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School of Ministry and Theology

A SOCIO-RHETORICAL INTERPRETATION

OF JOSHUA 6

An Honours Project

Presented in Partial Fulfilment

of the Requirements for THHN42100

Theology Honours Thesis

by

Abel C. Iorgulescu

October 2012

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DEDICATION

To Annaleese – my beautiful daughter and treasured possession

whom I pray will grow to love and trust Yahweh, the God

who is faithful in keeping His promises.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Honours Thesis

Avondale College

School of Ministry and Theology

Title: A SOCIO-RHETORICAL INTERPRETATION OF JOSHUA 6

Name of Researcher: Abel C. Iorgulescu

Name and degrees of faculty adviser: Dr. Wendy Jackson, BHB, MBChB, FRACP,

MDiv, PhD candidate.

Date completed: October 2012

The *ḥērem* war in Joshua 6, which demands total destruction of the city and
its inhabitants, presents a God who at first glance appears to be merciless and cruel.

This thesis employs socio-rhetorical interpretation as described by Vernon
Robbins to explore Joshua 6. It aims to better understand God's involvement in the
ḥērem war, and to determine what this involvement says about God's character.

The comprehensive picture that emerges from the five textures of socio-
rhetorical interpretation reveals that Yahweh's anger is not against people or other
nations, but against sin that destroys His creation. Rather than being merciless and
cruel, a careful study of Joshua 6 shows that Yahweh is in fact merciful and full of
love towards His creation. This love is demonstrated in the fact that God
accommodates Himself to His sinful people. While violence is used in the process of

the conquest, it is violence against sin and is redemptive in its nature, bringing salvation a step closer to its final fulfilment. This salvation is intended not only for the Israelites, but also for all the other nations. Joshua 6 also highlights God's love by presenting Him as a covenant keeper, thereby strengthening the faith of the Israelites in Yahweh who keeps His promises.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANE	Ancient Near East
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BBR	*Bulletin for Biblical Research*
BR	*The Biblical Archaeologist*
CTJ	*Calvin Theological Journal*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
OT	Old Testament
SwJT	*Southwestern Journal of Theology*
SRI	Socio-rhetorical Interpretation
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

The character of God in the Old Testament (hereafter OT) is commonly

attacked, ignored or misunderstood because of the many violent acts which appear to

be condoned by God in the biblical text. In an attempt to make sense of the biblical

stories and defend the character and image of God, some scholars try to separate the

God of the OT from the God that Jesus portrayed in the New Testament, while other

scholars are led to conclude that the 'atrocities' described in the OT never occurred,

or at the very least were never commanded by Yahweh. It is the author's contention

that better understanding of the text will reveal a God whose character does not need

defending, and thus preclude the need for such radical manipulations of the text as

suggested above.

Background of the Task

The book of Joshua is one of the most violent books of the OT with its vivid

descriptions of the war scenes that involved Israel at Yahweh's command. One

chapter in particular, chapter 6, has been widely analysed and misinterpreted in in

drawing conclusions about Yahweh's character and the manner in which He brought

the Israelites into the land of Canaan.

In order for one to correctly understand the message of Joshua 6 it is essential

to carefully consider elements such as the word patterns, the time and culture in

which the text was written, the historical evidence of the account, the social and cultural context, the beliefs, assumptions, and values of people at that particular time in history, and finally the role of the passage in divine history. When all these elements are together considered, a better insight of the text emerges, and a clearer and more accurate perception of God's character is revealed.

Statement of the Task

The aim of this study is to employ Vernon Robbins' methodology entitled *socio-rhetorical interpretation* (SRI) in order to develop a holistic understanding of Joshua 6 and consequently of Yahweh's character. This methodology requires the researcher to look at the text of Joshua 6 from five different perspectives or textures. These five textures are: *the inner texture* (getting inside the text), *the intertexture* (entering the interactive world of the text), *the social and cultural texture* (living with a text in a world), *the ideological texture* (sharing interest in commentary and text), and *the sacred texture* (seeking the divine in a text).

Expectation of the Thesis

The application of SRI to Joshua 6 is expected to provide at least two major findings. First, it will offer a new perspective on the text as Robbins's textures are carefully designed to separate the researcher from his/her biases and let the words, the world and context of the chosen passage reveal the meaning of the passage.[1] Second, this study will create an awareness of the misunderstandings that some researchers have when they approach the OT text, and it will reveal the necessity of continuing to analyse other OT texts where Yahweh is accused of condoning or authorising violent behaviour.

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[1] Vernon Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996), 14.

Limitations

The limitations of this study emerge from the nature of the socio-rhetorical methodology. The categories used in the socio-rhetorical methodology are largely based on findings from the 1st century. Texture three in particular, utilizes a social and cultural framework that is not entirely applicable to the time period of the conquest. In addition, each of the five textures of SRI, has many subtextures, some of which are not relevant to an OT study. Consequently, while this study will address all major textures, it will concentrate on subtextures of most relevance to the OT while omitting those of little or no relevance.

Outline of the Study

This thesis consists of eight main chapters as follows.

Chapter II, the literature review, will introduce the reader to the recent literature written on the chosen passage and highlight the different approaches to the text. It will then focus on two major aspects which are crucial to the understanding of the passage: God's role in the origins of OT wars, and the meaning of the Hebrew word *ḥērem* in the context of war.

Chapter III will outline the methodology which will be employed in this paper. It will define and explain the five textures of the socio-rhetorical interpretation and the manner in which they will be applied to the text of Joshua 6.

Chapters IV through to VIII will individually employ the five textures of SRI in the study of Joshua 6 with findings summarized at the end of each chapter.

Chapter IX will provide the summary and conclusion of the entire study, and will recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The passages of the OT that describe God as a warrior, or as some scholars claim, a genocidal commander, have been the subject of much study. This literature review firstly considers what has been written recently on God's role in the origins of OT wars. Secondly, it will outline the meaning of the Hebrew word *ḥērem* that is the focus of many research papers, and it will evaluate its application to Joshua 6. Thirdly, this paper will present an overview of the various contemporary theories regarding the conquest of Jericho and Canaan. Lastly, some areas for further research will be suggested.

God's Role in the Origins of OT Wars

Society is disgusted by genocides, repulsed by ethnic cleansing and struggles to deal with the presence of war in the Bible. The books of the OT talk extensively about war, and especially about war that came under God's command and which called for genocide or ethnic cleansing. Scholars however are divided on how these stories should be understood. Some consider that God literally commanded these wars while others suggest that the wars were not a response to the command of God. These two groups of theories, together with their advocates are explored below.

God did not Command the OT Accounts of *Ḥērem* Wars

The first set of theories considers that God did not command the accounts of genocide noted in the OT. These accounts of war were fabrications or exaggerations

constructed for a specific purpose. Well-known scholars who take this view include Jenkins, Stark, and Seibert who believe that the accounts of genocide mentioned in the OT are merely fabrication by an editor who took a story and framed it in a specific way to fit the culture of the time and to secure Israel's political power.[2]

In his recent controversial book, *Laying Down the Sword: Why We Can't Ignore the Bible's Violent Verses,* Jenkins is appalled by the accounts of the wars that the Israelites carried out against the Canaanites, Amalekites and other nations.[3] He remarks that the atrocities created by the Israelites "were terrible even by the standards of the ancient world."[4] He concludes that God did not command the wars, nor were they for the purpose of dealing with Canaanite sins. Rather, the war waged by the Israelites against the Canaanites was because they happened to be in the 'wrong place at the wrong time.'[5]

Eric Seibert in his latest book *Disturbing Divine Behaviour* similarly concludes that God's commands to destroy the Canaanites and other nations were merely a human invention.[6] Seibert notes that the descriptions of wars in the OT present an ambiguous image of who God is and of what He does because the OT writers were more concerned with "literary persuasion than with historical objectivity."[7] Thus every OT reader needs to make a difference between the "textual

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[2] Philip Jenkins, *Laying Down -the Sword: Why We Can't Ignore the Bible's Violent Verses* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2011), 209; Thom Stark, *The Human Faces of God* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 105; Eric A Seibert, *Disturbing Divine Behaviour* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2009), 108.

[3] Jenkins, *Laying Down the Sword,* 28.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., 45.

[6] Seibert, *Disturbing Divine Behaviour,* 108.

[7] Ibid.

God and the actual God" because writers of the OT attributed to God certain commands and actions that He never gave to his people.[8]

Thom Stark, in his book *The Human Faces of God,* perceives the fact that the Canaanites were not warned, in the same way as the city of Nineveh was warned of its potential destruction, as another element in support of the view that God did not command the wars.[9] He further questions why women and children were massacred in these wars.[10] Due to his failure to find appropriate answers to these and other similar questions, Stark perceives the stories of the OT as an untruthful account of the events. Stark along with Jenkins further suggest that the fact that the OT wars have promoted violent acts throughout Christian history, and have stimulated other acts of genocide, should make the reader question whether God truly commanded such wars.[11]

Stark also disagrees with apologists that claim that God destroyed sinful nations so He could bless all the nations through Abraham's seed.[12] Similarly, Seibert completely rejects the idea that God destroyed certain nations because of their sins because nowadays this would sound like justifying genocide, and this cannot be acceptable.[13]

All three authors, Jenkins, Stark, and Seibert bluntly remark that the accounts of war that we have in the OT did more evil than good to humankind throughout

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[8] Ibid., 170-171.

[9] Stark, *The Human Faces of God*, 107.

[10] Ibid., 108.

[11] Ibid., 100; Jenkins, *Laying Down the Sword,* 45.

[12] Stark, *The Human Faces of God*, 109.

[13] Seibert, *Disturbing Divine Behaviour,* 177.

Christian history. Thus, the war stories are unlikely to be the product of revelation as they inspired people throughout history to do more harm than good.

<center>God did Command the OT Accounts of Ḥērem Wars</center>

While Jenkins, Stark and Seibert criticise the OT passages which discuss wars that suggest genocide and separate them from God's involvement, others scholars take the war stories literally, and resolve God as responsible for wars. Scholars in this category include: Christopher Wright, Paul Copan, Tremper Longman III , Daniel Reid, Gordon McConville, Stephen Williams, and Alden Thompson.

Christopher Wright, in the book *The God I Don't Understand,* makes the point that the post-modern reader needs to carefully consider the "framework of the Old Testament story."[14] The implication is that one should look through the "lenses of culture and rhetoric of ancient warfare" and not through a post-modern mindset with standards imposed my modern constitutions.[15]

Similarly, Paul Copan in his book *Is God a Moral Monster?* points out that the OT stories are remote both in time and culture, hence the passages can be heavily misunderstood.[16] He further suggests that when the wars are analysed, readers should not perceive them from a "post-Enlightenment critique" as most scholars do.[17]

Scholars who believe that God commanded the OT *ḥērem* wars suggest that this type of war reveals more about the Israelites than about God. The inferiority of

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[14] Christopher J.H. Wright, *The God I Don't Understand* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 87.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011), 23.

[17] Ibid., 61.

the OT standards needs to be taken into consideration, because God worked with Israel in the context in which He found them; and unfortunately this included wars.[18] Copan further remarks that the problematic passages of the OT do not represent God's ideal, but rather His response to the great lack of progress towards human restoration.[19]

Alden Thompson's expands on this idea in the book *Who's Afraid of The Old Testament God?* He states that the OT wars reflect how cruel God's people were and how far they were from upholding the kinds of standards that the New Testament and even the Geneva Convention promotes today in our society.[20] The wars either tell us that God was very cruel or that He was very patient with His people.[21] Thompson chooses the second alternative because it corresponds with Jesus' teachings, and Jesus exemplified a better and fuller representation of God.[22] Thomson concludes that the wars described in the OT books represent a "drastic accommodation on the part of God to the needs of a fallen people."[23]

Similarly Gordon McConville and Stephen Williams in their book *Joshua,* suggest that God had to work with His people in situations that were foreign and

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[18] Alden Thompson, *Who's Afraid of the Old Testament God* (Gonzales, FL: Pacesetters Bible School, 2003), 72.

[19] Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster?* 61.

[20] Thompson, *Who's Afraid of the Old Testament God, 62*.

[21] Ibid., 25.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., 72.

totally contradictory to His nature.[24] They also suggest that the Israelites did not know that God commanded the *ḥērem* wars with a "heavy heart."[25]

Tremper Longman III and Daniel Reid in their book *God is a Warrior,* write that God not only commanded Israel to fight, but is presented as a warrior throughout the Bible.[26] As a warrior God "fights on behalf of his people Israel against their flesh-and-blood enemies."[27] The battles themselves were an act of worship in which the soldiers fought only after spiritual preparation.[28] God's presence was in their midst and God was the one who brought the victory.[29]

Thomson, McConville and Williams, Wright and Copan all mention that the Canaanites were destroyed because they were morally corrupted; they represented a spiritual danger to the Israelites, they were known for grotesque practices such as child sacrifices and cult prostitution, and they were totally wicked and beyond redemption.[30] These wars therefore, were an act of judgement and they were carried out by divine revelation.[31] Copan further suggests that God did not want to destroy the Canaanites, rather, He wanted to destroy their immorality and their false worship

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[24] Gordon J. McConville, and Stephen N. Williams, *Joshua* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 122.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Tremper Longman III, and Daniel Reid, *God is a Warrior* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 17. Longman and Reid's assertion is supported biblically by multiple references to God as warrior in the Psalms. Other literature on God as warrior includes Millard Lind, *Yahweh is a Warrior* (Scottdale, PA: Herald, 1980); Theodore Hiebert, "Warrior, Divine," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary,* vol 6, ed. David Noel Freedman 876-880, (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992).

[27] Longman, and Reid, *God is a Warrior*, 4.

[28] Ibid., 27.

[29] Ibid., 28.

[30] Thompson, *Who's Afraid of the Old Testament God,* 76; McConville, and Williams, *Joshua,* 111; Wright, *The God I Don't Understand,* 92; Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster?* 66.

[31] Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster?* 188.

which affected nations around them.[32] Similarly, Wright suggests that wars in the OT should be read in the "framework of God's plan of salvation," because God's ultimate purpose is to save everyone that desires this.[33]

H̲ērem

In addition to God's role in the origins of war, the Hebrew word *h̲ērem* needs special attention, as its meaning can shed light on the puzzling passages of the OT. The *Theological Lexicon of the OT* defines *h̲ērem* essentially as to "ban or to come under ban."[34] The ban usually refers "to that which is forbidden, either because it is accursed and should be destroyed or because it is very holy."[35] When *h̲ērem* is used in the context of war, it represents a "religious act which dedicates the enemies to God" resulting in their total destruction together with their habitat.[36]

A careful study of *h̲ērem* in scholarship reveals that there are a variety of concepts of what role *h̲ērem* plays in Ancient Near Eastern (hereafter ANE) culture, each coloured by the opinions of the scholar regarding the nature of the OT war stories. Scholars, who advocate that the war stories are the product of ancient culture, view *h̲ērem* differently from scholars who accept the war stories as the product of revelation. Thus, we have two main schools of thought on the notion of *h̲ērem.*

According to Jenkins, who regards the war stories as the product of ancient culture, the Israelites stand out among their neighbouring countries for the cold

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[32] Ibid., 173.

[33] Wright, *The God I Don't Understand,* 100.

[34] C. Brekelmans, " ērem, Ban," in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament,* vol.2, eds. Ernst Jenni, and Claus Westermann, 474-477, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 474.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid., 475; Victor P. Hamilton, " ērem," in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis,* ed. Willem A. VanGemeren, vol 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 276.

blood they shed and for the utter destruction they accomplished. Jenkins further

notes that *ḥērem* warfare was abnormal in the times of the OT, and that "full scale

genocide was rare" at that time.[37]

On the other hand, Thompson who looks at the war stories as the product of

revelation advocates that *ḥērem* was not God's idea, but a norm so deeply imbedded

in the culture at that time that God had to "tolerate" and work with it.[38] Andrew

Sloane makes this point very clear in his book *At Home in a Strange Land,* where he

mentions that *ḥērem* was practised by the Moabites from the 9th century.[39] Thompson

concludes that, God works within a culture and tolerates some detestable things only

because the transformation of the people's mindset requires time.[40]

Antony Campbell in his book *God and The Bible: Exploring Stories from

Genesis to Job,* suggests that *ḥērem* was a religious concept which described the type

of war that wasn't for profit, since everything was dedicated to God alone.[41] Wright

supports Campbell's assertion, pointing out that *ḥērem* inferred war that resulted in

total destruction.[42] Copan however, suggests that *ḥērem* refers to the destruction only

of warriors and not the non-combatants.[43]

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[37] Jenkins, *Laying Down the Sword,* 40.

[38] Thompson, *Who's Afraid of the Old Testament God,* 98. The seeming contradiction between Thompson and Jenkins over evidence for   ērem in the ANE demands a careful evaluation of sources which is beyond the scope of this paper.

[39] Andrew Sloane, *At Home in a Strange Land: Using the Old Testament in Christian Ethics* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 131.

[40] Thompson, *Who's Afraid of the Old Testament God,* 98.

[41] Antony F. Campbell, *God and the Bible: Exploring Stories from Genesis to Job* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2008), 72.

[42] Wright, *The God I Don't Understand*, 87.

[43] Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster?* 175-176. In his research, Copan came to the conclusion that Jericho was more like a fortress where soldiers were placed in order to overlook the main roads in Canaan. The size of the fortress was not too large, a fact which enabled the Israelites to circle the

However, another possible interpretation might be Wright's finding that the Bible writers followed literary conventions that employed "rhetorical exaggeration" in their descriptions of war.[44] This would explain Copan's observation that the Israelites didn't appear to utterly destroy the Canaanites, or other nations such as the Amalekites, and Kevin Vanhoozer's observation that history does not support the biblical account of what the Israelite army did to the Canaanites.[45]

Michael Coogan also regards *ḥērem* as a religious concept. In the book *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures,* Coogan suggests that the motivation for *ḥērem* was to avoid the risk of apostasy, as the Israelites were always tempted to adopt the Canaanites' worship style.[46] This point is made even clearer when Sloane suggests that *ḥērem* "reflects God's passionate hatred for sin" and that God takes sin very seriously.[47] Similarly, McConville, Williams and Thompson see the conquest as an act of God's judgement.[48] Since *ḥērem* was a very special war which represented God's

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city seven times on the seventh day, and also to fight against it. Copan also explains that the expressions used for total destruction of women and children in the story of the conquest (e.g. Josh 6:21) were in fact used in the ANE to refer to a complete destruction that did not necessarily include the destruction of women and children. Copan also bases his theory on the fact that the Canaanites seem to reappear in Scripture even when prior passages note that they were destroyed. By implication the Canaanites were not totally annihilated

[44] Wright, *The God I Don't Understand*, 87.

[45] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Theological Interpretation of the Old Testament: A Book by Book Survey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008), 89.

[46] Michael D. Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 206.

[47] Sloane, *At Home in a Strange Land*, 140.

[48] McConville, and Williams, *Joshua, 112*-116; Thompson, *Who's Afraid of the Old Testament God,* 76.

judgment, "sexual abstinence and other forms of ritual purity" were required from the soldiers.[49]

A final point to be made concerning *ḥērem* is Sloane's proposal that the wars carried out by the Israelites were "theological in nature and not ethical."[50] No matter how justifiable this might sound, the presence of *ḥērem* in the OT book is still difficult to fathom.

The Conquest of Jericho

Joshua 6 focuses on God's military strategy concerning the conquest of Jericho, a key city in the conquest of Canaan as a whole. It also portrays Joshua's obedience to God's command, the miracle of Jericho's walls collapsing and their victory over the enemy. This section of the paper will summarize the recent scholarship relating to the conquest of Jericho and Canaan. First, there is the theory of the *genuine conquest* held by conservative biblical scholars who believe that the conquest was a successful attack in which the Canaanites were destroyed and the land occupied. This theory is discussed by Christopher Stanley in his book *The Hebrew Bible: A Comparative Approach,* where he states that despite the lack of archaeological evidence, conservative scholars still accept the biblical account of the conquest in Joshua 6.[51] Representative scholars who hold this view include Copan, and McConville and Williams.[52]

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[49] Coogan, *The Old Testament,* 207.

[50] Sloane, *At Home in a Strange Land*, 141.

[51] Christopher Stanley, *The Hebrew Bible: A Comparative Approach* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 263.

[52] Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster?* 175-176; McConville, and Williams, *Joshua,* 113-114. Copan argues for the fact that Jericho was part of a large number of Canaanite cities that were used mainly by the army, while the civilians lived in the countryside, outside these cities. Copan further states that the presence of Rahab in Jericho does not prove the presence of civilians in the city, as she was just in charge of the "fortress tavern", a fact that was normal in ANE. Bryant G. Wood,

Second, Albrecht Alt puts forward the *peaceful infiltration model* in which the Israelites did not conquer the land, but rather they came peacefully into the land while looking for new pastures for their flocks.[53] There were some conflicts between Israelites and Canaanites, but the two nations co-existed peacefully during the incipient stage of Israelite migration.[54] Yohanan Aharoni shares the same view as Alt, and he bases his idea on the archaeological evidence of new settlements emerging in the 13th century BCE.[55] However, this theory has been severely criticised for the ignorance of the biblical text and other archaeological findings.[56]

Third, Mendenhall, suggests the *peasants' revolt model* that refers to a conflict that existed in the land of Canaan between villagers and city dwellers.[57] The intensity of the conflict between villagers and city dwellers increased when a group of slaves that had escaped from Egypt arrived in the vicinity of Canaan with a new belief in a god called Yahweh.[58] The city dwellers refused the entry of the slaves and thus an alliance was formed between the slaves from Egypt and the peasants who

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"Dating Jericho's Destruction: Bienkowski is Wrong on All Counts," *BAR* 19 (1990): 51. However, Wood's description of the abundance of food that was found in the ruins of Jericho might suggest that the city was in fact populated by both civilians and soldiers. Copan is the only one, as far as I am aware, that suggests that at the time of the conquest, Jericho was inhabited only by soldiers.

[53] Albrecht Alt, *Essays on Old Testament: History and Religion,* trans. R.A. Wilson (Sheffield: Sheffield, 1989), 159.

[54] Ibid. 168.

[55] Yohanan Aharoni, *The Archaeology of the Land of Israel: From the Prehistoric Beginnings to the End of the First Temple* (London: SCM, 1982*),* 167.

[56] Walter C. Kaiser, *A History of Israel: From the Bronze through the Jewish Wars (*Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 148.

[57] George Mendenhall, "The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine," *BR* 25 (1962): 73.

