book of Judges. And we see the same kind of things showing up in the book of Joshua at certain points, one of them being here. This is a major concern. They have to keep on doing the conquest. So as you walk on through this you see this particular focus then upon keeping the Law of the Lord.

Now it actually goes back even further than that in its connections. Look at Joshua 24:1 with me:
“Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel and for their heads and their judges and their officers; and they presented themselves before God.”

Now they are coming to Shechem.

“Joshua said to all the people, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, “From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River, and led him through all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendents and gave him Isaac’” (Joshua 24:2-3).

So it goes way back to the time of Abraham. Now the interesting thing here is that we are back at Shechem. In Genesis 12:6, this is where we actually have the first establishment that this is going to be the land. After Abraham comes out of Ur, moves eventually to Canaan, we have this in verse 6, Genesis 12:6-7:

“Abraham passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite was then in the land. The Lord appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your descendants I will give this land.’ So he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him.”

So the first place where the Lord speaks to Abram in the land declaring that this is the land that He's going to give him is at Shechem. So then in Joshua 24, Joshua goes to the same place and says, “We have occupied this land that was promised to us way back in Genesis 12,” and there's a whole series of connections that happen. In Genesis 33:18, we have a similar thing going on:

“Now Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-Aram [coming back from being with Laban], and camped before the city. And there he erected an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel”

in that particular passage. The point is Shechem becomes central.

Deuteronomy 27 – And Joshua ate binding this together as well. In Deuteronomy 27 we have this call to do this covenant ceremony when they come in the land. Now remember, Joshua is doing a covenant ceremony at the place that is the most historic for covenant ceremonies in Ancient Israel. It's at Shechem.
Deuteronomy 27:1-4:

Then Moses and the elders of Israel charged the people, saying,

“Keep all the commandments which I command you today. So it shall be on the day when you cross the Jordan to the land which the Lord your God gives you, that you shall set up for yourself large stones and coat them with lime and write on them all the words of this Law, when you cross over so that may enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, promised you. So it shall be when you cross the Jordan, you shall set up on Mount Ebal, these stones, as I am commanding you today, and you shall coat them with lime.”

Now Mount Ebal, that’s at Shechem.

“Moreover, you shall build there an altar to the Lord your god, an altar of stones; you shall not wield an iron tool on them. You shall build the altar of the Lord your God of uncut stones, and you shall offer on it burnt offerings to the Lord,” sacrifice peace offerings, it says, “write . . . the words of this law very distinctly and clearly on these stones” (27:5-8).

The point is that this is to be a covenant ceremony again of commitment to the Lord when they take possession of the land. In Joshua 8 when they come into the land, Joshua 8:30: “Then Joshua built an altar to the Lord, the God of Israel, in Mount Ebal,” and he does the very thing that’s said in Deuteronomy 27. So then at the end of his life, when he’s concerned about this whole thing, he comes to Shechem again in [Joshua] chapter 24 and redoes the covenant making. There’s this constant concern to renew the covenant. So in Joshua 24:32:

“Now they buried the bones of Joseph, which the sons of Israel brought up from Egypt, at Shechem, in the piece of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for 100 pieces of money; and they became the inheritance of Joseph’s sons.”

So we have this Shechem again as the burial place of Joseph, who had said that he wanted them to bring up his bones into the land,
and they bury his bones right at the place of the focus of covenant making.

This connection to Abraham as the faithful one to Yahweh alone in Joshua 24 is important. His father served other gods. Abraham however turned away from the other gods and pursued the Lord, and that’s what they’re supposed to do. They’re supposed to take very seriously their commitment to this one god, and therefore this gets repeated later in the chapter in verse 14: “Now, therefore, fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served,” now this is beyond the river; that means beyond the Euphrates. So that goes back to the time of Terah and so on referred to in verse 2, “and in Egypt,” so while they were in Egypt too. Just recently they’ve come out of Egypt in that particular place—they could’ve picked up others gods as well—

“They are to serve then the Lord alone [and give up on these other gods from Mesopotamia or from Egypt]. And if it is disagreeable in your site to serve the Lord, choose who you will serve, but as for me and my house,” he says, “we will serve the Lord” (verses 14-15).

