

A BIBLICAL & HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION INTO
THE LOST TRIBE OF THE PERIZZITES
DURING THE LATE BRONZE AND EARLY IRON AGE

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APPROVAL SHEET

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Mark Stephen Criss

Read and approved by:

Dr. Johnathan Pritchett, Chair

Dedication

This research paper is dedicated to Dr. Robert Grimwood and my lovely wife, Diana.

Dr. Robert Grimwood loved biblical history and the pursuit of Truth and Knowledge. He was a lifetime student of God's Word and is presently basking in the classroom of the Most High. I am thankful for his friendship, mentorship, and leadership in my life. Since these days are fleeting, I shall remember to serve the LORD. Thank you, Dr. Robert Grimwood for your shepherding heart.

Also, thank you, Diana for your love and care for me throughout these past couple years in particular. She not only puts up with me, but she is the perfect helpmate that compliment everything that I do. I would not be serving the LORD in ministry if it wasn't for such a perfect and unselfish wife. I appreciate her persistent encouragement and being my biggest fan.

Thank you, Diana! "I love you, more."

To God be the Glory, forever and ever. Amen.

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ABSTRACT**A BIBLICAL & HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION INTO
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Keywords: Perizzites, Land of Canaan, Genealogy of Canaan, Late Bronze Age, Early Iron Age, Baal, Ashtoreth, Phoenicians, Sidonians, Hill Country, Ephraim, Manasseh, Northern Kingdom, Israel

“When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them...” (Deut. 7:1-2b). All the people groups mentioned here have biblical lineages to the people of Canaan and specifically “Canaan, son of Ham.” However, the Perizzites are not mentioned in any biblical genealogy or narrative. Most people groups in the Old Testament are reasonably traced to their genealogical origins or geographic regions that identify the various nations and cultures. However, the Perizzites are an exception. The Perizzites rise as a formidable force before Israel’s entry into the land of Canaan but eventually disintegrate or assimilate without much trace or information.

The biblical and archaeological evidence will show that much of the land that Israel occupied by the end of the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age was occupied by the Perizzites, specifically in the critical geographical areas of the central hill country of Ephraim and Manasseh. On the surface, very little is known about these Perizzites, other than the fact that

they are listed as indigenous people in the Land of Canaan (Exod. 3:17, Deut. 7:1-2, Josh. 3:10). This study will bring to light the origin of the Perizzites and their influence on the early life of the nation of Israel. Although their name is vaguely known, their influence and cultural practices help lead Israel astray and perpetually becomes a covenant failure on behalf of God's people. A brief reflection on the persistent sin of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and their kings are evaluated in order to assess the influence of the Perizzites, relative to religious practices, geography, and assimilation of various people groups in the Southern Levant.

This same type of evidence leads to the conclusion that the Perizzites are most probable descendants of the Phoenicians and therefore offspring of Sidon, the "first son" of Canaan, son of Ham, and son of Noah. The Perizzites do have a unique place in history and should not be ignored or jettisoned. God used the Perizzites as an example of His providence and patience to the nation of Israel. God enabled His purpose to be revealed through His faithfulness and the forced movement of the Perizzites, and other Canaanite tribes, throughout the central hill country of Canaan. The research will show that the Perizzites are more than simply a group of "unwalled villagers" or "rural dwellers" that briefly occupied the central hill country. Perhaps their name lends better to the unwalled hearts of the Israelites that took their land but also coveted their gods, their people, and their depraved practices.

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Chapter 1: The Mystery of the Perizzites

Most people groups in the Old Testament are reasonably traced to their genealogical origins or general geographic regions that identify the various nations and cultures. However, the Perizzites are an exception. The Perizzites rise as a formidable force during the Late Bronze Age and eventually disintegrate or assimilate without much trace or information. By example, as Joshua stood at the precipice of Canaan, he led Israel across the Jordan River and declared; “Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites” (Josh. 3:10).¹ All these Canaanite tribes can be traced through biblical genealogy and the historical books. However, this is not true about the Perizzites. Their origin, existence, and impact are scarcely known or understood. “The Perizzites seem to have left no other marks on history. No non-biblical document mentions them.”² The Perizzites are first identified with numerous other people groups of Canaan as the nation of Israel prepares to enter the land. Although most of these groups participate in the history of Israel throughout thousands of years, the Perizzites effectively disappear by the end of the Iron Age. The Perizzites were a dominate people group that eventually concedes its power by an unknown force such as a plague, natural disaster, tribal conflict, or other factors that eliminated or assimilated the people group or forced migration outside of the Southern Levant. The goal of this study is to investigate the existence and conclusion of the Perizzites that are mentioned in numerous biblical texts and to compare to extra biblical sources.

¹ All biblical text will be rendered from the King James Version because it is public domain in the United States. Of course, the version is the 1769 revision and not the original 1611.

² Merrill C. Tenney, *Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967). The “well defined biblical references” include (Gen. 13:7; 34:30; Exod. 3:8,17; 23:23; 33:2; 34:11; Deut. 20:17; Josh. 3:10; 24:11; Judg. 1:4), p.637.

This study will investigate any historical “footprint” left by the Perizzites that were introduced during the time Moses and Joshua, but eventually assimilate, migrated, or were annihilated from the Southern Levant by the end of the Iron Age. Moses instructs Israel that God was with them as they entered into a land that was not their own; for “I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob...I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites” (Exod. 3:6,8). Moses also informs the people of Israel that, “When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them...” (Deut. 7:1-2b). All the people groups mentioned here have biblical lineages to the people of Canaan and specifically “Canaan, son of Ham.” However, the Perizzites are not mentioned in a biblical genealogy or narrative. The origin of the Perizzites is speculative at best (Appendix I).³ It is possible that the Perizzites could “return” or retreat to another region during the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age if they had originated from somewhere other than the land of Canaan and the offspring of Canaan, son of Ham (Gen. 9:18). This study will investigate the factors that led to the removal or assimilation of this people group in the Southern Levant. This research will essentially

³ Adam2Jesus.org, “Full Chart Genealogy,” Adam2Jesus.org. <https://adam2jesus.org/full-chart-genealogy/> [accessed April 20, 2021]. See Appendix I for diagram of biblical genealogy provided from Adam2Jesus.org and owned by author Mark Criss. This diagram insertion demonstrates the tribes that are related to Canaan, yet the Perizzites have no direct reference to the offspring of Ham or Canaan.

investigate the 3,200+ year-old “cold case” of the Perizzites and conclude their chapter in human history.

Numerous biblical commentaries and encyclopedias believe that the Perizzites were simply a group that occupied various “unwalled” cities in Canaan and therefore would be distinguished as nomad or a temporary suburban dweller.⁴ It is probable that much of this assumption simply comes from the transliteration of the Hebrew meaning of “Perizzites,” that can be translated “Perizziy” [per·iz·ze'] or “belonging to a village” or “unwalled city.”⁵ It seems that many biblical commentaries have adopted this transliteration as a substitute for an extensive explanation for the “rise and fall” of the Perizzite people during the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age.⁶ Unfortunately, this simple position does not fully explicate the imminent opposition upon Joshua’s entry into the promise land and the persistent identification of six other major Canaanite tribes. If such an explanation would be true, then the Perizzites would be the only tribe singled out of seven Canaanite tribes that is treated as a “common noun” instead of a “proper noun.” Nearly all modern bible translations treat Perizzite as a “proper noun” by the capitalization of the name throughout scripture.⁷ Such a persistent handling of the English translation of the Hebrew word “Perizziy” would lend to the conclusion that such a reference is more than a vague description of a people group and also supports the possibility that this group of people is unique in its culture, origin, and racial background. Also, the twenty-two biblical references to the

⁴ Tenney, p.637, also states that the Perizzites could have become “nomads” or were “not a part of the ordered town and village communities of Palestine.”

⁵ James Strong, *Strong’s Expanded Edition* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 2010).

⁶ *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, by example, conjectures that the Perizzites are a people group of Palestine that is considered a “rural people” based on “plausible etymology.”

⁷Modern English translations such as American Standard Version, Christian Standard Bible, Darby Translation, English Standard Version, Hebrew Names Translation (Perizzi), King James Version, New American Standard Bible, New English Translation, New International Version, New King James Version, New Living Translation, Revised Standard Version, Webster’s Bible, and Young’s Literal Translation, translates Perizzite with a capital “P”, to identify as a proper noun translation.

Perizzites are specifically identifying a people group with its own cultural attributes and opposition to the obtrusive Israelite people.⁸

In his commentary on Joshua, Woudstra suggests that the “Perizzites lived in central Palestine during the patriarchal period (Gen. 13:7; Exod. 3:8, 17; 23:23). Their name does not occur in extrabiblical sources, and little is known about them.”⁹ Much has been written about the Southern Levant and people groups in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, but no research has been committed to the history and determination of the Perizzite tribe of the Bible. The simple argument that the Perizzites live in an “unwalled city” or “belongs to a village” is negated by the fact that there were many towns or villages in Canaan without walls during the Late Bronze era that would therefore be ignorantly labeled “Perizzites.” This simple position cannot sufficiently explain the origin and history of the Perizzites in the Southern Levant and requires a better explanation. Ahlström, by example, identifies the common feature of “unwalled settlements” during the Late Bronze Age as socio-political impact and not a cultural or ethnic factor that would uniquely describe the Perizzite people. The abandonment of “55 sites in Ephraim” from the Middle Bronze Age to the Late Bronze Age would indicate “that contributing factors were *stresses and strains within the Canaanite socio-political system*, which may have caused some peoples to abandon their small unwalled settlements, with one result of this possibly being a strengthening of the central sites.”¹⁰ There were many people groups in the Southern Levant during the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age and not all the “unwalled settlements” can be contributed to a single people group. An alternative explanation for the “rise and fall” of the Perizzites is certainly warranted.

⁸See Appendix II, “Perizzite” List of Biblical References.

⁹ Marten Woudstra, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament – The Book of Joshua*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981) p.84.

¹⁰Gosta W. Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine*. (Minneapolis: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 219.

The importance of this study is to recognize the sovereign will of God through observing biblical and extra biblical evidence. The people of God were given the land of Canaan by the power of God because he declared, “I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey” (Exod. 3:17). This provision and promise of God included his judgement on the people of Canaan that were more numerous and powerful than the people of Israel. Therefore, the miraculous and sovereign works of God against the people of Canaan is worth evaluation and study to better understand the significance and glory of God’s grace. Any careless or cursory explanation of the Perizzites would depreciate and devalue the significance of God’s work and the glory that is due his name. Also, the ramifications of disobedience regarding Israel should be considered as well. After all, God said:

you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. (Deut. 7:2-4)

There are no direct biblical references to the Perizzites and the “complete destruction” of this people group. However, this specific people group is identified as one of “seven nations greater and mightier than thou,” yet they are only briefly mentioned during the time of King Solomon and the Early Iron Age period with no explanation as to the “rise and fall” of the Perizzites. There are certainly God ordained ramifications if the people of Israel do not obey the direction of God and the land that is delivered to them.

Developing a hypothesis on the origin, existence, and impact of the Perizzites on the history of Israel and the land of Canaan will reinforce and reflect on the preeminence and omnipotence of the God who revealed himself through Scripture. The Bible records the

Perizzites as a distinguishable and noteworthy people group in the land of Canaan prior to God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 18:15-21), and they are lastly mentioned during the time of King Solomon (2 Chron. 8:7-9). Therefore, according to the generations from Abraham to Solomon, that is identified in Matt. 1:1-6, the Perizzites were in the land of Canaan for at least 15 generations.¹¹ This study will enable the reader to witness the sovereign hand of God that quietly works out His will and purpose through various situations, opposition, and opportunity; "Thus saith the LORD, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters" (Isa. 43:16).

Existing Research

There is limited research available specifically on the topic of the Perizzites. Nadav Na'aman has developed a brief analysis of the "Canaanites and Perizzites" in comparison to the biblical texts in Genesis, Joshua, and Judges, the archaeological evidence, and Old Testament source criticism and interpretation. Na'aman refutes the commonly repeated scholarly response that "Canaanite and Perizzites refers to 'those living in fortified cities' and 'those living in unwalled towns or hamlets' (Schnell 1962:735; Meyer 1906:331, Gunkel 1917:174)."¹² Although a single paper is published by Na'aman on the specific identification of the Perizzites, most biblical commentaries repeat the position of Schnell, Meyer, and Gunkel. Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary, by example, identifies all references of "Perizzites" in the Old

¹¹ The biblical genealogy of the Jesus Christ is identified in a "family tree" format from information identified in Matt. 1:1-16 and Luke 3:23-38. This graph was utilized to determine the number of generations from Abraham to Solomon that corresponds to the references to the Perizzites in the land of Canaan through the Old Testament context. Adam2Jesus.org, "Genealogy of Jesus Christ," Adam2Jesus.org. <http://adam2jesus.org/matthew-luke-s-genealogy/> [accessed April 20, 2021].

¹² Nadav Na'aman addresses the indigenous identification of the Canaanites and Amorites, but the nomadic possibilities of the other five/six tribes mentioned as "pre-Israelite nations." Na'aman presents alternatives to the classical "walled cities" approach to the Perizzites and "introduces interpolation of the (biblical) text based on current knowledge of local nations and influences." Academia.edu, "Canaanites and Perizzites, Biblische Notizen (1988), pp. 42-47," https://www.academia.edu/13453080/Canaanites_and_Perizzites_Biblische_Notizen_45_1988_pp_42_47 [accessed April 13, 2021].

Testament text and claims that “there is an etymological similarity between the word and the term *dweller in an unwalled village*, hence the suggestion that the Perizzites were Canaanitish agriculturists (or nomads) who were not a part of the ordered town and village communities of Palestine.”¹³

The Baker *Encyclopedia of the Bible* does not give an extensive analysis of the Perizzites either. Baker mentions that there is only one non-biblical reference of “Perizzi” that exists in the “El Amarna” tablets and therefore “the exact identity of the Perizzites has thus far remained obscure”.¹⁴ The remainder descriptions repeat other hypotheses of “unwalled villages” or rural areas in a pre-Israelite land. Baker does at least attempt to identify appropriate geography for the Perizzite people as compared to other Canaanite descendants or tribes. Such commentary and limited research could reasonably lead to a conclusion that the Perizzites are to be considered Canaanites but cannot be identified with any distinctiveness from other people groups in a pre- or post- Israeli conquest of the land. The limited research and the persistence of a recapitulation of prior scholarly efforts on the etymology of the word “Perizzite” has limited our knowledge of the people that occupied Canaan and their influence or impact on the people of Israel. One final example of limited research comes from the respected work of Eerdmans’ *Dictionary of the Bible* that simply presents “a plausible etymology links Perizzite to Heb. *Pěřāôn*, ‘rural person.’ In such case, the Perizzites would originally have been country folks as opposed to city dwellers (Judg. 1:4-5).”¹⁵ The persistent explanation for the Perizzites is that they are not city dwellers, and they live in a place that “does not have walls.” Unfortunately, simple archaeology would

¹³ Zondervan’s *Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, “Perizzite”, p.637.

¹⁴ Walter A. Elwell, *Baker: Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol 2*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988) 1310.

¹⁵ *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, “Perizzites”, p.1030.

support the fact that many unwalled cities existed during the Bronze Age and therefore could not all be considered “Perizzites.”

One of the most extensive essays regarding the Perizzites can be found on the kukis.org website. “The Doctrine of the Perizzites” essay originates from the biblical commentary that is found on the book of Deuteronomy (chapter 7) and attempts to uncover the Hebrew translation of the Perizzite word, review a list of Old Testament references to the “Perizzites”, review other authors’ works on the topic, share a couple theories, and conclude a geographic location that is complete with a map of the Southern Levant. The author provides initial support for the recapitulation of prior scholarly work on the etymology of the word “Perizzite” but then suggests that Zondervan “emphatically disagrees with that assessment.”¹⁶ Following the simple explanation of the Hebrew word, the author also suggests that, in addition, the root word “p-râzîy” occurred three times in the Old Testament and should be investigated for information that would lead to the location and description of the Perizzite people.¹⁷ Unfortunately, this “unwalled, country, villages” explanation could literally mean hundreds of other locations throughout the Southern Levant. This quick assessment derails the author’s conclusion and the map of the location of the Perizzites may be incorrectly identified southwest of Jerusalem and immediately south of the coastal city of Gaza. Clearly, this territory is far from the central hill country of Ephraim and Manasseh (explained in Chapter 2: Geographic Location and Characteristics). Arguably, even the hill country of Judah is excluded from this conclusion and the potential homeland of the Perizzites. Such a location would leave the Perizzites in direct

¹⁶ Kukis.org, “The Doctrine of the Perizzites”, <http://kukis.org/Doctrines/Perizzites.pdf> (Accessed January 12, 2021). The six-page essay reveals the limited research that is available on the topic of the Perizzites. The geographical location is unlikely, considering the Egyptian domination and the “hill country” origin.