[58] Ibid. 74.

revolted and succeeded.[59] Few scholars agree with this model which Maxwell Miller has described as a "modern construct superimposed upon biblical tradition."[60]

The last two theories are also mentioned by Victor Matthews and James Moyer in their book *The Old Testament: Text and Context.*[61] Due to a lack of archaeological evidence of a war between 2000 BCE and 1100 BCE in that specific area, Matthews and Moyer conclude that the conquest of Jericho is either a subtle infiltration of smaller groups of Israelites or it is a revolt.[62] The point of the story is to present and describe Yahweh as a warrior; hence the text was more concerned with persuasion than with presenting authentic facts.[63]

Other authors supporting similar views are Jenkins and Campbell who say that there is no evidence for Joshua's conquest as described in the Bible.[64] Jenkins suggests instead that editors framed a story in a way that was culturally relevant to their time.[65] While Campbell suggests that different passages in the book of Joshua, where the Israelites are forbidden to marry the locals, imply that the locals weren't totally destroyed.[66]

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[59] Ibid, 83.

[60] Maxwell J. Miller, "The Israelite Occupation of Canaan," in *Israelite and Judean History,* ed. John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1977), 279.

[61] Victor H. Matthews, and James C. Moyer, *The Old Testament: Text and Context* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), 74-79.

[62] Ibid., 112.

[63] Ibid., 111.

[64] Jenkins, *Laying Down the Sword,* 54; Campbell, *God and the Bible*, 38.

[65] Jenkins, *Laying Down the Sword,* 209.

[66] Campbell, *God and the Bible,* 37.

However, both the *peaceful infiltration model* and the *peasants' revolt model* lack archaeological support and ignore the biblical text, and consequently should not be considered reliable models of the conquest.

Summary Statement

This literature review has highlighted three main points. First, it referred to the disagreement over the role of God in commanding the OT accounts of *ḥērem* war. Second, it revealed the different views, of scholars in relation to the Hebrew word *ḥērem*. Finally, it presented the dispute over the nature of the conquest itself in relation to the story outlined in Joshua. Although a variety of theories have been proposed, many authors have avoided wrestling with the specific details of Joshua 6 which may shed more light on the theology of war and the context of *ḥērem*. Other authors generally avoid looking at the book of Joshua through the ANE perspective, taking into consideration the world, the culture and the historical background of the passage, preferring instead to apply a historical or documentary criticism. Consequently, no author, that I am aware of, has looked carefully at whether *ḥērem* really is the highlight of Joshua 6, or whether another theme is intended. This implies that the word pattern of Joshua 6 has not been carefully studied, or it was not studied at all.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Rationale

Biblical scholars have long employed different methodologies in order to bring to light the 'buried' meanings of the text of the OT. Each methodology varies in the emphasis placed on certain aspects of the text. While it might be imagined that a variety of interpretations would be problematic, they have in fact proved to be an enhancement for biblical scholarship, particularly when passages are hard to understand or pose difficult questions for the reader.

In an effort to better understand the difficult passage of Joshua 6, this study will adopt a methodology that has not previously been applied to Joshua 6: the socio-rhetorical method of interpretation. This is a method which has been proven to be highly effective in drawing out new ideas when it has been applied to both biblical and non-biblical texts. It was developed by Vernon K. Robbins and subsequently described in his seminal book, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-rhetorical Interpretation.*[67]

The idea behind socio-rhetorical interpretation is implicit in the name of the methodology. First of all, the prefix "socio" indicates that the methodology will search for an anthropological and sociological understanding of the context in which the biblical text was written.[68] Secondly, the term "rhetorical" denotes the

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[67] Vernon Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity, 1996).

[68] Ibid., 1.

importance of the language in a text "as a means of communication among people."[69] Consequently the socio-rhetorical method of interpretation merges the "ways people use language with the ways they live in the world." [70]

In the words of Robbins the socio-rhetorical method (hereafter SRI) stands out because it successfully integrates "literary criticism, social-scientific criticism, rhetorical criticism, postmodern criticism and theological criticism together into an integrated approach to interpretation." [71]

The socio-rhetorical method has been largely employed in the New Testament studies and the advantages of this study can be observed from works such as those of Ben Witherington III and Kayle de Waal.[72] Witherington has embraced many facets of SRI in his Socio-Rhetorical commentary series which has been published over the last seventeen years.[73] While Witherington has been criticised for discarding parts of Robbin's outline of SRI methodology, his work has been

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[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid., 2.

[72] Other scholars who have employed the socio-rhetorical methodology in their study include: David A. DeSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle "To the Hebrews"* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000). Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009). Jang-Hwan Moon, "Paul's Discourse for the Corinthians' Edification: A Socio-rhetorical Interpretation of 2 Corinthians 10-13," (PhD diss., University of Stellenbosh, 2004). Riku Pekka Tuppurainen, "The Role(s) of the Spirit-Paraclete in John 16:4B-15. A Socio-rhetorical Investigation (PhD diss., University of South Africa, 2006). Patrick Gray, "Abortion, Infanticide, and the Social Rhetoric of the Apocalypse of Peter," *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 9 (2001): 313-337. Bernard H.J. Combrink, "Shame on the Hypocritical Leaders in the Church: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of the Reproaches in Matthew 23," in D. B. Gowler, L. B. Bloomquist, and D. F. Watson, *Fabrics of Discourse: Essays in Honor of Vernon K. Robbins* (Harrisburg/London/New York: Trinity Press International, 2003) 1-35. Vernon K Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2009).

[73] Witherington's Socio-Rhetorical commentaries now cover most New Testament books. Early volumes were published by Eerdmans, and later volumes by IVP.

welcomed in the scholarly world because it offered a deeper understanding of the biblical text. [74]

Likewise, Kayle de Waal, another NT scholar, in his book *A Socio-rhetorical Interpretation of the Seven Trumpets of Revelation: The Apocalyptic Challenge to Earthly Empire* has achieved a comprehensive and new understanding of the seven trumpets of Revelation by following Robbins' outline.[75] De Wall stands in contrast to Witherington by including all of Robbins' main textures in his research.

The SRI methodology, which contains five textures, can be applied to any ancient passage in order to clearly understand the meaning of a text that is remote to a postmodern reader both in time and space. Despite the wide application of Robbins' method of interpretation in NT and classical studies, it has not been widely employed in interpreting the OT.[76] Nevertheless, one scholar, Martin Oosthuizen,

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[74] Kayle B. de Waal, *A Socio-rhetorical Interpretation of the Seven Trumpets of Revelation: The Apocalyptic Challenge to Earthly Empire* (New York, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2012), 16-17. De Waal notes that Witherington leaves out elements of *inner texture* and he fails to remain faithful to the categories of the *ideological texture* as well. On the other hand, many scholars have welcomed Witherington's III work. Justin Marc Smith, "Book Reviews: The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 40 (2010): 53. Justin Smith considers Witherington's commentary on the Captivity Epistles to reveal new evidence about Paul's authorship and to expose new meanings of the rhetoric found in the letters. Will Rutherford, "Socio-rhetorical Commentary-Pastoral and Johannine Epistles," *The Expository Times* 119 (2008): 463. Rutherford commends Witherington's work on Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John, as it is "highly informative" and presents a refreshing view on the letters. William S. Kurz, "Review Article on Ben Witherington III, The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-rhetorical Commentary." *Biblica* 81 (2000):128-129. Moreover, Kurz states that Witherington's commentary on the book of Acts represents a balanced word which offers a "cautious reading of the biblical text." Eric Eve, "Book Review: Romans and Rhetoric; Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary," *The Expository Times* 116 (2005): 136. Another scholar, Eric Eve compliments Witherington for his commentary on the book of Romans, where Witherington revealed the techniques that the apostle Paul employed in order to persuade the Gentile Christians, without leaving aside the theology that is found in the book.

[75] de Waal analyses 'The Seven Trumpets of Revelation' by rigorously applying all five textures that Robbin's methodology recommends.

[76] Vernon K. Robbins, *"Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation,"* in The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament, ed. David E. Aune (Chichester, NH: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 195-198. Some of the writings in which the SRI methodology was employed are: writings of Plato (Dialogues), Xenophon (Memorabilia),Philostratus (Life of Appollonius, and sections of Flavius Josephus, Philo Judaeus, rabbinic literature and portions of the Qu'ran.

has successfully applied the SRI methodology in interpreting Deuteronomy 15:1-18, with resultant new insights into the text.[77] The paucity of OT studies using SRI is most likely due to concerns about the application of the first century rhetorical forms to older materials.[78] While such concern is in part justified, the concept of persuasion is present in the OT books. Even though it is not as developed as it is in the NT, the OT authors did structure their writings for a specific purpose. Thus, applying this methodology, which examines the structural features of a text, will help the scholar to determine the main themes and ideas of passages without necessarily having to assign a NT rhetorical category.

While recognizing that there may be some limitations with the application of 1st century rhetorical categories to Joshua 6, this author considers that applying the basic methodology of SRI to Joshua 6, will uncover fresh insights for several reasons. First, there are many textures that the SRI requires the researcher to analyse, some of which receive very little emphasis in other methodologies. Second, these textures move the discussion from theories regarding one or more words, to the entire context of the passage. Third, Robbins' methodology requires the researcher to analyse lengthier units instead of small portions. Finally, the order of textures is carefully designed by Robbins to lead to the discovery of new and original ideas. It is a gradual analysis that separates the researcher from his/her biases and lets the text reveal its richness.[79]

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[77] Martin J. Oosthuizen, "Deuteronomy 15:1-18 in Socio-Rhetorical Perspective," in *Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte*, eds. Eckart Otto, and Klaus Baltzer (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1997), 64-91.

[78] One of the limitations of this methodology is that texture 3 in particular (social and cultural texture) is based on 1st century rhetorical forms. Apart from this issue, the socio-rhetorical methodology is widely applicable.

[79] Robbins, *Tapestry*, 14.

Outline of Methodology

Robbins recommends five vital steps that help the researcher to explore the multiple textures within a text.[80] This section will outline these five focuses of interpretation that will help the researcher to provide a better understanding Joshua 6.

Inner Texture

The main purpose of inner texture is to focus on words as a communication tool, a technique that seeks to determine first of all the "meaning" of the words and then the "real interpretation of the text."[81] The advantage of this analysis at the level of individual words is that it helps the researcher to detach himself/herself from biased views and it creates the path to simply look and listen to "the words themselves."[82] This technique enables the researcher to acquire "an intimate knowledge of words, word patterns, voices, structure, devices and modes in the text," which will complement and supplement other understandings of the text.[83]

Robbins describes six types of inner texture in a text: repetitive texture, progressive texture, opening-middle-closing texture, narrational texture, argumentative texture, and sensory-aesthetic texture. He recommends that the researcher should choose three or four of the strategies of analysis and apply them to interpret a particular passage.[84] In this study, two subtextures, the argumentative texture and sensory-aesthetic texture will be disregarded because they do not meet

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[80] Robbins, *Exploring*, 3.

[81] Robbins, *Tapestry,* 30.

[82] Robbins, *Exploring*, 7.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid., 8

the needs of the selected OT passage.[85] The remaining four subtextures are all relevant to the chosen passage.

The four types of inner textures that will be employed in the exegesis of Joshua 6 are briefly described below.

Repetitive Texture and Pattern

The focus of the repetitive texture is to identify the "words and phrases that appear more than once in a unit."[86] The question that this texture answers is: "What patterns emerge from the repetition of certain words in the text?"[87] This repetitive texture points out the key words of a unit that will eventually reveal the theme of the text.[88] Further, the repetition of a word or phrase usually gives glimpses into the overall rhetorical movements in the discourse.[89]

Progressive Texture and Pattern

The progressive texture "emerges out of repetition" with the purpose of identifying the "sequences of words and phrases throughout the unit," and to reveal

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[85] Ibid., 21-29. The argumentative texture seeks to examine various "kinds of inner reasoning in the discourse" in order to identify the purpose of the text. This texture searches for "assertions, reasons, opposites, analogies, examples, and citations of ancient written testimony" employed in the text in order to persuade the reader. The argumentative texture was disregarded because aspects of it are covered in the repetitive and progressive texture. The other disregarded texture, the sensory-aesthetic texture and pattern, looks for a "range of senses" such as "thought, emotion, sight, sound, touch, smell" in the words of the text. While the text of Joshua 6 might evoke a wide range of senses, this author considers that more will be gain from the discussion of open-middle-closing texture and of the narrational texture. In addition, Robbins recommends that a researcher should focus on no more than three or four subtextures within the inner texture.

[86] Ibid., 8.

[87] Robbins, *Tapestry,* 50.

[88] Robbins, Exploring, 8.

[89] Ibid.

the "sequence of sub-units" throughout the text.[90] The progressive texture discloses

the aim of the entire passage, and in the context of Joshua 6 it will reveal what is the

main concern of the text.

Opening-middle-closing Texture and Pattern

The opening-middle-closing texture refers to the "beginning, body and

conclusion" of a section of a text.[91] Usually, most interpreters have differing views

concerning the positioning of the opening, middle and closing sections. This

subtexture allows a researcher to examine the beginning, body, and the closure of the

text. Furthermore, it reveals a new meaning of the passage being studied.[92]

Narrational Texture and Pattern

The narrational texture relies on the idea that passages often have an implied

narrator who decides which people to bring on the 'stage' and which ones to

exclude.[93] The narrational texture generally shows a "pattern that moves the

discourse programmatically forward."[94] Robbins says that the frequent occurrence of

a particular type of speech, such as a demand or a question, creates a "narrational

pattern in the discourse."[95]

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[90] Ibid., 9-10.

[91] Robbins, *Tapestry*, 50.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid., 55.

[94] Robbins, *Exploring,* 15.

[95] Ibid.

Intertexture

The second texture that Robbins suggests is intertexture, which represents the interaction "of the language in the text with 'outside' material and physical 'objects,' historical events, texts, customs, values, roles, institutions and systems."[96] There are four dimensions to the intertexture method: oral-scribal intertexture, cultural intertexture, social intertexture and historical intertexture. This section however, will summarise two textures which will be employed in this study. The *cultural intertexture* and the *social intertexture* will not be engaged at this stage in the study because the major elements of these intertextures will be covered in the third main texture which Robbins calls the *social and cultural texture.*

Oral-scribal intertexture

The aim of the oral-scribal intertexture is to identify the passage's use of texts outside of itself.[97] There are four ways in which this can be achieved. Firstly, recitation implies the transmission of a story, from either oral or written tradition, in the "exact words."[98] Secondly, recontextualization represents the use of phrases from the biblical text without specifying that they were taken from somewhere else.[99] Thirdly, reconfiguration refers to the restructuring of an antecedent tradition.[100] Lastly, narrative amplification is actually the interweaving of recitation, recontextualization and reconfiguration.[101]

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[96] Ibid., 40.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Robbins, *Tapestry,* 102.

[99] Robbins, *Exploring*, 48.

[100] Robbins, *Tapestry,* 107.

[101] Robbins, *Exploring,* 51.

Historical intertexture

This intertexture discusses the events that have occurred at specific times in specific locations.[102] Robbins advocates that in order to interpret a historical event, one needs to take into consideration the social, cultural and ideological background.[103] Moreover, in order for this method to provide good results one must carefully consider the multiplicity of the data and the nature of the data. The multiplicity of data refers to the "limited information about a historical event," and the nature of the data requires identifying if a passage is a historical inscriptions or a literary discourse.[104]

Social and Cultural Texture

The third texture is the social and cultural, which requires the investigation of the "social and cultural 'location' of the language and the type of social or cultural world that language creates."[105] This texture is divided into three main areas: specific social topics, common social and cultural topics, and final cultural categories. The final cultural categories refers to the rhetoric that is used in a passage in order to identify one's cultural location. This will not be discussed in the paper for two reasons: first, the NT rhetorical categories are not as relevant to an OT study; second some of this information will be covered in the intertexture, under the oral-scribal intertexture

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[102] Robbins, *Tapestry,* 117.

[103] Robbins, *Exploring,* 63.

[104] Ibid., 63-64.

[105] Robbins, *Tapestry,* 144.

Specific Social Topics

Specific social topics analyses the language of the passage being studied in order to identify the worldview that it evokes.[106] Robbins describes seven different modes of perceiving the world. First, the conversionist who sees the "world as being corrupt because people are corrupt," and believes the world can be changed only if the people will change.[107] Second, the revolutionist who suggests that only the destruction of the creation and the "social order" will "save people."[108] Third, the introversionist "views the world as irredeemably evil," and one can be saved only by withdrawing from it. Fourth, the gnostic-manipulationist view which holds that people can overcome evil only if they solve their problems in the right way.[109] Fifth, the thaumaturgical view encourages people to seek personal messages from spirits, obtain cures and perform miracles.[110] Sixth, the reformist sees the "world as being corrupt because the social structures are corrupt," and salvation can occur only if the social structures are changed.[111] Lastly, the utopian seeks to establish a new order that will "eliminate evil."[112]

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[106] Robbins, *Exploring,* 72.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Robbins, *Tapestry,* 147.

[109] Robbins, *Exploring*, 73.

[110] Robbins, *Tapestry,* 149.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Robbins, *Exploring*, 74.

Common Social and Cultural Topics

Investigation of common social and cultural topics involves identification of

the values and beliefs of the world in which the biblical text was written.[113] The

purpose of this subtexture is to introduce the reader to the values and beliefs of the

world of text, in order to gain an unbiased understanding of the passage, in

particular, to prevent misunderstanding due to researchers looking at the text with

postmodern eyes.[114]

Ideological Texture

The ideological texture covers areas such as the individual location of the

individual reader, relations to groups within the text, modes of intellectual discourse,

and spheres of ideology.[115] A comparison with the book of Kayle de Waal on the

Seven Trumpets of Revelation, the paper written by Oosthuizen on Deuteronomy 15,

and Robbins' chapter on ideology, led to the conclusion that the ideological texture

is best restricted to the ideology of power in a text.[116] Robbins suggests that when

the ideology of power is considered, one must use Foucault's guidelines in order to

interpret and understand the power relations in a text.[117] Oosthuizen followed

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[113] Ibid., 75.

[114] Ibid., 76-78. In this section Robbins talks about 8 important components: (1) honour, guilt and rights cultures; (2) dyadic and individualistic personalities; (3) dyadic and legal contracts and agreements; (4) challenge-response; (5) agriculturally based, industrial, and technological economic exchange systems; (6) peasants, labourers, crafts people, and entrepreneurs; (7) limited, insufficient, and overabundant goods; (8) purity codes.

[115] Robbins, "Dictionary of Socio-rhetorical Terms," Socio-rhetorical Interpretation. http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/index.cfm (accessed June 25 2012).

[116] de Waal, *A Socio-rhetorical Interpretation of the Seven Trumpets of Revelation,* 53.

[117] Robbins, *Exploring*, 113.

Foucault's guidelines when he analysed Deuteronomy 15, and this paper follows the same principle.[118]

Foucault's principles comprise five distinct steps, and they are described as follows. First, is the system of differentiations, which permits a person that is in a "dominant position" to govern over those who are in inferior positions.[119] Robbins, commenting on this wrote that the first step of Foucault's guidelines "differentiates between people who give orders and people who carry out those orders."[120]

The second step in Foucault's guidelines requires the researcher to discover the "types of objectives" that the person in a dominant position wants to achieve.[121] This feature refers to the desires that the person in a dominant position wants to maintain.[122] The third step is to "identify the means for bringing" the relationship between the one in a high position and the one in a lower position into being.[123] The fourth crucial step is represented by the "forms of institutionalization of power."[124] In the context of NT the "forms of institutionalization of power are the temple, the Jewish court, [and] the Roman military establishment."[125] The challenge of this paper will be to discover, what forms of institutionalized power, if any, existed during the conquest of Jericho. The last feature of Foucault's guidelines requires the

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[118] Oosthuizen, "Deuteronomy 15:1-18 in Socio-Rhetorical Perspective," 64-91.

[119] Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1991), 50.

[120] Robbins, *Tapestry,* 113.

[121] Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power,* 50.

[122] Robbins, *Tapestry,* 113.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid., 114.

researcher to analyse the "degree of rationalization of power relations."[126] This final

step requires from the researcher to rationalize the power relations in the text in order

to discover the bigger picture of truth that was contained in that passage.[127]

Sacred Texture

The focus of the last texture is to help the reader in his/her search for sacred

aspects of the text and for the divine nature.[128] In order for this to be achieved,

Robbins recommends eight different categories to guide the reader. These categories

are: deity, holy person, spirit being, divine history, human redemption, human

commitment, religious community, and ethics.

This paper will focus on only three of these categories. Firstly, the divine

history, which represents the concept that divine powers are in charge of the events

that take place in the history of this world, in order to achieve a particular

outcome.[129] Secondly, the human commitment category, which refers to the special

role that humans play "in revealing the ways of God" to other people."[130] Finally, it

will review the category of ethics, which is concerned with the ways in which

people, who are committed to God, act and think.[131]

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[126] Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power,* 50.

[127] Robbins, *Tapestry,* 114.

[128] Ibid., 120.

[129] Ibid., 123.

[130] Ibid., 126.

[131] Ibid., 129.

Summary Statement

The SRI methodology has been applied to biblical and non-biblical texts, and while it has been predominately applied to NT passages because of its use of 1st century rhetorical categories, it can be successfully applied to OT books, via the five textures which Robbins described. This methodology has been shown to bring a new understanding of the NT text, and is expected that the employment of this methodology will also reduce the bias of the researcher, offering a rewarding analysis of the OT text.

CHAPTER IV

INNER TEXTURE

This chapter will carefully analyse the words within Joshua 6 in order to gain

"an intimate knowledge of words, word patterns, voices, structure, devices and

modes in the text."[132] Four sub-textures will be considered: the repetitive texture,

progressive texture, opening-middle-closing texture, and the narrational texture.

Repetitive Texture

The repetitive texture presupposes that the frequency of "words and phrases"

is important in the interpretation of the text.[133] Bullinger points out that the repetition

of a word frequently in a passage is for the purpose of emphasising and "calling

attention to it."[134] Therefore, the repetition of words and ideas assist the interpreter

by revealing the most important ideas, themes and patterns of the text. [135] Given this

important role, Sandy and Giese lament the fact that in the OT, identification of

repetition has been mainly confined to Hebrew poetry, whereas it should have been

noticed in the prose as well for its rhetorical role.[136] In prose, they suggest, the

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[132] Robbins, *Exploring,* 7.

[133] Ibid., 8

[134] E.W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 264.

[135] Robbins, *Exploring,* 8.

