

LEGEND OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

To the Hebrew text of the OT books there is generally added a postscript QZJ that is called "a help" or "attachment". I term it a "postscript" and find that very often vital facts about a particular book can be gleaned from the incisive lines within the postscript. From meditation on these factors one discovers within the Hebrew text it is possible to establish what I am pleased to call the "legend" of the book; by this I simply mean a brief on the story of the book – its key – that which should be read in connection with its writing and content.

TEXTUAL COMMENT QZJ

1 LEGEND – "POSSESSING OUR POSSESSIONS" AND "WHOLLY FOLLOWING"

*There follows a two liner comment called "HAZAK" or "HAZEK" in the Hebrew text. This short comment supports the book and provides help with its understanding. The strength of Joshua and the conquest was seen in the re-naming of all the cities and territories using Jewish names and the territories of which this scribe provides us the impressive number of 656. It would be difficult for a gentile scholar to reach such precision although I have found over 500 conquests in a cursory check. The value of this enumeration is that it supports the view that the book is primarily about "God-given possessions" and that thankfulness and joy of **possessing our possessions** that we as NT believers see focussed in this old book. We like the victors of the conquest are to glorify the name of Jehovah Nissi – our Jeshua-Jesus.*

The scribal comment tells us that Israel's banner carried the name-YAHWEH NISSI. The purpose of the book is not simply historical but it is a story that shows us how Joshua from the early trauma of seeing God at work in the Exodus became like Caleb a man who wholly followed the LORD and remained "a man bound fast" to God; "a man girding on the armour of faith"; "a man undaunted"; "a man increasing in prosperity" and "a man prevailing". The book is a "must read" for the Christian who is committed to "wholly following the LORD". The two principles above are key to understanding the book of Joshua.

2 JEHOVAH NISSI – LIVING IN VICTORY

The Hebrew textual QZJ help or postscript to which I have made reference reads:-

(A) THE SEPARATE PARTS OF THE BOOTY AT SHECHEM FROM THE CONQUEST OR "CASTING OF THE SHOE" OF JOSHUA BEING MARKED OFF WAS 656.

(B) AND THE VICTORIOUS FLUTTERING BANNER WAS SIGNED IN THE ANCIENT LANGUAGE (cf Psalm 20 5 –THE SIGN OF YAHWEH is ADONAI ELOHIM – and in this name victory cries of YESHUA would rend the air.

(C) ALSO THE HALF PORTION

(D) AND THE COUNT OF THE SPOIL

(E) AND HIGH PLACES AND WATCHTOWERS WERE ESTABLISHED OR NAMED IN OUR ANCIENT LANGUAGE

Among the above comments I select the reference to "the victorious fluttering banner". The outstanding victories of Joshua characterise this book and his submission to Christ the Captain of salvation was the secret to his success. It is no

different today. This is another **key** in the legend of the book and to our living out the faith.

3 THE LANGUAGE AND LAW OF OUR RACE GO HAND IN HAND

As you will observe from the QZJ several references are made to the “ancient language” of Israel. The people of the Jews owe their continuance to the LORD and chief among the other factors that have contributed to their survival is their language and their Torah which are inextricably linked. Some believe Moses who was inspired to write the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, is also the fountain head of the Hebrew language. That would mean he made a substantial contribution to its expression and perhaps modified its alphabet though the fathers from Abraham would have written and spoken in what was called the “language or lip of Canaan” (Isaiah 19.18). How did Hebrew become the language of Canaan? Hebrew emerged as a result of two main influences. First the earliest Semite Shem himself may have lived in or near Jerusalem as a speaker of the world’s first language-close in structure to the language of Ugarit or Ras Shamra **and closely related to ancient Aramaic**. Second, with the invasion under Joshua following the work done by Moses to modernise its writing, the ancient language kept alive by Israel in Egypt entered Canaan again in the written style of Moses with the conquest. Confirmation of its development and distinctives at this time is the re-naming of all the mountains and fortresses in pure Hebrew. It became refined under the usage of the early settlers who adopted loan words from Phoenician and other remaining remnants of the population: it parallels both in script and meaning its cousin tongue Chaldee which was popularly spoken and written simultaneously. Thereafter the Hebrew language was very considerably advanced by the niceties and proverbs and songs of Solomon and of course the psalms of David. The importance of Hebrew then is that it carries to us by tradition the very oracles of God from the Garden of Eden and times of the Ark of Noah and the lips of Abraham and the law of Moses in a fashion. Joshua’s reference to “the ancient language” confirms its place as amongst the root languages of all mankind if not the most ancient language of all in one or other Semitic form. To summarise the third key to the book is the “Word of God” given under the hand of the prophet Moses. In a true theocracy the inspired prophet and his word counted in everything. The word of God is the only sure guide not only to the nation of Israel but to the church of Christ. Paul writing to the Romans reminded them that Israel possessed the oracles of God and we should possess ourselves of them as well. Obedience to the word of God is **key** to the book of Joshua and also to possessing our possessions.

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A BIBLE COMPANION