¹⁷ p-râzîy is the Hebrew root word identified by the Strong’s Concordance; Hebrew #6521.

lordship and oversight of Egypt during the Bronze Age and the mercy of the Philistine or Aegean invaders in the Early Iron Age. Yasur-Landau would explain the common view as:

The newcomers [Philistines] were thought to have violently conquered the southern Canaanite towns, either with consent of the Egyptian overlords or following the demise of the Twentieth Dynasty Egyptian domination in the province of Canaan.¹⁸

Either way, this southern area of Philistia would be dominated by mercenaries and merchants to control trade and resources through Egypt or the “newcomers” themselves. Unfortunately, “The Doctrine of the Perizzites” is an essay that is limited in scope and only provides a cursory summary of approximately five biblical commentaries and encyclopedias that does not include any archaeological or bibliographical information to support its conclusions.¹⁹ Tristan Joseph Barako supports the migration into the existing Philistia area during the Early Bronze Age of approximately 1175 B.C., based primarily on the Egyptian ruler,

Rameses III’s expulsion of the Sea Peoples in the eighth year of his reign. Following their defeat, the Philistines were forcibly settled by Egypt in southern Canaan, where they were soon able to overcome their Egyptian masters. William Foxwell Albright (1975:511) and Albrecht Alt (1953) are credited with constructing this paradigm, based largely on Egyptian texts, that archaeologists have been forced to accommodate ever since (Finkelstein 1995:213–14).²⁰

The geographic area of “The Doctrine of Perizzites” does not correlate with existing research and evidence of the Egyptian dynasties and Philistine migration facts²¹. Further research is necessary to assess and communicate the history and impact of the Perizzites more accurately, but it is unlikely that their territory was outside the hill country of Ephraim, Manasseh, or Judah. “Josh.

¹⁸ Assaf Yasur-Landau, *The Philistines and Aegean Migration at the End of the Late Bronze Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 218.

¹⁹ (1) M.G. Easton M.A., D.D., *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*; (2) Fausset’s *Bible Dictionary*; (3) *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; (4) *Publishers*; from E-Sword; (5) *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*.

²⁰ T.J. Barako, *The Seaborne Migration of the Philistines*. (Academia, 2001), 72.

²¹ For discussion, see T.J. Barako Appendix A, Chronology of Philistine Settlement and Map 12 to *The Seaborne Migration of the Philistines*
https://www.academia.edu/12405646/The_Seaborne_Migration_of_the_Philistines?email_work_card=view-paper

11:3 locates the Perizzites among the highlands of Canaan, while 17:15 places them ...in the forested hill country of Samaria.”²² The biblical location and geographical description of the Perizzites will be evaluated in Chapter 2 from the Late Bronze Age through the Early Iron Age.

Research Assumptions and Methodology

The knowledge of the existence of the Perizzites rises and falls on the revelation and validity of scripture. This study will evaluate the time frame and the geographic characteristics of this people group as identified in scripture. The biblical text will be compared to other secular and scholarly research to find supportive information on the Perizzites. Each “Perizzite” occurrence in the Old Testament will be evaluated to assess as much critical information as possible to direct bibliographical and archaeological research into the history of this people group. The authority of scripture brings light to mankind.

The Scripture is the final standard of appeal – Science and Scripture throw light upon each other. The same divine Spirit who gave both revelations is still present, enabling the believer to interpret the one by the other and thus progressively to come to the knowledge of the truth.²³

Augustus Strong reminds theologians and students of the Bible that mankind has been impacted by sin and are fully reliant on God’s Word because “the total record in Scripture of God’s past communications is a more trustworthy source of theology than our own conclusions from nature or our private impressions of the teaching of the Spirit.”²⁴ Therefore, our final appeal and primary source will be the scripture of God that stands true and directs our investigation.

The Old Testament scripture will lead the investigation into the rise, fall, and disappearance of the Perizzite people. Each biblical text or reference will be evaluated to exact

²² David Noel Freedman, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company:2000), 1030.

²³ Augustus Hopkins Strong, D.D., LL. D., *Systematic Theology – A Comprehensive and Commonplace Book*, (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1946) p.27.

²⁴ Ibid.

the geographic location, historical timeline, relative size, and impact of the Perizzites compared to Israel and other Canaanite tribes, and tribal and archaeological characteristics of the Perizzite people group. Bibliographical and qualitative research will be evaluated and collected to identify the location and influence of the Perizzite tribe in a relative time frame of history. Such data should be able to lead to the identification of a specific region that includes the existence of historical Israel and the various Canaanite tribes that are impacted by the Perizzites within the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age. The geographical region of the Perizzites will also be evaluated to conclude and develop a hypothesis through biblical and archaeological information. Ultimately, the migration, existence, and influence of the Perizzites will be driven by the historical books of the Old Testament that correspond to bibliographic research that is available for this study.

There is considerable qualitative research that has been devoted to the historical land of Israel as well as the fertile crescent and the Southern Levant in general. By example, a National Geographic article verifies the impact of the Philistines on Israel because “ancient DNA reveals the Israelites’ archenemies originally came from Europe, settling around Ashkelon at the dawn of the Iron Age.”²⁵ This recent study connects the DNA of Canaanite burial sites with DNA from European origins that connects the Philistine people during the Early Iron Age. Studies such as these establish a historical presence that confirms the existence of biblical tribes that influence the challenges that are faced in the Old Testament by the people of God and surrounding or competing people groups.

²⁵ Amy E. Briggs, *National Geographic*, November/December 2019, 4-5.

Other assumptions for research include the fact that Joshua led Israel into Canaan during the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age (Josh. 1:1-9).²⁶ Finegan utilizes the Seder Olam Rabbah chronology methodology to calculate the milestone dates in Israel's history and the Old Testament in general. Our primary concern is the *Entry into Canaan* that is calculated from the *Destruction of the Second Temple* and synchronized from A.M. 3828 to A.M. 2488, respectively.²⁷ Considering that the destruction of the temple was in 70 A.D., then the *Entry into Canaan* can be estimated at around 1270 B.C. The authority of scripture enables the reader and researcher alike to have confidence in the facts that Israel entered Canaan with their leader Joshua after Moses passed away. Any alternative research or hypothesis on the premise of Israel's origin will not be debated under this research study. The Late Bronze Age is identified by Ahlström as the period that the Israelites entered the "central hill country" and identifying them as "the nomads of Palestine" and therefore lumping all people groups into one tribe "known as the Israelites."²⁸ Although the conclusion is debatable, the research is helpful to identify appropriate time-period of the entry of Israel into the promise land or Southern Levant. In reality, it is reasonable to assume that Israel entered Canaan during the Late Bronze Age or at the beginning of the Early Iron Age.

Various archaeological research, such as the Lautenschlager Azekah Expedition of 2012-2016, has confirmed that the Late Bronze era was a period of significant change for inhabitants.²⁹ This discovery supports the migration of people groups during this period and helps to identify

²⁶ See Definitions and Research Boundaries for Description of Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age.

²⁷ Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), p.110. A.M. is Latin for Anno Mundi which means "in the year of the world" and starts calculating from the "Era of Creation". The example of A.M. 3828 to A.M. 2488 is equivalent to 1807 B.C. to 464 B.C., respectively, in 2021 A.D.

²⁸ Gosta W. Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine*, "The Late Bronze Age" chapter identifies migration during LB Age and surveys sites in Ephraim to support such migration, p.219.

²⁹ Aren M. Maeir, Itzhaq Saei, and Christ McKinny, *The Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages of Southern Canaan*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 37. "A destruction layer dating to this time period was exposed in almost every excavation area of the site [of Azekah], enabling various multi-disciplinary studies of wide range of material remains."

possible factors and geographical regions that were impacted by the destruction of various villages and towns. Emanuel Pfoh explains that Egypt had a significant impact on the Southern Levant during the Late Bronze Age and references the Amarna Letters to support the evidence that various “small clans and Southern Levantine kings” were a constant factor in military intervention and political negotiations with reigning Egyptian dynasties.³⁰ The evidence seems to indicate that towns and villages that developed during the Bronze Age were “along the coast, thanks to harbors and sea-trade. Moreover, only a few miles inland enabled the development of the most important trade route over land: the *via maris*, ‘the way of the sea’, connecting Egypt, ancient Canaan, Syria and Asia.”³¹ Ahlström concludes that the central hill territory of Manasseh and Ephraim did not significantly develop until the Early Iron Age period. Also, until this time, most of the villages and towns were near to the coast, trade routes, valleys, and fertile lands as indicated by C.H.J. De Gues. As the demand for agriculture continued to grow and as the populations and trade developed, the necessity to utilize agricultural terraces began in the central hill country of Manasseh and Ephraim. “A remarkable change occurred in the beginning of the Iron age, from *circa* 1150 BCE. In this period, we see the appearance of villages in the central hill country of Manasseh and Ephraim and likewise east of the river Jordan. Areas that had been scarcely inhabited up to this time.”³² The research assumption of a broad coastal population of Canaanite people in the Southern Levant and limited population in the central hill country of Manasseh and Ephraim, during the Late Bronze Age, is critical for further research into the topic of the Perizzite people.

³⁰ Ibid. “the persistent evidence of the Amarna Letters is that the small clans and Southern Levantine kings are accused of treason, revolt and foreign threat to the Pharaonic order in various points of the whole territory of Syria-Palestine,” 39.

³¹ C.H.J. De Geus, *Towns in Ancient Israel and in the Southern Levant* (Bondgenotenlaan: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2003), 161-163.

³² Ibid.

Research Boundaries

According to the Bible, the Perizzites were present during Israel's early entry into the land of Canaan and eventually disappear around the time of King Solomon (1 Kings 9:20, 2 Chron. 8:7-9). Therefore, the timeframe for the study will range from the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 B.C.) through part of the Iron Age (1200-900 B.C.). This time frame corresponds with the biblical historical understanding of the Perizzite people as revealed throughout scripture in the Old Testament (Appendix II). The Early Iron Age (1200-1000 BC) was dramatically impacted by "the invasion of the Sea People (Philistines), natural disasters, and government deterioration. Many historians view this period as culturally disruptive and extremely violent."³³ There were multiple influences during the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age that would impact Israel and the people groups in or around the Southern Levant. This research will only cover the "Sea People" (Philistines) on a limited basis as to their relationship or influence on the Perizzite people in a shared geographic region. The origin and influence by various people groups on the nation of Israel is not within the scope of this research. Migration is often impacted by various people groups that attempt to consume resources or are influenced by warring factions in which the Philistines are culpable when it comes to being a "migration" factor during the Late Bronze Age for any people group within the Southern Levant.

The historical date range for this study will include the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 BC), Early Iron Age (1200-1000 BC), and 100 years of the Late Iron Age (1000-900 BC). The purpose for this range is to accommodate the historical period during King Solomon and the united monarchy that penetrates briefly into the Late Iron Age (1000-585 BC). The Neo-Babylonian period is often utilized to identify the end of the Iron Age or alternatively is

³³ Trevor Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 35.

“attached” to this same period. Ahlström, by example, included the Neo-Babylonian period as part of the “Iron II” age or Late Bronze Age with the “Persian Period” beginning in 539 BC and ending in 339 BC.³⁴ Finegan however, ends the Iron Age before the Neo-Babylonian Period at 586 BC.³⁵ Therefore, this study will concentrate on biblical and historical research from 1550 BC through 900 BC.

The geographical research will primarily be limited to the Southern Levant unless it becomes evident that the Perizzites migrated outside the Southern Levant by the beginning or middle of the Iron Age. Research will be directed by the biblical historical text and supported by bibliographical and archaeological evidence that can support the land of Canaan and corresponding cultures or people groups. Existing literature on the historical middle east and the Perizzite people in general will be evaluated and utilized for this research. However, an extensive search of materials has indicated extremely limited information available specifically on the Perizzite people. An extensive amount of material and research is available regarding the Southern Levant and the people of Canaan and Israel. This research material will be utilized to identify cultural patterns of life and migration during the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age period. Such an assessment can increase the probability of identifying the lost people group of the Perizzites.

The debate of a “united monarchy” or kingdom of Israel during the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age will not be addressed through this study. Palestinian research materials on the Southern Levant will often question the validity of the historical person of Joshua and the period of Judges in the history of Israel. Ahlström, by example declares that this period is

³⁴ Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine*, 54. Chronological Periods.

³⁵ Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, 110. Table 53 summarizes a time frame from “the Flood to the Destruction of the Second Temple”. Ultimately, Finegan estimates the “Entry into Canaan” at A.M 2488 or 1270 BC.

completely unknown in Near Eastern texts except from the Hebrew Bible is that of the so-called united monarchy. No kingdom...is anywhere attested in the records of the non-Palestine countries...a presentation of the history of this period, as of any other period in history of Palestine which lacks external evidence, will therefore be tentative.³⁶

The direction of this study will be led by bibliographical and historical information that originates from the Old Testament text. The proof and evidence of the “united monarchy” is not the goal of this study. The proof and evidence of the entry of the people of Israel, into the Southern Levant, is not the purpose of this study but will develop a cursory view of Israel to establish the knowledge and evidence of competing people groups that require interaction, such as trade agreements, treaties, or military intervention.

A brief reference to “the Rephaim” is included with the Perizzites in Gen. 15:20 and Josh. 17:15. David Guzik’s commentary on the book of Joshua reveals that the reference to Rephaim may have more to do with the people of the Rephaim Valley than a type of people groups or culture. It is probable that the people of the Rephaim Valley were Canaanites or Perizzites but were not a characteristically a unique people group. Guzik briefly describes the boundaries of Judah by explaining that “the border went up by the Valley of the Son of Hinnom to the southern slope of the Jebusite city. The border went up to the top of the mountain that lies before the Valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the Valley of Rephaim northward.”³⁷ This Rephaim Valley territory is at the foothills of the central to southern hill country of Ephraim and Judah, respectively. Other than a tertiary reference, “the Rephaim” is not included in the scope of the Perizzite study and the tribes of Canaan.

³⁶ Ahlström emphasizes the difficulty of verifying Israel’s existence as an “Israelite empire” in any specific region of Palestine during the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age without the assistance of the Hebrew text or oral tradition. (The History of Ancient Palestine, p.35).

³⁷Enduring Word, “JOSHUA 15, 16, 17 – THE INHERITANCE OF JUDAH, EPHRAIM AND WESTERN MANASSEH”, <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/joshua-15-16-17/> [Accessed March 16, 2021]

The book of Joshua and Judges will not be deconstructed to prove that the Perizzites existed during the entry and occupation of Israel into the land of Canaan. John Van Seters evaluates the book of Joshua and hypothesizes that it was written around 900 B.C. in response to explaining pre-Deuteronomistic history. Specifically, Van Seters boldly proclaims:

the pre-DtrH [pre-Deuteronomistic history] work is regarded as a collection of etiological legends in chs 2-9 combined with military narratives in chs 10-11. This work was created to give an account of the conquest of Canaan west of the Jordan. The ‘compiler’ of this work was responsible for giving to these local stories an all-Israelite orientation and for introducing them the figure of Joshua.³⁸

Research in this study is limited to the biblical reference and existence of the Perizzite people during the time of Abraham through the period of King Solomon. Marten H. Woudstra supports the conclusion of a late authorship of the book of Joshua; “The traditio-historical approach to the authorship of Joshua abandoned the literary-critical solution with regards to chapters 1-12...a collector is believed responsible for the combination of these materials...[whom] was active about 900 BC.”³⁹ Although there are various hypotheses that Joshua and Judges have been written from multiple sources and multiple collectors, this research paper is focused on a pre-Israelite people group in the land of Canaan that was identified by God and cautioned to the people of Israel.⁴⁰ The authorship and dating of the Joshua and Judges text will not be evaluated or defended. However, the authority of scripture sufficiently stands alone and enables

³⁸John Van Seters, *Changing Perspectives I*, (London: Routledge, 2019), 74. Van Seters makes various arguments to defend the authenticity of Israel’s history through the biblical text but is reliant on speculation and compromised literary analysis to defend his position.

³⁹ Marten H. Woudstra, *The Book of Joshua – The New International Commentary of the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1981) p.7,163.

⁴⁰Gosta W. Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine*, p.375; “The history of the Book of Judges is presented through a literary pattern of change which is determined by the writer’s dogmatic opinion about right and wrong cult...such a literary pattern does not have as its highest priority the description of actual events. Thus, it cannot be used for writing history.”

bibliographical research to be exercised to follow God's plan for his people and the enemies of the same.

Outline and Approach

As mentioned in the *Research Assumptions & Methodologies* section, the biblical text will lead the investigation as to the mystery of the Perizzites in Chapter 2 (Appendix II). Each text will be evaluated for geographic location, estimated time frame, and the people groups impacted within the revelation of the biblical text. Following the biblical text assessment, Chapter 3 will proceed with the geographical location assessment of the Perizzites that originate from bibliographical and archaeological evidence. Such evidence will then be evaluated to assess the various "contemporary people groups" according to the revealed time frame that correspond to the geographical location. Chapter 4 will assess the biblical genealogical origin of the Perizzites and assist in the confirmation of location and geographical boundaries that are based on religious practices that are revealed in the biblical narrative and archaeological evidence. Chapter 5 will evaluate the bibliographical and archeological information to determine the life and influence of the Perizzites in a specifically defined geographic area and a determined timeline. Such evidence can lead to information regarding migration, assimilation, and annihilation, just to name a few possibilities. Specific geographic boundaries will be identified to simplify the sharing of information uncovered in this study. However, multiple boundaries may be necessary as factored by various timelines (e.g., Late Bronze Age, Early Iron Age) or migration factors. Consideration will be given to major "influencers," such as a dominate people groups (e.g., Egyptians, Philistines, Israel) or natural factors (e.g., plagues, famine), during the Perizzite occupation of their established territory. It is likely that there were multiple factors or influencers as they lived in the land of Canaan. The final chapter will assess the results of

research and evidence to determine a hypothesis as to the mystery of the Perizzites. Such research should illuminate the impact of the Perizzites as a formidable force during the Late Bronze Age and document archeological and anthropological data that corresponds to the historical narrative of the Old Testament. Eventually, the Perizzites are displaced without much biblical information. Tenney confirms this position in *Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, by stating, “The Perizzites seem to have left no other marks on history. [And] no non-biblical document mentions them.” Such a vague explanation as to this people group should only increase the importance of this study to determine or reopen the 3200+ year-old cold case of the Perizzites. The Perizzites eventually concede their power due to an unknown force such as a plague, natural disaster, tribal conflict, or other factors that eliminated or assimilated this people group. Such factors cause migration throughout the Southern Levant during the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. This study will develop a reasonable and educated hypothesis as to the Perizzites of the Old Testament and the people groups of the Southern Levant based on biblical, historical, archeological, and bibliographical evidence.