[136] Brent Sandy, and Ronald L. Geise, *Cracking Old Testament Codes* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 77.

repetition is present in a text because the narrator wanted to make sure some "names, objects, or themes" are not overlooked by the reader.[137]

The frequency of significant words in Joshua 6, along with the verses they occur in has been documented in Table 1. Words are listed in the order of their first occurrence within the passage.

Table1. – Words and phrases that are Repeated in Joshua 6

REPETITIVE TEXTURE		
Words/ Phrases	**Occurrences**	**Verses in Joshua 6**
Jericho (יְרִיחוֹ)	4	vv. 1, 2, 25, 26
Yahweh (יְהוָה)	16	vv. 2, 6, 7, 8 (x2), 11, 12, 13 (x2), 16, 17, 19 (x2), 24, 26, 27
Joshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ)	11	vv. 2, 6, 8, 10, 12, 16, 22, 25 (x2), 26, 27
Priests (כֹּהֲנִים)	12	vv. 4 (x2), 6 (x2), 8, 9 (x2), 12, 13, 16, 20
Seven (שֶׁבַע)	14	vv. 4 (x4), 6 (x2), 8 (x2), 13 (x2), 15 (x3), 16
Rams' horns (שׁוֹפְרוֹת הַיּוֹבְלִים) Or horns (שׁוֹפְרוֹת)	15	vv. 4 (x2), 5 (x2), 6, 8 (x2), 9 (x2), 13 (x3), 16, 20 (x2)
Ark (אֲרוֹן)	10	vv. 4, 6 (x2), 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13(x2)
Shout (רוּעַ)	9	vv. 5 (x2), 10 (x3), 16, 20 (3)
Rahab (רָחָב)	3	vv. 17, 23, 25
Under ban (חֵרֶם)	4	vv. 17, 18 (x3)

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[137] Ibid. It may seem an exaggeration to suggest that repetition has mainly been noted in Hebrew poetry, however, the observation of Sandy and Giese is correct in suggesting that repetition has not received the attention that it should have in other Old Testament genres.

At first glance it can be seen that in addition to introducing the major characters in the story, Joshua 6 draws our attention to the idea of the tabernacle expressed through the presence of the priests, the ark, the ram's horns and of the number 7. I will return to this idea later.

The first word, from the repetitive texture table is *Jericho* (יְרִיחוֹ) which appears four times in Joshua 6. According to Alter, this repetition is a "type-scene repetitive structure," because the city of Jericho appears at a significant time in Joshua's life.[138] It is significant to note that Jericho is mentioned in the first verse but also in the second last verse of chapter 6. This is because Jericho has a "symbolic status" representing the Promised Land, or the land of Canaan.[139] The four occurrences of the city of Jericho in Joshua 6 are to remind Israel that God gives that land, and the conquering of this city foreshadows the conquering of the entire land.[140]

Used sixteen times in Joshua 6, the name of *Yahweh* is the most repeated word in the chapter, a fact that implies that the entire chapter is focused primarily on God, rather than on Joshua, Jericho, or *ḥērem.* The repetition serves not only to move focus to God, but also to tell people about God. God alone is the one who possesses enormous power and He is capable of delivering what He promises.[141] Furthermore, whenever the biblical writers use Yahweh as a name for God, instead of Elohim or

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[138] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2011), 121. Alter defines the type-scene repetitive structure as the episode that occurs "at a portentous moment in the career of a hero." This type of repetition found in the Bible is also shared by other "narrative literature."

[139] Gordon J. McConville, "Jericho," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books,* eds. Bill T. Arnold, and H.G.M. Williamson, 541-544 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 542.

[140] Ibid.

[141] McConville, and Williams, *Joshua,* 215.

Adonai, they refer to God as the originator of the covenant with his people.[142] In this case, the choice of the name Yahweh reminded Israel that Yahweh was the God of Moses, and this implied that Joshua was under the guidance of the same God.[143]

The second character named in the passage under study is *Joshua* (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ) which means "Yahweh is salvation." It is used in the passage not only to portray Joshua as the leader, but also to remind the people of Israel that "Yahweh is salvation"; thus Joshua's name served as a continuous reminder that Yahweh was "Israel's real deliverer."[144]

Having considered the main named characters and places that contribute to the repetition in the first part of the passage, we turn our attention to the repeated words which are linked with the idea of the religious rituals of the Israelites. The *priests* (כֹּהֲנִים) are mentioned almost as often as the name Yahweh. This is significant because as "mediators of the covenant" between the Israelites and Yahweh they represented Israel's relationship with God.[145] Thus when the priests are at the forefront of the army and the battle, they in fact remind people that Yahweh will give them the victory, because He is always faithful to His covenant.

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[142] J.M. Frame, "God, Biblical Doctrine of," in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible.* vol 2, eds. Tenney, Merrill C., and Moises Silva, 784-794 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 787. See also Martin Rose, "Names of God in the OT," In *The Anchor Bible Dictionary,* vol 4, ed. David Noel Freedman, 1001 -1011 (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 1006-1008. Adonai (אֲדֹנָי) on the other hand means Lord. It was used as a replacement for "the personal name of God, Yahweh." When the term Adonai is used, God is referred to as the "heavenly king" and He is to be worshiped as a king. The other name used for God, Elohim, traces it beginning to the Hebrew root אֵל which means god. The term Elohim, is in fact a plural word that serves to emphasise the absoluteness of God, He is the "God of gods, the highest God."

[143] David N. Freedman, "YHWH," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol 5, eds. Johannes G. Botterweck, and Helmer Ringgren, 500-521, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 500.

[144] Victor P. Hamilton, *Handbook on the Historical Books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, Esther (*Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008), 15.

[145] Davos W. Dommershausen, "Kōhēn," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol 7, eds. Johannes G. Botterweck, and Helmer Ringgren, 60-75, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 74.

Rams' horns (שׁוֹפְרוֹת הַיּוֹבְלִים) were used for announcing important events and to summon people to war.[146] They symbolized power, and the loud sound of them "stressed the publicness of an event."[147] In the Jewish setting however, the שׁוֹפָר (horn) also played a role in worship. In particular, the sound of the horn was heard in the Jewish camp on the Day of Atonement, communicating a message of warning "concerning holiness and judgement", but it also represented a "celebration of victory and blessing for the land."[148] Flanders suggests that the sound made by the ram's horns might have "symbolised the voice of Yahweh," a voice that was warning people of the judgement to come.[149] The sound of the horns was also reminiscent of God's manifestation at Mount Sinai, where people trembled before God.[150] Moreover, the horn was also had "sacred associations" in the context of war as it was used not only for announcing the battle but also to call people to repentance.[151]

From the above findings, we conclude that in the context of Joshua 6, the employment of the ram's horns seems to have multiple purposes. On one hand it announced Yahweh's judgement over the city of Jericho. On the other hand, for the Jews the sound of the horn represented God's presence among them, victory over the

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[146] H.M. Best, and D. Huttar, "Music, Musical Instruments," in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible.* vol 4, eds. Tenney, Merrill C., and Moises Silva, 343-356 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 352.

[147] Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery (*Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1998), 900.

[148] Victor H. Matthews, "Music and Musical Instruments," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol 4, ed. David N. Freedman (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 936. The use of the horn in worship is very prominent in the book of Leviticus, especially chapters 25 and 26.

[149] Henry J. Flanders, Robert W. Crapps, and David A. Smith, *People of the Covenant (*New York, NY: Oxford, 1996), 233.

[150] Marten H. Woudstra, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Joshua* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdamans, 1991), 110.

[151] Matthews, "Music and Musical Instruments," 936.

land, and a celebration in anticipation of the great delivery that Yahweh would achieve.

The *ark* (אָרוֹן) is also frequently mentioned in Joshua 6 usually in combination with a descriptor defining it as the Lord's or on two occasions directly noting it as the "ark of the covenant." The ark contained the Ten Commandments, which represented the "documentary basis of God's redemptive covenant with Israel."[152] It also represented God's promise that He will save His people in response to their belief and obedience.

Furthermore, the mercy seat on the ark was the place where Yahweh had declared that he would meet his people and communicate with them.[153] Thus the ark's recurrent mention in Joshua 6 also symbolized God's presence in the middle of the nation, at the centre of their planning for battle, and indeed in the centre of the battle itself.[154] Together, these ideas suggest that the presence of the ark represented assurance for the Israelites that God was with them and that He would bring victory.[155] Moreover, the ark identified Yahweh as the true attacker of the Jericho city, thus it was God's battle and His victory.[156]

Joshua 6 also emphasizes the number *seven* (שֶׁבַע). We are introduced to: seven priests, seven ram's horns, seven days and the seventh day. The number seven is God's number; it represents "spiritual perfection," and suggests the idea of

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[152] S. Barabas, "Ark of the Testimony," in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible* vol 1, eds. Tenney, Merrill C., and Moises Silva, 345-350 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 346.

[153] See Ex 25:22.

[154] Arthur W. Pink, *Gleanings in Joshua (*Chicago, IL: Moody, 1964), 156.

[155] Richard Hess, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Joshua* (Leicester, England: Intervasrsity, 1996), 130.

[156]Robert L. Hubbard, *NIV Application Commentary: Joshua* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 190.

totality, completeness or fullness.[157] In addition, Davis suggests that the number

seven is the "number of the covenant between God and man."[158] Thus, the repetition

of number seven in Joshua 6 serves to emphasise the covenantal relationship

between Yahweh and the Israelites, assuring them not only of the fact that God will

be faithful to His covenantal promises in giving them the Promised land, but also

that the victory will be complete.

Another word that is frequently found in Joshua 6 is the verb to *shout* (רוּעַ)

that appears nine times in the text. The verb shout usually refers to the war cry that

the people of Israel had to make when they attacked the enemy or throughout the

battle.[159] In Joshua 6 however, the shout of the people does not take place until the

seventh day of marching around the city; they were to be silent until that time. This

play on sound reinforces the idea that this is not Israel's battle but the Lord's. The

shout here is not a war cry.[160] It represents acknowledgement that Yahweh has given

Israel the victory.[161]

The second half of Joshua 6 introduces a new character, Rahab, who is

mentioned three times in the passage. She is referred to as the prostitute that saved

the life of the spies not because she was persuaded by them, but rather because she

was in awe of the God of the spies.[162] Due to her acknowledgement of Yahweh as

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[157] Bullinger, *Figures of speech used in the Bible,* 158, 167; E. Otto, "Šeʿa," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament,* vol 7. eds. Botterweck, Johannes G., and Helmer Ringgren, 336-367, trans. Douglas W. Stott (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 351.

[158] John J. Davis, *Biblical Numerology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1968), 122.

[159] H. Ringgren, "Rw, Rēa," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament,* vol 13, eds. Botterweck, Johannes G., and Helmer Ringgren, 412-415, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 413.

[160] Trent C. Butler, *Word Biblical Commentary: Joshua* (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 68-69.

[161]Ibid.

[162] Hamilton, *Handbook on the Historical Books*, 23.

being the supreme God, Rahab's life and the lives of her family were saved. The example of Rahab in Joshua 6 stands in stark contrast to the example of Achan in Joshua 7. Achan is completely destroyed, together with his family, because of his unfaithfulness towards Yahweh.[163] The story of Rahab, placed in the middle of the conquest sequence, stresses that those who were under the sentence of *ḥērem* (the Canaanites) could be spared due to their faith in Yahweh; at the same time, the Israelites could come under the sentence of *ḥērem* if they disobeyed God's word. [164]

The Hebrew word is *ḥērem* (חֵרֶם) that means *under ban* must also be considered due to its repetition in the passage under study. The word *ḥērem* is a *leitwort,* which according to Alter is a word that appears significantly in a text which has its meaning revealed gradually in the passage.[165] The complexity of *ḥērem* can only be observed in the larger context of Joshua 6 that will be discussed in all five textures outlined in the methodology. *Hērem*, however, generally describes a war waged by God that required complete destruction of a city, including men, women, children and animals.[166] While this seems abhorrent, in Joshua 6 it stresses the fact that Jericho and everything it sheltered belonged to God and had to be devoted to Him. The Israelites were told to stay away "from the accursed things," that belong to the Lord, otherwise they would have come under the curse of *ḥērem*.[167]

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[163] McConville, and Williams, *Joshua*, 35.

[164] Ibid.

[165] Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative,* 117.

[166] McConville, "Jericho," 544.

[167] Woudstra, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Joshua,* 113-114.

Progressive Texture

The progressive texture assumes that there is a progression of ideas in the text of Joshua 6.[168] Table 2 over leaf outlines the progression of words and phrases in Joshua 6, and it reveals important themes that provide a better understanding of the passage.

Particularly noticeable in Joshua 6 is a progression in the language about covenant and how God keeps His promises towards His people. The first action or command is given by Yahweh to Joshua, after which Joshua becomes the protagonist of the entire story until the end where it is mentioned that the Yahweh who talked to Joshua in the beginning (v.2) was the same Yahweh who helped Joshua accomplish the victory (v.27).

The name Yahweh, is very strategically situated in Joshua 6. This happens because, as Frame points out, whenever the Yahweh is used, the covenant relationship between God and His people is being emphasised.[169] Moreover, what was so important about the covenant relation is that Yahweh initiated it and He became part of "Israel's affairs."[170]

The placement of Joshua in the telling of the story is also important because the meaning of his name, *Yahweh saves,* reminds people about God who will remain faithful to His covenant and will bring victory in the Promised Land; Yahweh will save His people.[171]

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[168] Robbins, *Exploring,* 10.

[169] Frame, "God, Biblical Doctrine of," 787.

[170] Ibid., 798.

[171] Richard Nelson, "Joshua," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books,* eds. Bill T. Arnold, and H.G.M. Williamson, 559-562 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 561.

Table 2. A Visual Progression of the Significant Words and Phrases in Joshua 6.

PROGRESSIVE TEXTURE					
VERSE	**WORDS/ PHRASES**				
2	Yahweh (יְהוָה)	Joshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ)				
4			Priests (כֹּהֲנִים)	Rams' horns (שׁוֹפְרוֹת הַיּוֹבְלִים) (x2)	Ark (אֲרוֹן)	
5				Rams' horns (שׁוֹפְרוֹת הַיּוֹבְלִים) (x2)		Shout (רוֹעַ) (x2)
6		Joshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ)	Priests (כֹּהֲנִים)	Rams' horns (שׁוֹפְרוֹת הַיּוֹבְלִים)	Ark of Yahweh (יְהוָה אֲרוֹן) Ark of the covenant (הַבְּרִית אֲרוֹן)	
7					Ark of Yahweh (יְהוָה אֲרוֹן)	
8	Yahweh (יְהוָה)	Joshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ)	Priests (כֹּהֲנִים)	Rams' horns (שׁוֹפְרוֹת הַיּוֹבְלִים) (x2)	Ark of the covenant of Yahweh (בְּרִית וַאֲרוֹן יְהוָה)	
9			Priests (כֹּהֲנִים)	Horns (שׁוֹפְרוֹת) (x2)	Ark (אֲרוֹן)	
10		Joshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ)				Shout (רוֹעַ) (x3)
11					Ark of Yahweh (יְהוָה אֲרוֹן)	
12		Joshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ)	Priests (כֹּהֲנִים)		Ark of Yahweh (יְהוָה אֲרוֹן)	

Table 2- continued

13			Priests (כֹּהֲנִים)	Rams' horns (שׁוֹפְרוֹת הַיּוֹבְלִים) (x3)	Ark of Yahweh (יְהוָה אֲרוֹן) (x2)	
16		Joshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ)		Horns (שׁוֹפְרוֹת)		Shout (רוֹעַ)
17	Yahweh (יְהוָה)					
19	Yahweh (יְהוָה) (x2)					
20			Priests (כֹּהֲנִים)	Horns (שׁוֹפְרוֹת) (x2)		Shout (רוֹעַ) (x3)
22		Joshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ)				
24	Yahweh (יְהוָה)					
26	Yahweh (יְהוָה)	Joshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ)				
27	Yahweh (יְהוָה)	Joshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ)				

Consequently, the progression is from God who initiated the covenant, to Joshua who reminds people that Yahweh will give the land of Canaan to the Israelites. Then the transition is to priests, ram's horns and ark of the covenant that each individually point to Yahweh.

The presence of the priests in the battle transformed the entire narrative from a "battle story to a cultic drama."[172] The priests represented the nation's relationship with God, as the covenant of God was mediated through them.[173] They were also bearers of the divine 'ark of the covenant', thus indicating again the covenantal

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[172] Butler, *Word Biblical Commentary: Joshua,* 68.

[173] C.L. Feinberg, and G.D. Fee, "Priests and Levites." in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible.* vol 4, eds. Tenney, Merrill C., and Moises Silva, 963-985 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 964.

relationship of Yahweh with Israel.[174] Moreover, their duty was to represent God before the Israelites and other nations; they were a constant reminder of the divine presence.[175] It is important to note that the carrying by the priests of the Ark of the Covenant for seven days around the city symbolised that Yahweh was the true assailant against Jericho.[176] Then, when Jericho's walls collapsed on the seventh day, this symbolism progressed to its fulfilment, and the evidence that it was Yahweh who had attacked Jericho was visible to everyone.

The transition from 'don't let your voice be heard' to the command to shout represents a progression in the conquest of Jericho. The six-day silence among the people of Israel served as an element of "solemnity of the ceremony" that was part of the battle.[177] The people were told to shout on the seventh day, after the horns sounded, as a symbol of attack, victory, and in order to bring fear into the citizens of Jericho.[178]

The presence of the priests, ram's horns and the ark symbolizes that the march to war was actually a procession and it referred to Yahweh's presence in the midst of His people.[179] All the elements point to Yahweh who fights and wins on behalf of Israel, and everyone had to be aware of that. The glory was to be given only to Yahweh. The last line of Joshua 6 summarises the entire chapter, and says

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[174] Ibid.

[175] Ibid, 965.

[176] Ibid., 190.

[177] Hubbard, *NIV Application Commentary: Joshua,* 189.

[178] Ibid.

[179] Flanders, Crapps, and Smith, *People of the Covenant,* 233.

that Yahweh remained true to his promise, and Joshua's fame was spread throughout the land.[180]

Joshua 6 begins and closes with Yahweh being the God who promises and fulfils His promises. It is a God who remains faithful to the covenant made to His people, and the purpose of this progression is to reveal and emphases this fact. Moreover, Brueggemann states that Yahweh in the book of Joshua is described as the one who "keeps promises, gives gifts, issues orders and is to be obeyed."[181]

Opening-middle-closing Texture

This section will examine the structure of Joshua 6 and its importance to the story. The opening-middle-closing texture allows the researcher to examine the beginning, body and the closure of a text, and its importance in the entire examined unit.[182] An understanding of the structure of Joshua 6 can reveal significant meanings that will stipulate a new understanding of the text.

Joshua 6 falls at a significant point in most structural paradigms of the book of Joshua. Many commentators divide the entire book of Joshua into two main sections: "The conquest in Canaan" (ch 1-12) and "The settlement in Canaan" (ch 13-24).[183] For instance, Davidson identifies a strong parallelism that exists between

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[180] Robert B. Coote, "The Book of Joshua," in *The New Interpreter's Bible,* vol 2, ed. Leander E. Keck, 553-719 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1998), 619.

[181] Walter Brueggemann, "The God of Joshua…Give or Take the Land," *Interpretation. A Journal of Bible and Theology* 66 April (2012): 164.

[182] Robbins, *Tapestry,* 50.

[183] For instance: J. Rea, "Joshua, Book of," in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible.* vol 3, 806; Butler, *Word Biblical Commentary: Joshua*, 1,141; Coote, "The Book of Joshua," 561. ; Donald H. Madvig, "Joshua," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* vol.3, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 250-251.

these two main sections, and he identifies the theme of worship at the centre of both sides. [184]

Not only is the conquest of Canaan as a whole cantered around worship, the conquest of Jericho is constructed around God's military strategy which is more an act of worship than a military siege. Yehuda Radday also notes a clear structure in Joshua and identifies the conquest of Jericho as being the crux of a chiastic structure within the first half of the book.[185] Pressler shares Radday's view arguing that the story of the conquest in Joshua 6 has a pivotal role in the first half of the book because it contains the main themes of Joshua 1-12.[186]

Having examined the context of Joshua 6 attention will now be turned to the structure of Joshua 6 itself. Exploration of Joshua 6 reveals a chiastic structure that emphasises the collapse of Jericho's walls as being the crux of the entire chapter.

> A   Yahweh speaks to Joshua (2-5)
>> B   Joshua speaks to the people (6-7)
>>> C   People followed Joshua's command (8-16)
>>>> D   Joshua reminds people about Rahab (17)
>>>>> E   Instructions about *Ḥērem* (18-19)
>>>>>> F   Jericho's walls collapse (20)
>>>>> E`   *Ḥērem* is applied (21)
>>>> D`   Rahab and her family are spared (22-23)
>>> C`   People followed Joshua's command (24-25)
>> B`   Joshua speaks and curses the city (26)
> A`   Yahweh was with Joshua (27)

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[184] Richard Davidson, *In the Footsteps of Joshua* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1995), 15.

[185] Yehuda T. Radday, "Chiasmus in Hebrew Biblical Narrative,"in *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis.* ed. John Welch, http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/publications/books/?bookid=111&chapid=1288 (accessed May 21 2012).

[186] Carolyn Pressler, *Joshua, Judges and Ruth* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 44. The themes that Pressler refers to in her book are: "sovereign agency of Yahweh who gives the land; the obedience and the worship that constitute Israel's role in the conquest; the importance of Joshua as mediator and leader; the image of God as warrior and war as sacred; and the command to devote the enemy to destruction.

This paper will now analyse the opening, middle and closing sections of Joshua 6 in the context of this chiasm.

Opening

The opening of the passage occurs in verses 1 through 5. It begins with information offered by the narrator on the state of Jericho (6:1), and is followed by Yahweh presenting a divine military strategy (6:2-5).[187] The information about Jericho city being well secured, represents a challenge to Israelite's faith, similar to the challenge presented by the crossing of Jordan.[188] The first verse in Joshua 6 thus highlights the miracle that God was about to do in giving the city to a nation "unskilled in the kind of warfare" that was required.[189]

In Josh 6:2 Yahweh reassures Joshua that Jericho city is already defeated and he has nothing to fear.[190] Joshua is told that the method to overcome Jericho's walls will be through a religious ceremony.[191] Madvig states that the command to circle the city for seven days required faith from the Israelites, faith that God would keep His promise and deliver the city, in the same way in which Moses had to wait for seven days on Mount Sinai before God spoke to him (Ex 24:16).[192]

The opening of Joshua 6 (1-5) presents the great difficulty of conquering the city, but it also emphasizes that the complete solution that will make the victory possible will come from Yahweh; completeness that is stressed by the repetition of

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187 Hamilton, *Handbook on the Historical Books*, 30; Coote, "The Book of Joshua," 613.