This is all focused at Shechem—the first place where Abraham received the promise of Canaan in Genesis 12 and then all the way to Joshua in terms of when they actually conquer the land and take possession of it. Now we can walk through then starting in verse 16 of Joshua 24 certain steps, then, in actually making the covenant. The people say, in verse 16,

“Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods.” So they’re agreeing with Joshua. They’re going to serve the Lord. That’s what they’re house is going to do. “For the Lord our God is He who brought us and our father’s up out of the land of Egypt from the house of slavery and preserved us,” and so on (verse 17).

[Chapter 24] verse 18, “The Lord drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites who lived in the land. We also will serve the Lord, for He is our God.”

So they make the initial statement. Then verse 19:

“Then Joshua said to the people, ‘You will not be able to serve
the Lord, for He is a holy God; He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgression or your sins.’”

So he warns them this is to be taken seriously:

“If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you after He has done good to you” (verse 20).

Now the people respond to Joshua and said,

“‘No, but we will serve the Lord.’ Joshua said to the people, ‘You are witnesses against yourselves that you have made this commitment’” (verses 21-22).

The basic point that he is making is if/when you fall away, you already are witnesses against yourselves of what you’ve done. So once they make this commitment verbally, he writes down the covenant document, adds it to the Book of the Law, and we end up building Scripture from these kinds of occasions and from records that are kept along the way of these kinds of commitments. We even have the witness of the stone mentioned there in the passage.

Now this then becomes kind of the focal point around which everything functions in the book of Joshua. And in between the beginning and the end, we get the actual conquest of the land and the dividing up of the land. One of the major concerns that Joshua had was: What would happen after his death? We’ve already looked at Joshua 24 down through verse 28. Verses 29-31:

It came about after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being 110 years old. And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-Serah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, on the north of Mount Gaash. Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, and had known all the deeds of the Lord which He had done for Israel.

So that’s what happens, but Joshua is particularly concerned about whether they are going to continue to serve the Lord after his death.

Now there’s a connection here to Judges that’s very important. Judges 1—remember in Joshua 24 we already have Joshua being
referred to as dying in verse 29 and being buried in verse 30. In Judges 1:1 we read this:

“Now it came about after the death of Joshua that the sons of Israel inquired of the Lord, saying, ‘Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?”

If you look forward then to Judges 2:6: “When Joshua had dismissed the people,” now that reflects back to Joshua 24:8: “Then Joshua dismissed the people.” Well in Judges 2:6 we come back to the time when Joshua dismisses the people:

The sons of Israel went each to his inheritance to possess the land. The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the Lord which He had done for Israel. Then Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of 110.

Now you see how this is put together with reiterations and so there are certain sections of the material. A lot of this may refer to documents that were used to write the history of Israel, but the point is that they keep on coming back then in Judges 2 to the time of death when it’s already accounted for in the end of the book of Joshua. So there’s a flash forward here in Judges 1:1–2:5 and on through verse 10. There’s a flash forward to the time when he’s already dead, and it talks about what happens. After the death of Joshua, we come back then to the time when Joshua dies in 2:8 to pick up with that again. So verse 8 of Judges 2:

Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of 110. They buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-Heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. All that generation [verse 10] also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel.

So now we come and we begin actually the period of the book of Judges in Judges 2:11 and following, and the theology of the Judges Period gets developed in that particular section. We’ll come back to that later.

In the meantime, as we look at the book of Judges 1:1–2:5 we get a certain theology of that section. And we’ll come and talk more about that later as well. The connection therefore is an overlap between the book of Joshua and the beginning of the book of
Judges picking up on things that are also found in Joshua. Note especially that in Judges 2:1-2 we read this:

“No the angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bokim, and he said, “I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land which I have sworn to your fathers; and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you.’”

So the emphasis here is on the permanence of God’s covenant.

We talked earlier about the fact that when God makes a covenant, He makes it permanently—He commits. And He’s emphasizing this,

“I’m never going to break a covenant. And as for you, you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars. But you have not obeyed Me; what is this you have done?”

So we hear about, after the death of Joshua, how they did break the covenant that they had committed themselves to in Joshua 24. This of course was the major reason that Joshua made that covenant in Joshua 24 was to try and reinforce the covenant commitment to the Lord. It did not work. We see a lot of devastation from rebellion that takes place in Israel after the death of Joshua.

But nevertheless, right here, we learn that He’s not going to violate the covenant that He’s made with Israel, with the patriarchs, and then through Moses at Sinai. He is committed to that permanently. That’s again an indication of the permanence of the covenant, but also the ongoing obligation of covenant relationship with God whereby the people are to show their faithfulness to God who has given them the promises. This is the way God does relationships with fallen people.