Chapter 2: An Exegetical Assessment of the Perizzites

The word “Perizzite” occurs twenty-three times in the Old Testament. These occurrences primarily reflect a reference to a people group that is residing in the land of Canaan from the time of Abraham (Gen. 13:5-7) through the reign of King Solomon (1 Kings 9:20). According to the genealogy list that is provided in Matthew 1:1-7, there are 15 generations from Abraham to Solomon. If the average generation is forty years, it would be reasonable to estimate that the Perizzites existed in the land of Canaan for at least 600 years. The LORD said to Abram, “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee” (Gen. 12:1). Abram therefore left Haran at seventy-five years old (Gen. 12:4) and took his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot and “set out to go to the land of Canaan” (Gen. 12:5). Eventually, “Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem [Shechem]⁴¹, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land” (Gen. 12:6). Abram briefly resides in the hill country “east of Bethel” and “west of Ai” where he also built an altar to the LORD, but he eventually continued his journey south. The only people group mentioned during Abram’s maiden voyage, from his home country of Haran into the “land of Canaan,” are the Canaanites (Gen. 12:6).

Abram eventually continues his journey south through the Negev (Gen. 12:9) and makes his way to Egypt because the famine was great in the land (Gen. 12:10). In Chapter 13 of Genesis, we learn that Abram eventually returns north toward Bethel, “unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai [Ai]³⁹” (Gen. 13:3). By this time, Abram and Lot have become influential and wealthy. The herdsmen of Abram and Lot begin to quarrel amongst themselves, and Abram decides that there should “be no strife, I pray thee, between me

⁴¹ *The Holy Scriptures – According to the Masoretic Text*, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1963) p.14.

and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren” (Gen. 13:8). Abram proposes a separation from Lot and his family because the land cannot sustain them both. As a result, “Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom” (Gen. 13:12). Although Abram referred to the “land of Canaan” in a broad geographical sense in Gen. 12:5 and 13:12, he does mention the “Canaanites” as a specific people group in Gen. 12:6. However, upon his return to “Bethel and Hai [Ai]” from Egypt and the Negev (Gen. 13:3), Abram identifies a new people group that is now competing with land and resources in the immediate area of Bethel and Hai [Ai]; “And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land” (Gen. 13:7). Abram had mentioned the Canaanites upon his first visit through Bethel and Hai [Ai] but also includes the “Perizzites” upon his return and during the separation agreement with Lot. As a result, it is evident that the Perizzites are becoming influential in this area of the land of Canaan and resources are limited between the three people groups of the Perizzites, Abram, and Lot. Also noted is the absence of the other tribes as revealed to Abraham in this geographical area of “Bethel and Hai [Ai].”

From a chronological perspective, the Canaanites are the only people group prior to Gen. 13:7 that have been identified as occupying the “land of Canaan.” A brief lineage and disbursement of the “clans of the Canaanites” are mentioned in Gen. 10:15-31 which describes the boundaries of Canaan prior to the period of Abraham and Israel. “The territory included goes beyond that ever held by Israel or any other people in the vicinity, so it is unclear what political realities it describes.”⁴² The genealogical descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham and grandson of Noah are also mentioned; “...Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn, and Heth, And the Jebusite,

⁴² T. Desmond Alexander & David W. Baker, *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 599.

and the Amorite, and the Girgashites, and the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad.” The Perizzites become the first people group that are not identified directly as descendants of Canaan but also dwell in the “land of Canaan.” It becomes evident that the Perizzites and Canaanites are a factor in the socioeconomic decision that leads to the separation of the families of Abram and Lot in Gen.13:12. “And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together” (Gen. 13:6). Abram and Lot chose to go their separate ways and find a land that would sustain their families because they were unable or unwilling to dispose the Canaanites and Perizzites.

The word “Perizzite” is never mentioned in scripture without being accompanied with another people group, from a single complimentary group that is joined with the “Canaanites” to as many as ten other people groups that are mentioned in the land of Canaan. Six people groups, which we will identify as the “Significant Six,” are persistently referenced together in the Old Testament. Specifically, the “Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites” are mentioned collectively in 13 verses; Exod. 3:8, 3:17, 23:23, 33:2, 34:11, Deut. 7:1-2, 20:17, Josh. 3:10, 9:11, 11:3, 12:8, 24:11, and Judg. 3:5. The “Girgashites” occur with these six groups in Deut. 7:1-2, Josh. 3:10, and Josh. 24:11, and are commonly included in the “seven Canaanite tribes” that scholars, such as Marten H. Woudstra, identify with the fulfillment of “the iniquity of the Amorites” that is found in Gen. 15:16. Such a fulfillment is “viewed here as seven in number (cf. Deut. 7:1), possibly a number symbolic of fullness (Josh. 9:1; Exod. 3:17 list only six; Gen.

15:19-21 ten).”⁴³ This is the complete list of nations that Moses includes in his words to Israel before sending them into the promised land:

When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; and when the LORD your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. (Deut. 7:1-2)

There are additional occurrences of these tribes where the majority of the “Significant Six” people groups are present, except for one or two groups (e.g., “Canaanites” in 1 Kings 9:20, 2 Chron. 8:7-9, “Hivites” in Ezra 9:1, Neh. 9:8). The purpose of identifying these occurrences is to evaluate “direct” and “indirect” references to the “Perizzites” and other Canaanite people groups that influence or bring evidence of their existence and impact in the Land of Canaan.

The “Significant Six” tribes that lived in Canaan were originally revealed to Abram through God’s promise in Gen. 15:18; “In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites.” Approximately six generations later, God speaks to Moses through the burning bush as is revealed in the third chapter of Exodus:⁴⁴

And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a

⁴³ Marten H. Woudstra, *The Book of Joshua – The New International Commentary of the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1981) p.84. “The term *Canaanite* is frequently used as a collective for the inhabitants of Canaan regardless of racial origin.”

⁴⁴ John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative – A Biblical-Theological Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992) 137. Sailhamer provides narrative on the “Line of Abraham” that reveals God’s sovereign will of deliverance after judgement and “dispersion of the nations of Babylon” (Gen. 11:1-9).

land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. (Exodus 3:8-9)

The “Significant Six” are also mentioned in Exod. 3:8, 3:17, 23:23, 33:2, 33:6, and 34:11. With the exception of the Perizzites, the “Significant Six” people groups can be traced to the offspring or genealogy of Canaan, the son of Ham and grandson of Noah (Gen. 6:10, 9:18) as presented in Appendix I. Just before the entry into Canaan, God renews his covenant with Israel through Moses in Gen. 34:11 and instructs them to “Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite.” God warns them to tear down their altars and “cut down their Asherim” and do not make a covenant or intermarry with “the inhabitants of the land” (Exod. 34:12-16). As Joshua leads the people of Israel into the land of Canaan, he reminds them of the living God that they serve; “Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites” (Josh.3:10). The Girgashites are added to the “Significant Six” list of people groups but are also considered a direct descendant of Canaan (Gen. 10:15-18). The book of Joshua references the Perizzites six times throughout the narrative. Although most of the references are related to the original promise to Abraham and displacing the people of Canaan, one verse in particular helps to identify a general geographic location of the Perizzites. The remaining verses from Judges to Nehemiah, as listed in Appendix II, simply identify an indirect reference to the Perizzites as a people group that is to be displaced by God with obedience by the people of Israel (Exod. 34:12-16). None of these references are helpful in identifying the geography or further characteristics of the Perizzite people group.

Geographic Location and Characteristics

To identify the geographic location of the Perizzites, it is necessary to review each bible verse that is listed in Appendix II that has direct correlation to a location or geographical reference. Each Bible verse will be evaluated to determine if it provides any insight into relevant geographical information such as biblical towns or historical land structures. Each piece of information will then be compared to extrabiblical historical information and archaeological evidence as well. The location analysis will begin with the evidence of the Perizzites living in the “larger land mass” area of the land of Canaan and eventually draw the location down to a more specific region. The only region that seems to immediately evict the inhabitants of Canaan is in the tribal allocations of Judah and Simeon. Na’aman suggests that part of the border identification and “conquering of Canaan” in Judges 1 is an example of political maneuvering and proclaiming God’s sovereign approval of a Judean monarchy; “...only Judah and Simeon were able to drive the Canaanites out of their inheritances; the other tribes west of the Jordan failed to do so.”⁴⁵ Such biblical references and conclusions will be assessed to identify appropriate geography and location of the Perizzites. However, we know that historically, the Philistines throughout united and post-United Kingdom of Israel strongly hold the area of Philistia.

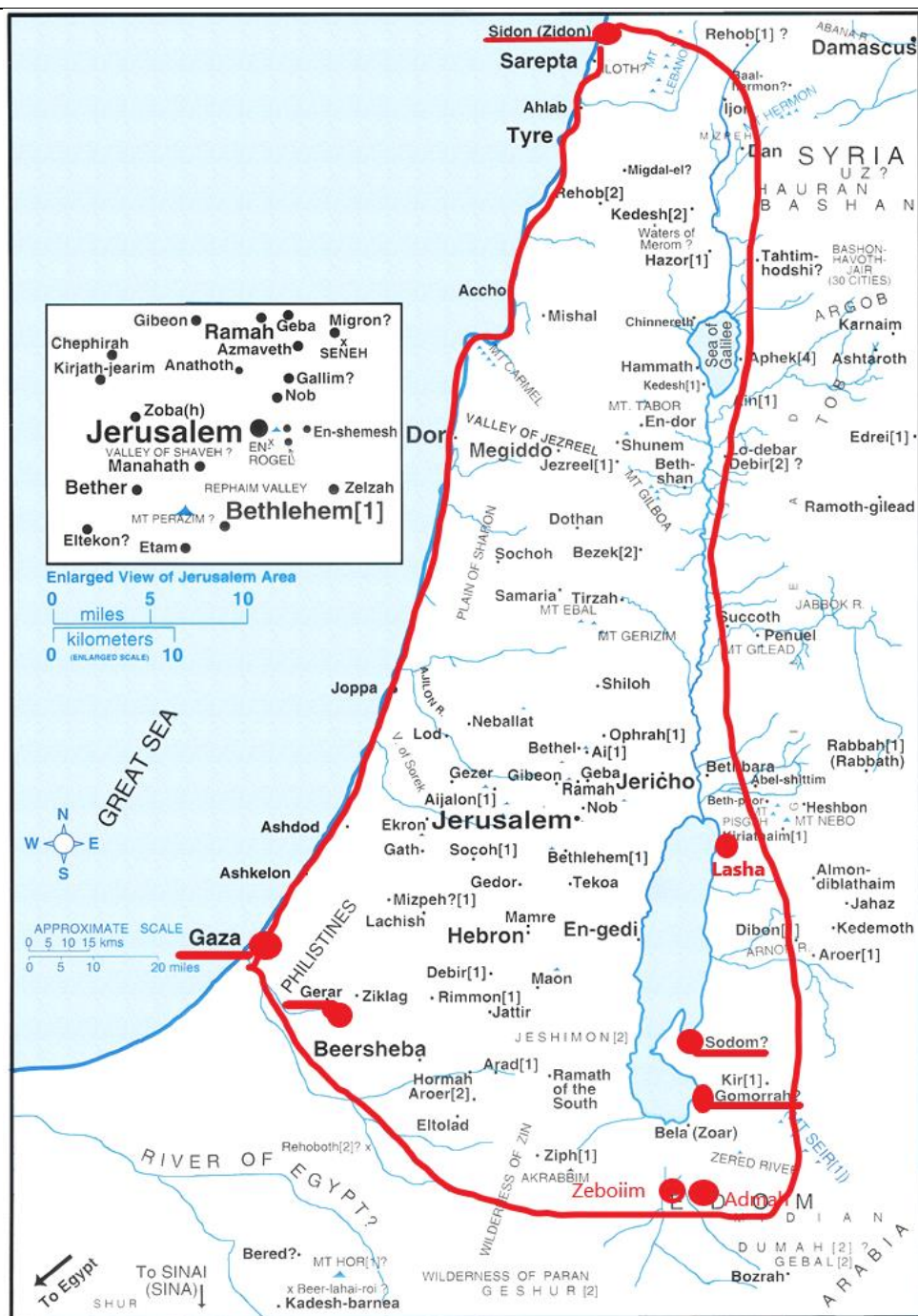
⁴⁵ Nadav Na’aman, *Borders and Districts in Biblical Historiography*, (Jerusalem: Simor Ltd., 1986), 70.

The descendants of Canaan, grandson of Noah, is listed in Gen. 10:15-18, and the “border of the Canaanites” is described in Gen. 10:19. The border of the land of Canaan is somewhat broad and representative of the current nation of Israel.⁴⁶

“And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrhah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha.” (Gen. 10:19)

The Canaanites dispersed according to the following cities that provided an adequate border or description of the vastness of the territory that God had given Israel.

Lasha is a debatable location and is considered “unknown” but “used in an ancient description of the southern boundary of the territory occupied by the Canaanites.”⁴⁷



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Figure 2.1, Gen. 10:19, Broad Description of the land of Canaan.⁴³

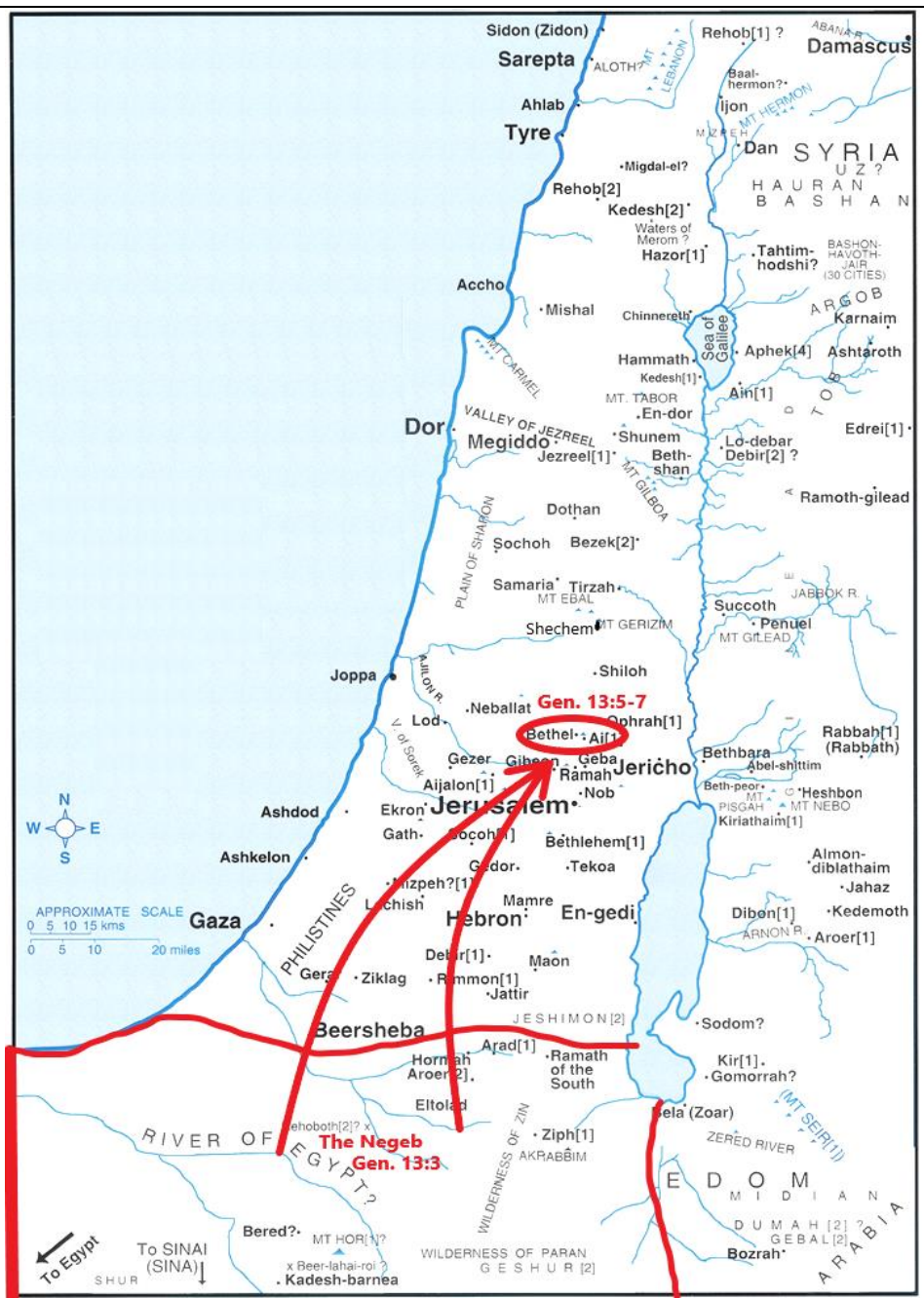
⁴⁶ Son Light Publishers, Inc., *Personal Map Insert*, (Ft. Smith, AR: Son Light Publishers, Inc., 1997) 10.