188 Pink, *Gleanings in Joshua*, 147.

189 Woudstra, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Joshua,* 108.

190 Hubbard, *NIV Application Commentary: Joshua*, 187.

191 Hess, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Joshua*, 129.

192 Madvig, "Joshua," 278.

number seven. All the elements that are present in the opening of the passage, the seven priests, the seven rams' horns, the Ark of the Covenant and the circling for seven days, symbolize the "presence of God, journeying with His people" and giving them victory.[193]

<center>Middle</center>

While the opening section presents the enormity of the problem and the completeness of God's solution, the middle section, comprised of verses 6-26, provides the actual details of the victory. This section will be presented in the form of the chiastic structure proposed above.

In Josh 6:6-7 Joshua speaks to the people and instructs them in the military strategy that was revealed to him by Yahweh. The assertion that Yahweh brings victory and gives the city to the Israelites frames the story.[194] But while it is Yahweh who brings victory, it is "obedience to the divine commands makes the victory possible."[195] The divine works through human but there is to be no doubt that it is God's victory.

Close to the end of chapter, in Josh 6:26, Joshua speaks again to the people and puts them under an oath before Yahweh, so no one will seek to rebuild the city that Yahweh delivered to them. The chiastic structure, that reflects a parallelism between Josh 6:6-7 and Jos 6:26, is reinforced by Hess who states that Joshua intended for the city to remain destroyed so it could be a "symbol of the power of

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[193] Hess, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Joshua*, 129.

[194] Pressler, *Joshua, Judges and Ruth,* 48.

[195] Richard Nelson, *Joshua: A Commentary (*Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 93.

Israel's God" before other nations.[196] In Josh 6:6-7 the people are given the instruction to conquer Jericho, but once Jericho is conquered the people are told never to rebuild it (Josh 6:26) because it was God who destroyed it.

Furthermore, the third stage in the chiasm is the obedience of the people who listened and followed the instructions given to them by Joshua. The importance of the human participation in the conquest is highlighted in Josh 6:8-16 and then in Josh 6:24-25, where Israel had a significant role to play in the defeat of Jericho.[197] Before the collapse of the walls the people showed faith that God would keep His promise, and after the collapse of the walls people obeyed in totality the instructions received.[198]

The fourth stage of the chiasm represents Joshua's reminder to people about Rahab (Josh 6:17), and the account that the people spared Rahab's life and that of her family (Josh 6:22-23). The promise made to Rahab violates the Deuteronomic law that no Canaanites should be spared (Deut. 20:16-18), but the covenantal relationship with Rahab emphasises that Yahweh wanted to extend mercy to whomever was willing to accept it.[199] Madvig suggests that the story of Rahab creates a better understanding of the theme of "judgment and salvation," which often appear side by side in the Bible.[200] Hess also comments that the story of Rahab draws attention to Yahweh's willingness to show mercy and forgiveness to those

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[196] Hess, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Joshua*, 135.

[197] Pressler, *Joshua, Judges and Ruth*, 48.

[198] Butler, *Word Biblical Commentary: Joshua*, 71.

[199] Paul Copan, "Yahweh Wars and the Canaanites: Divinely-Mandated Genocide or Corporate Capital Punishment?" http://www.epsociety.org/library/articles.asp?pid=63&ap=1 (accessed 13 June 2012).

[200] Madvig, "Joshua," 281.

who seek it.[201] The rescue of Rahab suggests the importance of the covenant in Israelite thinking. Yahweh made a covenant with Israel, and the people believed that God would keep his word, which He did. Likewise, the spies made a covenant with Rahab, she believed them, and her life was saved. The idea of the covenant that is strongly emphasised through the entire chapter is also emphasised in Rahab's rescue.

The fifth stage in the chiasm is represented by the instruction given by Joshua about *ḥērem* (Josh 6:18-19) and how people obeyed the instruction and destroyed everything according to the commandment given (Josh 6:21). Hubbard states that in Yahweh's war, *ḥērem* "takes on a specific religious meaning," because everything belongs exclusively to God.[202] The offensiveness and repulsion created by the notion of *ḥērem* will not be discussed in this section as it will be developed at a later stage in this paper.

Finally, the crux of the chiasm is Josh 6:20 which presents the collapse of Jericho's walls. Pressler states that the "liturgical celebration" of the fall of Jericho's walls suggests that the main point of the story is not to tell what happened at a particular time in history, but what Yahweh "has regularly done, is doing, and can be trusted to do in the future."[203] The collapse of Jericho's walls is the crux of the chiasm because it represents Yahweh's miracle and it highlights that God was faithful to his covenant made with the Israelites. Josh 6:20 represents the fulfilment of the miracle promised to Joshua at the beginning of the conquest and the structure of the text emphasises this aspect.

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[201] Hess, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Joshua*, 133.

[202] Hubbard, *NIV Application Commentary: Joshua*, 191-192.

[203] Pressler, *Joshua, Judges and Ruth*, 49.

Closing

The closing of Joshua 6 is found in verse 27 where the narrator simply
declares that Yahweh was with Joshua. This closing statement parallels Josh 6:2
where Yahweh promised Joshua victory over Jericho, and after all is finished, the
conclusion is that Yahweh was truly with Joshua, as He had promised. Hess states
the Joshua became famous not because of his military strategies, but rather because
Yahweh was with the entire nation of Israel and He remained faithful to the
covenantal promises.[204]

Summary

The repetitive inner texture of Joshua 6 shows that five important words are
often repeated. These words are: Yahweh, Joshua, priests, rams' horns and Ark of
the Covenant (or ark of Yahweh), and they all point to the covenant relationship
between Yahweh and His people. Butler states that the Jericho story provides a good
illustration of Yahweh's promises fulfilled; "What God said, he did."[205] Similarly,
Pressler comments that in Joshua 6 Yahweh accomplished for Israel what it would
had been impossible to achieve in their own power.[206]

This research identifies that the core of Joshua 6 is not *ḥērem* as some
scholars have argued, but Yahweh's faithfulness towards His people and the
significance of the covenantal relationship.

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[204] Hess, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Joshua*, 136.

[205] Butler, *Word Biblical Commentary: Joshua*, 72.

[206] Pressler, *Joshua, Judges and Ruth*, 49.

Narrational Texture

The narrational texture is concerned with the voice of the narrator, the

manner in which he presents the events, and the characters that he chooses to be part

of the action.[207] The voice of the narrator is to be distinguished from the author.

While identification of the author relies on both internal and external evidence,

identification of the narrator who unfolds the story in any particular passage relies

solely on the internal evidence of the text itself.[208] In some cases the narrator and the

author may be the same person, but in others they may be quite different. Beck

suggests that the first thing that the narrator of a passage does is to describe the place

of the action and to introduce the main characters of the story.[209] In the text of Josh

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[207] Robbins, *Exploring,* 15, 18.

[208] Scholars advocate three main views concerning the author of the book of Joshua. See J. Rea, "Joshua, Book of," in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible.* vol 3, eds. Tenney, Merrill C., and Moises Silva, 795-807 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 800; David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary,* vol. 4. (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 999; Pressler, *Joshua, Judges and Ruth,* 3; Woudstra, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Joshua,* 10; Davidson, *In the Footsteps of Joshua,* 8. The first theory supports the Talmudic tradition that the book of Joshua was written by Joshua himself, that his death was recorded by Eleazar son of Aaron, and that the death of Eleazar was recorded by his son Phineas. A second theory states that the book of Joshua was composed by the Deuteronomistic Historians who lived between the 7th and 6th century BCE. For example, Freedman and Pressler suggest that the book of Joshua was composed during Josiah's reign as a response to the questions that arose from the Israelites who were hurting from the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions. Thus, the purpose of the book was to tell people that Yahweh was still in control and cared about Israel. A third theory, supported by Woudstra, suggests that while there is sufficient evidence that the book of Joshua is not written by Joshua, there is also evidence to strongly suggest that the book was written not long after Joshua's death. The book needs to be pre-Solomonic because according to Josh 16:10 the Canaanites still lived in Gezer, a city which was later conquered by an Egyptian Pharaoh during Solomon's days. In addition, according to Josh 15:63 the book needs to be pre-Davidic because Jerusalem was still inhabited by the Jebusites. Moreover, the book might even precede the time of Saul, who violated the terms of the covenant with the Gibeonites (Josh 9:27). This paper supports the Talmud tradition that regards Joshua as the main author of the book and that it was an additional scribe, maybe a priest, who made the final remarks about Joshua's death. Davidson is among the few OT scholars who support the view that Joshua himself might have been the author who recorded the events.

[209] John A. Beck, *God as Storyteller* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 2008), 58-59. Marguerat, Daniel, and Yvan Bourquin, *How to Read the Bible Stories* (London: SCM, 1999), 10. According to Beck, the purpose of the narrator in setting up the scene is to prepare the reader for the action that is about to take place. It also outlines any changes that might take in regards to the main characters of the story. Beck also suggests that the reader should not doubt the story presented by the narrator, because the narrator always seeks to describe the truth. In addition, Marguerat and Bourquin state

6:1-2, the narrator starts by describing Jericho as being a fastened city because of the presence of the Israelites, and he introduces the main characters which are Yahweh and Joshua. Since Joshua is introduced in the third person, and value judgements are made about him, the narrator of Joshua 6 is not Joshua.

In retelling the story, the narrators use different technique that emphasise certain aspects of the narrative. One important technique that biblical narrators use in order to affirm one particular idea is "mirroring of language and actions." [210] This can be observed in Josh 6:3-10 where the command of Yahweh is repeated by the narrator and carried out by Joshua and the people. The purpose of this mirroring is to affirm that the people listened to Yahweh's command, thus fulfilling one of the responsibilities of the covenant, obedience.[211] In using this technique, the narrator also helps the reader to anticipate that the Promised Land will be given to the Israelites on the condition of faithfulness to the covenant.

Another employment of the mirroring technique is when Joshua commands the destruction of the city, the sparing of Rahab together with her family, and the setting aside of the metals for the treasury of the Lord (Josh 6:17-19). His command is mirrored by the actions of the soldiers (described in Josh 6:23-25) who entirely obeyed the word of Joshua. The narrator's plan in using this was to portray Joshua as the respected leader of the Israelites.

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that in most of the cases the Biblical narrator does not place himself in the front line, but rather lives in the shadow presenting events from an omniscient viewpoint.

[210] Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative,* 97-98. The mirroring of language and actions refers to the process where one character describes what he/she would like to happen, and then the narrator describes the "actual happening" in a manner that mirrors the words of the character. See also Beck, *God as storyteller*, 59.

[211] Deut 28:1, 7, 12,13. Edward J. Woods, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Deuteronomy* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), 273-274.The blessings of the covenant are related to the Israelite's obedience to Yahweh's words. The blessings of the covenant include victory over the enemies on the condition of obedience, so what the narrator of Joshua describes is a nation faithful to Yahweh, and God faithful to His people.

The narrator also informs the reader about any changes in the time or location of the story.[212] In the conquest story, there are changes in the time, but not in the place of the story. The narrator keeps the reader informed about the progression from day one through to day seven when the final conquering takes place according to God's promise. In presenting the progression in time, the narrator employs the mirroring technique by describing that Yahweh's command, to circle the city for seven days, was fulfilled by the people.

One last characteristic about the narrator is that he often expresses "value judgments that define characters."[213] This aspect is clearly observed in Joshua 6:27 where the narrator declares that "Yahweh was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land." What takes place here is that the narrator's opinion about Joshua becomes the reader's assessment as well, thus the narrator "controls our point of view."[214] This aspect leads this paper into the next subtexture that examines the objectives of the narrator in the story of the conquest.

Narrational Pattern

The purpose of the narrational pattern is to study and understand the intent of the narrator who carefully selects and crafts his message in order to accentuate the purpose of the entire story.[215] This paper will now analyse the objectives of the narrator in Joshua 6.

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[212] Beck, *God as Storyteller*, 60.

[213] Ibid.

[214] Ibid., 61.

[215] Ibid.

First, Madvig notes that the narrator's intention was not just to record history, but to show that Israel was blessed at the time of the conquest because of their allegiance to Yahweh.[216] The Israelites obeyed the words of Yahweh, they remained faithful to the covenant, and thus the people experienced the blessings of the covenant (Deut 28), blessings that included victory over enemies (Deut 28:7). Thus, the narrator encourages the Israelites to show faithfulness to Yahweh, if they wanted to experience the blessings of the Covenant.[217]

Second, the narrator of Joshua also wanted to demonstrate "God's faithfulness to God's promises."[218] Joshua 6 begins with Yahweh's assurance of victory (Josh 6:2), and finishes with the fulfilment of that promise (Josh 6:20-21). Thus, the narrator emphasised that the Promised Land was not inhabited because of Israelite's great army and tactful military strategy, but rather because Yahweh fulfilled His promises.[219]

The insertion of the story of Rahab (Josh 6:17, 22) into the story of Jericho's conquest connects God's fulfilled promises to man's responsibility to fulfill promises. It emphasises again the importance of the covenantal relationship.[220] *Ḥērem* was not applied to Rahab's family because of the promise, or covenant, made between Rahab and the spies. Keeping the covenant is presented as more important

[216] Madvig, "Joshua," 281.

[217] Alan Moss, "The Historical Books," in *Reading the Bible: An Introduction for Students,* ed. Maurice Ryan, 89-106 (Tuggerah, NSW: Social Science, 2003), 94.

[218] Jerry L. Sumney, *The Bible: An introduction (*Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2010), 104.

[219] Ibid., 106. The main characteristic of Joshua 6 is to reveal that Yahweh has been faithful to the covenant made with the patriarchs and also with the entire nation at Sinai.

[220] Pressler, *Joshua, Judges and Ruth*, 48.

than applying total destruction. Thus, even in the rescue story of Rahab, God is presented as a "promise keeper."[221]

To conclude, the intent of the narrator in Joshua 6 was to remind the people that Yahweh is faithful to His promises as long as they are obedient to the covenant made between them and God.

Summary Statement

The repetitive texture has revealed a number of interesting findings in the listing of particular words. The words Jericho (יְרִיחוֹ), Yahweh (יְהוָה), Joshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ), priests (כֹּהֲנִים), seven (שֶׁבַע), rams' horns (שׁוֹפְרוֹת הַיּוֹבְלִים), ark (אֲרוֹן), Rahab (רָחָב), and under ban (חֵרֶם), are often repeated in Joshua 6 and they portray a scene of worship rather than of war. In fact, the progressive texture found in Joshua 6 emphasises Yahweh as the God of the covenant, who keeps His promises, rather than the vengeful God of *ḥērem.*

This theme of 'Yahweh a promise keeper' was also represented in the chiastic structure presented in the opening-middle-closing texture. The crux of the chiasm is Jos 6:20 which presents the collapse of Jericho's walls. This miracle signifies the fulfilment of Yahweh's promise made to the patriarchs, Israelites and to Joshua as well.

Finally, the narrational texture reveals that the aim of the narrator was to describe Yahweh's faithfulness to the covenantal relationship and to encourage Israelites never to doubt Yahweh's promises.

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[221] Hubbard, *NIV Application Commentary: Joshua*, 53.

In conclusion of the inner texture, Joshua 6 discloses that the theme of the chapter is not the war with all its brutal killing, but Yahweh's faithfulness in keeping His promises.

CHAPTER V

INTERTEXTURE

The aim of the *intertexture* is to identify if the text under study imitates

another text, restructures a well-known tradition, or whether it refashions a story in

order to create a new and dramatic tradition.[222] The spectrum of intertexture

includes: oral-scribal intertexture, cultural intertexture, social intertexture and

historical intertexture. This section will only discuss the oral-scribal intertexture and

the historical intertexture which best contribute to the findings of this research.

Oral-Scribal Intertexture

The thrust of this intertexture is to identify if Joshua 6 is a recitation,

recontextualization, reconfiguration or a narrative amplification, as was outlined in

the methodology chapter.[223]

A number of OT biblical scholars identified similarities between the text of

Joshua and other ANE records of different conquests. Richard Hess identifies a

parallel between the fall of the walls of Jericho in Joshua 6 and a Hittite text.[224] The

translation of the Hittite text reads: "Shaushga of shamuha, my lady revealed also

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[222] Robbins, *Exploring, 40.*

[223] Robbins, *Tapestry,* 102-107. Recitation refers to a quotation of exact words that is from either an oral or written tradition. Recontextualization refers to the use of "wording" from previous biblical texts in a new context, in which the origins are not mentioned. Reconfiguration is the process in which an antecedent tradition is outshined by the new event. Finally, narrative is the enlargement of a brief narrative into an expanded form. It often integrates recitation, recontextualization, and reconfiguration.

[224] Hess, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Joshua,* 28. The Hittite text that Hess refers to is called "Keilschrifturkunde aus Boghazkoy" vol. VI, II 29-33. Mario Liverani, *Prestige and interest: International Relations in the Near East ca. 1600-1100 B.C* (Padova: Sargon, 1990), 155.

then her divine justice: in the very moment I reached him, the wooden fortifications fell down to the length of one *gipeššar*."[225] The common point of Joshua 6 and the Hittite text is the collapse of a fortification which is attributed to the justice of a god.

Furthermore, Hess also notes that the book of Joshua has a structure very similar to the land grants found throughout the ANE in Hittite, Ugaritic and Akkadian texts.[226] On this basis, Hess affirms that the book of Joshua records the actual "deeding of the land" of the tribes of Israel, with God as their suzerain.[227]

There are two parties in land grants, a suzerain and a vassal. When considering battles over land, the suzerain is always the main actor in the battle, and it is the suzerain who therefore receives credit for winning the battle.[228] In the case of the Ugarit land grants Abbael functions as the suzerain, and in the case of Israel in Joshua 6, Yahweh is the suzerain who receives that credit.[229] Walton concludes by saying that the Israelites received the land as a gift from God; the land was part of the covenant that God made with Israelites, who were called to show exclusive loyalty to their suzerain.[230]

The vassals or vassal nations witness what the suzerain is accomplishing for them. Thus they are not heavily involved in battles.[231] In the Ugaritic text Abbael,

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[225] Ibid., 28; SteveThurston, "Hittite Crop Yields." Hittites info. http://www.hittites.info/essays.aspx?text=essays/CropYields20030607.html (accessed May 2 2012). The Hittite word *gipeššar* represents a measurement, being translated as a cubit, equivalent of about 50 cm.

[226] Richard Hess,"The Book of Joshua as a Land Grant," *Biblica* 83 (2002): 493.

[227] Ibid., 496.

[228] Richard Hess, "Joshua," in *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary,* vol 2, ed. John H. Walton, 2-93 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 11.

[229] Ibid.

[230]Ibid., 13.

[231] Hess, "The Book of Joshua as a Land Grant," *Biblica* 2002 (83): 500.

the suzerain, gave the conquered cities as a gift to Yarimlim.[232] Abbael received the

honour in the Ugarit text, both as the winner of the battles and giver of gifts. This

represents a scenario which is very similar to the account in Joshua 6. Indeed Hess

emphasises that Joshua and Israel are merely witnesses who view the work of God

and receive the benefits from it.[233] Yahweh receives all the glory for conquering

Jericho and gifting it to the Israelites. As the Ugarit text emphasied Abbael's

generosity towards his brother, Joshua 6 portrays the generous God who offered the

land of Canaan as a gift to Israel because of the covenant He had made with them.[234]

Rather than comparing Joshua with a specific ANE document type, Thelle

suggests that the accounts of the conquest described in the book of Joshua reflect the

stereotypic pattern of the ANE at that time. A number of elements of this pattern will

be described below.

The first common element to the stereotypic pattern is that the wars in the

ANE were commanded by a deity who told his people to conquer new cities or

kings.[235] Younger gives one example from the Assyrian text in which an army leader

declared, "By the command of Aššur, my Lord, I did such and such."[236] Although

the Assyrian text does not present the actual command of the deity, the common

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[232] Ibid.

[233] Ibid.

[234] Ibid., 506.

[235] Rannfrid Thelle, "The Biblical Conquest Account and Its Modern Hermeneutical Challenges," *Studia Theologica* 61 (2007): 67

[236] K. Lawson Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts: A Study in Near Eastern and Biblical History Writing* (Sheffield : JSOT, 1990), 198; H.G. Andersen, "Assyria and Babylonia," in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible.* vol 1, eds. Tenney, Merrill C., and Moises Silva, 407-420 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 414. Andersen states that Aššur was the national god of Assyria.

element of a deity issuing a command remains.[237] The conquest account described in Joshua 6 clearly portrays the command that Yahweh gave to Joshua to conquer Jericho (Josh 6:2-5).

A second common element is that the deity plays an active role in the conquest.[238] Indeed, the gods are often noted as going before the leaders into battle. Several such examples can be found in the record of the Hittite conquest, the "Ten Year Annals of Muršili II."[239] For example, the annals of the fourth and fifth year of Muršili II report that "my lady the mighty storm god, my lord Mezzulla and all the gods ran before me. And I conquered the city of Kammanman."[240] In another instance the annals report that Muršili II attributed the conquest of the army of Piyama-Kal to the stormgod Mezzulla, and all the gods which ran before him.[241] Thus, the Hittite accounts reveal the belief of Muršili II that his gods went ahead of him to the battle, and because of that he won the victory.

In a similar way Josh 6:6-16 describes how the priests carried seven ram horns, and the Ark of the Covenant, and circled the city for seven days. All these elements, the priests, ram horns and the Ark of the Covenant refer to the presence of Yahweh among the people and who goes to battle before His people. Thus, it is Yahweh who brings the victory to the Israelites.

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[237] Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts: A Study in Near Eastern and Biblical History Writing*, 198.

[238] Thelle, "The Biblical Conquest Account and Its Modern Hermeneutical Challenges," *Studia Theologica* 61 (2007): 67.

[239] Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts,* 148.

[240] Ibid., 148-149.

[241] Ibid., 150-151

A third common element is the occurrence of supernatural phenomena in association with the battles.[242] The record of the 'Ten Year Annals of Muršili II' describes a battle that includes these supernatural phenomena. The account is as follows: "So I marched, and as I arrived at Mt. Lawsa, the mighty stormgod, my lord, showed his godly miracle. He hurled a meteor. My army saw the meteor, and the land of Arzawa saw it. And the meteor went; and struck the land of Arzawa."[243] The record found in Josh 6:20 also describes a supernatural phenomenon that helped the Israelites to conquer the city: the fall of the Jericho walls without any physical intervention from the Israelites soldiers. It was Yahweh's action that tore down the walls and all the people saw it.