Now going back and talking more about the book of Joshua and how the conquest works and some of the issues of how Joshua fits together. This is important. In Joshua 1, let’s go back there to verse 12 and I’ll read several verses in the book kind of shaping how this book is put together. Joshua 1:12-13: “To the Reubenites and to the Gadites and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, ‘Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, “The Lord your God gives you rest and will give you this land.”’” So they have rest in their land across the Jordan in the trans-Jordanian region. These are the two and a half
tribes that have their territory over there on the side of the trans-Jordan, not across the Jordan into the land of Canaan.

“Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle shall remain in the land which Moses gave you beyond the Jordan” (1:14), this was already conquered in the days of Moses. So he had already set out what the regions of the land these particular two and a half tribes would have. This was already accomplished before Joshua became the leader.

“But you will cross before your brothers in battle array, all your valiant warriors, and shall help them, until the Lord gives your brothers rest too in the land” (verses 14-15).

Just because they have their land in the trans-Jordanian region and are settled there, it doesn’t mean they are exempt from going to war to establish the other tribes in the land of Canaan. They’re still to be committed to the rest in the land of all the tribes.

“They also possess the land which the Lord your God is giving them. Then you shall return to your own land, and possess that which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise” (verse 15).

So they’re to do the battles of the conquest, then they’re to go back to their homeland that’s been established in the trans-Jordanian region. But they have to be involved in this conquest.

Now in Joshua 21:43-45, we have a certain note made really about the conclusion of the conquest and really beyond that. Joshua 21:43-45:

So the Lord gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it. And the Lord gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the Lord gave all their enemies into their hand. Not one of the good promises which the Lord had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass.

Now going then to 23:1, this is after all of this has taken place at the end of Joshua’s life. Again, he’s talking about the Lord has given you rest. This emphasis upon rest is very important. And it, of course, is one of the major themes we’ve been developing in this course. If you notice then, after Joshua 21, you go into Joshua
22 and the tribes, the trans-Jordanian tribes—the two and a half tribes; Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh—now are released to go to their land in the trans-Jordan.

[Joshua] 22:1:

> Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and said to them, “You have kept all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, and have listened to my voice in all that I commanded you. You have not forsaken your brothers these many days to this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord.”

So they have gone in, they have successfully helped the people to conquer the land. So what we have then is within this framework of this conquest of the land, we have the concern about the two and a half tribes and their occupation of the trans-Jordanian region. They are to rest in the trans-Jordan. They are to help the rest of the nation take the land. This is very important for the unity of the twelve tribes of Israel. Now we need to pay close attention, however, to the tension between the rest and the need to continue to conquer. In [Joshua] 23:4: “See, I have a portion to you these nation which remain as an inheritance for your tribes, with all the nations which I have cut off, from the Jordan to the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun.” verse 7, “So that you will not associate with these nation, these which remain among you, or mention the name of their gods,” and so on. So there are nations still there that need to be conquered.

[Joshua 23] verse 12: “For if you ever go back and cling to the rest of these nations,” the ones that are still there, and don’t actually expel them and continue the work, then there’s a real problem. In other words, there’s ongoing conquest that needs to happen. In Judges 1 and then in 2:14 of Judges, we begin to get moving into this period of time where they haven’t actually been successful at staying loyal to the Lord. We mentioned this when we mentioned Judges 2:1 and following. The point is there’s a tension here. They have been given rest, but they have to continue to conquer, because not all of the remnants of the Canaanites and the various people have been run out of the land or conquered. In fact it appears that at least parts of Joshua 13–21 were written at a later date. Now the Bible claims no date, as we mentioned before, for any of the dates for Joshua through Kings in terms of who wrote it and when, but there are certain reflections upon this. And this affects how we read Joshua 12—that passage we read about the rest being established, and none of the promises have failed.
If you turn with me to look at II Samuel 7. This is when David is wanting to build a house, and it’s put this way in II Samuel 7:1:

“Now it came about when the king lived in his house, and the Lord had given him rest on every side from all his enemies.”

Well that’s very similar to what we read in the last two verses of Joshua 21. It seems that we have here in Joshua 13–21, where we’re establishing the rest and talking about the rest and how it was established, and all the way to II Samuel 7 we have a historical framework around everything in between. Actually it doesn’t get all accomplished in Joshua’s days. There’s rest that’s established, but there’s ongoing tension with remnants of the people in the land. Now therefore we get from Joshua 21 through to the time of II Samuel, the time of David, when things are finally established and [there’s] full rest in the land. And Joshua 13–21 kind of gives us a picture of how that’s all accomplished and functions through that particular time.