⁴⁷ Walter A. Elwell, *Baker: Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol 2*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988) 1310.

Abram and Lot traveled north from the Negev to the area of Bethel and Ai (Gen. 13:3) after the Pharaoh had sent them out of Egypt (Gen. 12:17-20).

“And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.”
Gen. 13:5-7

According to v.7, the Canaanites and Perizzites were dwelling in the land of Bethel and Ai...where Abram and Lot dwelt, v.3. “The Negev is the southern region of Palestine, formed roughly by a triangle stretching from the Gulf of Aqaba on the S, northward to Gaza on the W and the Dead Sea on the E.”⁴⁸



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Figure 2.2, Gen. 13:3,7 Abram confronts the Perizzites.

⁴⁸ The Negev (i.e., Negeb) is described as the triangular region (from above) to the gulf of Aqaba. The “intermittent nature of sedentary occupation” is caused by the limited rainfall that makes agricultural living inconsistent. E.M. Blaiklock & R.K. Harrison, *The New International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology* (Grand Rapids, MI: The Zondervan Corporation, 1983) 335-337.

Jacob traveled from Succoth [A] to Shechem [B] and purchased some land from Hamor, Shechem's father (Gen. 33:19). Eventually, Dinah is defiled by Shechem, the Hivite, who is tricked into a false treaty by Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi (Gen. 34:1-30). Jacob's response gives us an indication of the inhabitants of the area and the significance of the Perizzites.

“And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.”
Gen. 34:30

“And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.” Gen. 35:1

Jacob returns to the area where Abraham sojourned and will reside there as well. The Perizzites are still in the land and are an influential force that can attack or threaten Jacob's family.



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Figure 2.3, Gen. 34:30 Jacob retreats to Bethel after Shechem is annihilated.

The LORD instructs Moses to send spies into the land of Canaan in Numbers 13. Upon their return, the spies report seeing numerous people groups in the land, but the Perizzites are excluded in their report. Although it is not conclusive, this analysis can identify the area where the Perizzites were not identified by utilizing a modern walking route from [A] to [B].

The spies begin their journey from the “wilderness of Zin” (Num. 13:21) and progress north to Lebo-hamath that is considered the current city of Laboueh, Lebanon [B].⁴⁹ The city of Yeruham [A], below, will serve as a starting point for Israel that is considered at the northern side of the “wilderness of Zin.”

“So, they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath. And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)” Num. 13:21-22

According to current technology and mapping software, it would take nearly two hundred hours to make a round-trip from Yeruham, Israel to Laboueh, Lebanon and back again.⁵⁰ Since the spies were gone for forty days (Num. 13:25), they would have covered approximately 5 miles per day. The natural geography and landscape have not dramatically changed but the infrastructure for travel has certainly improved. “The main north-south road follows the watershed, is near the eastern side of the (Ephraim Mountain) plateau.”⁵¹ It is safely assumed that the “five miles” per day were much more challenging and not equivalent in effort and resources required to traverse today. It is probable that the limited amount of time would not allow for the entire interior or hill country of the land of Canaan to be explored.

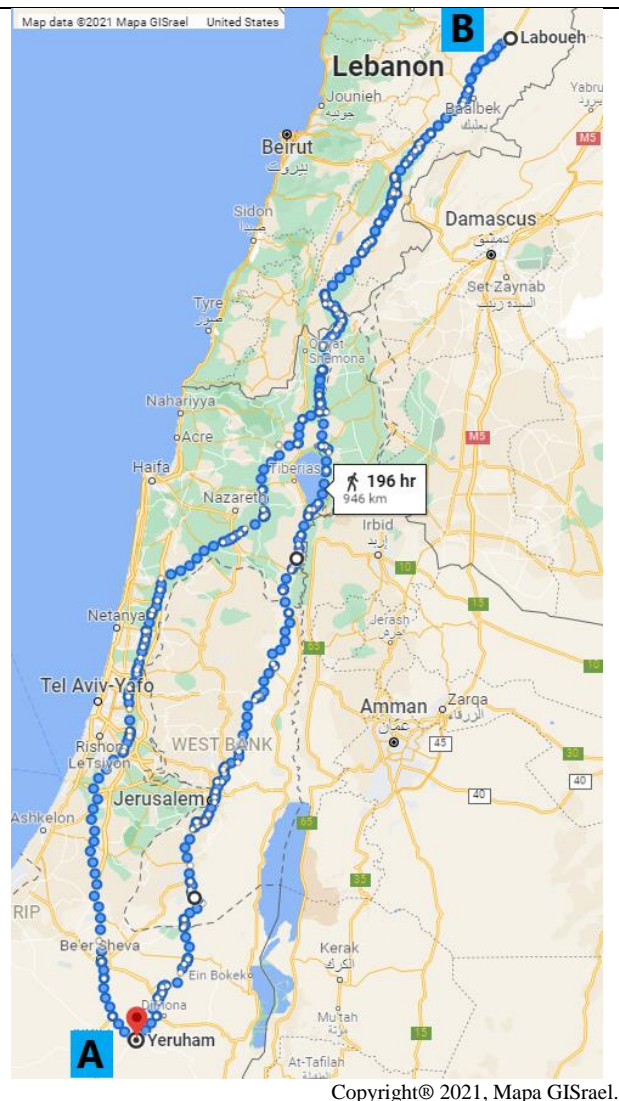


Figure 2.4, Num. 13:21-22, 29. The spies identify some Canaanites in the land but no Perizzites.

⁴⁹ The city of Laboueh is considered the modern city of Lebo-Hamath and is also the “northernmost boundary of Canaan”. Christine Helmer, *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception, Vol.15* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017) 1215.

⁵⁰ According to the walking map data available on “Google Maps.” Copyright laws enable reproduction for less than 5,000 copies of a book or text book. Google Maps, “Mapa GISrael,”

<https://www.google.com/maps/dir/Yeruham,+Israel/Laboueh,+Lebanon/Yeruham,+Israel/@32.519498,34.7625337,8.25z/am=t/data=!4m35!4m34!1m5!1m1!1s0x15023f21eb95ae01:0x93a390f4a44208f12d30.929741!2d30.987804!1m20!1m1!1s0x15226e06277569c1:0xb0fe17f7f4ece132!2m2!1d36.3538435!2d34.196821!3m4!1m2!1d35.6497842!2d32.8160029!3s0x151c16d21b4864c9:0xf9eb6288f743058!3m4!1m2!1d35.5372605!2d32.542959!3s0x151c5d09f695aa7d:0xe0699d5e93603f4b!3m4!1m2!1d35.1492871!2d31.453512!3s0x1502e34040c9fb87:0x617958b9fa1f565b!1m5!1m1!1s0x15023f21eb95ae01:0x93a390f4a44208f12d30.929741!2d30.987804!3e2> [accessed September 24, 2021].

⁵¹ Yohanan Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible – A Historical Geography*, (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1979) 29.

The spies of Israel return after forty days from traversing near the sea, through the mountains, and along the Jordan. They also go through Hebron (Num. 13:23) and return to meet with the awaiting nation of Israel.

“The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.” Num. 13:29

Figure 2.5 represents a walking path near the “sea” that sufficiently identifies a general conclusion that Canaanites reside “by the sea” [A] and “along the Jordan” [B]. The Amalekites are reported to be residing in the southern section of the land (“the Negev”) and the Hittites, the Jebusites and the Amorites “dwell in the hill country.” “The hill country” is the vast central mountainous section upon the map. However, the spies did not traverse the entire land of Canaan and had limited time to inspect all current inhabitants. It is probable that the mountainous topography represented in [B] and westward may identify the area of the “Hittites, the Jebusites and the Amorites.”

It is widely accepted that the Jebusites were in the vicinity Jerusalem and possibly the mountain range or hill country.⁵² The nearly 1,000-kilometer trip would have brought the spies in connection with the Hittites [C] that dwell in Lebanon and eventually modern-day Turkey.⁵³ The geography of the hill country or “mountains” that is identified in Num. 13:29 would be related to the walking route that is highlighted in RED and considered north and south of [B] as well as [C]. Therefore, these areas are attributed to the Hittites [C], Jebusites [B], and Amorites [B].



Figure 2.5, Num. 13:29. The spies return with their report, but the Perizzites and Hivites (Deut.7:1-2) are not identified.

⁵² Bryce appeals to “biblical tradition” when it comes to the Jebusites and suggests a “connection with the Hurrians” that is stated by other scholars. Trevor Bryce, *The World of the Neo-Hittite Kingdoms – A Political and Military History* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012], 66.

⁵³ Redford identifies the influence of the Hittites and Hyksos during the Late Bronze Age and attributes migration to northern Syria and modern-day Turkey to an Egyptian treaty with Ramesses II, thirteenth century B.C. Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 125-169.

Under the leadership of Joshua, the land of Canaan is subdued by the Israelites and by the sovereign hand of God. This conquest is best documented in Chapter 9, 11, & 12 in the book of Joshua. Specifically, Chapter 9 communicates the deception of the “inhabitants of Gibeon” (Josh. 9:3) who claim they are “from a very far country” (Josh. 9:9) and eventually submit as slaves to Israel. This appeal has to do with God’s instructions on warfare; “When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it.” (Deut. 20:10) and “Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations” (Deut. 20:15). The Gibeonites appealed to this “loophole” in the warfare plan of God for Israel. A covenant was made with the people of Gibeon, and they became slaves and “cutters of wood and drawers of water” for all of Israel (Deut. 9:21). Of course, the deception of the people of Gibeon is that their city is “only six or seven miles from Bethel, though represented by its crafty people as ‘a very far country’...and “lying about six and a half miles north-northwest from Jerusalem.”⁵⁴ Therefore, the Gibeonites lived in the hill country of Ephraim and were inhabitants of the inheritance that God provided Israel and were not “very far off” as they proclaimed. Israel was instructed not to show mercy to the people that lived in the inheritance that God had given them; “But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites...” (Deut. 20:17). An important dialog in this narrative is that Israel identifies the Gibeonites as “Hivites” (Josh. 9:7), which are included in the “Significant Six” and should not be shown mercy.

It is certainly debatable if all the tribes of Canaan are literally “gathered together” in Josh. 9:2 or if the author intended to communicate the intent of the tribes of Canaan against the people of God. “In actual fact this coalition did not come to being. The southern kings did not combine

⁵⁴ J. Glentworth Butler, D.D., *The Bible Work – The Old Testament, Vol. III*, (New York: The Butler Bible-Work Company, 1892), 91.

their forces with those of the north (compare ch. 10 with ch. 11), as one might expect from the enumeration of geographical areas”⁵⁵ that are identified in 9:1. By example, the king of Gezer “came up to help Lachish; and Joshua smote him and his people, until he had left him none remaining” (Josh. 10:33). There were certainly occurrences of collaboration but there isn’t biblical evidence for a single large battle of Canaanite allied forces in the book of Joshua. Josh. 10:29-43 communicates a brief history of the conquest of southern Canaan, and Josh. 11:1-23 documents a summary of victories that God provided Israel in northern Canaan. With this understanding, the cities that are identified in Chapter 11 are primarily in the northern territory of Canaan. Although the kings of the land of Canaan may not have literally gathered for a single battle, they certainly resisted and collaborated to defeat the entry of Israel into their land.

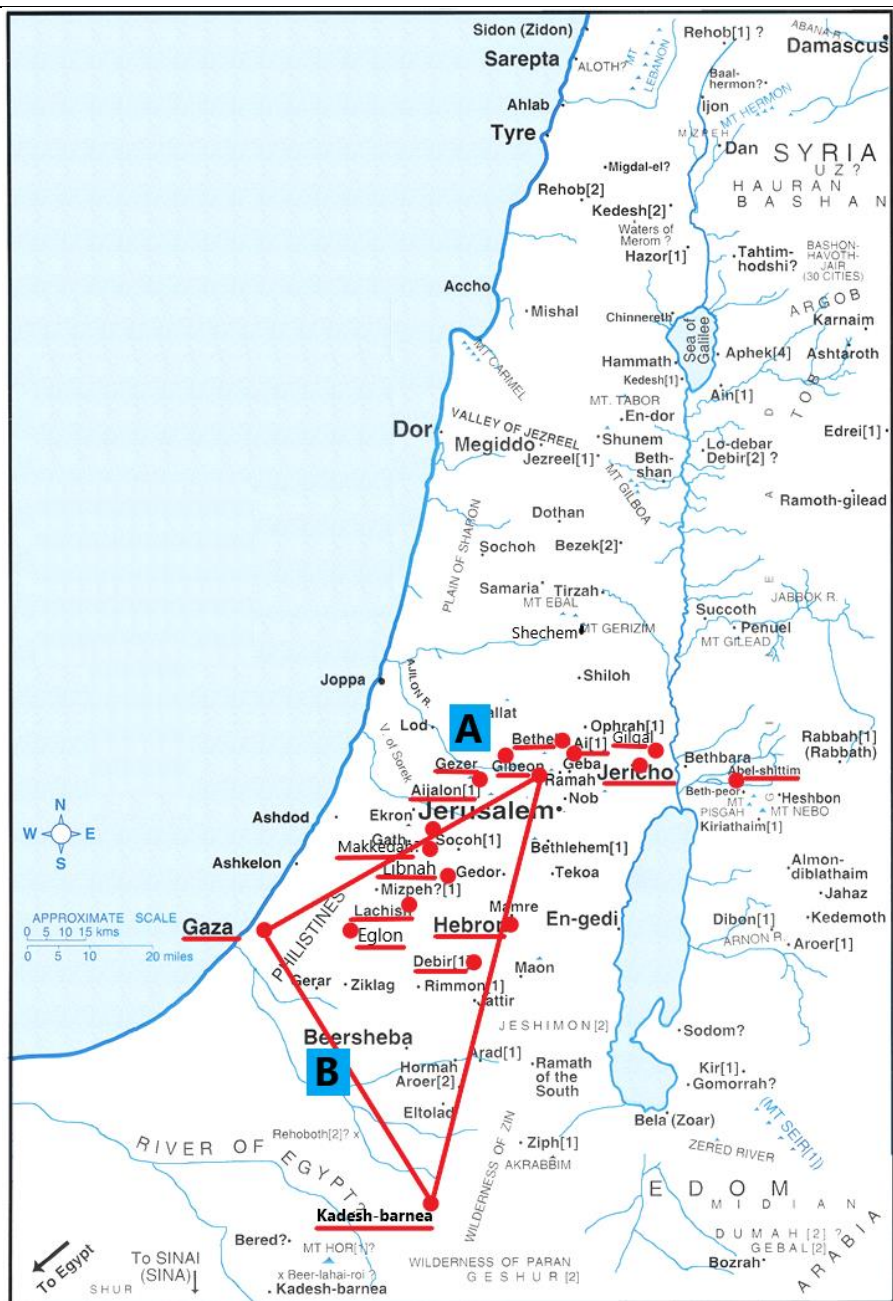
The following two pages will identify the cities of Canaan that are defeated by Joshua and Israel in the southern (Fig. 2.6, Josh. 10:29-43) and the northern (Fig. 2.7, Josh. 11:1-23) Canaanite territories. Throughout this narrative in the book of Joshua, the term “Perizzites” is not mentioned in any specific territory that is covered in this section. However, the *process of elimination* will assist in identifying where the Perizzites may have dwelled and had their influence as compared to other Canaanite tribes and competing nations.

⁵⁵ Woudstra suggests that the author of the book of Joshua primarily wanted the reader to understand that thwarted the plans of the Canaanites and sovereignly upheld his promise. Marten H. Woudstra, *The Book of Joshua – The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1981), 151-153.

Joshua leads Israel into the central and southern territories of the land of Canaan. No specific Canaanite tribe is mentioned during the conquest of this territory. All cities are attributed to the narrative of Josh. 10:29-43.

“So, Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel commanded. And Joshua smote them from Kadeshbarnea⁵⁶ even unto Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even unto Gibeon.” Josh. 10:40-41

The Israelites conquer the central and southern parts of Canaan [A] that is identified in Josh. 10:29-39 and is summarized as a single conquest campaign in Josh. 10:40-43. This last summary is intended to draw a wide area [B] or conquered territory with the city of Gibeon “to designate a northern limit of territory described.”⁵⁷



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Figure 2.6, Josh. 10:29-43, The central and southern territory of Canaan is conquered by Joshua.

⁵⁶ Woudstra identifies Kadesh-barnea as “located in the wilderness of Zin (cf. Num. 20:1; cf. 13:26)”, Marten H. Woudstra, *The Book of Joshua – The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1981), 184-185.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Following the southern campaign, Joshua leads Israel into the northern territory of the land of Canaan. All original “Significant Six” tribes are mentioned in Josh. 11:3 and presented as “the sand that is upon the seashore in multitude” (11:4). Chapter 11 documents the conquest of the northern territory of Canaan.

“And it came to pass, when Jabin king of **Hazor** had heard those things, that he sent to **Jobab** king of **Madon**, and to the king of **Shimron**, and to the king of **Achshaph**. And to the kings that were on the north of the mountains, and of the plains south of **Dor** on the west. And to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and to the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and to the Hivite under Hermon in the land of **Mizpeh.**”

Josh. 11:1-3

This historical narrative “stresses the great significance of Hazor’s capture, and implicitly of the whole northern campaign which is meant as the concluding part of the conquest of Canaan.”⁵⁸ Woudstra explains that the significance of this city includes access to Egypt via the area of Megiddo and Jezreel, along the plain of Sharon and the coast.