A fourth common element of the stereotypic pattern is the assurance of divine help and protection.[244] Younger demonstrates the similarity between Joshua's account of conquest and other Near Eastern conquests by presenting a text about Zakkur.[245] The text concerning Zakkur is as follows:

> And Ba'alshamayn spoke to me through the hand of seers and the hand of envoys and Ba'alshamayn said to me: do not be afraid because I have made you king, and I will stand with you, and I will deliver you from all these kings who have raised a siege against you.[246]

This assurance of divine protection is clearly present in the book of Joshua (e.g. Josh1:5-6; 8:1; 10:8; 11:6) and Joshua 6 is no exception. In Josh 6:2, 6 Yahweh

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[242] Thelle, "The Biblical Conquest Account and Its Modern Hermeneutical Challenges," *Studia Theologica* 61 (2007): 68.

[243] Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts,* 208.

[244] Thelle, "The Biblical Conquest Account and Its Modern Hermeneutical Challenges," *Studia Theologica* 61 (2007):69.

[245] Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts,* 229; Green Douglas, *'I undertook great works"* (Tűbingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 156. Douglas explains that Zakkur means 'God has remembered' and he was the king of Syria kingdom of Hamth.

[246]Ibid.

assures Joshua that He will be with him and give him victory over the city and
soldiers in the city.

A fifth common element of the stereotypic pattern that Thelle identifies is
that the conquered city was burned.[247] The 'Ten Year Annals of Muršili II' presents
this as something that Muršili II commonly did. In one instance it is recorded that "I,
my sun, went to it, and I attacked Halila and Dudduska which were major cities of
the Kaskaeans. I took out from them the inhabitants, cattle and sheep and I brought
them forth to Hattuša. I completely burned down Halila and Dudduska."[248] In
addition, the annals say that Muršili II conquered the city of Kathaidduwa and
burned it down completely.[249] The similarity that we find with the biblical text is that
in Josh 6:24 it is said that Jericho was burned with fire.

The final common element of the stereotypic pattern is the notion of *ḥērem*.
Ḥērem is present in Josh 6:21 where every living being (humans and animals) was
utterly destroyed.[250] Kaminsky suggests that *ḥērem* is found in the ANE cultures,
and this practice of utter destruction should not be considered as an invention of the
biblical writers who were hyperbolizing the glorious past.[251] The best example to
illustrate the validity of this statement is the account of Mesha, the Moabite king.

> And Chemosh [the national god of Moab] said to me, 'Go seize Nebo
> from Israel'. So I went at night and fought against it from the break of
> the dawn until noon. I seized it and killed everyone of it –seven thousand

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[247] Thelle, "The Biblical Conquest Account and Its Modern Hermeneutical Challenges," *Studia Theologica* 61 (2007):69.

[248] Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts,* 146.

[249] Ibid., 147

[250] Thelle, "The Biblical Conquest Account and Its Modern Hermeneutical Challenges," *Studia Theologica* 61 (2007): 69.

[251] Joel S. Kaminsky, *Corporate Responsibility in the Hebrew Bible (*Sheffield: Sheffield, 1995), 81.

men, foreign men, native women, foreign women, and concubines- for I devoted it to 'Ashtar Kemosh.[252]

Kaminsky suggests that this Moabite inscription provides good evidence that *ḥērem* is in fact a historical practice, in which everything including living beings and objects, were dedicated to their supreme god.[253]

Younger also refers to the annals of Ashurnasirpal II as evidence that the ideology of total war was practiced by other nations.[254] The quote that Younger presents is as follows:

> I crossed over to Mt. Kashiary (and) I approached the city of Kinabu, the fortified city of Hulaya. I besieged with the mass of my troops (and) my fierce battle array; I conquered the city. I slew with the sword 800 of their combat troops. I burned 3,000 captives from them. I did not leave one of them alive as a hostage. I captured Hulaya, their city ruler, alive. I made a pile of their corpses. I burned their young boys (and) girls. I flayed Hulaya, their city ruler; and I draped his skin over the wall of the city of Damdammusa. I razed, destroyed, (and) burned the city."[255]

Despite the fact that the annals of Ashurnasirpal II do not use the Hebrew word *ḥērem,* it describes a scene very similar to that of *ḥērem*, the only difference being that the destruction was not dedicated to the god of the nation.

This brief overview of the common patterns between Joshua 6 and the record of ANE conquest demonstrates that the conquest described in Joshua 6 is structured around a literary pattern that was not uncommon in the historical accounts from 1300

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[252]Translation is from K.P. Jackson, "The Language of the Mesha Inscription", in A. Dearman (ed), *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab (*Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989): 97-98.

[253] Kaminsky, *Corporate Responsibility in the Hebrew Bible,* 83.

[254] Sarah Melville, Brent Strawn, Brian Schmidt, and Scott Noegel, "Neo-Assyrian and Syro-Palestinian Texts I," in *The Ancient Near East,* ed. Mark W. Chavalas,280-330 (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 285-286. Ashurnasirpal II was the king Assyria and his name means 'the god of Ashur guards the son'. The annals refer to him as the one who made piles of decapitated heads, impaled, skinned, burned people alive or dyed the landscape red with the blood of his enemies.

[255] Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts,* 236.

to 600 BCE.[256] Thus, the author of Joshua, in this particular context, wrote in a similar manner to everyone else at that time.

Thelle suggests that because the text of Joshua is so similar to other ANE conquest accounts, we should also expect it to have some other qualities that are common to such accounts. In particular, it is likely to contain "a lot of exaggeration" because the accounts not only presented history, but they also served to build faithfulness to the leaders of the country and to their supreme god.[257]

We can conclude from the examination of the oral-scribal intertexture, that Joshua 6 appears to be a recitation of an event from the life of Israelites written to conform to the literary conventions at that time.

Historical Intertexture

This intertexture will analyse the historical records about the city of Jericho and Joshua as an army leader, and will also examine, with the help of archaeological data, the genuineness of the conquest account.

Jericho

The city of Jericho of Joshua's book is situated on the northwest side of the modern Arab town with the same name, and is about 5 miles west of the Jordan River.[258] It is also believed to be the lowest inhabited place on earth, as it is situated "800 feet below sea level," and is also the oldest city in the world.[259]

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[256] McConville, Gordon J. "Joshua," in *Theological Interpretation of the Old Testament: A Book by Book Survey,* ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008), 84.

[257] Thelle, "The Biblical Conquest Account and Its Modern Hermeneutical Challenges," *Studia Theologica* 61 (2007): 72.

[258] John C.H. Laughlin, *Fifty Major Cities of the Bible* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 156.

[259] Ibid., 157.

The history of Jericho is thought to go back to the 8th millennium BCE although it wasn't until a millennium later that a town with a "revetment wall" was first built.[260] Around the year 3000 BCE (in the Early Bronze Age) the city of Jericho was occupied by people who built a settlement with defence walls, but this occupation was short lived due to recurrent earthquakes and fires.[261] The city was later rebuilt and inhabited by Canaanites.

The site of the ruins of the city of Jericho, Tell es-Sultan, was first excavated by Captain Charles Warren in 1868 and by many others thereafter.[262] The site contains the remains of a severely burned city the dating of which is disputed. Garstang dated the ruins to 1400 BCE which is consistent with the timing of the biblical account of the destruction of Jericho, but the ruins were later redated by Kenyon to 1550 BCE which is difficult to fit with the biblical account.[263]

The historicity of the conquest will be dealt with later, but it can be observed that the city of Jericho represents a real place, with a long history, discovered by archaeologists and supported by history. Jericho was also known as the "city of palm trees" (עִיר הַתְּמָרִים Deut 34:3)[264] as it was only a small city, more like an "oasis town," defending the border of the Jordan River.[265] It is estimated that the size of the

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[260] H. Jamieson, "Jericho," in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible* vol 3, eds. Tenney, Merrill C., and Moises Silva, 519-523 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 519.

[261] Ibid.

[262] James K. Hoffmeier, *The Archaeology of the Bible* (Oxford, England: Lion Hudson, 2008), 65.

[263] Ibid., 69; Katharine Doob Sakenfeld ed., *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible I-Ma vol3* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2008), 237. John Garstang excavated the site between 1930 and 1936 on behalf of the Neilson expedition. Kathleen Kenyon conducted her excavation campaign between 1952 and 1958.

[264] Philip J. King, and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 103.

[265] Jamieson, "Jericho," 521.

Jericho was "between nine and twelve acres," and with the help of the "studies of ancient population density" it was concluded that there were under "two thousand people" in the city.[266] The size of Jericho implies that one circuit of the city could have been completed in one hour by the priests and soldiers.[267]

Joshua

Our knowledge of Joshua comes only from Scripture and later Jewish writings. There are no archaeological findings that mention Joshua specifically to confirm his historicity. Scripture tells us that Joshua was born in Egypt from among the tribe of Joseph.[268] He was initially named Hosea, meaning salvation, but Moses later changed his name to Joshua, meaning "Yahweh is salvation."[269]

Joshua's military skills are evident from Ex 17:9 where he is asked by Moses to lead an attack on the Amalekites, and Joshua does it successfully.[270] Joshua was also one of the 12 spies who searched the land of Canaan, and he and Caleb were the only ones to enter the Promised Land out of the generation numbered at the beginning of the wilderness journey.[271]

Joshua was the successor of Moses, and mirrored Moses in several ways. Nelson for instance, points out comparisons such as: the crossing the Jordan River which recapitulates the Red Sea event (Josh 4:23), the encounter of Joshua with the

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[266]Alfred J. Hoerth, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001), 207.

[267] Ibid., 208.

[268] Num 13:8, 16; Deut 32:44.

[269] William S. Lasor, David A. Hubbard, and Frederic W. Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 143.

[270] Ibid.

[271] J. Rea, "Joshua," in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible.* vol 3, eds. Tenney, Merrill C., and Moises Silva, 793-795 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 794.

commander of God's army which echoes the burning bush experience, and Joshua's function as an intercessor similar to that of Moses.[272]

Josephus Flavius in his works on *Jewish Antiquities* described Joshua, the son of Nun, as being of "great courage, patient to undergo labours, of great abilities to understand and to speak what was proper, and very serious in the worship of God, like another Moses."[273] According to Josephus and the Bible, Joshua was a man of faith, who possessed military and leadership skills. Thus, Joshua was a second Moses, who followed Yahweh's instructions.

Conquest

The conquest account of Jericho, as Joshua 6 describes it, has been a controversial topic because of the contradictions that the archaeological findings evoked. Carl Watzinger, who excavated the site in 1907, concluded that during the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 BCE) the place was uninhabited; thus when Joshua entered he had nothing to conquer.[274] Later on, in contrast to Watzinger, the excavations carried out by John Garstang between 1930-1936, appeared to attest the truthfulness of the biblical account. He uncovered the ruins of a severely demolished and burnt city, which he named City IV.[275] Garstang argued that City IV was "violently destroyed in 1400 BCE," based on the pottery types found there, Egyptian scarabs with Eighteenth Dynasty Pharaohs on them, and on the absence of

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[272] Nelson, *Joshua: A Commentary,* 21.

[273] Flavius Josephus, "*Jewish Antiquities*," in *Wordsworth Classics of Wold Literature,* ed. Brian McGing (St Ives, UK: Clays, 2006), 97.

[274] Hoerth, *Archaeology and the Old Testament,* 209; Rea, "Joshua, Book of," 796-797. The assumed date for the entrance of Joshua in the land of Canaan is c. 1400 BCE.

[275] John Garstang, and J.B.E. Garstang, *The Story of Jericho* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1948), 136.

Mycenaean pottery.[276] Garstang's findings support both the biblical description of
the conquest, and the commonly accepted dates for Joshua's leadership. However,
the controversy over the reliability of Jericho's conquest continued.

After a period of 26 years of no archaeological diggings, Kathleen Kenyon
started new excavations between 1952-1958. Kenyon's findings led her to the
conclusion that City IV was destroyed in 1550 BCE by Egyptian armies.[277] Kenyon
also stated that Jericho had been unoccupied from 1550-1200 BCE, except for a
small area in the 14th century BCE.[278] Thus, her conclusion was that when Joshua
reached the Promised Land, there was no "walled city" for him to conquer.[279]

Nevertheless, Wood demonstrates that Kenyon based her conclusions on the
absence one type of pottery (Cypriote), which was common in the Late Bronze Age,
while ignoring the considerable Late Bronze Age pottery which was found locally.[280]
In addition, Wood states that the distinctive pottery that John Garstang found at the
site was in use only in the 15th century BCE, a time that matches the biblical story of
the conquest.[281] Wood strongly argues that the dating needs to be done first and
foremost on pottery which is actually available, a process that Kenyon ignored.[282]

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[276] John Garstang, "Jericho and the Biblical Story," in *Wonders of the Past*, ed. J. A. Hammerton, (New York, NY: Wise, 1937), 1222.

[277] Kathleen M. Kenyon, "Jericho," in *Archaeology and Old Testament study,* ed. Winton Thomas, 264-275 (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1967), 272.

[278] Ibid.

[279] Kathleen M. Kenyon, *Digging up Jericho*, (London: Ernest Benn, 1957), 262.

[280] Bryant G. Wood, "Did the Israelites Conquer Jericho? A new look at the archaeological evidence," *BAR* 16 (1990): 50.

[281] Bryant G. Wood, "The Walls of Jericho," *Associates for Biblical Research.* The pottery was distinctive because it was decorated with red and black geometrical patterns, used only in the 15th century BCE.

[282] Bryant G. Wood, "Dating Jericho's Destruction: Bienkowski is Wrong on All Counts," *BAR* 19 (1990): 47.

Wood also disagrees with Kenyon's conclusion that the Egyptians destroyed and burned Jericho in 1550 BCE. Central to his argument is the finding at the archaeological site, of an ample food supply which indicates that the city capitulated quickly and not after a long siege.[283] Indeed, food was abundant. Kaiser notes that Kenyon found "six bushels of grain in one season," which is unique in the annals of Palestinian archaeology where perhaps a jar with grains might be found.[284] This is significant because Egyptian campaigns were always prior to harvest when the food supplies stored inside the city were at the lowest level. Moreover, the Egyptians would besiege the city for long periods of time, as it was with Sharuhen that was besieged for 3 years and Megiddo for 7 months.[285] Based on usual Egyptian military strategy, the discovery of abundant food in the city of Jericho therefore makes an Egyptian destruction unlikely.

Additional evidence that Wood presents for the support of the biblical account are the numerous scarabs unearthed by Garstang.[286] This series of Egyptian scarabs extend from the 18th century BCE to the early 14th century. The royal names inscribed in these scarabs include Hatshepsut (c. 1503-1483 BCE), Tuthmosis III

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[283] Wood, "Did the Israelites Conquer Jericho? A new look at the archaeological evidence" *BAR* 16 (1990):51. The abundance of food found in the city led Wood to conclude that the conquest occurred after harvest time and not before. This idea is supported by the information given in the Bible that Rahab was drying freshly harvested flax on the roof of her house. Another clue is the celebration of the Passover just prior to attacking the city, event that is described in Joshua 5:10-11. Since, any successful attackers would plunder valuable grain, the fact that grain remained in the city supports the biblical accounts of the conquest that everything was devoted to destruction (Josh 6:17-18).

[284] Kaiser, *A History of Israel*, 152.

[285] Wood, "Did the Israelites Conquer Jericho?" 51.

[286] Ibid., 52. Scarabs are small Egyptian amulets shaped like a beetle with an inscription (usually the name of the Pharaoh) at the bottom.

(c.1504-1450 BCE) and Amenhotep III (c.1386-1349). The presence of these scarabs

implies that the cemetery was in use until the end of the Late Bronze period.[287]

Further evidence for the timing of Israel's conquest comes from the

Mernephtah Stela, which is an Egyptian victory monument that mentions Israel as

one of the people groups that were living in Canaan around 1210 BCE. Stanley

suggests that this represents good evidence of Israelites being in the land by the 13th

century BCE.[288]

Moreover, Kaiser's interpretation of Kenyon's archaeological discoveries

supports the biblical account of the conquest. Kaiser notes that Kenyon discovered

that City IV had an impressive "fortification system with its own walls."[289] In

addition, a "stone revetment wall, [that] rose fifteen feet from the base of the

mound," could be seen.[290] However, what is striking is that on top of this revetment

there were remnants of a mud brick wall that had risen "another eight feet."[291] This

means that that on top of the revetment there had been a city wall that collapsed. In

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[287] Ibid., 53; Piotr Bienkowski, "Jericho was Destroyed in the Middle Bronze Age, not the Late Bronze Age," *BAR*, 16 (1990): 46. Bienkowski disagrees with Wood's findings, because history confirms that scarabs continued to be used by people, even after the king died. Thus he claims the presence of scarabs cannot be used as a proof for the dating of the ruins. Wood, "Dating Jericho's Destruction: Bienkowski is Wrong on All Counts," *BAR* 19 (1990):49. Nevertheless, Wood's response is so suggests that while Bienkowski is right in saying that some scarabs continued to circulate even after the death of the king, some scarabs were purposefully destroyed. For example Tuthmosis III and Amenhotep III were both revered after death and scarabs inscribed with their names served as amulets. However, Hatshepsut is part of the exception. Wood comments that after her death, her name was systematically obliterated from monuments and inscriptions, thus her scarabs were not kept as good luck charms. Wood further points out the importance of the seal of Tuthmosis III found by Garstang. The seal is flat and inscribed on both sides, which is very rare and considered to be a contemporary artefact. He maintains therefore, that the presence of this seal and the scarab of Hatshepsut along with other scarabs suggest that the cemetery at Jericho was in use throughout the 15th century BCE.[287] Consequently, when Joshua came to that land, there were people in the city.

[288] Stanley, *The Hebrew Bible: A Comparative Approach,* 262.

[289] Kaiser, *A History of Israel: From the Bronze through the Jewish Wars,* 153.

[290] Ibid.

[291] Ibid.

the view of Kaiser and Wood this is incredible evidence that supports the biblical account that says the walls of Jericho came down.[292] Kaiser further notes that because the bricks fell outside the stone revetment wall and formed a sort of natural trail to climb on, this explains how it was possible for the Israelites to enter the city.[293]

Taking into consideration all the evidence in favour or against Jericho as being a city at the time of Joshua, one must realize that there is no real consensus over this issue. However, the evidence presented by Wood for Jericho being a city at the time of Joshua appears strong. Nevertheless, the number of scholars that accept as fact the reality of the biblical conquest is very small.

Summary Statement

It can be seen from this research that the text of Joshua was written in a literary style that matches other Near Ancient Eastern texts. Although this literary style might include elements of exaggeration, it does not deny the reality of the event. Joshua 6 represents a written passage that comes from a strong oral-culture and is aimed to strengthen the faith in Yahweh, who is a God of the covenant and keeps His word, and to encourage loyalty towards the leaders of the country.

The archaeological evidence discovered by Garstang, and the discoveries made by Kenyon and reinterpreted by Wood, lead to the conclusion that Jericho was indeed a real city that was conquered. The archaeological findings match the biblical account of the conquest, and despite the exaggeration that might be found in the text of Joshua 6, this does not disprove the reality of the conquest and the fall of the walls of Jericho.

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[292] Wood, "Did the Israelites Conquer Jericho? A New Look at the Archaeological Evidence" *BAR* 16 (1990):54; Kaiser, *A History of Israel,* 153.

[293] Kaiser, *A History of Israel,* 153.

CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TEXTURE

The *social and cultural texture* provides insights into the social and cultural context of the text, especially in reference to the language and worldview it suggests.[294] This texture will explore "the social and cultural location of the language and the type of social and cultural world the language evokes and creates."[295] The two areas that are going to be covered in this section are the specific social topics, and the common social and cultural topics.

Specific Social Topics

The purpose of *specific social topics* is to analyse the language, thoughts, and ideas that are found in Joshua 6 in order to identify the worldview which is embraced in the rhetoric of the text.[296] The challenge of this sub-texture consists in the fact that the rhetorical views of Robbins are based on the 1st century Roman-Greek-Jewish mindset.[297] Nevertheless, this section will seek to identify which out of the seven specific social topics, if any, are suggested by the OT text. This will be carried out through a careful analysis of the chosen passage.

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[294] Robbins, *Tapestry,* 144.

[295] Robbins, *Exploring,* 71.

[296] Ibid.

[297] David Howard Jr. "Rhetorical Criticism in Old Testament Studies," *BBR* 4 (1994): 87-104. The rhetorical analysis of the OT to date has mainly focused on structural features, such as parallelism, rather than focusing on "speech and persuasion." Howard encourages researcher to analyse the rhetoric of OT books in order to discover any means of persuasion that were used by biblical authors.

The conquest described in Joshua 6 portrays a combination of worship and total destruction which resulted in a great victory. The worship elements such as the Ark of the Covenant, the rams' horns, and the priests, might suggest that this section of text implies a *conversionist social rhetoric* technique. This kind of rhetoric views the world as being corrupt "because people are corrupt; if people can be changed, the world will be changed."[298] Thus, salvation can be achieved only through a "transformation of the inner self."[299] This type of transformation can be suggested by God's presence in the middle of His people through the Ark of the Covenant. The sound of rams' horns played an important role in this as it heralded that something great was about to happen.[300] In addition, the priests, who interceded on behalf of the people, symbolized the connection between humans and God.[301] This part of the scenario suggests Yahweh's presence near Jericho, was in order to transform the citizens of Jericho, thus the conversionist view.

However, Joshua 6 describes more than just a scene of worship; it describes God's power revealed in the collapse of the walls and the total destruction that the Israelites accomplished.[302] Reuven Firestone suggests that in Yahweh's war, where *ḥērem* was applied, the Israelites did not seek to convert people "through physical

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[298] Robbins, *Exploring,* 72.

[299] Vernon K. Robbins, "Dictionary of Socio-rhetorical Terms." Socio-rhetorical Interpretation. http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/index.cfm (accessed May 28 2012).

[300] Carol Myers, *The New Cambridge Commentary: Exodus (*New York, NY: Cambridge University, 2005.), 238; Robert O'Connell, "Šôpār," in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis,* ed. Willem A. VanGemeren, vol 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 68.

[301] Bruce Wells, "Exodus," in *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary,* vol 1, ed. John H. Walton, 160-283 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009),255.