So if we turn then to, for example, Joshua 19, there are a lot of things that could be done with understanding this, but this may be a good illustration of the issue that we have and how this is all put together. Joshua 19:47-48:

The territories of the sons of Dan proceeded beyond them; for the sons of Dan went up and fought with Leshem and captured it. Then they struck it with the edge of the sword and possessed it and settled in it; and they called Leshem Dan after the name of Dan their father. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages.

Now this actually doesn’t happen until the period of the judges. We can see this in Judges 18:27. This was talking about the tribe of Dan when they’re moving and they’re establishing themselves at Dan.

“Then they took what Micah had made and the priest who had belonged to him, and came to Laish,”

which is the same as Leshem in Joshua 19. They came to the region up north there by Dan near Mount Herman. [Judges 18] verse 29:

“They called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father who was born in Israel; however, the name of the
Now the point is that therefore this actual conquest of Dan, which would formerly have been called Laish or Leshem, happens in the period of the judges. It’s after Joshua is already dead. So this is actually in Joshua 19 a summary of how the conquest continued after Joshua is already dead through the troubled time of the Period of Judges even. So we get this summary then in Joshua 12–21 which really is summarizing from a later point of view all the conquest of the land, because the foundation was laid in the time of Joshua. So it flashes forward and looks forward to how the various parts of the land are conquered through history down through the Period of Judges, even down to the time of David when, finally, it’s not until the time of David that they conquer Jerusalem. And that’s clear from the text in specific places.

Now there’s a lot that could be done with these particular complications, but it’s clear that what we have in this particular material is a theology of rest that’s essential to understanding what God is doing in the history of Israel. He’s wanting to give them rest, but that requires that they be faithful to Him. And if they are not faithful to Him, they’re not going to have rest.

Joshua 22 then picks up and talks about the establishment of the two and a half tribes in the trans-Jordanian region. They set up an altar and so on. There’s a real confusing situation. I have some notes there on Joshua 22. They make an altar, and that offends the people of Israel because they’re not supposed to make altars in the land aside from the one that’s in the tabernacle. And so what happens is there’s a big conflict, but it’s all straightened out and the result is that there’s proper settlement of the trans-Jordan region as well as Canaan. So there was proper settlement then of the trans-Jordanian as well as in the land of Canaan itself as a result of all this.

Now one of the things that comes out as important in the book of Joshua is this whole issue of the ban, or, in Hebrew, the word kherem, which means complete annihilation of the inhabitants of Canaan. In Joshua 2, as part of the conquest, we get this stated very clearly, for example, verse 10:

“For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed.”
And that’s the word for “ban” or “you completely annihilated them.” Chapter 6:17-19: “The city shall be under the ban [talking about Jericho], it and all that is in it belongs to the Lord.” That’s what the ban means; it really comes from the idea that it’s completely devoted to the Lord. That means it goes to the Lord. “Only Rahab the harlot and all who are with her in the house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. As for you, only keep yourselves from the things under the ban, so that you do not covet them and take some of the things under the ban,” of course later on Achan [Joshua 7] does this and the result is that we have a serious problem in Israel.

“And make the camp of Israel accursed by taking something under the ban and bring trouble on it. But all the silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron are holy to the Lord; they shall go into the treasury of the Lord.”

Verse 6:21: “They utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.”

This is the ban, and the basic rule is based upon theology again in the book of Deuteronomy. Let’s turn to Deuteronomy 7 to understand what this is all about. There are several passages we need to look at to get out what the Bible says in regard to this. Deuteronomy 7:1-6:

When the Lord your God brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and stronger than you, and when the Lord your God delivers them before you and you defeat them, then you shall utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor to them. Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. For they will turn you sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you. But thus you shall do to them: you shall tear down their altars, and smash their sacred pillars, and hew down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire. For you are a holy people to the Lord you God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession.
That’s the terminology that’s being used specifically in Exodus 19:5-6 where they are this special possession of the Lord. We talked about that earlier.

“The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because your were more in number than any of the peoples; you were the fewest of all peoples. But because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your fathers” (Deuteronomy 7:7-8).