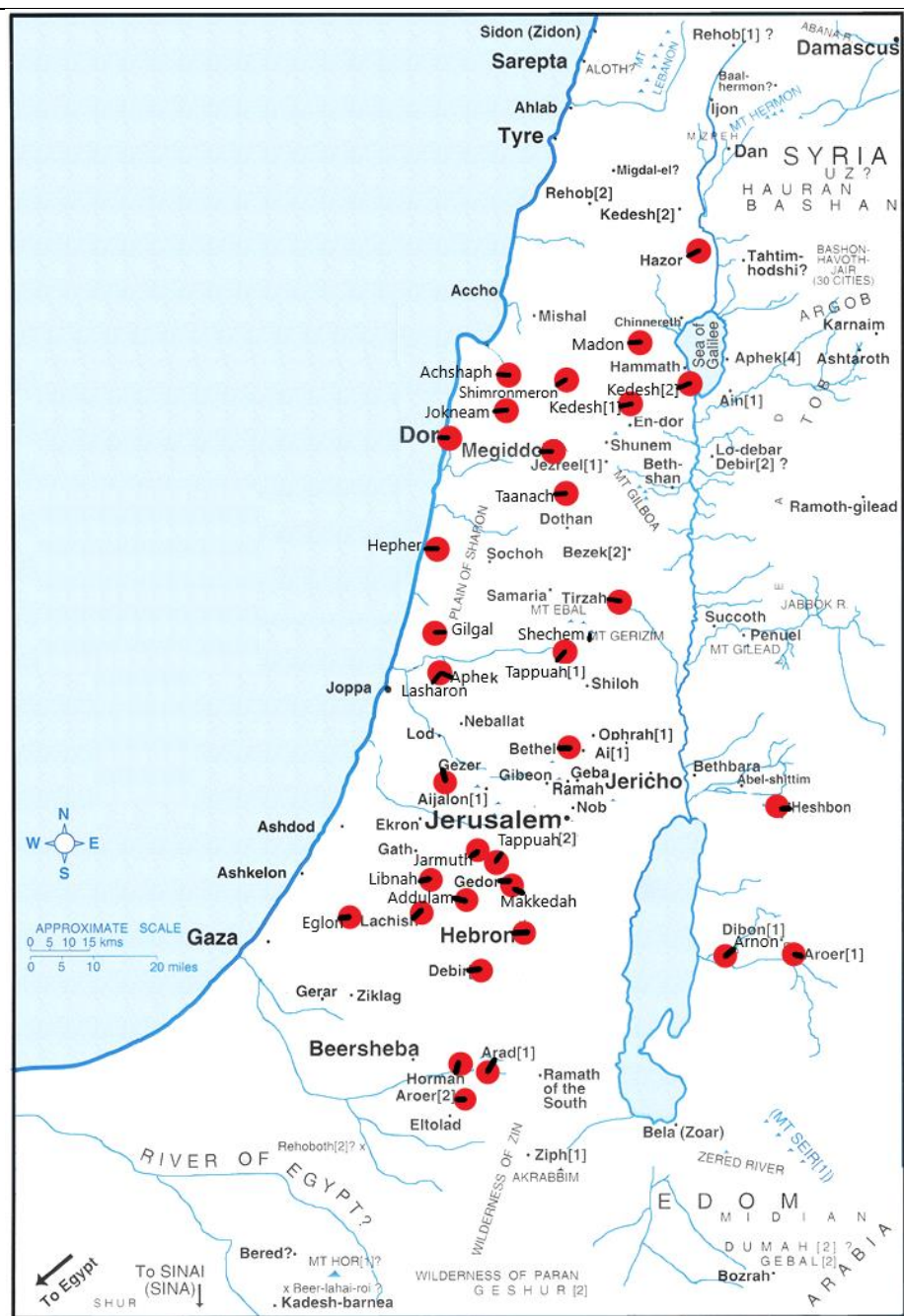
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Figure 2.7, Josh. 11:1-23, The northern territory of Canaan is conquered by Joshua.

⁵⁸ Marten H. Woudstra, *The Book of Joshua – The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co 1981), 187,192.

The Canaanite kings and their territories that are defeated with the leadership of Moses and Joshua is listed in Joshua 12. Verse 1 serves as an introduction: “these are the kings of the land, which the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land on the other side Jordan.”

The 12th chapter of Joshua falls “into two subdivisions: (1) a catalogue of the kings conquered east of the Jordan (vers. 1-6); (2) a catalogue of the kings conquered in Palestine proper (vers. 7-24).”⁵⁹ The kings and cities that are represented in the initial conquering of Canaan are meticulously included in the Joshua narrative. Figure 2.8 plots the applicable areas that Israel conquers, according to Son Light Publisher’s “Master Index” and the general city or village locations. These Canaanite kingdoms are identified east of the Jordan, the southern part of Canaan that is west of the Jordan (also supplemental to Joshua 10 and Figure 2.6), the coastal area of the Mediterranean, and the northern area of Mt. Carmel that is west of the Sea of Galilee. The only Canaanite cities within the central hill country of Ephraim and Manasseh would include Taanach, Tirzah, and Tappuah.



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Figure 2.8, Josh. 12:1-24, The territory of Canaan that is conquered by Moses and Joshua; 31 sites identified.

⁵⁹ John Peter Lange, D.D., *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures – Joshua* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1957), 112.

One of the most significant references to the Perizzites occur in Joshua 17, where Joshua instructs the disgruntled people of Joseph to take the land of the Perizzites if they were not satisfied with the land that was allocated to them. The direction that Joshua gives is preempted by an explanation of some assigned cities of Manasseh's inheritance that may have come from Issachar and Asher. Regardless of the allotment, these cities and villages are identified as Canaanite locations that Israel is either unable to drive out or unwilling to annihilate.

“And Manasseh had in Issachar and in Asher Bethshean and her towns, and Ibleam and her towns, and the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Endor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Taanach and her towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns, even three countries. Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land.” Josh. 17:10-11

Four of these six cities (Dor, Megiddo, Taanach, were originally identified as “conquered cities” by Moses and Joshua in Josh. 12:1-24 (see Fig. 2.8). Therefore, some of these cities were not able to continue under Israel’s authority or military influence. **“Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land.” Josh. 17:12**



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Figure 2.9, Josh. 17:10-12, The northern territory of Manasseh is compromised, and Canaanite cities are not completely defeated or driven out.

It is unmistakable that Israel did not completely follow the instructions of Moses and Joshua before the entry into the land of Canaan was executed. Moses instructed Israel to “Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you” (Deut. 4:1). Moses also informs Israel that they are entering a land where the people are “greater and mightier than thou” (Deut. 7:1) and they must rely on God for the land and the people to be delivered over to them. “And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them...” (Deut. 7:2). Joshua reminds Israel, “Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land” (Josh. 1:13). It is evident that the events of Josh. 17:10-12 sit in significant contrast to what God had instructed Israel to do as they entered the land of Canaan. These six cities that are listed in Josh. 17:10-11 (Fig. 2.9) are evidence of Israel’s disobedience to God’s instructions. However, in the context of the Canaanite cities that are not occupied or “utterly destroyed,” the “children of Joseph” complain to Joshua for not allocating sufficient land for their people because “I am a great people” (Josh. 17:14). In reality, Manasseh and Ephraim (“children of Joseph”) have sufficient land, but they have not taken the effort and relied on God to seize that which has been promised. The following text identifies Manasseh and Ephraim’s short-comings and challenges, but it also significantly identifies the location and occupation of the Perizzites:

¹⁴And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, “Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as the LORD hath blessed me hitherto?” ¹⁵And Joshua answered them, “If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee.”

¹⁶And the children of Joseph said, “The hill is not enough for us: and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both they who are of Bethshean and her towns, and they who are of the valley of Jezreel.”

¹⁷And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, “Thou art a great people, and hast great power: thou shalt not have one lot only: ¹⁸But the mountain shall be thine; for it is a wood, and thou shalt cut it down: and the outgoings of it shall be thine: for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong.” (Josh. 17:14-18)

It is interesting to consider why the “children of Joseph” pointed out the “chariots of iron” that were in the valley of Jezreel and the area of Bethshean when Joshua instructed them to deforest the hill country of Ephraim that was presently the “land of the Perizzites and of the giants.” Woudstra’s explanation is helpful: “The purpose of inserting this episode at the conclusion of the description of Joseph’s portion may be to alert the reader to the fact that the promise land, if it is to be possessed, requires the activity of the tribes, who must not be deterred by the threats of Canaan’s superior military force.”⁶⁰ Joshua does not bend to the demands of the “children of Joseph” and reasserts the responsibility that they have to possess the land. Since the Canaanite cities that are identified in Josh. 17:10-11 (Fig. 2.9) are in the northern area of Mt. Ephraim and southwest of Mt. Carmel, it is possible that Joshua’s intent for Manasseh and Ephraim is to conquer and occupy the “center of the country, so that the forces of the Canaanites were necessarily divided, and the Israelites could strike first with their whole force at the southern armies, and then turn round upon their enemies to the north.”⁶¹ Also, Ellicott does conclude that “a large portion of the center of Palestine consisted of uncleared forest: that the cities and inhabitants of that district were far fewer than those of the valley of Esdraelon

⁶⁰ Marten Woudstra, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament – The Book of Joshua*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981) p.267.

⁶¹ Charles John Ellicott, *Ellicott’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House) p.144.

(Jezreel).”⁶² Kaufmann concludes that “The land of the Perizzites and Rephaim...is the territory of Joseph, and its full possession is to be achieved by deforestation of the mountain and the subjugation of the valleys. The deforestation is mainly Ephraim’s problem in Mount Ephraim, and the valleys are the concern of Manasseh.”⁶³ This, of course, points to activity and location of the Perizzites, relative to the Israelites and the other Canaanites living according to Fig. 2.9. Lange suggests that “the outgoings of it” (v.18) includes the mountain and hill territory of central Palestine that progresses north from Bethel to Mt. Carmel and Mt. Gilboa, just south of the Sea of Galilee; “on the northwest a forest-covered hill joins itself to Mount Ephraim connecting the latter with Carmel, that most beautiful and greenest of all the mountains of Canaan. On the northwest Mount Gilboa.”⁶⁴

The remaining biblical references to the location and influence of the Perizzites in the land of Canaan are identified in Josh. 24:29-30 and Judg. 1:4-5 (Fig. 2.10). Although these stories are quite different, they do identify the area of Canaan where Israel begins to express dominance and persistent victory of the indigenous people. This also reduces the probability that the Perizzites remain in this territory until the time of King Solomon. However, they certainly could have been brought into slavery after Israel began to conquer the land of Canaan (Judg. 1:27-29, 3:5, 1 Kings 9:20, 2 Chron. 8:7-9, Ezra 9:1).

⁶² The phrase “Esdraelon” is later changed to “Jezreel” valley. Charles John Ellicott, *Ellicott’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House) p.144.

⁶³ C. Brekelmans & J. Lust, *Pentateuchal and Deuteronomistic Studies* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 201.

⁶⁴ “a small forest of low oak trees is mentioned by the same traveler as standing on the right of the road from Nazareth to Carmel...a wide strip of low woody heights by which Carmel is joined on the southwest with the mountains of Samaria.” Samaria is the equivalent of Mt. Ephraim. John Peter Lange, D.D., *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures – Joshua* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1957), 147.

To complete the review of biblical references that identify the territory of the Perizzites, the end of the book of Joshua and the beginning of book of Judges will be briefly summarized regarding significant geography and occupation of the land.

“And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being a hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathserah, which is in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash.” Josh. 24:29-30

The Israelite dominance of the central hill country of Mt. Ephraim enabled Joshua to be buried in the “border of his inheritance.

“And Judah went up; and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand: and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men. And they found Adonibezek in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites.” Judg. 1:4-5

The Israelite victory is definitive, and the location includes a clue as to the territory of the Perizzites and the Canaanites.



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Figure 2.10, Josh. 24:29-30 & Judg. 1:4-5, The central hill country of Mt. Ephraim has become an expanding area for Israel occupation.

The geographic location and characteristics of the Perizzites have varied over the biblical analysis. The time frame of this analysis will be evaluated in the next section of the chapter. It has become evident that the biblical evidence assigns the Perizzites to the area of Bethel and Ai during the time of Abraham (Gen. 13:3, 12:17-20, 13:1-7). The Perizzites are distinct but included with the general people group of the Canaanites during this same period (Gen. 13:5-7). Jacob is concerned about becoming a stench to the “inhabitants of the land” in Shechem because of the actions of his sons against the Hivites (Gen. 34:30, 35:1). Jacob then moves south to Bethel; perhaps indicating the vacancy left by the Perizzites at that time but present during the time of Abraham two generations earlier (Matt. 1:2). The journey of the spies in Canaan (Num. 13:21-22, 29) would have taken a natural walking course around Mt. Ephraim, Mt. Carmel, and Mt. Gilboa to Laboueh in Lebanon and back to the Negev. This journey does not identify the Perizzites or the Hivites but adds the Amalekites as a people group that lived in Canaan during their spy mission (Num. 13:29). The biblical narrative of Joshua and the conquering of Canaan identifies the southern (Josh. 10:40-41) and northern (Josh. 11:1-4, 12:1-24) victories of military crusades but leaves much of the central hill country of Ephraim and Manasseh sparsely populated. Israel is unable to fully “drive out” the inhabitants in the northern area of Mt. Ephraim, southwest Mt. Carmel, and the mountain and valley region of Gilboa. Although they are “a great people” in population, the “sons of Joseph” complain to Joshua that the inhabitants of this region have “iron chariots” and cannot be displaced. Joshua does not change or add to their inheritance but charges them to “get up to the wood country and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee” (Josh. 17:15). Finally, Joshua is buried in Timnathserah (Josh. 24:29-30), and the “LORD delivered the

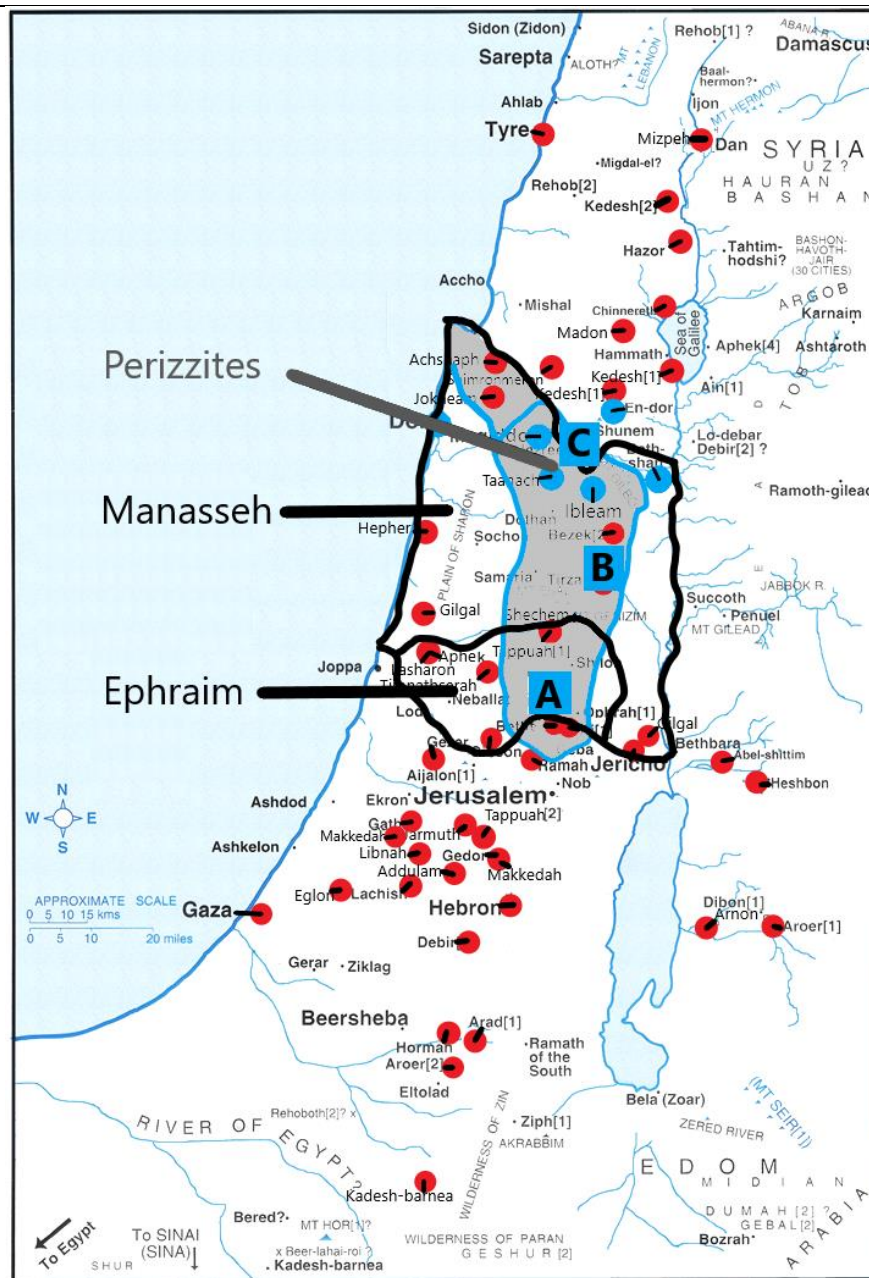
Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand: and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men.”