[302] Millard Lind, *Yahweh is a Warrior* (Scottdale, PA: Herald, 1980), 81.

force or persuasion."[303] Thus while the narrator did consider the Canaanites to be corrupt, destruction was carried without an attempt to convert the nation. The conquest symbolized Yahweh's judgement upon the idolatrous nations that tried to prevent the Israelites from realizing their divinely ordained goals.[304] Thus, the conversionist social rhetoric seems unlikely.

The book of Genesis presents the call of Abraham to a particular land because God wants to solve the crisis of the whole earth.[305] Consequently, the land of Canaan is chosen as a possession of Israel. It is to become a "scene of corruption reversed" and a place where Yahweh will be worshiped.[306] Brueggemann supports this idea by stating that Israel's presence in the land of Canaan is for the "well-being of the world" which has not yet accepted its role under Yahweh as sovereign.[307]

Part of God's restoration process is the concept of *ḥērem*, which comes as a religious act that always originates as a divine command and dedicates the enemies to Yahweh.[308] In the context of war, *ḥērem* means "uncompromising consecration" of things and people "without possibility of recall or redemption."[309]

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[303] Reuven Firestone, "Conceptions of Holy War in Biblical and Qur'anic Tradition," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 24 (1996), 107.

[304] Ibid., 103

[305] McConville, and Williams, *Joshua*, 103.

[306] Ibid.

[307] Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1997), 431-432.

[308] C. Brekelmans, " ērem, Ban," 475.

[309] J.P.U. Lilley, "Understanding the herem." *Tyn Bul* 44 (1993): 177; Walter Kaiser, "The Book of Leviticus," in *The New Interpreter's Bible,* vol 1. ed. Leander E. Keck, 983-1191 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon,1998), 1189. Kaiser states that the law of ērem is found in Lev 27:29, but God never applied it hastily. It was only after a long period of grace that Yahweh dedicated "persons and things for destruction."

Hamilton suggests that the reason for such a drastic command is to keep Israel away from temptations, preventing the Israelites from "moral and spiritual contamination."[310] In the OT, the issue of idolatry was very important, because even Israel "would be destroyed if it forsook its God and practiced the abominations of idolaters." [311] It is interesting to note that disloyalty towards Yahweh or idolatry was metaphorically called prostitution, and the person guilty of it would be killed.[312] In such a context the story of Rahab, the idolater and prostitute, is remarkable because her life is spared from ḥērem because of her conversion and belief in Yahweh as supreme God. [313]

Brueggemann suggests that the role of Israel was always of two kinds, "one to reorder the internal life of the community in ways faithful to Yahweh, the other to invite the world out beyond this community to reorder its life with reference to Yahweh."[314]

Consequently, the language used in Joshua 6 suggest a *reformist social rhetoric* view. This rhetoric "views the world as corrupt because its social structures are corrupt."[315] The problem of evil can be dealt with only by "supernaturally given

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[310] Hamilton, *Handbook on the Historical Books,* 34. Hamilton makes use of passages such as Ex 23:33 ("they will make you sin against me"); Ex 34:16 ("they will make you sons prostitute themselves to their own gods"); Deut 7:4 (that would turn your children away from following me"); Deut 20:18 ("so that they may not teach you to do all the abhorrent things that they do for their gods").

[311] Firestone, "Conceptions of Holy War in Biblical and Qur'anic Tradition," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 24 (1996), 105. Firestone bases his arguments on the following passages: Deut 7:1-4, 9-11; 8:19-20; 11:16-17, 26-28; 28:1-68; 29:15-27; 30:17-18.

[312] John Stek, "Rahab of Canaan and Israel: The meaning of Joshua 2," *CTJ* 37 (2002): 47. Stek bases his statement on the following biblical passages: Lev 20:5, Num 15:38, and Deut 31:16.

[313]John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Gospel,* vol 1 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 498.

[314] Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 747.

[315] Robbins, *Exploring,* 73.

insights" about the modes in which the social organization should be corrected.[316]

Those whose hearts and minds are open to supernatural influence will receive the

instructions about the changes that need to be made.[317] Joshua 6 contains a reformist

view, because Israel is called by God to destroy the evil social structure in Canaan.

The Israelites received the instructions for their conquest by revelation from

Yahweh, with the intention to bring salvation to the entire world.

Common Social and Cultural Topics

The common social and cultural topics subsection will examine major

patterns, values and codes prevalent in the Middle Eastern region at the end of the

Late Bronze period (1550-1200 BC) that add light on the text of Joshua 6.[318]

Honour and Shame

The first value to be discussed is *honour and shame*. While Robbins

highlights the role of honour and shame in NT times, this value is common to the

Bible as a whole.[319] Honour refers to the "value of a person in his own eyes, but also

in the eyes of [the] society" he lives in.[320] In the historical books of the OT, honour

generally came at the expense of somebody else, and it was usually acquired in

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[316] Robbins, "Dictionary of Socio-rhetorical Terms." Socio-rhetorical Interpretation. http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/index.cfm (accessed May 28 2012).

[317] Robbins, *Exploring, 73.*

[318] Robbins, "Dictionary of Socio-rhetorical Terms." Socio-rhetorical Interpretation. http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/index.cfm (accessed April 27 2012).

[319] Bruce Malina, "Honor/Shame," in *Biblical Social Values and Their Meaning,* eds. John Pilch, and Bruce Malina, 95-104 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 95.

[320] A.C. Hagedorn, "Honor and Shame," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books,* eds. Bill T. Arnold, and H.G.M. Williamson, 497-501 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 497.

battle.[321] Both the honour of God and the honour of Israel's leaders will be considered.

In the OT, the honour of God was closely connected with the fate of His chosen people, Israel.[322] Consequently the battles between nations in the ANE were perceived as battles between their gods; this was a worldview shared by the Israelites.[323] Thus, the destruction that occurred at Jericho established God's honour as deity both in the eyes of the Canaanites and in the eyes of the Israelites.[324]

While Yahweh's honour was not dependent upon mankind, God was nevertheless honoured by the Israelites' faithfulness to the covenant made to Him.[325] Joshua and the people followed Yahweh's instructions in the conquest of Jericho and this fact brought honour to God who was in a covenantal relationship with them.

Those who were appointed as leaders by Yahweh were also to be honoured and listened to by the entire nation.[326] Honouring the leader implied honouring God who elected that leader.[327] Conversely, Josh 6:27 notes that Joshua's fame was known by everyone in the land because Yahweh was with him. The statement from

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[321] Ibid., 499.

[322] David A. DeSilva, "Honor and Shame," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch,* eds. Alexander, Desmond T., and David W. Baker, 431- 436 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 434.

[323] David A. Glatt-Gilad, "Yahweh's Honor at Stake: A Divine Conundrum," in *JSOT* 98 (2002): 64.

[324] DeSilva, "Honor and Shame," 434.

[325] Hagedorn, "Honor and Shame," 500.

[326] DeSilva, "Honor and Shame," 432.

[327] Hagedorn, "Honor and Shame," 500.

Josh 6:27 suggests that whoever challenged Joshua's ruling brought shame not only upon Joshua's name, but also upon Yahweh.[328]

While *honour* can be acquired in a battle, *shame* can be received by losing a battle.[329] Thus, the Jericho dwellers were doomed to shame because they lost the battle and were killed. Moreover, the curse of Joshua upon the city suggests that perpetual shame be associated with the city and its people.[330]

<div align="center">Dyadic agreement</div>

Another element that Robbins refers to is the *dyadic agreements* which refers to an informal binding between two people.[331] The principle of reciprocity is the fundamental point of the dyadic agreements and it works for the benefit of both parties.[332] This subsection will cover two parts of the agreements: the *colleague agreement* and the *patron-client contract*.

The Colleague Agreement

The *colleague agreement* refers to the reciprocity among people with the same social status, or at least where gifts can be repaid.[333] Joshua 6 describes a situation that illustrates, to some extent, the concept of *colleague agreement*. The lives of Rahab and of her family (Josh 6:17, 22-23) were spared because she hid the Israelite spies in her house; it was a form of agreement. The importance of the

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[328] DeSilva, "Honor and Shame," 432.

[329] Malina, "Honor/Shame," 99.

[330] Ibid., 98.

[331] Robbins, *Exploring,* 79.

[332] Robbins, "Dictionary of Socio-rhetorical Terms," Socio-rhetorical Interpretation. http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/index.cfm (accessed April 27 2012).

[333] Robbins, *Exploring,* 79.

contract made between Rahab and the spies was more important than the law of *ḥērem,* and nowhere in the book of Joshua is this action condemned.[334]

The reason why the agreement between Rahab and the spies was faithfully kept is because Rahab ceased to be an idolater when she sheltered the spies; she 'devoted' herself to Yahweh and she escaped the *ḥērem.*[335] The gift of protection that was offered by Rahab to the spies was repaid by the Israelites, also with a gift of protection. This scenario illustrates well the colleague contract.

The Patron-Client Contract

The patron-client contract ties persons of significantly different social status in which the client cannot afford to repay the gift of the patron.[336] Robbins suggests that "all positive relationships with God are rooted in the perception of patron-client contracts."[337] However, while there is not, and indeed cannot be equality of reciprocity between the two parties, there is a response from the client. On one hand God (the Patron) offers a gift to His people, on the other hand, the people (the clients) offer honour and loyalty in return. [338]

According to Hubbard, the book of Joshua emphasises Yahweh's purpose to fulfil his promise toward Israel, to give the land of Canaan as a gift to them.[339] The promise goes back to the patriarchs Abraham (Gen. 15 and 17), Isaac (Gen. 26:3, 24), and Jacob (28:15; 35:12). It was also repeated to the Israelites in their journey

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[334] Pressler, *Joshua, Judges and Ruth*, 48.

[335] Hess, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Joshua*, 133.

[336] Robbins, *Exploring,* 79.

[337] Robbins, "Dictionary of Socio-rhetorical Terms." Socio-rhetorical Interpretation. http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/index.cfm (accessed April 27 2012).

[338] Ibid.

[339] Hubbard, *NIV Application Commentary: Joshua*, 53.

towards the Promised Land (Ex. 32:12; Deut. 12:10). However, what Yahweh desired from them was to obey Him, to keep His covenant and to honour Him (Ex 19:5; 24:7).[340] Joshua 6 describes God's faithfulness through the collapse of the Jericho' walls and it also describes the Israelites' faithfulness in consecrating everything to destruction as Yahweh had told them.

Hess expands on this thought saying that the land would remain in the possession of the Israelites as long as they were faithful to Yahweh. When the Israelites later broke the covenant with God, they in fact declared that the land of Canaan belonged to Baal and other deities, and Yahweh would remove them from there.[341] Yahweh expected the Israelites to always look at the land of Canaan as a gift that He gave to them.

<center>Purity</center>

Another social and cultural topic that Robbins mentions is *purity*, which refers to the general cultural "map of a social time and space" and the boundaries that separate those within that time and space and those outside of it.[342] The problem arises when the unclean or the impure strays into the sphere of the clean and pure and needs to be dealt with.[343] The concept of purity is found in Joshua 6 under the concept of *ḥērem*.

The Promised Land was a territory that Yahweh claimed for Himself, which meant that the land had to be purified because no unholy person or thing could stand

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[340] McConville, and Williams, *Joshua*, 96.

[341] Hess, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Joshua*, 48.

[342] Robbins, "Dictionary of Socio-rhetorical Terms," Socio-rhetorical Interpretation. http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/index.cfm (accessed April 27 2012).

[343] Robbins, *Exploring,* 85.

in God's presence.[344] The Canaanites, who were under curse because of their distant ancestor (Gen. 15:16) and also because of idolatry and disgraceful immorality, were to be completely destroyed; they could not dwell in the same land with Yahweh.[345]

Seters argues that in Deuteronomy 7:1-5, where God gives instructions of how to drive out the other nations from the Promised Land, *ḥērem* is commanded in order to "strive for a type of utopian culture and religious purity" within the land promised by God.[346] The battle that involved *ḥērem* was known as 'Yahweh's war' and it was perceived as a divine reordering of the world.[347] In this battle the enemy was destroyed because he/she was "seen as a pollutant."[348] Purity in the land of Canaan was an essential element so that the Israelites did not start worshiping other gods, a circumstance that might have led to the land being polluted, and thus hindering the fulfilment of God's plan of salvation.[349] The destruction of the Canaanites was also meant to serve as a lesson for the Israelites that if they turned away from Yahweh to idols, which meant a shift from purity to impurity, they would also be destroyed.[350]

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[344] J.I. Packer, and M.C. Tenney, eds. *Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1980), 303.

[345] Ibid.; S. Barabas, "Ban," in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible,* vol 1, eds. Tenney, Merrill C., and Moises Silva, 489 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 489.

[346] John V. Seters, *The Pentateuch. A Social-Science Commentary* (Sheffield: Sheffield, 1999), 110.

[347] *A.C. Emery, "Warfare," in Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch, eds. Alexander, Desmond T., and David W. Baker, 877- 881 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003),* 881.

[348] T.R. Hobbs, "War and Peace," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books,* eds. Bill T. Arnold, and H.G.M. Williamson, 972-980 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005). 978.

[349] Hubbard, *The NIV Application Commentary: Joshua*, 43; McConville, and Williams, *Joshua*, 113.The book of Exodus (20:3-4) and Deuteronomy (5:7-8) strongly emphasis the issue of idolatry and how Israelites need to keep themselves clean from this, by totally destroying the idols and the idol worshipers at the entrance in Canaan (Deut. 6:14; 7:4-5).

[350] S. Barabas, "Ban," 489.

The battle of Jericho also evokes the image of purity because the battle

required purity amongst the soldiers (Josh 3:5), it started with religious ceremony

(Josh 6:7:14), the Lord's presence was symbolised by the ark (Josh 6:13), and the

plunders of the battle belonged to Yahweh (Josh 6:24).[351]

Curses

This paper would like to suggest the concept of *curse* as an additional social

and cultural topic in the OT. To curse means to "wish, pray or cause trouble or

disaster on a person or a thing."[352] The notion of curse has been known ever since

Eve ate the forbidden fruit and God placed a curse on the serpent.[353] Curses were

used when either God or a leader wanted to discourage people from transgressing a

commandment, or a legal demand.[354] However, the fulfilment of a curse depended

on Yahweh's approval of the curse, because curses could be used sinfully or

righteously.[355]

Woudstra suggests that *ḥērem* carried the meaning of curse, and the Israelites

were told to stay away from the "accursed things."[356] This was required of them,

because if they were to touch the things that were placed under the curse of *ḥērem*,

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[351] Hubbard, *NIV Application Commentary: Joshua*, 43; Lilley, "Understanding the ērem." *Tyn Bul* 44 (1993): 172.

[352] Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary,* vol 1, 1218.

[353] G.B. Funderburk, "Curse," in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible,* vol 1, eds. Tenney, Merrill C., and Moises Silva, 1112-1114 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 1114.

[354] Joseph Scharbert, " 'rr," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol 1, eds. Johannes G. Botterweck, and Helmer Ringgren, 405-418, trans. John T. Willis (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), 409.

[355] Douglas Stuart, "Curse," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary,* vol 1, ed. David Noel Freedman, 1218-1219 (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 1218. Balaam cursed sinfully against Israel (Num. 22:6-17) whereas Joshua cursed righteously against Jericho and Gibeon (Jos 6:26; 9:23).

[356] Woudstra, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Joshua,* 113.

they risked becoming cursed themselves.[357] The Israelites were not only "executers of the curse," but they were also "subject to the curse" if they did not follow Yahweh's instruction.[358]

Another aspect of the idea of curse is found in Josh 6:26, where the curse placed on Jericho functioned as a threat to anyone who violated the command not to rebuild the city of Jericho.[359] The curse, which consists in the death of the offender's oldest and youngest sons, is a certainty because it is made before Yahweh.[360] This implies that the curse is not effective only during Joshua's life, but forever because Yahweh is eternal.[361] The fulfilment of the curse is described in 1 Kgs. 16:34 when Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho at the cost of his first-born son Abiram, and set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub.[362]

It is interesting to note that Jericho, out of all the other Canaanite cities that were conquered by the Israelites, is the only one cursed.[363] Hubbard suggests that this happened because Jericho had a symbolic value since it has been one of the primary gateways in Canaan for nearly eight thousand years.[364] The ruins of Jericho

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[357] Butler, *Word Biblical Commentary: Joshua,* 71. This is obvious in the word play found in Joshua 6: 17-18.

[358] Woudstra, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Joshua,* 113. This aspect is developed in Joshua 7 where Achan together with his family is placed under the curse of   ērem because he was not faifthul in following God's instruction concerning the destruction of the cured things.

[359] J.K. Aitken, *Ancient Near Eastern Studies: The Semantics of Blessings and Cursing in Ancient Hebrew* (Louvain, Belgium: Peeters, 2007), 81.

[360] Ibid.

[361] Hubbard, *NIV Application Commentary: Joshua*, 195.

[362] Woudstra, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Joshua,* 117.

[363] Hubbard, *NIV Application Commentary: Joshua*, 195.

[364] Ibid., 195-196.

city represented Yahweh's victory over the Canaanites' gods and it also warned the Israelites of the terrible fate awaiting those who turn from Yahweh to idols.[365]

The study of curse in Josh 6:26 reveals that its purpose was to bring honour to Yahweh who made the victory possible, and every surrounding nation had to know that.

Summary Statement

The *social and cultural texture* has revealed that the purpose of the Jericho conquest is to emphasise Yahweh's plan to restore humanity. The Israelites represented the people God used to bring spiritual reform to the nations and to tell people about the sovereignty of Yahweh.

This texture has also revealed that a proper understanding of the worldview during Joshua's time will help us understand God's actions. Since, the Jericho conquest uplifted the name of Yahweh above all other gods, it made visible His supremacy over everything. Another aspect that this texture emphasised is God's desire to keep His people clean from any impurities such as idolatry, immorality and other sins that the Canaanites practised.

To conclude, this texture suggests that Yahweh worked in a culturally relevant manner with the Israelites, and His interaction with the Canaanites was similarly relevant in the context of the ANE worldview. Thus, we can say that God accommodated Himself to that specific period of time and worked within the culture of His people.[366]

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[365] Hess, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Joshua*, 135.

[366] McConville, and Williams, *Joshua*, 122.

CHAPTER VII

IDEOLOGICAL TEXTURE

The *ideological texture* considers the system of beliefs, assumptions, and

values that reflect the needs and interests of a group of people at a particular time in

history.[367] One of the major concerns of this texture is the issue of power within a

society and how it impacts people's response to the power structures.[368]

This chapter will focus on these power structures by analysing the ideology

of power within Joshua 6 following Foucault's guidelines.[369] He presents five

essential steps in examining the ideology of power in a text.[370] These five steps will

be discussed in the context of Joshua 6.

System of Differentiations

The text of Joshua 6 sets up a clear distinction between the one with authority

and the one who carries out the command. It contains two examples of this

distinction. The first instance is between Yahweh the giver of the order, and Joshua

the subordinate. The second example described in the text refers to Joshua as the

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[367]Robbins, *Tapestry,* 193.

[368] de Waal, *A Socio-rhetorical Interpretation of the Seven Trumpets of Revelation,* 53.

[369] Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1991), 50. Foucault's guidelines are cited in this book.

[370] These five steps that were previously presented in the methodology chapter are described as follows: The first step is the system of differentiations, which refers to the authority of the person in a dominant position to give orders to subordinates. The second step represents the quest to discover the types of objective of the person in a dominant position. The third step seeks to identify the means for bringing the relationship between the one in a high position and the one in a lower position into being. The fourth step looks at the forms of institutionalization of power. The final step requires the researcher to rationalize the power relationships within a text in order to understand the bigger picture of truth that was contained in that passage.

giver of order, and the people as subordinates. These two situations will now be examined.

Yahweh the Dominant Figure

At the beginning of Joshua 6 (vv.2-5) Yahweh instructs Joshua about the military strategy that he needs to implement, and He also reassures him of the victory to come.[371] This subsection will show that Yahweh had the authority and power to order Joshua to destroy the city of Jericho.

Yahweh is unique among other gods because he is never in a situation wanting to do something and not being able to do it.[372] He is the creator of everything, and this implies that God is sovereign over nations, governments, heavenly powers, over the world and human life.[373]

It has been argued that the name Yahweh is introduced to remind the forgetful Israelites of exactly who their God was, but it plays a much more significant role.[374] The sound of Yahweh's name reminded them of the first commandment by which they were told that no other god is as powerful as Yahweh.[375] Furthermore, because Yahweh was the personal name that God Himself revealed to Moses it was able to be used strategically in Joshua to inform people that the same God was leading them, even though Moses was dead.[376] Thus they are reminded of the long history of God's leading including such episodes as the great

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[371] Hubbard, *NIV Application Commentary: Joshua*, 187.

[372] John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Faith,* vol 2. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 64.

[373] Ibid., 71, 733.

[374] D. I. Block, "God," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books,* eds. Bill T. Arnold, and H.G.M. Williamson, 336-355 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 338.

[375] Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament,* 268.

[376] Robin Routledge, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 83.

Exodus where Yahweh is said to be "a man of war" who defeated Pharaoh and all his army.[377]

To sum up, Yahweh as the creator of the world and as God of Israel had the authority to give orders to Joshua.

Joshua the Dominant Figure

From the subordinate position, Joshua becomes the dominant figure of the passage because Yahweh authorised him for that task.[378] Thus, Joshua commands the priests and people to do everything that he was told to do by Yahweh (Josh 6:6-7).

Even before he starts ordering the priests and the people, Joshua is referred as the son of Nun in Josh 6:6. Joshua is referred to as the "son of Nun" ten times in the book of Joshua and twenty other times throughout the OT.[379] The reference to Joshua as the "son of Nun" in Josh 6:6 is meant to identify Joshua in reference to his family or tribe.[380] However, it does more than this; the title "son of Nun" also identifies Joshua with the youth who assisted Moses (Ex 24:13), with the young general who led Israel's army (Ex 17:8-13), with one of the twelve spies sent to explore the land of Canaan (Num 13:16), with one of the two spies that believed that the land of Canaan can be conquered (Num 14:6), and with the new leader appointed

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[377] Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament,* 242. Exod 15:3

[378] Ibid., 197.

[379] Sarah L. Hall, *Conquering Character: The Characterization of Joshua in Joshua 1-11* (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2010), 19. (Josh 1:1; 2:1, 23; 6:6; 14:1; 17:4; 19:49; 19:51; 21:1; 24:29), (Exod 33:11; Num11:28; 13:8; 13:16;14:6, 30, 38; 26:65; 27:18; 32:12; 32:28; 34:17; Deut 1:38; 31:23; 32:44; 34:9; Jud 2:8; 1Kgs 16:34; 1 Chr 7:27; Neh 8:17).

