

The Conquest

A conquest there surely was, but recent archaeology has agreed with Alt, who long ago saw that the record suggests a gradual, not a sudden, conquest. Traces of that gradual conquest are still visible in the sudden-conquest account in Joshua, with its massacres of entire populations.

(39) Khirbet el-Mastarah. This site near Jericho was occupied by a band of Hebrews who later *conquered* Jericho, and eventually other places as well.

(40) Joshua. There was no sudden Conquest, but these two accounts of the distribution of land show a memory of a more gradual process.

(41) The Song of Deborah. Its claim to be the oldest thing in the Bible is here considered separately, lest it unduly interrupt our reading of Judges.

(42) Twelve Judges. Hereditary kings are oppressive. Judges gathers twelve heroes to argue that there could be a *non-hereditary* rotating leadership.

(43) The Need for a King. This addendum gives the opposite answer to the Judges question: a king will after all be necessary to secure public order.

(44) The Philistines. Pressure from this warlike coastal people may have been the reason why the priestly faction finally accepted a king.

In the next section, the necessary Kingship will finally happen, and the majority of the priestly party will commit themselves to a national form of state. It is at this point that the "House of David" becomes the definition of the state, its rationale of continued identity.