(Judg. 1:4-5).

The biblical evidence shows that the Perizzites were generally considered to be in the hill country of Manasseh and Ephraim that is identified by the grey area of the following map.

More precise areas include the areas of Bethel, Ai, [A] and Bezek [B] as well as the areas of northern area Manasseh [C] that Israel could not drive out.

This collective information ranges from the time-period of Abraham to Joshua. It is evident that the Perizzites do not stay in these locations throughout the entire Late Bronze Age but gradually progressed northward as Israel began to dominate the central hill country of Manasseh and Ephraim during the Early Iron Age.⁶⁵



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Figure 2.11, The Perizzite territory during the time of Abraham. (The plotted towns are for reference, and most did not exist during the time of Abraham.)

⁶⁵ Israel adopts the agricultural practices and benefits from natural “security of the small, unfortified villages” in the newly occupied hill country during Joshua and Early Iron Age. Yohanan Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible – A Historical Geography*, (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1979) 240-241.

Towards the end of Joshua's life, the biblical evidence indicates that Israel was still in the process of occupying the land that God had given to them, and the gradual occupation took considerable time and multiple generations.

The central hill country provided natural “security of the small unfortified villages” but the Israelite settlement in the hill country was “furthered by the invention of the plastered cistern. In various excavations plastered and whitewashed water cisterns have been found in Late Bronze strata, especially in later phases.”⁶⁶ As Israel began occupation in the south and north, the gradual occupation in the central hill country took more time and effort. Eventually, the “sons of Joseph” receive their inheritance by “clearing the forest” of the Perizzites and successfully push out the Canaanites and Perizzites that are in the valley of Jezreel, Mt. Carmel, and Mt. Gilboa (Josh. 17:7-18).



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Figure 2.12, The Perizzite territory at the end of the Israelite conquest during the leadership of Joshua.

⁶⁶ Occupation of the hill country was partially slow because of the natural protection and difficulty traveling with military prowess. Yohanan Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible – A Historical Geography*, (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1979) 240-241.

Neighbors: Friends and Foes

From a biblical historical perspective, it has become evident that the Perizzites have occupied much of the territory of Mt. Ephraim that begins north of the territory of Judah and continues north to the area of Mt. Carmel and Mt. Gilboa. This is commonly known as the territory of Manasseh (west) and Ephraim. The multiple references to the “hill country” and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh (Josh. 9:1, 11:3, 12:8, 17:10-13) helps to identify the various oppositions that Israel faced when entering the land of Canaan. The Perizzites and other Canaanite tribes are a persistent presence in this area. Although, God was very clear with the instructions that were given through Moses to Israel:

“When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them...” Deut. 7:1-2b

The command to “utterly destroy” was for the purpose of God’s judgement on the people of Canaan (Gen. 15:16, Lev. 18:24-25), but it was also to mitigate the temptation to worship their gods and commit idolatry (Lev. 20:22-24). God’s chosen place and method of worship does not include a hybrid or compromise of Canaanite rituals and religions:

“When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land; Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.” Deut. 12:29-30.

As the territory of the Perizzites is coming into better focus, the disobedience of Israel becomes evident as well. The unwillingness to “utterly destroy” the inhabitants of Canaan will forever be a threat to Israel’s spiritual obedience and genuine worship. By example, the

inhabitants of the towns and villages of Bethshean, Tanaach, Dor, Ibleam, and Megiddo are not driven out or annihilated and continue to dwell in their towns; although they are eventually submitted to “forced labor” (Judg.1:27-29). All these towns are in the Perizzite territory and influence. Unfortunately, the length of time between “passivity” and “slaved labor” is not clear. It seems probable that the forced labor doesn’t happen until the time of King Saul or King David, which is approximately seven generations from Moses or approximately 280 years (40 years per generation).⁶⁷ Because of Israel’s “inability to penetrate the Canaanite plains and the necessity to create sufficient room for occupation in the hilly regions by the cultivation of waste lands and the clearing of natural forest,”⁶⁸ they begin the meticulous process of populating the hill country of Mt. Ephraim while slowly progressing to the north. “It seems that the central hill country region was sparsely settled during the period from 1550-1220 B.C.”⁶⁹ that corresponds to the migration of the indigenous Perizzites during the Late Bronze Age.

During the time of King Solomon, the territory of the Perizzites becomes controlled by Israel and the strategic positioning of Megiddo and Jezreel Valley become necessary to manage the north-south trade routes. “Israel’s emergence in the land occurred over a long period, not in the lifetime of a single generation. Moreover, Israel never completely annihilated the Canaanites, who survived into the monarchy period (1 Kings 9:20-21).”⁷⁰ Nelson suggests that Israel merged with the Canaanites and assimilated with much of their culture and did not enter into Canaan with a single military campaign. As a matter of fact, Nelson suggests that Israel better represents “a loose association of small agricultural and pastoral villages or clans located in the highlands

⁶⁷ Adam2Jesus.org, “Full Chart Genealogy,” Adam2Jesus.org. [accessed October 24, 2021].

⁶⁸ Yohanan Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible – A Historical Geography*, (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1979) 29.

⁶⁹ The analysis of the settlement of Canaan identifies the slow occupation of the hill country by the Israelites with “largely unfortified sites in the highlands”. Professor Barry J. Beitzel, *Biblica: The Bible Atlas*, (Baulkham Hills: Global Book Publishing, 2006), 179.

⁷⁰ Richard D. Nelson, *The Historical Books*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press), 81.

away from the main Canaanite power centers.”⁷¹ Eventually, this patriarchal society emerges and requires more resources and collectively occupies the central hill country and dominates the valleys and area of Galilee as well. “Archaeological research has proved that the Israelites did not bring a consolidated tradition of material culture with them. Instead, they borrowed everything from the previous inhabitants. This is expressed in building construction, in weapons, in art objects and especially in pottery.”⁷² Aharoni argues for the gradual assimilation of Israel into the land of Canaan over multiple generations of growth and expansion. Much of the archaeology evidence is “similar” between indigenous people and the people of Israel. However, there are some identifiable differences that will be explored in the following chapter.

“Time Frame” Assessed

The occupation of the land of Canaan took considerable time. There were many military campaigns that are documented in the Bible and there is significant evidence that Canaanite towns were annihilated, driven out, or subdued. From a chronological perspective, the biblical record of the Perizzite begins in Genesis and is last referenced in Ezra and Nehemiah. The Perizzite is referenced ten times in the books of the law and thirteen times in the historical books of the Old Testament (Appendix II). Since the first direct reference to the Perizzites occurs during the time of Abraham’s return into the land of Canaan from Egypt (Fig. 2.2), the timeframe for the existence of the Perizzites would also begin at this time. “The books that describe Israel’s emergence in the land (Joshua, Judges) and the period of becoming a nation state (1 and 2 Samuel) first developed as written literature only in the period of the monarchy.”⁷³ Following the “emergence” of Israel, the influence of the newly developed “monarchy”, the

⁷¹ Nelson, *The Historical Books*, 97.

⁷² Yohanan Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible – A Historical Geography*, (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1979) 240.

⁷³ Nelson, *The Historical Books*, 31.

divided kingdom, and the exile to Babylon, the Perizzites are lastly mentioned in Ezra 9:1 and Neh. 9:8. The historiography of these two books refer to the restoration of Israel from exile and the reestablishment of the temple in Jerusalem during the time of Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:2, 3:8, 5:2, Neh. 12:1,47). Zerubbabel is also mentioned in genealogy of Jesus Christ, Matthew 1:12, "...after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zerubbabel; and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud..." This genealogy and lineage of the kings of Judah will be helpful in assessing an historical date range of the occurrences of the Perizzites in the Southern Levant.

There has been much work over the years to assess the archeological evidence and to collaborate or oppose biblical record. Finkelstein, by example, suggests that "the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age (ca. 1200 B.C.) was marked by sudden appearance of many new village sites throughout Canaan, especially in the central hill country."⁷⁴ The extrabiblical evidence to the time period includes the Amarna letters that were written to "the ruler Labaya of Shechem, who controlled a territory occupied by Ephraim and Manasseh" according to Joshua's allotment "that corresponds to the Late Bronze Age world of the Amarna correspondence."⁷⁵ The time frame and location of the Israelites and the Perizzites begin to merge in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. There are initially military campaigns of Israel that is documented in biblical narrative and then there is a gradual occupation of the land that God has provided as an inheritance. "It is rapidly becoming a consensus that instead of a conquest of the land of Canaan, one should picture the Israelites as abandoning a former nomadic lifestyle and the assuming of a more sedentary life in the hill country of the Israelites sometime

⁷⁴ A.R. Millard, J.K. Hoffmeier, D.W. Baker, *Faith, Tradition, & History* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994) 198.

⁷⁵ Millard (1994), 197.

around 1200 B.C.”⁷⁶ The immediate impact and inevitable conflict is supported through the Joshua and “children of Joseph” narrative in Joshua 17 and discussed earlier in this chapter.

⁷⁶ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *A History of Israel: From the Bronze age Through the Jewish Wars* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 133.

Chapter 3: Historiography and Archaeology

Throughout the Bronze Age, Egypt had the most influence on regional commerce, trade, and population movements in the Southern Levant. “During the Middle Bronze Age, local Canaanite rulers maintained autonomous rule over small territories focused around large, walled, urban centers. Then, in the Late Bronze Age, Egyptian control of Canaan significantly curtailed the political autonomy of these rulers, while still allowing Canaanite culture, religion, and language to flourish.”⁷⁷ The Perizzites prospered with other indigenous people of Canaan throughout the entire hill country of Ephraim and Manasseh (Fig. 2.11). However, during the Middle Bronze Age, according to *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, there is significant evidence that there was a major migration of people from the southern part of the Samaria Mountain region to the northern half, just north of Shechem. In the south, “there was a sharp decline in settlement (residential sites) ...some sites were abandoned, and the population moved to large settlements,” while at the same time, the northern region witnessed “a large wave of settlement (161 sites) ...its size was unparalleled anywhere else in the country. New cities were founded that were fortified with walls and huge earthen ramparts (Shechem, Tirzah, Dothan, Ibleam, Jenin, Khirbet Najjar, Khirbet Kheibar, Khirbet Qumei, el-Kebara, Shuweiket er-Ras, and Khirbet Qarqaf).”⁷⁸ It is probable that the Perizzites and other indigenous people migrated both to the larger cities in the south and to the developing urban cities in the neighboring hill country of the north. “At the same time, numerous smaller sites were built on the edges of the valleys, several of which were also defended with ramparts. This

⁷⁷ Mary Ellen Buck, *The Canaanites – Their history and Culture from Texts and Artifacts* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2019), 57.

⁷⁸ The Perizzite and indigenous sites that consolidate in the south and become fortified that “include Bethel, Khirbet Marjama, Shiloh, Sheikh Abu Zarad, and Khirbet el-Urma.” Ephraim Stern, *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society & Carta, 1993), 1310-1313.

was a period of prosperity and growth for Mount Manasseh” (northern Samaria Mountain region).⁷⁹

The period of prosperity for the northern region is exemplified in the palace of Megiddo that was ruled by the Perizzites or Canaanites during the Middle to Late Bronze Age. Excavations identify “380 ivory objects that were collected in the city’s treasury,” which “illustrates the magnificence, power, and strength of Megiddo during the period of Egyptian rule and emphasizes its important status among the Canaanite population of the area.”⁸⁰ A premiere ivory object, named the “Inlay plaque depicting a Canaanite ruler” by The Israel Museum in Jerusalem (Appendix III), identifies a visual story of a Megiddo king of the Late Bronze Age that is “seated on a throne during the victory banquet held in his honor” and can also be “seen standing in his chariot, returning victoriously from battle.”⁸¹ It is not clear if this visual story is a specific event or if it represents similar events that had occurred in the territory of Megiddo. It is certainly interesting that this story is communicating a Megiddo king who is celebrating a military victory that includes captive circumcised slaves as his bounty. These slaves could very well represent the early inhabitants of Israel who had recently entered the land of Canaan. The two primary groups in the Southern Levant that performed circumcision were Israel and Egypt.⁸² Therefore, it is unlikely that the slaves would represent Egyptian captives because of their Imperial ruling status in the Southern Levant. The vast ivory inventory and treasury lend to the understanding of the influence of Megiddo and the people of the northern Samaria Mountain range. It also supports Kaiser and Robbins position that the Egyptian dynasty was mutually beneficial to the people of Canaan until Ramesses II and Ramesses III attempted to excise more

⁷⁹ Ibid. 1312.

⁸⁰ Ann E. Killebrew, *Biblical Peoples and Ethnicity – An Archaeological Study of Egyptians, Canaanites, Philistines, and Early Israel 1300-1100 B.C.E.* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 53.

⁸¹ Daphna Ben-Tor, *Pharaoh in Canaan: The Untold Story* (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 2016), 119-122.

⁸² Freedman (2000), 256.

tribute and increased restrictions on trade. By the end of the Bronze Age, “Canaan...was defined largely by the imperialistic policies of the Egyptians.”⁸³

Killebrew also explains that Egypt was primarily concerned with trade and tribute but did provide limited protection for various economic or trade centers that impacted travel routes from Egypt to Mesopotamia. Similarly, Mazar suggests that “The Egyptian conquests of the Levant were carried out in order to guard the main routes to Lebanon and Syria, and for the gains from the economic exploitation of the occupied country. Wood, oil, wine, wheat, cattle, copper, sales, and concubines were brought from Canaan to Egypt.”⁸⁴ Egypt established their influence northward “to Tel Beth-shean, continuing westward along the Jezreel Valley. The valley serves as a geographical division separating southern and northern Canaan.”⁸⁵ “The Jezreel and Beth-shean Valleys were critically important in antiquity because together they provided the only east-west passage across the north of Israel, connecting the coastal highway with the Jordan River Valley, the major inland route for north-south Travel.”⁸⁶ This important demarcation also identifies the northernmost location of the Perizzite people during the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age (Fig. 2.11 and Fig. 2.12, respectively). The Perizzites were by default an active part of the Egyptian dynasty in this geographical area. Along with socioeconomic growth, there is evidence of local city-state rulers (i.e., kings) that continue to prosper or be sustained in such an environment. Egypt provides economic and military influence in the region albeit discrepantly.

“...the Amarna letters and the Egyptian military annals, present a less uniform and unified sociopolitical picture, testifying to a low degree of integration and central organization, each city being ruled by its own king. The political situation seems to be volatile, with Canaanite rulers frequently requesting Egyptian intervention to settle disputes between the

⁸³ Killebrew (2005), 12.

⁸⁴ Amihai Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: 10,000-586 B.C.E.* (New York: Doubleday, 1992): 236.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁸⁶ Elizabeth Bloch-Smith and Beth Alpert Nakai, “A Landscape Comes to Life,” *Near Eastern Archaeology* 62:2 (1999): 83.

various urban centers. This type of political structure is often referred to as a city-state system.”⁸⁷

The political or military protection from Egypt is limited at best. Robbins declares that it was mostly focused on commerce and trade routes for the best interest of Egypt’s dynasty, “help from Egypt rarely came...so long as tribute flowed to Egypt, there was no need to be drawn into these Canaanite squabbles. In any case, quarreling among Canaanite kings was useful to Egyptian imperial policy. There need be no worry about Canaanites uniting against Egypt. Small Egyptian garrison forces in certain cities would suffice.”⁸⁸

“Excavations of the Egyptian strongholds in Canaan from the period of the [Egyptian] Empire have revealed Egyptian-style residences...such structures have been termed ‘Governor’s Residences,’ as they are believed to have been the seats of the chief Egyptian officials stationed in Canaan.”⁸⁹ The Israel Museum in Jerusalem identifies Megiddo and Beth-shean specifically as “city seats” or garrisons with governor residences identified in their exhibit that is appropriately named, “Pharaoh in Canaan.” Both cities have been identified in the Perizzite territory. It is probable that the Perizzites and Canaanites lived “on the periphery of the Egyptian Centers” and relied on these centers for trade, religion, and protection as they traversed and lived in the hinterland and hill country while assimilating or contributing to the urban growth. Similarly, Killebrew identifies various cities in Canaan as “garrison and administrative” cities under Egyptian control. During the Late Bronze Age, she identifies 14 cities specifically under Ramesses II that operated as “Egyptian expansion and control inside Canaan proper, resulting in

⁸⁷ Killebrew (2005), 32-33.

⁸⁸ Manuel Robbins, *Collapse of the Bronze Age: The Story of Greece, Troy, Israel, Egypt, and the Peoples of the Sea*, (Lincoln, NE: Authors Choice Press, 2001), 248.

⁸⁹ [imj.org.il, “Pharaoh in Canaan – The Untold Story”](https://museum.imj.org.il/en/exhibitions/2016/pharaoh-in-canaan/page/?id=egyptian-governors-and-canaanite-rulers), <https://museum.imj.org.il/en/exhibitions/2016/pharaoh-in-canaan/page/?id=egyptian-governors-and-canaanite-rulers> (Accessed December 2, 2021).

imperial rule” instead of colonial occupation.⁹⁰ Such a strategy of Egyptian rule enables independent city-states to function with limited central authority.