[380] Ibid., 18.

by Moses (Deut 3); the title identified him as the Joshua of the Pentateuch.[381] The title thus ties together the accomplishments and legacy of Joshua.

In the light of these findings, the title "son of Nun" is important in the story of Joshua because his honour and status among the people can be continually "checked, affirmed or even challenged."[382] This is meant to identify him with the Joshua of the Pentateuch, the man who served Moses, and who was appointed by both Yahweh and Moses as the new leader of Israel.[383]

Furthermore, Joshua's authority can be seen in Josh 6:8 which notes that after he spoke, people followed his instructions.[384] Joshua's dominant position is not limited to the commands in Josh 6:6-7. He gives other instructions to the people and they obeyed him "without exception."[385]

These observations about Joshua show that he was in a position to give orders because Moses, under Yahweh's guidance, appointed him as the new leader

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[381] Hess, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Joshua*, 20-21; Hall, *Conquering Character: The Characterization of Joshua in Joshua 1-11, 19.*

[382] Jerome H. Neyrey, "Dyadism," in *Biblical Social Values and Their Meaning,* eds. John Pilch, and Bruce Malina, 49-52 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 51.

[383] Hall, *Conquering Character: The Characterization of Joshua in Joshua 1-11*, 19. Yahweh and Moses appoint Joshua as the new leader in Num. 27 and Deut. 3. Dale C. Allison, *The New Moses. A Matthean Typology* (Mineapollis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), 23-28. Dale Allison describes Joshua is the new Moses based on the strong parallelism between Moses and Joshua in the beginning of the book of Joshua. Allison also suggests that the life of Joshua is to some "significant degree a replay of the life of Moses." Just like Moses who sent the spies into Canaan (Numbers 13), so did Joshua (Joshua 2). It was under Moses that Israel first celebrated their Passover and shortly after that they received manna (Exodus 12), and the Israelites in Canaan celebrated Passover under Joshua after which the manna ceased to be given (Josh 5:10-13). In addition, when Moses experienced his first theophany, he was asked by God to take his shoes off (Exod 3:5), and the same request was given to Joshua when he experienced his first theophany (Josh 5:15). There are many more similarities to be mentioned, but these suffice to prove that Joshua was seen as a second Moses.

[384] Ibid., 93.

[385] Ibid., 94. Joshua also commands silence in the procession, shouting, total destruction of the city, the sparing of Rahab, and the consecration of the metal articles (Josh 6:10, 16-19, 22).

of the people, Yahweh enabled Joshua for this new role, and that the people of Israel recognized his authority.

Types of Objectives Pursued by Dominant Figures

The second stage of Foucault's guidelines refers to the types of objectives that those in dominant positions are trying to achieve.[386] While these objectives vary, two commonly held objectives are achieving honour and maintaining power over other people.[387] This section will identify Yahweh's and Joshua's objectives in the chosen passage.

Yahweh's Objectives

To begin with, Yahweh is presented in Joshua 6 as a "powerful force" who engages in the battle with the gods and the social powers of the Canaanites.[388] This implies that the battle of Jericho was first of all a battle among the gods determining the future of the Canaanite land.[389] Yahweh, as the creator, not only claims the land as His, but also gives the Israelites the right to dwell there.[390]

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[386] Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power,* 50.

[387] Robbins, *Exploring,* 113.

[388] Bruce C. Birch, Walter Brueggemann, Terence E. Fretheim, and David L. Petersen, *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1999), 185.

[389] Glatt-Gilad, "Yahweh's Honor at Stake: A Divine Conundrum," in *JSOT* 98 (2002): 64; Richard Hess, *Israelite Religions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 160. Hess observes that Yahweh's portrayal as a warrior starts in Exodus 15 and then continues throughout the OT. Yahweh is described as the deity that fights against Egyptian, Canaanites and Philistine deities. Mark Smith, *The Early History of God. Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 56. It is important to note that Mark Smith suggests that the Israelites compared Yahweh to Baal, and in many instance they described Yahweh with the same words in which Baal was described. This suggests that the conquest was a decisive moment to demonstrate which god was the strongest and the most powerful.

[390] Birch, Brueggemann, Fretheim, and Petersen, *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament,* 186. In Ex 19:5 Yahweh declares that "the whole earth is mine" and he has the authority to reassigning the land for the benefit of Israel.

The focus of Joshua 6, especially with reference to the collapse of Jericho's wall, is to portray Yahweh as the God who is capable of creating miracles and overthrowing every power that opposes His plan.[391] Yahweh wanted his power over the Canaanite gods to be displayed in the same manner as it was shown over the Egyptian gods.[392] This display of power was to be made in the presence of other nations. Thus through this conquest Yahweh made known His power in the presence of the Israelites, Canaanites and other neighbouring nations.[393]

Hubbard identifies another objective that Yahweh had in destroying Jericho. This was to bring judgement on the heresies, sins and immoralities that took place in the land of Canaan. The ruins of the city would be a constant reminder to the Israelites of the "terrible fate awaiting those who abandon Yahweh for other gods."[394]

A last objective that can be identified from Joshua 6 is that Yahweh wanted to be known as the God who can deliver on what He promises.[395] This specific promise refers to the covenant He made with Abraham in which He promised to give the land of Canaan to his descendants.[396] Joshua 6 describes that Yahweh fought the battle, won the victory, and gave the land as a gift to the Israelites.[397] This gift of land was received by the people as a guarantee that Yahweh would bless them in the

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[391] Hess, "Joshua, " 31.

[392] Ibid., 185.

[393] Glatt-Gilad, "Yahweh's Honor at Stake: A Divine Conundrum," in *JSOT* 98 (2002): 65.

[394] Hubbard, *NIV Application Commentary: Joshua*, 196.

[395] McConville, and Williams, *Joshua*, 215.

[396] Lasor, Hubbard, and Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament,* 151.

[397] Ibid.

land with a "safe, stable and prosperous life."[398] The fulfilment of the promise also

pointed to Yahweh's faithfulness towards the people that in turn required from them

total obedience to the covenant.[399]

To conclude, Yahweh's objectives in Joshua 6 were to display His power in

front of His own people and other nations, and to show to the Israelites that He is a

faithful God that fulfils His promises.

<p style="text-align:center">Joshua's Objectives</p>

The text of Joshua 6 describes Joshua as Moses' "legitimate" and suitable

successor.[400] However, Joshua is presented in a better light than Moses, because

unlike Moses who was initially reluctant to obey God, Joshua received the divine

command to attack Jericho, and was immediately willing to execute it.[401]

Hittite documents show that the respect and acceptance of a leader was

totally dependent on his first military campaign.[402] If we accept that Israel was

similar to its ANE neighbours, then we can assume that the victory over Jericho

under Joshua's leadership secured him the authority and respect he needed as leader.

Thus the conquest of Jericho played a crucial role in establishing Joshua's authority

and leadership position in the eyes of the Israelites.

The objectives of Joshua's authority were to establish him in the eyes of the

Israelites as the successor of Moses and as a successful military commander. The

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[398] Birch, Brueggemann, Fretheim, and Petersen, *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament,* 191.

[399] Lasor, Hubbard, and Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament,* 152.

[400] Birch, Brueggemann, Fretheim, and Petersen, *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament,* 188.

[401] Hall, *Conquering Character: The Characterization of Joshua in Joshua 1-11,* 90.

[402] Ibid., 91.

victory over Jericho confirmed to the people that Joshua was instructed and guided by Yahweh, in a similar way to Moses.[403]

The Means for Bringing Power Relations into being

The next step in Foucault's guidelines is to identify the means for bringing the power relationships into being.[404] Robbins identifies the dominant ways to bring these about are "giving of order, actions and making requests."[405] This subsection will identify Yahweh and Joshua's means for bringing the power relations into being.

Yahweh's Means

As mentioned before, the battles between nations in the ANE were battles between gods, and through war-*ḥērem* in which gods made their name and power known to other nations. Hence, Yahweh intended to make his name and power known, both amongst its own people and the surrounding nations through the concept of war-harem.[406]

In addition, war-*ḥērem* signified the means by which the Israelites were bounded to Yahweh, who gave them the victory over Jericho.[407] The war-*ḥērem* was

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[403] Hess, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Joshua*, 135.

[404] Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power,* 50.

[405] Robbins, *Exploring,* 113.

[406] Glatt-Gilad, "Yahweh's Honor at Stake: A Divine Conundrum," *JSOT* 98 (2002): 64-65.

[407] Lauren A. S. Monroe, "Israelite, Moabite, and Sabaen War- *ērem* Traditions and the Forging of National Identity: Reconsidering the Sabaen Text RES 3945 in Light of Biblical and Moabite Evidence," *VT* 57 (2007): 322.

a "metaphor for religious fidelity" which showed the Israelites' commitment to Yahweh, and acceptance of His governance.[408]

Monroe states that war-*ḥērem* in Jewish texts, like the Moabite and Sabaean texts, served as an "affirmation of the exclusive relationship" between the Israelites and Yahweh. Yahweh wanted Israel to understand that He owns everything, and He has the authority to seal the fate of everything.[409] Faithfulness in implementing *ḥērem* represented Israel's commitment to the covenant made with Yahweh, a covenant which required complete obedience to Yahweh's instructions.[410]

In the context of Joshua 6, *ḥērem* signified the method by which God brought the power relations into being. Yahweh ordered *ḥērem* and the Israelites acted according to God's word.

Joshua's Means

Joshua's means of bringing the power relations into being is slightly different from Yahweh's method. Joshua responded to Yahweh's orders by delivering commandments of his own to the people.[411] This represented Joshua's method of creating the power relation between him and the people. Thus, Joshua becomes the military leader that the Israelites obeyed. Joshua also had a supervisory role, as he

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[408]R. W. L. Moberly, "Toward an Interpretation of Shema," in *Theological Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Brevard S. Childs,* ed. Christopher Seitz and Kathryn Greene-McCreight, 124-144 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 135. Cited in McConville, and Williams, *Joshua*, 115.

[409] Hubbard, *NIV Application Commentary: Joshua*, 192.

[410] Monroe, "Israelite, Moabite, and Sabaen War- *ērem* Traditions and the Forging of National Identity: Reconsidering the Sabaen Text RES 3945 in Light of Biblical and Moabite Evidence," *VT* 57 (2007): 323; McConville, and Williams, *Joshua*, 116.

[411]Daniel E. Fleming, "The Seven-Day Siege of Jericho in Holy war," in *Ki Baruch Hu*, ed. Chazan R. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999, 223. Cited in Hall, *Conquering Character: The Characterization of Joshua in Joshua 1-11,* 93.

oversaw the procession around Jericho for seven days, and the priests, soldiers and people did exactly as Joshua instructed them.[412]

It was Yahweh who elevated Joshua in Israel's eyes and gave him authority over the people.[413] Moreover, Joshua was also given the authority to command life and death in Jericho because Yahweh enabled him to do this. Joshua thus commanded the destruction of Jericho because Yahweh required that but he also ordered that Rahab and her family be spared.[414]

Another way in which the power relation between Joshua and the people was created was the prophetic cursing of the Jericho ruins. Joshua's speech of cursing in Josh 6:26 is considered to be "prophetic" because it predicted the future.[415] Joshua's prophetic speech also includes the communication of the commands he received from Yahweh for the people.[416]

Joshua's ability to command such orders and curse the city, and the fact that Yahweh himself elevated him to the position of leadership, set him above every other Israelite, and also confirmed the way in which the power relations were created between him and the people.

The Forms of Institutionalisation of Power

Another essential step in analysing the power relations is the identification of the forms of institutionalization of power.[417] Robbins explains that the power

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[412] Hall, *Conquering Character: The Characterization of Joshua in Joshua 1-11,* 96.

[413] Hubbard, *NIV Application Commentary: Joshua*, 58.

[414] Hall, *Conquering Character: The Characterization of Joshua in Joshua 1-11,* 104.

[415] Block, "God," 338.

[416] Hall, *Conquering Character: The Characterization of Joshua in Joshua 1-11,* 109.

[417] Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power,* 50.

circulates in social networks, and some of the New Testament forms of institutionalization and power are the church, the temple, and the Jewish court.[418] As these features are not applicable to the passage in study, this subsection will try to identify which, if any, forms of institutionalization of power are present in Joshua 6.

The OT presents a progression of religious institutions, from sacred territories, to the tabernacle and temple.[419] The tabernacle served as a visible reminder to the Israelites that Yahweh was in their midst. Through the service that took place in the tabernacle Israel maintained the covenantal relationship with Yahweh and they received instructions and guidance.[420] The books of the OT reveal that a principal component of the tabernacle and the temple was the Ark of the Covenant.[421] The Ark was a holy object, and during the years of Israel in wilderness Yahweh spoke to Moses from between the cherubim that were on the Ark of the Covenant.[422]

The Ark of the Covenant is mentioned ten times in Joshua 6.[423] It played a crucial role in the life of Israel as it created the environment for a form of institutionalised power. Yahweh instructed that only the Levites should carry the Ark

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[418] Robbins, *Exploring,* 114.

[419] Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Religious Institutions*, vol 2 (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1965), ix-x.

[420] C.L. Feinberg, "Tabernacle," in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible.* vol 5, eds. Tenney, Merrill C., and Moises Silva, 664-677 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 676.

[421] King, and Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 319.

[422] Shubert Spero, "From Tabernacle and Temple to Synagogue," *Tradition* 38 (2004): 63-64. (Num 7:89).

[423] Josh 6: 4, 6 (x2), 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 (x2).

of the Covenant, which was named as such because it contained the 'tablets of the Covenant', a covenant which Yahweh had made with his people.[424]

The Ark of the Covenant symbolised the "throne of the invisible Yahweh" and it was part of the Israelite worship, especially in the book of Joshua.[425] Davidson suggests that the Ark and its role in relation to covenant is present at the very core of the first twelve chapters of the book of Joshua.[426] Cate supports such a view by suggesting that the focus of the book of Joshua is not so much the conquest stories as about the elements that point to the covenantal relationship between Yahweh and the Israelites.[427]

Joshua 6 describes the Ark of the Covenant circling the city, representing Yahweh's presence, but also reminding the Israelites that the covenant did not end with the death of Moses or with the crossing of the Jordan River.[428] The Ark of the Covenant was a reminder that Yahweh still had the same commitment to them, and He expected total obedience from them even though their circumstances were about to change, as they became a settled people.[429] Howards, further notes that the emphasis of the covenantal relationship was the cause and effect relationship of

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[424] de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Religious Institutions*, vol 2, 298.

[425] John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 169.

[426] Davidson, *In the footsteps of Joshua*, 15. Davidson sees Josh 8:30-35 as the core of the first half of Joshua. In this passage the Ark of the Covenant is present, and altar is built, and a great ceremony of covenant renewal is held. See also Robert L. Cate, *An Introduction to the Historical Books of the Old Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 20.

[427] Cate, *An Introduction to the Historical Books of the Old Testament,* 13.

[428] Ibid.

[429] Ibid., 13-14.

obedience and blessing, disobedience and punishment.[430] Yahweh would continue to bless them only if they remained faithful to the covenant.

The violation of the commandments that were placed in the Ark of the Covenant would have constituted the sin of the Israelites, which brought judgement down from Yahweh.[431] The Ark of the Covenant was not magical in itself, but it was the presence of Yahweh that made it holy.[432]

For the Israelites, to be before the ark of Covenant was as if they were before Yahweh; it was a visible reminder of God's presence, authority and power in their midst.[433] The Ark was also a means through which Yahweh guided and protected His people, and it also had an ultimate "sacramental significance" in the Day of Atonement.[434]

The idea of institutionalized power is not well defined in Joshua 6, but in the light of the above remarks, it can be concluded that the life of the Israelites in the time of Joshua revolved around and centred upon the Ark of the Covenant. It was the central point through which God revealed His power and guided His people.

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[430] David Jr. Howard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1993), 93.

[431] Alberto J. Soggin, *Israel in the Biblical Period: Institutions, Festivals, Ceremonies, Rituals* (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2001), 60.

[432] Marten H. Woudstra, *The Ark of the Covenant from Conquest to Kingship* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1965), 54.

[433] J.B. Payne, "Ark of the Covenant," in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible,* vol 1, eds. Tenney, Merrill C., and Moises Silva, 345-350 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 347.

[434] Ibid., 348.

The Degree of Rationalization of Power Relations

The final point to be discussed from Foucault's guidelines is the degree of rationalization of power relations.[435] The power relations are rationalized in order to discover the larger picture of truth behind the context.[436] This section challenges the researcher to rationalize the activity in Joshua 6 and to attempt to offer an answer to the question Was ḥērem necessary in the Jericho' conquest?

The Canaanites are described as opponents of Yahweh because they did not recognize His sovereignty over the entire creation.[437] The entire nation knew about Yahweh's supremacy because Rahab and her family are a clear indication of that.[438] Rahab's salvation was not a violation of ḥērem because Yahweh wanted to extend mercy to whomever was willing to accept it.[439]

The reason why the Canaanites were destroyed is because they openly refused to worship Yahweh, even though they knew He was the supreme god.[440] The judgement that fell upon Sodom in the days of Abraham stood as a witness for the Canaanites that Yahweh is the supreme God of the universe.[441] Moreover, in Gen 15:16 God told Abraham that He will wait for 430 years until He will destroy the inhabitants of Canaan, because after that period of time the sins of the people would

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[435] Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power,* 50.

[436] Ibid.

[437] Birch, Brueggemann, Fretheim, and Petersen, *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament,* 189-190.

[438] Paul Copan, "Yahweh Wars and the Canaanites." The text of Josh 2:10-11 reveals that the Canaanites knew about the miracles that Yahweh performed in Egypt and through wilderness.

[439] Ibid.

[440] Madvig, "Joshua," 247.

[441] Ibid.

reach full measure and they would be ripe for judgement.[442] Moreover, the corporate capital punishment that God brought against the Canaanites was because of their religion.[443] History shows that the Canaanite gods and goddesses engaged in "incest, bestiality, adultery and other grotesque acts;" consequently the Canaanite worshipers engaged in "infant sacrifice, and ritual prostitution."[444] God's destructive command against the Canaanites was therefore a "sign of moral concern for other humans" and a method of stopping the moral decline that was taking place in the land.[445]

Another purpose for the employment of *ḥērem* in Jericho's conquest was to maintain a divine cosmic order, as the battle between nations was a battle between their patron gods.[446] Warfare was a "religious duty" that was outside the "sphere of ethics and morals" as we see them today, and its purpose was to destroy the direct enemies of the divine order.[447] Goldingay further states that the destructions of certain nations, such as the Canaanites, can represent a reason for other nations to rejoice because Yahweh's purpose in doing this was to create a means for Israel to be a blessing for all the nations.[448]

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[442] Paul Copan, "How can a God of Love Orchestrate Killings in the Old testament," http://www.rzim.org/justthinkingfv/tabid/602/articleid/10624/cbmoduleid/1694/default.aspx (accessed June 13 2012)

[443] Copan, "Yahweh Wars and the Canaanites: Divinely-Mandated Genocide or Corporate Capital Punishment?" http://www.epsociety.org/library/articles.asp?pid=63&ap=1 (accessed 13 June 2012).

[444] Copan, "How can a God of Love Orchestrate Killings in the Old testament," http://www.rzim.org/justthinkingfv/tabid/602/articleid/10624/cbmoduleid/1694/default.aspx (accessed June 13 2012)

[445] Ibid.

[446] Hobbs, "War and Peace," 977.

[447] Ibid.

[448] Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Faith,* vol 2, 734.

To conclude this section, *ḥērem* was necessary in the conquest of Jericho because the divine cosmic order was necessary and the land needed to be purified and prepared for the coming of the Messiah who would be a blessing and represent salvation for all nations, not for the Jews only. The surrounding nations had to realise that the God of Israel is supreme, and He is the all-powerful God that can bring judgement down upon nations.

Summary Statement

The purpose of this texture was to examine the power within a society and people's response to the power structure. The analyses discovered that Yahweh is the supreme and powerful God, above any other gods, and this fact is recognized by the Israelites and Rahab the Canaanite. Yahweh had the authority to order the total destruction of Jericho in order to generate a divine cosmic order. The Israelites and Rahab are both portrayed as obedient to Yahweh's authority and commands.

The text of Joshua 6 also reveals that Joshua has the status of leader of the Israelites, because Yahweh elected him and he proved himself worthy for such a high position through his obedience to God's commands. The people accepted Joshua as Moses' successor and gave no evidence of questioning his divine election.

The greatest aspect that this texture revealed was that Yahweh's intent in the destruction of Jericho was to remind people who the almighty God is, and to prepare a land through which salvation would come for all the nations.

CHAPTER VIII

SACRED TEXTURE

The *sacred texture* is the final texture in which Robbins challenges the researcher to discover the "insights into the relationship between human and the divine."[449] This texture relates to the way in which the text talks about "God, gods and the realms of religious life."[450]

The three main areas that this chapter will carefully consider are: the role of God in Joshua 6 in relation to divine history; the human commitment to divine ways; and the issue of ethics in the context of the Jericho conquest.

The Role of God in Joshua 6 in Relation to Divine History

The aim of this subsection is to show how the divine powers guide historical process and events towards certain results. Specifically, it will argue that the reason why divine powers control history is to bring about the possibility of salvation for all humankind. This texture will try to identify the role of the Jericho conquest in this great divine history.

God and Divine History

The OT presents a God who is intimately involved in human history. He chose to act both in "supernatural ways," and through His people.[451] God's

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[449] Robbins, "Dictionary of Socio-rhetorical Terms," Socio-rhetorical Interpretation. http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/index.cfm (accessed April 30 2012).

[450] Robbins, *Exploring,* 120.

[451] John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Life,* vol 3 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 575. Other scholars that embraced this thought and included this topic in their

involvement in human history has a particular end in view, because the history presented in the Bible is not an enclosed system or "a sequence of causes and effects."[452] The outcome that God wants to achieve is salvation made available to everyone.[453]

The God of the OT is the One who has revealed Himself to humanity and has also entered into a covenantal relationship with one nation in particular, the nation of Israel.[454] The reason for the covenantal relationship is described in Gen 4-11 where the progressive decline of humanity into sin is presented in detail. [455] The appearance and increase of sin on the face of the earth led to two of God's important and essential actions: judgement and the covenant relationship.[456] The Bible describes God's judgement on sin through the flood in Noah's day, and how the covenant relationship that Yahweh entered with Noah and then with Abraham was to bring blessings and salvations not only for the people of the covenant, but for all nations (Gen 12:2).[457]

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writings are: Terence Fretheim, *Abraham. Trials of Family and Faith* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 2007); Terence Fretheim, *Exodus. Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1991). Brent A. Strawn, and Nancy R. Bowen, eds. *Essays on Old Testament Theology in Honor of Patrick D. Miller* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003). Edward J. Young, *The Study of Old Testament Theology Today* (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 2004).