Now remember, the Abrahamic covenant is the foundation of the Mosaic covenant. Mosaic covenant fits under that umbrella of the Abrahamic covenant. The commitment to the fathers is the reason that the Lord brought them out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Verses 9-11:

Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments; but He repays those who hate Him to their faces, to destroy them; He will not delay with him who hates Him, He will repay him to his face. Therefore, you shall keep the commandment and the statutes and the judgments which I am commanding you today, to do them.

The basic logic of this whole thing is there’s a need to destroy these nations that are in the land, unless they lead the people astray.

Chapter 20 of Deuteronomy, we’ll come back and say more about other passages even in Genesis, but let’s turn to chapter 20 in the book of Deuteronomy starting in verse 10. This is warfare law that’s being set in Deuteronomy 20 starting with verse 10:

When you approach a city to fight against it, you shall offer it terms of peace. If it agrees to make peace with you and opens to you, then all the people who are found in it shall become your forced labor and shall serve you. However, if it does not make peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it. When the Lord your god gives it into your hand, you shall strike all the men in it with the edge of the sword. Only the women and the children and the animals and all that is in the city, all its spoil, you shall take as booty for yourself; and you shall also use the spoil of your enemies which the Lord your God has given you. Thus you shall do to all the cities that are very far from you [in other words outside the promise land], which are not of the
cities of these nations nearby. [Verse 16] only in the cities of these peoples that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance [in other words Canaan], you shall not leave alive anything that breathes. But you shall utterly destroy them, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite and the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that they may not teach you to do according to all their detestable things which they have done for their gods, so that you would sin against the Lord your God (10-18).

This is basic theology for understanding this passage in Joshua 6 and so on for the ban. It’s already in the theology of Deuteronomy.

Now the rationale actually picks up from Genesis 15:16 when God makes His covenant with Abraham where He makes a particular statement in that section. He’s talking about He’s not going to give Abraham the land yet. It’s not going to be until generations later. Verse 16: “Then in the fourth generation they will return here [after they have been in Egypt], for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.” In other words, He’s waiting for them to get just so corrupt that His judgment upon them is fully justified in terms of completely wiping them out. It’s like this land has become like the whole land was before the flood in Genesis. Everyone is corrupting His way in every particular possible way, and the result is the Lord finally brings a judgment on them—a final destruction.

In Deuteronomy 9:5, this comes out specifically:

> It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land, but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord your God is driving them out before you, in order to confirm the oath which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The oath that the Lord swore, Genesis 15 is the place where that is really set forth. That’s what we’ve been referring to, and he’s picking it up here and saying,

> “Again, it is because of the wickedness of these nations that God is pronouncing this ban on them to wipe them out, unless they corrupt everything else including the people of God that come into the land to take to it as their inheritance.”

Now this whole concept, then, of the ban is associated with that. And the same term is used in Leviticus 27: For anything that is
completely devoted to the Lord has to be completely given to Him on the altar; completely offered to Him. Achan’s violation, conviction, and execution in Joshua 7 is based upon him wanting to take some of these things. The things were actually (the silver and the gold that he took and so on) things that were belonging to the Lord. They did not belong to anyone but the Lord; they were to be given to the Lord. He took some and hid them in his tent, and as a result he has actually stolen the Lord’s holy things. This ends up in execution, then, of him and his family for doing this. Now the Gibeonites come along in Joshua 9, and they realize that this ban has been pronounced upon them. So what they do is they present themselves as if they have come from a foreign land. Now remember, in Deuteronomy 20 it’s only those that are in the land that are to be executed completely and so on and given under the ban. So they present themselves as outside the land and they’re just traveling to meet the Israelites and so on. Well the Israelites make a covenant with them, because if they live outside the land then they don’t have to apply the utter destruction to them. They find out later that this was a trick and the Gibeonites actually lived in Gibeon in the land, and therefore they have made a covenant that they should not have made. They should have gone to the Lord first in order to determine whether they were telling the truth. But in the meantime, they had sworn an oath to the Lord, so now they cannot wipeout the Gibeonites. The Gibeonites then become people who are laborers within Israel.

Now the geographical pattern then of the conquest—they move in, cut through the land, defeat Jericho, cut the north from the south, then there’s a southern campaign going down into the south, a northern campaign that takes place in the north, and then you get the summary of this in Joshua 11. So you have the division of the land into the various parts of the land for the book of Joshua’s conquest of the land. And we see the history of all of this developed in this particular book. They get established, and now we’re ready to move on to the book of Judges, which shows that although they are established in they land, they also become corrupt in the land.