However, by the end of the Late Bronze Age, there is evidence that the city-state system began to decline with the introduction of the Philistines on the coast of the Mediterranean and the expansion of Israel into the central hill country of Ephraim and Manasseh, which “coincided with the general fall of civilizations across the ancient Near East and eastern Mediterranean at the end of the thirteenth century B.C.”⁹¹ During this same period, Egypt is weakened by war with the Hittites and the Philistines, the Mycenaean trade began to crumble economically that impacted Cyprus, Phoenicia, Southern Levant, and Egypt.⁹² “Although Egypt under Ramesses III was the only major power to resist successfully, the onslaught of the Sea Peoples (e.g. Philistines)...Egypt was never the same again afterward...diminished in influence and power, Egypt became a second-rate empire; a mere shadow of what it had once been.”⁹³ Levy also gives credit to the Israel expansion during this time frame; “In the late 13th – 12th cents. B.C. there occurred a major influx of new settlers into the hill country, especially from Jerusalem northward to Shechem. Hundreds of small villages were now established, not on the remains of destroyed or abandoned Late Bronze Age urban Canaanite sites, but *de novo* or anew.”⁹⁴ As identified in Chapter 2, the Perizzites migrate north during the end of the Late Bronze Age and the beginning of the Early Iron Age (see Figure 2.11 and 2.12, respectively) which is supported by the archaeological evidence during this same time frame. The Perizzites face “migration or confrontation” with the decline of Egyptian influence across the Southern Levant, the appearance

⁹⁰ Killebrew (2005), 81-83.

⁹¹ Paul H. Wright, *Understanding Biblical Archaeology: An Introductory Atlas* (Jerusalem: Carta Jerusalem, 2014), 20-21. Wright also credits Israel for the “emerging presence” central hill country of Canaan and Transjordan.

⁹² Manuel Robbins, *Collapse of the Bronze Age: The Story of Greece, Troy, Israel, Egypt, and the Peoples of the Sea* (Lincoln: Authors Choice Press, 2001), 240-260.

⁹³ Eric H. Cline, *1177 B.C. The Year Civilization Collapsed* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 9.

⁹⁴ Thomas E. Levy, *Historical Biblical Archaeology, and the Future: The New Pragmatism* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), 58-59.

of the Philistines on the coast of the Mediterranean, and the expansion of Israel into the central hill country of Ephraim and Manasseh. The archaeological evidence, as communicated by Robbins, Killebrew, and Stern, support the migration of the majority of Perizzites and indigenous people to the northern territory of Manasseh (Fig. 2:12), including the area of Mt. Carmel, Jezreel Valley, and Beth-shean.

As the expansion of Israel into the hill country of Ephraim and Manasseh is evaluated, Finkelstein & Na'aman identify the “water supply” as the most important factor in the possibility of Israeli assimilation and integration with the Perizzites and Canaanites instead of “confrontation or annihilation.” After all, the “water supply is the main problem facing new settlers in this hilly region...and the early stages of the Iron I settlement process. The Israelites were dependent on perennial water sources, which were basically under Canaanite control.”⁹⁵ Although, God had promised to provide the “land of milk and honey” to His people, perhaps Israel became more reliant on local covenants or agreements than on God’s promises. “When one examines possible explanations for the peaceful infiltration theory concerning the Israelite Settlement, it seems that water supply was the main factor for coexistence with the local groups.”⁹⁶ Finkelstein also explains how the region of Ephraim and Judea differed from Manasseh because of the limited Canaanite and Perizzite sites, as mentioned in *Neighbors: Friends and Foes*. Therefore, the necessity for such local agreements were not essential in southern Ephraim and Judea.

The distinction of a Perizzite migration, during the end of the Late Bronze Age, is supported by archaeological evidence that was gathered in a study on “pig consumption” and the assessment of bones in the Southern Levant from the Late Bronze Age through the end of the

⁹⁵ Israel Finkelstein & Nadav Na'aman, *From Nomadism to Monarchy* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1994), 58-60.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 60.

Iron Age.⁹⁷ This study was originally published to assess the correlation between Philistine sites and Israelite sites in the Southern Levant. Their main purpose was “to question the notion that pork consumption is a way to distinguish Israelites/Canaanites from Philistines.”⁹⁸ The study leads to the revelation that pig consumption is vastly different as the Judean kingdom and the Northern Kingdom is compared in the Late Iron Age. In general, there are significantly more pig bone fragments and evidence of domestic pig husbandry in the Northern Kingdom than in the Judean kingdom. This information corresponds well with hypothesis that the Perizzites migrated further north as the Philistines and Israel entered the southern hill country of Ephraim (Fig. 2.11 and Fig. 2.12). The report identifies a significant decrease in pig consumption in the southern hill country of Ephraim and Judah during the Late Bronze Age that corresponds to the vacated land of the Perizzites. At the same period, northern Manasseh witnesses a rise of pig consumption through the Late Bronze and Early Iron age. Specifically, the report identifies the cities of Megiddo, Tel Rehov, Beth-Shean, and Tel Yoqne’am that correspond to the Perizzite territory (Fig. 2.12). It is also noteworthy to recognize that pig consumption increases two to four-fold by the end of the Iron Age, although the time frame is outside the scope of this paper. The “Pig Husbandry” report is not all inclusive, but it does support the fact that southern cities, such as Shiloh and Ai, had negligible evidence of pig consumption through the Late Bronze and entire Iron Age, suggesting the land is occupied by Israel during this period. The research confirms that Philistine cities (generally on the coast) and Perizzite cities (in the central hill country of Manasseh) did raise pigs domestically during the Late Bronze Age and continued to increase in the Early Iron Age. The authors do go one step further and suggest that “the

⁹⁷ Lidar Sapir-Hen, “*Pig Husbandry in Iron Age Israel and Judah: New Insights Regarding the Origin of the Taboo*,” *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* (1953), Bd. 129, H. 1 (2013).

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/43664894>

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

significantly high percentage of pig bones found at Iron Age IIB...similar to other northern sites (i.e., Megiddo and Beth-Shean), may be used as an indicator for the site's affiliation with the [Northern] kingdom of Israel." Faust argues that the specific settlements of Philistia in the southern coast (e.g., Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, Gath, Timnah) had increased pork consumption in the Early Iron Age as the Philistines dominated the territory. However, he credits the "indigenous, Non-Israelite and Non-Philistine Canaanite population"⁹⁹ for the pork consumption in the Late Bronze Age through Early Iron Age, that is found in the northern Manasseh hill country, Mt. Carmel, Jezreel Valley, and Beth-Sehan Valley region (e.g., Joqnean, Megiddo, Dor, Beth-Shean, Tel Qiri, and Tel Rekhesh). Faust concludes that the Canaanite communities, such as that of the Perizzites, "have received relatively little attention over the years, compared with the Israelites and Philistines..." He does "think that the local population should indeed be treated as a third group, different from both Israelites and Philistines." Such research is helpful for a distinction between Perizzite or Canaanite cities and that of the Philistines and Israelites before the end of the Iron Age.

The hypothesis that the Northern Kingdom of Israel assimilated with the people of Canaan, and specifically the people of the territory of the Perizzites, is also supported by Bloch-Smith and Nakhai in their 1999 article in *Near Eastern Archaeology*, "New iron I sites were located within one and a half kilometers of large LB II/Iron I transitional sites. This clustering of sites along the road suggests economic relations among the traditional 'Canaanite' and the new founded Iron I 'Israelite' settlements."¹⁰⁰ The areas of Tirzah and Dothan, also Perizzite territory, are utilized as examples of sustained Late Bronze Age "Canaanite" communities that flourished

⁹⁹ Avraham Faust, "Pigs in Space (and Time): Pork consumption and Identity Negotiations in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages of Ancient Israel," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 81.4 (April 2018): 276-295.

¹⁰⁰ Elizabeth Bloch-Smith and Beth Alpert Nakai, "A Landscape Comes to Life," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 62:2 (1999): 62-127.

into the Early Iron Age. However, this continuation is accompanied with new Israeli development in the hill country of Ephraim and Judah. “The story of the Iron I is, in part, the biblical story of transition from the city-states of Canaan to the United Monarchy of Israel...and the emergence of distinct groups on the borders of what would become Israel.”¹⁰¹ Hess argues that the central hill country of Manasseh isn’t controlled by Israel until “a later stage of Iron Age I settlement process...as the Israelites achieved control over the water sources, either by military superiority or by a process of assimilation with the autochthonous population.”¹⁰² As confirmed in Joshua 17:11-12, “The children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities” and the villages of Beth-Shean, Ibleam, Dorr, Endor, Taanach, Megiddo, and Napheth. All these cities and villages are in the territory or the periphery of the Perizzites. It is probable that the Perizzites and Canaanites accommodated the settlement growth of Israel during the Early Iron Age through necessary social engagement, commerce, and economic development. “The water factor was a key role in Israel’s rise to prominence in the land, and, when the cistern was developed, it ‘made possible a new independence of the Israelites that soon became a political superiority.’”¹⁰³

Burial Practices

It has become evident, as identified in the previous section, that the sedentary Perizzites of the northern hill country of Manasseh are joined by the Perizzites and indigenous people of Canaan from the southern hill country of Ephraim. Various archaeological studies in burial habits will help to verify the migration of the Perizzite people in Megiddo, Samaria, and Shechem, while having cultural ties to neighboring Ugarit. Halpern evaluates an architectural

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 71.

¹⁰² Richard S. Hess, Gerald A. Klingbeil, Paul J. Ray, Jr., *Critical Issues in Early Israelite History* (Winona Lake, IL: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 177-179.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 178.

“subterranean room” in Megiddo and compares its origins and function to other Late Bronze Age cities with similar characteristics in architecture and practice: “The combination of storage jars, musical instruments, and an empty tomb, with the exception of a few open vessel fragments, suggests that the corbeled tomb was actually a cultic structure, and specifically a *marzēāh*, or point of assembly for a funerary society, or of an association identified with piety toward the dead.”¹⁰⁴ Such subterranean rooms are identified with “funerary societies that had multiple functions” but the “attestations of *marzēāh* come from Ugarit.”¹⁰⁵ Although our purpose is not to evaluate the *marzēāh* through multiple cultures and generations, it is evident that there have been many studies on the practice of such ceremonial rituals from the Bronze Age through the Iron Age. Phillip J. King explains the etymology,

The pertinent *marzēāh* texts from the ambient cultures of ancient Israel encompass the 14th century BCE to the 3rd century CE. Important Ugaritic texts from the 14th-13th centuries BCE are written in two languages, Akkadian and Ugaritic. One of the latter is the mythological text RS 24.258, describing a banquet hosted by E1 for other gods; overindulgence in food and drink ...¹⁰⁶

The earliest description and explanation of *marzēāh* comes from Ugarit, a city in Lebanon, in the Early to Middle Bronze Age. This Ugaritic text identifies the origins and cultic practices of the Phoenicians which shows a connection to the Perizzites and Canaanites of the Southern Levant. Although it is not inclusive, Halpern identifies the fact that Megiddo, Samaria, and Shechem, Perizzite territories, are impacted by the Ugarit tombs and “may represent holdovers of the family mortuary cult of the Middle Bronze into the period of public/royal worship in the Late

¹⁰⁴ Baruch Halpern, “*The Dawn of an Age: Megiddo in the Iron Age I.*” Academia.edu. <https://www.academia.edu/32419977> (accessed December 2, 2021). 151-163.

¹⁰⁵ The *marzēāh* has origin in Ugarit text and progresses through the Greek and Roman empire. Ibid.155.

¹⁰⁶ King also describes the transition and changes of the *marzēāh* from the Bronze Age through the Historic Age, post Iron Age. The “origin” and current LBA or EIA usage is our focus in this research paper. Philip J. King, “THE MARZĒAḤ: TEXTUAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE,” *Israel Exploration Society*, (1989): 98.

Bronze.”¹⁰⁷ These practices are carried through to their sedentary life in the northern hill country of Manasseh (Fig. 2.12) but they may have originated from farther north in the area of Ugarit, Lebanon (i.e. biblical Tyre, modern Ras Shamra). It is possible that the Perizzites are naturally retreating north from where their forefathers may have originated but will settle in the northern hill country of Manasseh until the Northern Kingdom of Israel maintains a foothold in the territory and opposition becomes too great. “The marzēāh was a pagan ritual that took the form of a social and religious association...it was prominently associated with the ancient Canaanite city of Ugarit, on the coast of Syria as we know from the cuneiform tablets found there.”¹⁰⁸ Philip J. King begins with the book of Amos to review the “eight-century B.C. prophet’s” call to repentance that is “associated with the capital city of Samaria and with the royal sanctuary at Bethel.”¹⁰⁹ It is not a coincidence that the Northern Kingdom continued to struggle with the gods and rituals that the Perizzites practiced in the area of Samaria, Shechem, and Bethel (Fig. 2.11). There are indicators of Ugarit burial and religious influence on the Perizzite culture in the hill country of Ephraim and Manasseh. Clearly, the ultimate sin is the adoption of these practices by the Israelite people and specifically the Northern Kingdom during the entire Iron Age. “For the prophets, Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in the eighth century B.C. symbolized, with the ‘ivory houses,’ not only self-indulgence, but also pagan immorality and flagrant injustice.”¹¹⁰ The burial practices of the Perizzites are duplicated in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Although Israel practiced the Perizzite burial rituals during the Early Iron Age, these practices were perfected by the Perizzites in the Late Bronze Age as experienced by immigrants or religious adapters from Ugarit, Tyre, and Sidon during the Middle Bronze Age.

¹⁰⁷ Halpern, *The Dawn of an Age: Megiddo in the Iron Age I*, 155.

¹⁰⁸ Philip J. King, “The Marzēāh Amos Denounces,” *Biblical Archaeology Review*, (July/august 1988): 34-44.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

Since earliest descriptions of this family mortuary cult are identified with the Phoenicians, such burial practices reflect the possibility that the Perizzites are descendants of Phoenicia with the support from Ugarit, Tyre, and Sidon archaeology and etymology.

Religion and Ceremonial Objects

Exodus 20:3 and Deuteronomy 5:7 are very clear: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” Unfortunately, the warnings of God through Moses, Joshua, the prophets, and judges seemed to go unheeded by Israel throughout the Bronze Age and Iron Age. Israel begins to integrate into the central hill country of Ephraim and progressively occupy to the northern hill country of Manasseh as the Late Bronze Age comes to an end. There is biblical and archaeological evidence that sheds light on the fact that all “the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite” (Exod. 34:11) were not driven out by Israel. God warned Israel to tear down the pagan altars and “cut down their Asherim” and do not make a covenant or intermarry with “the inhabitants of the land” (Exod. 34:12-16). It becomes evident throughout the book of Judges, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the prophets that Israel does not obey God’s ordinance but compromises their faithfulness. The specific influence of the Phoenician gods of Melqarth, Baal, and Ashtoreth are evident in the geographical area of the Perizzites. Moscati briefly explains the origin and influence of Phoenician religion on cultural functions:

In Tyre, alongside Melqarth there was a widespread worship of Astarte (i.e., Ashtoreth, Asherim), to whom King Hiram dedicated a temple...in the treaty of Escarhaddon, she is the deity called upon to punish whoever shall dare to violate the clauses of the agreement, by ‘breaking his bow in battle.’ This goddess, who was very well-known among the Semitic peoples of Syria-Palestine...whereas in

the Bible she is connected to fertility and love, a connection which explains why she is frequently identified with Aphrodite.¹¹¹

The gods of the Phoenician people impact their culture and way of life. “The Phoenician sovereigns left no historical or memorial epigraphs, and what information we have mostly refers to religious activities. Many kings mention having built sanctuaries to the gods and call themselves priests, sometimes even placing their attribute before their royal titles.”¹¹² Halpern also concludes that the Phoenician kings had limited rule, perhaps deferring to Egypt during the Bronze Age, and “their authority in the civic sphere was based primarily on their sacred and priestly function” that is witnessed in multiple Phoenician towns; “Ethbaal, who reigned in Tyre in the 9th century B.C., was described by Josephus as a ‘priest of Astarte’.”¹¹³ Since it is probable that the Perizzites lived in central hill country of Ephraim and Manasseh, Mt. Carmel, and Mt. Gilboa during the Late Bronze Age (Fig. 2.11), it is necessary to find similar pottery and archeological research that ties the Perizzite region with the Phoenicians to the north. Such evidence can be found in archeological discoveries of ivories and metal bowls in both regions. Although Moscati’s research mainly identifies the influence of Egyptian expansion to the north and coastal area of Canaan, it does verify common craftsmanship between Ugarit, Byblos, Lachish, and Megiddo in the form of ivories and metal bowls.¹¹⁴

One of the characteristics of Canaanite and Perizzite worship in this area include the worship in “high places” that is identified in verses such as Lev. 26:30 and Num. 33:52. Israel is warned against such worship as they receive their inheritance and occupy the land. The specific

¹¹¹ Melqarth is considered the son of Baal and is worshipped throughout Phoenicia and Southern Levant. King Hiram is the Phoenician king during the time of King Solomon and reigned 969–936 B.C. Sabatino Moscati, *The Phoenicians* (New York, NY: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1997), 128-129.