[452] Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 40.

[453] Ibid. 41.

[454] Routledge, *Old Testament Theology*, 159-160.

[455] Ibid., 156.

[456] Ibid., 154-155.

[457] Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011), 191. More information on the theology of the covenant can be found in the following books: Michael Horton, *God of Promise. Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006). Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed With an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Purpose,* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007). Gerhard F. Hasel, and Michael G. Hasel, *The Promise: God's everlasting covenant* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2002).

The duty of Abraham and his descendants was to draw others into the same relation with Yahweh, submit to His authority, and worship Him as the creator or heaven and earth.[458] The purpose of the covenantal relationship between Yahweh, Abraham and eventually Israel, was to restore "what has been spoilt by the fall."[459]

Pierre Gilbert suggests that Yahweh is working on a project to restore what sin has damaged, and humanity is invited to become part of this project.[460] When Israel accepted God's invitation they became a nation set apart from others which represented "God to the people and the people to God."[461]

On the other hand, the moment God initiated the covenant between Himself and Abraham and his descendants, He agreed to work with flawed human beings.[462] Thus, God needed to work within the culture that Israel found itself in at that time. This concept helps us understand that the picture of war found in the OT is not describing God as being bloodthirsty, angry and violent in character, but as loving and accommodating God, willing to participate in the human history tainted by sin.[463] God was willing to be part of the history of Israel for whom "war is an essential part of the religion and culture."[464]

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[458] Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Faith.* vol 2, 225; Routledge, *Old Testament Theology*, 325.

[459] Routledge, *Old Testament Theology*, 164.

[460] Pierre Gilbert, "Christians and Violence: A two part series. Part 1: The Problem of War in the Old Testament," http://www.mbseminary.edu/files/download/gilbert7.pdf?file_id=12815167 (accessed June 21 2012).

[461] Routledge, *Old Testament Theology*, 172.

[462] Gilbert, "Christians and Violence: A two part series. Part 1: The Problem of War in the Old Testament," http://www.mbseminary.edu/files/download/gilbert7.pdf?file_id=12815167 (June 21 2012).

[463] Ibid.; Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament,* 42.

[464] Collin Chapman, "Holy War," in *Zondervan Handbook to the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 234.

God's love must not be viewed in isolation since it is not the only part of
God's character that has bearing on God's actions. Love must be balanced with
justice. Because God is a "loving, powerful and holy judge," He also needs to be a
"warrior against evil."[465] Consequently, the entire Bible presents a God who fights
the evil in our world, and in this conflict God's goodness goes hand in hand with His
severity.[466] God is not interested in arbitrarily destroying certain nations; He is rather
concerned for the wellbeing of the entire world.[467]

At times this means that God acts like a surgeon who "does not hesitate to
remove an arm or a leg, or even a vital organ, when life is at stake. The very
existence of Israel, and ultimately the salvation of the world, depended upon" the
survival of this chosen nation.[468] He wanted every nation to have an "equal share in
the blessings of God's salvation."[469]

Thus, the covenant that Yahweh made with Abraham and repeated with Israel
at Mt. Sinai called the entire nation to be Yahweh's covenant partner, to be obedient
to His commands and to do justice, and to be the "agent and instrument" through
which God's blessings are to be given to the world under curse.[470] Israel, as an
instrument of Yahweh, had to "reorder the internal life of the community in ways

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[465] Tremper Longman III, "The God of War," *Christianity Today,* May 2003, 62.

[466] Ibid.

[467] Routledge, *Old Testament Theology*, 333.

[468] Lasor, Hubbard, and Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament,* 147-148.

[469] Routledge, *Old Testament Theology*, 333.

[470] Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament,* 418-421, 498.

faithful to Yahweh" and also to "invite the world out beyond" their community to arrange their life under Yahweh's sovereignty.[471]

This section reveals that Yahweh's purpose is to make salvation available to the entire world. He started with the nation of Israel through which salvation can come to the entire world. God's involvement in human history, while revealing both His love and justice, focuses on His willingness to work in a sinful environment to restore people to the initial state of His creation.

Divine History and Joshua 6

God's purpose in conquering Jericho fits neatly into the divine purpose outlined above. First, Joshua 6 shows that the Israelites attacked Jericho at Yahweh's command with no doubt or fear because their God was a divine warrior who engaged and accomplished victory in battle.[472] While the image of God as a divine warrior does not fully describe God and His purpose, it does express God's involvement a world filled with violence.[473] God's portrayal as a warrior reveals His willingness to accommodate Himself to a certain time in history in order to restore what was lost soon after the creation of the earth.

Second, Canaan was conquered in order for Israel to create and live in a sacred space from where they could "bear concrete witness to what God originally intended for all of his creation."[474] Moreover, Stern argues that for Israel the process

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[471]Ibid., 747.

[472] Jeph Holloway, "The Ethical Dilemma of Holy War," *SwJT* 41 (1998):49-50.

[473] Ibid., 53.

[474] Ibid., 57.

of ḥērem was "a re-enactment of the creation, a way of achieving a world order in which they could live and thrive."[475]

The total destruction suggested by ḥērem represented the process in which the "chaos and disorder" found in the Canaanite civilization and religion were replaced by God's intended order.[476] The Canaanites were not destroyed because the Israelites needed the land to be empty, but they were judged by God because of their immorality and rejection of Him.[477] Through the conquest of the Canaanite land, as well as through worship and beliefs, Israel revealed to other nations, that were still living in "chaos and disorder," the nature of God's intent for a peaceful and "ordered creation."[478]

Copan suggests that if the Israelites had not applied the laws of ḥērem to the Canaanites, the result would have been "incalculable damage to Israel's integrity and thus to God's entire plan to redeem humanity."[479]

Third, the conquest of Jericho by the Israelites in the power of Yahweh represents strong evidence that the power of chaos and disorder will not be triumphant forever in this world.[480] Yahweh has proven to be stronger and mightier than any adversary, and He is working on restoring peace and order for the entire world. The conquest of Canaan is in fact the fulfilment of God's promise made to

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[475] Philip D. Stern, *The Biblical ḥērem* (Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 1991), 219. Cited in Holloway, "The Ethical Dilemma of Holy War," *SwJT* 41 (1998): 58.

[476] Holloway, "The Ethical Dilemma of Holy War," *SwJT* 41 (1998): 48.

[477] Gilbert, "Christians and Violence: A two part series. Part 1: The Problem of War in the Old Testament," http://www.mbseminary.edu/files/download/gilbert7.pdf?file_id=12815167 (June 21 2012).

[478] Holloway, "The Ethical Dilemma of Holy War," *SwJT* 41 (1998): 58.

[479] Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster?* 190.

[480] Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Faith.* vol 2, 152.

Abraham, and represents a step closer for Yahweh to bring blessings to the entire world.[481]

The conquest of Jericho symbolises a replacement of a society that embodies all that is evil and sinful in God's eyes by a society that "bear[s] witness to God's hope for this world."[482] Superior to the issue of judgement upon the sinful people of Jericho or the issue of finding Israel land, was God's action in restoring fallen creation.[483]

Through Joshua and the Jericho conquest, God advanced further His plans to make salvation available to every nation and to restore His creation to its original state of perfection.

Summary

In conclusion, Jericho's conquest brought the redemptive plan of God for the entire world a step closer to its fulfilment. God's name was made known among nations, and Israel was given the duty to represent God before people. Jericho's conquest is an assurance that God will finally triumph over the forces of chaos, darkness and evil. The restoration of fallen creation is assured because of what God has accomplished in the past.

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[481] Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Life,* vol 3, 579.

[482] Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East* (New York, NY: De Gruyter, 1989), 143. Cited in Holloway, "The Ethical Dilemma of Holy War," *SwJT* 41 (1998): 61.

[483] Holloway, "The Ethical Dilemma of Holy War," *SwJT* 41 (1998): 61.

Human commitment

Human commitment refers to the faithfulness, obedience and response of people towards God.[484] This section will also show the special role that the people who are committed to God play in revealing Him to other people.[485] The commitment of the people towards Yahweh as described in Joshua 6 will now be analysed.

Israel was a covenant partner of Yahweh which implied that Israel was to be a nation defined by commitment and obedience to God, otherwise the covenant between them and God could not have worked.[486] Although the word commitment does not exist in the OT, the idea is included in the "Hebrew word *ḥesed*," which can be translated as "steadfast love" or "constant love."[487] Yahweh was expecting the Israelites to obey His word as a result of their constant love for Him. The passage of Joshua 6 depicts a time in Israel's life when they showed total commitment to God.

The employment of *ḥērem* in Jericho's conquest was an "expression of Israel's commitment to and worship of their sovereign, Yahweh, a commitment displayed in the practice of devoting to God all the spoils of war."[488]

Joshua 6 presents Israelite's commitment to God by going to war and devoting everything to destruction as Yahweh required. The total destruction of

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484 Robbins, "Dictionary of Socio-rhetorical Terms," Socio-rhetorical Interpretation. http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/index.cfm (accessed June 25 2012).

485 Robbins, *Exploring,* 126.

486 Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 417.

487 Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Life,* vol 3, 66.

488 Holloway, "The Ethical Dilemma of Holy War," *SwJT* 41 (1998): 52.

everything, including human life, was Israel's expression of love for God.[489] We can then conclude that ḥērem represented a form of people's commitment to Yahweh during Jericho's conquest.

The judgement of Achan in Joshua 7, because he stole that which was dedicated to God during Jericho's conquest, emphasises this idea. God's justice demanded that Achan's lack of commitment must result in the complete destruction of him and his family. Thus ḥērem was applied to Achan's family because he lacked commitment towards God.[490] As it was mentioned in the previous section of this *sacred texture,* God is a warrior who fights to destroy evil in order to bring salvation to every nation. In this battle against evil Yahweh has called Israel to be His partner that can prove his allegiance by employing ḥērem when he is told to.[491]

To conclude, the findings show that the concept of ḥērem refers not only to God's judgement upon a place, but is also an expression of Israelites' commitment towards Yahweh.

Ethics in Joshua 6

The last section of the sacred texture will discuss the *ethics in Joshua 6.* Ethics represent our human responsibility to "think and act in special ways in both ordinary and extraordinary circumstances."[492] In this section, ethics will be studied

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[489] Nathan MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of "Monotheism"* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 3. Cited in McConville, and Williams, *Joshua,* 116. It is important to note that Abraham's commitment to God was tested when he was asked to sacrifice his child, Isaac.

[490] Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Gospel,* vol 1, 496.

[491] Holloway, "The Ethical Dilemma of Holy War," *SwJT* 41 (1998): 66.

[492] Robbins, "Dictionary of Socio-rhetorical Terms," Socio-rhetorical Interpretation. http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/index.cfm (accessed June 26 2012).

in the context of religious commitment, where the "ways of thinking and acting are motivated by commitment to God." [493]

There are scholars who support James Barr's view that it is impossible for someone to believe that God ordered the ḥērem without losing his/her "own moral values;" consequently, this theory has potential to lead to the rejection the Scriptures as being inspired by God.[494] Because of the limitations of word count, this section will only wrestle briefly with this controversial and much disputed problem of the apparent injustice and immoral action by God.

When approaching the story in Joshua 6 the reader must remember three important facts: First, when the atrocity of Jericho's conquest is considered, one must first understand that the account of the conquest was written according to the ANE literary patterns with a rhetoric of war, as was demonstrated in chapter V, the intertexture.[495]

Second, the conquest that the Israelites were told to accomplish was a limited event that is imbedded in Israel's long history.[496] This can be clearly seen though the fact that the employment of ḥērem in war was not a pattern to be followed by the Israelite armies, just as Abraham's call to offer Isaac as a sacrifice was not a model for the Israelite fatherhood.[497] For the Israelites, the ḥērem was a religious war

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[493] Robbins, *Exploring,* 129.

[494] James Barr, *Biblical Faith and Natural Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 207-210. Cited in Coote, "The Book of Joshua," 616.

[495] Christopher J.H. Wright, "Ethics," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books,* eds. Bill T. Arnold, and H.G.M. Williamson, 259-268 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 266. The rhetoric of war was discussed in chapter V, where it was noted that exaggerated language was common in ANE war stories.

[496] Richard Nelson, "Holy War," in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible,* vol 2, ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, 879-882 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2007), 879.

[497] Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Life,* vol 3, 581.

that helped Yahweh achieve His purpose in the world, which consisted in restoring fallen creation.[498]

Today God's followers live in a different historical and cultural context and they are not called upon to imitate the Jericho conquest.[499] There is no evidence to suggest that Joshua 6 is intended to be "prescriptive" by telling us what we should be doing.[500] Rather the account is "descriptive;" it tells us what God did through Israel at a specific point in history.[501]

The conquest of Jericho was God's war and victory, thus it does not present a justification for Christians to use violence "to take the land away from others in the service of God's purposes."[502] The conquest of Jericho was "theological in nature not ethical," which implies that humans are not encouraged to promote violence, but rather to look to Yahweh as the Judge of all the nations.[503]

It is important to understand that for the Israelites living in the ANE war did not present a problem or an ethical issue; it was part of their everyday life.[504] Thus, the conquest does not aim to display norms of ethics, but to show that humanity is still 'a work in progress' and God labours to gradually restore the lost creation.

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[498] Ibid.

[499] Hubbard, *NIV Application Commentary: Joshua*, 45.

[500] Ibid.

[501] Ibid.

[502] Sloane, *At Home in a Strange Land,* 135.

[503] Ibid., 141.

[504] Cyril S. Rodd, *Glimpses of a Strange Land: Studies in Old Testament Ethics* (London: T&T Clark, 2001), 205.

The third important fact is that God did not arbitrarily destroy the Canaanites "just to give the land to Israel."[505] Yahweh could not have acted just in Israel's "favour" and in the "disfavour" of the Canaanites; Yahweh had to do the right thing for both nations.[506]

The conquest of the Canaanites therefore was not genocide or ethnic cleansing and neither were they destroyed because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time.[507] The conquest happened because of the wickedness of the Canaanites which included "idolatrous religion and oppressive political and economic ideology."[508] The conquest represented a defensive action because the Canaanites attempted to prevent the establishment of Yahweh's kingdom and His plan to bless every nation.[509] Thus, the conquest highlights both the reality of evil and God's destruction of "sin and sinners" as part of His grace and love for the entire creation.[510]

The Canaanites were morally aware of their sins, but they chose to reject Yahweh's sovereignty, a fact which leads to an ethical distinction between arbitrary violence and violence that came as an outcome of God's judgement "within a moral framework."[511] The Canaanites were destroyed only when there was a moral basis

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[505] Madvig, "Joshua," 247. Gen 15:16 talks clearly that the conquest represented God's judgement for their sins.

[506] Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Life,* vol 3, 576.

[507] Wright, "Ethics," 266.

[508] Sloane, *At Home in a Strange Land,* 132.

[509] Madvig, "Joshua," 247.

[510] Ibid.

[511] Wright, "Ethics," 266.

for such an action, even though God waited four hundred years until the conquest took place.[512]

Holloway points out that God is working in a world filled with evil and violence, which means that God would have to work through the lives of "sinful and violent" people.[513] The portrayal of God as a warrior depicts the truthfulness of the fact that God is involved in history and that human violence will not have the last word on this planet.[514]

Summary Statement

In conclusion of this texture it can be said that the conquest of Jericho played an important role in God's greater plan of restoring the tainted creation. Violence is a horrible thing, but it was employed by Yahweh because He has been working in a wicked and ruthless world. The conquest of Jericho does not represent a pattern to be followed, but is a story that informs us that God is working towards the salvation of the entire world and that sin will eventually be eradicated.

The story of the conquest presents Yahweh's sovereignty above everything else, and at the same time His willingness to work with people whose lifestyle is far removed from God's ideal. The conquest is not about violence and crime among men, but is about God's violence against sin that has destroyed His people and contaminated entire creation. God's violence against sin is redemptive in its purpose.

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[512] Sloane, *At Home in a Strange Land,* 131; Gen 15:15-16.

[513] Holloway, "The Ethical Dilemma of Holy War," *SwJT* 41 (1998): 54.

[514] Ibid.; Madvig, "Joshua," 247.

CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of this study represent the results of interpreting Joshua 6 using SRI. This appears to be an original approach to the interpretation of Joshua 6, as no other research paper, to my knowledge, has used SRI methodology to understand the conquest of Jericho. This chapter outlines the major findings of this study, before making a recommendation for further study.

Summary

The *inner texture* has revealed, through the repetitive and progressive sub-textures, that the Hebrew language of Joshua 6 portrays more of a scene of worship than of war. The main concern of the passage was to describe Yahweh as the covenant keeper who fulfils His promises towards Israel, rather than to portray Him as a genocidal general. This idea was strengthened by the miracle of the collapse of Jericho's walls at the crux of the chiastic structure, as revealed in the opening-middle-closing sub-texture, which pointed to Yahweh as the One who gave the Promised Land to the Israelites. This texture has revealed that Joshua 6 does not focus on the atrocity of *ḥērem*, but rather on Yahweh who keeps the promises of His covenant.

The study of the *intertexture* revealed two essential matters. First, the account of the conquest was written in a literary style that matched other ANE texts, and even though it might have included elements of exaggeration and came from an oral culture, the reality of the event cannot be denied. Thus, the purpose of Joshua 6 was

to strengthen people's faith in Yahweh, who is always faithful to His covenant, and also to inspire allegiance towards the leaders of the country who received guidance from God. Second, the archaeological findings lend considerable support in making a case for the collapse of Jericho's walls, findings that affirm the reality of the conquest in the manner in which the Bible describes it.

The third texture dealt with the *social and cultural* aspect of Joshua 6, and this represents an area where new ideas have emerged. First, the language of Joshua 6 suggests a reformist social rhetorical view, because Israel is called by God to destroy the evil social structure in Canaan. Within this view, the conquest was the result of a revelation from Yahweh in order to make salvation available to all the nations. Second, a proper understanding of the ANE worldview helps one recognize that the conquest of Jericho served as a means whereby the name of Yahweh was lifted above any other gods in the presence of the surrounding nations, thus confirming Yahweh's supremacy over every other power or god. Third, God accommodated Himself to that specific period of time and used different means in order to keep Israel pure from idolatry, immorality and other sins that might have interfered with the fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham that he would become a blessing to all the nations.

The discoveries of texture four, the *ideological texture,* highlighted the power relations between Yahweh, Joshua, the Israelites, and Rahab the Canaanite. The supremacy and power of Yahweh above all other gods was recognized not only by the Israelites, but also by Rahab who was aware that no Canaanite god could defeat Him. The text of Joshua 6 shows how Joshua and the people were willing to be under Yahweh's leadership, because He is the creator and the almighty God. In addition, the Israelites were willing to follow Joshua's leadership, because he was

elected by Yahweh and he proved himself worthy for such high office through his faithfulness. It is important to note that while this texture reveals Yahweh's greatness and power, it also shows that Yahweh used this power in order to prepare a land through which salvation would be available to all nations.

The final texture, the *sacred texture,* has provided an understanding of the role that the conquest of Jericho played in divine history, and of the ethical implications of such a conquest. First, Joshua 6 portrays the replacement of a society that embodies all that is sinful in God's eyes, by a society which was foreordained to bring hope to the entire world. The conquest of Jericho was an action that God initiated in order to restore the fallen creation. The victory at Jericho is also strong evidence that chaos and disorder will not finally triumph over this world, because Yahweh has proven to be stronger than any other power. Joshua 6 depicts Yahweh's purpose in making salvation available to everyone, and to restore creation to its original state.

Second, the study of Joshua 6 has revealed that the employment of *ḥērem* in war was not a pattern to be followed, but it was used by Yahweh at that particular time as His judgement on the Canaanites, in order to advance His plans of restoration of this world. The conquest of Jericho was theological in nature and not ethical, which implies that Christians are not to promote violence because only God can bring judgement upon a nation. Joshua 6 describes the conquest as a defensive action because the Canaanites were obstructing the establishment of God's kingdom and His plan to bless all people. Violence is a terrible thing, but it was employed by God because He has been working in a sinful and violent world. God is violent against sin that has destroyed His people, but this violence is redemptive in its purpose.

Conclusion

The overall theme that emerges from these findings is that Yahweh is a warrior, not against people, but against sin that destroys His people and His creation. Every action that Yahweh does, and every command that He utters, including the command to conquer Jericho, is made in order to restore the fallen creation, and to bring salvation a step closer to its final fulfilment.

Joshua 6 portrays God's willingness to accommodate Himself to this sinful world in order to make salvation available to all the nations. The conquest does not highlight God's anger, but rather His characteristic as a covenant keeper, a God who fulfils what He promises, and it also confirms that there is no force that can withstand Him. Thus, a close examination of the conquest of Jericho in Joshua 6 does not support the accusation that God is cruel, but rather reveals a God who is reliable, loving and merciful in His actions.

Recommendations for Further Studies

This study has revealed that the core idea of Joshua 6 was not *ḥērem,* but Yahweh' s faithfulness and desire to restore His creation. In view of the fact that there are other passages, such as 1 Sam. 15, that portray God as the commander of *ḥērem*, the recommendation is made to apply the methodology of *socio-rhetorical interpretation* to other OT passages in order to discover a more holistic perspective of the passage and consequently of Yahweh's character. Socio-rhetorical interpretation of Joshua 6 has resulted in a clearer understanding of God's motivation for his actions in the destruction of Jericho. The use of this methodology has the potential to do the same for other passages where God's character is question, and therefore I would recommend that scholars consider applying a modified form of this methodology to other OT passages.

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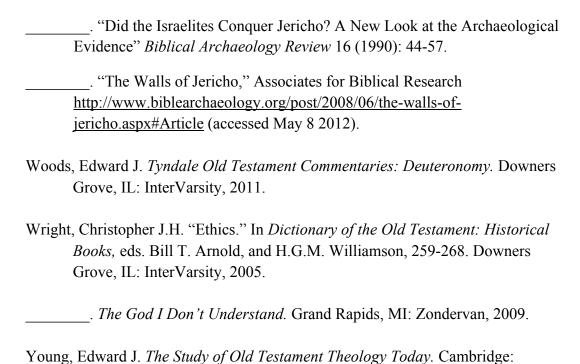_____. *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation.* Valley Forge, PA: Trinity, 1996.

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