¹¹² Halpern, *The Dawn of an Age: Megiddo in the Iron Age I*, 153.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 153.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 584. Moscati identifies an increasing craftsmanship influence from the Egyptian dominance along the “coastal cities” but a more Mesopotamia influence on “the inland cities of Syria-Palestine”.

area of the Perizzites is marked by “high places” and the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth. Such biblical truths are also revealed in archaeological evidence. As a matter of fact, the “largest (bronze) bull figurine was found in Israel,” which was in fact the largest ever found “in the entire Levant” that is located between Dothan and west of Mt. Gilboa.¹¹⁵ The bronze bull figurine and the location of the archaeological discovery can be viewed at Appendix IV. This is the same territory as identified for the Perizzites during the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age (Fig. 2.11 and Fig. 2.12, respectively). It is probable that the Perizzites worshipped Baal and Ashtoreth in the “high places” that was influenced by the northern neighbors from Ugarit, Tyre, and Sidon. Mazar suggests in the *Biblical Archaeology Review* (Vol. IX NO.5, 1983) that this “cult site” is one that was utilized by Israel during the time of Judges and possibly gives insight to the unfaithfulness of the Northern Kingdom. However, the time frame would be in question as to the influence of Israel’s occupation in “the summit of a hill in northern Samaria, above the ancient road connecting the biblical towns of Dothan and Tirzah.”¹¹⁶ Regardless of the debatable time frame, it is evident that the Baal worship or “cult site” was exercised by the Canaanites and Perizzites during the Bronze Age. There was no direct residential settlement of this “high place,” and it was meant for worship and not occupancy. Mazar describes the site “to have been an open-air cult center comprising a massive stone enclosure wall with a large rectangular stone slab set on a special pavement” which may function as “a kind of altar which stood in front of the pavement of flat stones.”¹¹⁷ This is the archaeological description of the “high place.” There is certainly no debate regarding the Northern Kingdom of Israel’s disobedience and apostasy from the time of King Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:25-33) through the influence of Jezebel at the time of

¹¹⁵ Amihai Mazar, “Bronze Bull Found in Israelite ‘High Place’ From the Time of the Judges,” *Biblical Archaeology Review*,” (September/October 1983): 34-40.

¹¹⁶ This location of where the bronze bull was found on a “high place” that did not have evidence of any settlement. The conclusion is that it was only designed for “cult worship.” *Ibid.*, 34.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 36.

King Ahab; "... as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, he took for his wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians and went and served Baal and worshiped him" (1 Kings 16:31). The influence of the Perizzites on religion and worship impacts Israel's disobedience for many generations, through the entire Iron Age, including the united monarchy and divided kingdom of Israel. "It is not difficult to imagine many of the Israelites mingling with the Canaanite population and adopting both their material culture and their religious practices only a short time after the Conquest."¹¹⁸

One of King Jeroboam's first functions as the king of the Northern Kingdom was to establish the sacrifice of calves in Bethel and install priests in the "high places." Secondly, Jeroboam also instituted annual festivals and functions as Israel's high priest (1 Kings 12:32-33). Jeroboam established his residence or palace at Shechem and created places of worship at Bethel and Dan. Although the city of Dan is north of the established Perizzite territory, it is certainly in the general area of Phoenicia (i.e., Sidon, Tyre). This timeframe would support Mazar's claim that Israel may have been occupying this area and performing sacrifice and apostasy on the "high places" in the area that the Perizzites once occupied. The potential of integrating or assimilating with the Perizzites should not be dismissed as well. The religious influence of the Perizzites is evident in the biblical narrative as well as archeological discoveries. The book of Judges begins with Othniel because "the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves" (Judg. 3:7).¹¹⁹ It is evident that the "Significant Six" continued to have cultural and religious influence on Israel because "the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters

¹¹⁸ John J. Bimson, *Redating the Exodus and Conquest* (Sheffield: The University of Sheffield, 1978), 235.

¹¹⁹ Most Bible translations utilize the Hebrew variant "āšērâ" or "Ashera", as identified in the Strong's (H842).

to their sons, and served their gods” (Judg. 3:5). Specifically, given the geography and the archaeological evidence, it is probable that the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth is directly related to the influence of the Perizzites on the emerging and growing nation of Israel. Mazar reflects on archaeological religious fragments and pottery that supports the evidence of Perizzite occupation in the northern Manasseh hill country; a bronze “fragment of a pottery object, which originally was part of a square incense burner or similar cult object like those at Taanach, Megiddo and Beth-Shean, ...might possibly have been a model of a cult-shrine such as was found at Tirzah.”¹²⁰ Such examples support the Late Bronze Age map of Figure 2.11 and, with the exception of Tirzah, supports the Early Iron Age map of the Perizzites in Figure 2.12 as well. The addition of Tirzah may validate extending the southeast border of the Early Iron Age map of the Perizzites by approximately 14 miles. However, additional evidence would be necessary to validate the extension of the geography of the Perizzites into the territory of Tirzah.

Geographic Location and Ancestry

As revealed earlier, biblical narrative does directly identify the origin and genealogy of the “Significant Six” Canaanite tribes with the exception of the Perizzites. There is no direct biblical identification to the origin and genealogy for the descendants of the Perizzites. Therefore, identification and comparing various genomic studies would be helpful to determine if there are shared characteristics and origin in the region in which the Perizzites did reside. These comparisons will primarily be focused on the genomic studies that have recently become available for analysis. Various archaeology research must be compared as well in order to have a complete picture of the people of the Southern Levant. Finkelstein, by example, describes the importance of continual research and discoveries because “Only archaeology can inform us

¹²⁰ The ancient Tirzah site is northeast of Shechem and in the LBA territory of the Perizzites. Mazar, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, 37.

about the material culture of the Iron I sites in the highlands, about the dispersal of their settlements, about their economy, and about their relationships with their neighbors.”¹²¹ In order to determine the validity of Perizzite and Canaanite villages in the northern hill region of Sameria (Fig. 2.12), we must review archaeological evidence that is available during the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age. This archaeological evidence will include genome sequence comparisons of Canaanite burial remains and modern-day people in the region of ancient Canaan.

To help better define relevant people groups in the genomic study, we will specify their locality. “As early as the 3rd millennium B.C., the term ‘Canaanites’ was used for the people and ‘Canaan’ for the region, but this denotes the whole Syro-Palestinian area. The term is also used specifically for the Phoenicians, especially in the Old Testament...”¹²² Moscati explains that the use of the term *Sidonians* “is used to denote the Phoenicians as a whole, but it seems obvious that this is because of the suzerainty at some time, in some place of the city from which the name derives, Sidon. In other words, it is an extended meaning, a linguistic phenomenon that once again emphasizes the lack of a unitary awareness among the Phoenicians.”¹²³ The territory of the Canaanites is quite broad and the references to the Canaanites as a specific people type is quite broad as well. The term “Phoenician” and “Sidonian” become synonymous with this “distinctive culture that emerged as a Semitic-speaking people known as the Canaanites. The Canaanites inhabited an area bounded by Anatolia to the north, Mesopotamia to the east, and Egypt to the south, with access to Cyprus and the Aegean through the Mediterranean. Thus, the Canaanites were at the center of emerging Bronze Age civilizations and became politically and culturally

¹²¹ Israel Finkelstein & Amihai Mazar, *The Quest for the Historical Israel* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 16.

¹²² Sabatino Moscati, *The Phoenicians* (New York, NY: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1997), 18.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 18.

influential.”¹²⁴ The broad Canaanite definition gives way to a smaller Phoenician geographic definition that is more focused on modern-day Lebanon during the Iron Age. “Phoenician sites of the eleventh century B.C.E. onwards have been excavated farther south along the Carmel coast (at Dor) and the valley of Acre.”¹²⁵ Finkelstein and Mazar support the “biblical account in Judg. 1:27-29” with archeological evidence that “Canaanite life has also been identified at Beth-shean, Tel Rehov, Dor, and additional sites in the region.”¹²⁶ These cities are closely associated with Phoenician sites that originate from modern day Lebanon. The valley of Acre is northeast of Mt. Carmel and the city of Dor that is on the coast.

In 2017, a genome sequence study was published that showed that “present-day Lebanese derive most of their ancestry from a Canaanite-related population, which therefore implies substantial genetic continuity in the Levant since at least the Bronze Age.”¹²⁷ This study, that was published in *The American journal of Human Genetics*, goes on to explain that “the Lebanese can be best modeled as Sidon_BA 93% \pm 1.6% and a Steppe Bronze Age population 7% \pm 1.6% (Appendix V). The “Sidon_BA” abbreviation is the marker in the study that represents genomic data from the Canaanite samplings in Sidon during the Bronze Age. The “Steppe Bronze Age” is the marker that represents genome data from Eurasian Steppe during the Bronze Age. The study explains that current Sidon and Tyre populations would have had an influx of immigrants from Assyria, Persia, and Macedonia during the Iron Age, “all of whom could have carried the Steppe-like ancestry observed here in the Levant after the Bronze Age.”¹²⁸ This genome evidence certainly supports the Assyrian occupation of the land of Israel, beginning

¹²⁴ Marc Haber, et.al., “Continuity and Admixture in the Last Five Millennia of Levantine History from Ancient Canaanite and Present-Day Lebanese Genome Sequences,” *The American Journal of Human Genetics* (August 2017): 274-282.

¹²⁵ Finkelstein & Mazar, *The Quest for the Historical Israel*, 96.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹²⁷ Marc Haber, et.al., *The American Journal of Human Genetics*, 274.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 279.

with the reign of Pekah the son of Remaliah (2 Kings 15:27-29, 17:6, 23, 18:11, 1 Chron. 5:6, 5:26, Ezek. 39:23) and during “the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it” (Daniel 1:1). Except for some outliers, the genome studies of the Canaanite Bronze Age samplings did not include the Eurasian Steppe marker. This marker doesn’t become evident until the later Iron Age periods in the Southern Levant.

While it is helpful to know that most modern-day Lebanese people share 93% of Bronze Age Canaanite DNA, the one conclusive determinant is that the Perizzite people were not distinguishable enough from other Canaanite genome comparisons, assuming a judicious variety of samplings were collected that would include the ancient Perizzites. In 2020, a separate article was published by *CellPress* that focused on the genome analysis of the Southern Levant during the Bronze Age that assessed a wider range of nine separate sites, from Sidon to Ashkelon. From North to South, these sites include Sidon, Abel-Beth Maacah, Hazor, Shadud, Megiddo, Baq’ah, ‘Ain Ghazal, Yehud, and Ashkelon. The main locations that we are concerned about during this study is Sidon, Abel-Beth Maacah, Shadud, and Megiddo, that are related to the territory of the Perizzites. In summary, the

Genome-wide data from Bronze Age individuals across nine sites in the Southern Levant show strong genetic resemblance, including a component from populations related to Chalcolithic Zagros and Early Bronze Age Caucasus introduced by gene flow lasting at least until the late Bronze Age and affecting modern Levantine population architecture.¹²⁹

The purpose of this study was to answer, three questions: “how genetically homogeneous were these people, what were their plausible origins with respect to earlier peoples, and how much change in ancestry has there been in the region since the Bronze age?” The first two

¹²⁹ Agranat-Tamir, L., Waldman, S., Martin, M. A., Finkelstein, I., Carmel, L., & Reich, D., “The Genomic History of the Bronze Age Southern Levant.” *CellPress*, (May 2020): 1146.

questions will best contribute toward better understanding the origin and territory of the Perizzites. “Our analyses revealed that, with the exception of Sidon...they are homogeneous in the sense of being closer to each other than to other contemporary and neighboring populations. This suggests that the archaeological and historical category of Canaanites correlates with shared ancestry.”¹³⁰ Although Sidon showed “resemblance” to the Southern Levant states, it is speculated that “Sidon was a major port city and was connected in trading relations with eastern Mediterranean basin, which could have led to significant genetic inflow, making its population more heterogeneous than that of inland cities. This might also be the reason that the site that most resembles Sidon is Ashkelon, which is another coastal site.”¹³¹ The homogeneous connection of these sites deviates with the influx of other people groups that are directly related to Coastal trade that introduced Caucasus ancestry, as compared to the continual homogeneity populous of the inland cities with heavy Chalcolithic Zagros emphasis. The *CellPress* study compares 20 individuals from these nine locations from the Early Bronze Age to the Iron Age. Appendix VI reveals the relative homogeneity of the people groups across thousands of years in the Southern Levant. The plotting of these objects is relative to other people groups such as Iran, Armenia, Israel, and Eurasian individuals as revealed in the appendix chart. “All Bronze and Iron Age Levant individuals (blue and green shapes) form a tight cluster, except for three outliers from Megiddo, and previously identified outliers from Ashkelon population known as Iron Age I (IA1) ...suggesting that all individuals have similar ancestry.”¹³² Although, like the 2017 study, the *CellPress* report confirms the ancestry and similar origin of the Canaanite and Perizzite people in the Southern Levant, it does not distinguish them from each other. Except for the gradual influx of Caucasus in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age in a few coastal Southern

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1154.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 1154.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 1148.

Levant cities, the ancestry marks remain similar and directly related. The hypothesis that the Perizzite people came from the North, such as Sidon and Tyre, and settled in the hill country of Manasseh and Ephraim during the Bronze Age is supported in this genome study. The CellPress report also compares the “fraction of Iran Chalcolithic” similarities in six locations in order to see deviation over time. This chart is published as Appendix VII. Our main concern is the relation between Megiddo and Hazor as well as Megiddo and Abel Beth Maacah. Notice that this chart progresses from around 2400 B.C. (i.e., Early Bronze Age) and 800 B.C. (i.e., Iron Age) and identifies Megiddo plots in Orange, Hazor in Lime Green, and Abel Beth Maacah in Pink. The Iran Chalcolithic similarities begin to differ from point [A] to [B] but originated more closely in the Early Bronze Age. The deviation is more evident by the end of the Late Bronze Age and their marginal difference increases over time. Such similarities and gradual deviation would suggest close origins of Megiddo and Hazor. Unfortunately, only Iron Age data is available for [C] Abel Beth Maacah, so Bronze Age data cannot be compared. However, it is evident that Abel Beth Maacah has even a closer Iran Chalcolithic similarity to Megiddo than most other locations. The homogeneous ancestry has already been determined in these groups, but the additional similarity of Iran Chalcolithic fraction helps to determine that they had similar origins, at least from Early or Middle Bronze Age. Unfortunately, Tyre and Sidon are not included in this specific study. Although, it is important to note that Abel Beth Maacah is on the border of the Lebanon and Hazor is in northern Israel, north of the Sea of Galilee. Such locations help to support the determination that the Perizzites migrated from the north, from Lebanon, while carrying similar genome qualities and culture into the Southern Levant during the Bronze Age.

The transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age was accompanied by the “Sea Peoples” (i.e. Philistines) entrance into the land of Canaan “which drove the great neighboring powers (Egypt and Mesopotamia) beyond the boundaries of the area, and witnessed the establishment in the hinterland of new peoples (the Hebrews and Aramaeans), so that the cities on the coasts were ‘negatively’ differentiated.”¹³³ Moscati suggests that the coastal and heartland occupation of the land by the “Sea Peoples,” Hebrews, and Aramaeans, made the colonization of the Mediterranean more viable, if not necessary. Although the purpose of this paper is not to evaluate the colonization of the Mediterranean during the Late Bronze Age, it is helpful to recognize the solidification of the Phoenicians (i.e., Sidonians) in the northern and coastal area of Canaan. The Arameans and the Hebrews are also identified as “late comers” to the northern occupation of Canaan compared to the Phoenicians, Canaanites, and Perizzites.

¹³³ Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 18.

Chapter 4: Biblical Genealogy and Cultural Determinations

“In Phoenician sources, Ashtart is the patron goddess of both Tyre and Sidon and consort to Baal in each city.”¹³⁴ Eerdmans also explains that the Phoenicians (i.e. Sidonians) “exported the worship of Ashtart throughout the Mediterranean” and also points to the influence that Egypt had on the development of Ashtart (i.e., Ashtoreth) and Baal that “is reflected in texts from Egypt, where the worship of the Semitic goddess was widespread” from the 13th and 12th century (i.e. Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, respectively). This style of worship is consistent with the territory of the Perizzites and the territory of Phoenicia as well. Archaeological research reveals that “The bronze bull (Appendix IV) ...represents a continuation of the Canaanite tradition of bronze bull figurines, examples of which have been found at Hazor and Ugarit.”¹³⁵ The identified territory of the Perizzites during the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age is supported by the archaeological findings and makes the connection with the Phoenician territory of Tyre, Sidon, Hazor, and Ugarit. Ahlström supports the argument that the “bull figurine” is not an Israelite worship object during the Late Bronze Age but may have later occupied the territory during the Iron Age, as they adapted to the existing Canaanite and Perizzite culture and influence.¹³⁶ “The (ceramic) sherds indicate that the site was in use at the beginning of the Iron Age” that could indicate Perizzite or Israelite religious practices.¹³⁷ However, Ahlström goes one step further and builds the argument that the “bull figurine can be seen as an indication that a group of northerners arrived in the hills of Manasseh” during the Bronze Age.¹³⁸ The journal article makes the argument that the bull figurine is too early for Israel and claims that the “Zebu

¹³⁴ David Noel Freedman, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company:2000), 114-115.

¹³⁵ Ephraim Stern. *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*. (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society & Carta, 1993), 266-267.

¹³⁶ Gösta W. Ahlström, “The Bull Figurine from Dhahrat et-Tawileh,” *The Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research (BASOR)* No. 280 (Nov. 1990): 77-82.

¹³⁷ Stern, 266.

¹³⁸ Ahlström, 77.

bull” statue and rituals were consistent with the likes of Ugarit and Hazor and not consistent with other areas in Ephraim and Judah. “Other Zebu bull figurines have been found in Lebanon, Syria, and Cyprus...and one has surfaced, at Hazor, in the Late Bronze temple.”¹³⁹

The territory of Hazor is north of the Sea of Galilee and near the border of Lebanon.

The archaeological evidence shows that the Bronze “Bull” Figurine and the worship of Ashtoreth started in the northern region (Tyre & Sidon) which includes the southern territory of existing Lebanon and the northern borders of existing Israel.

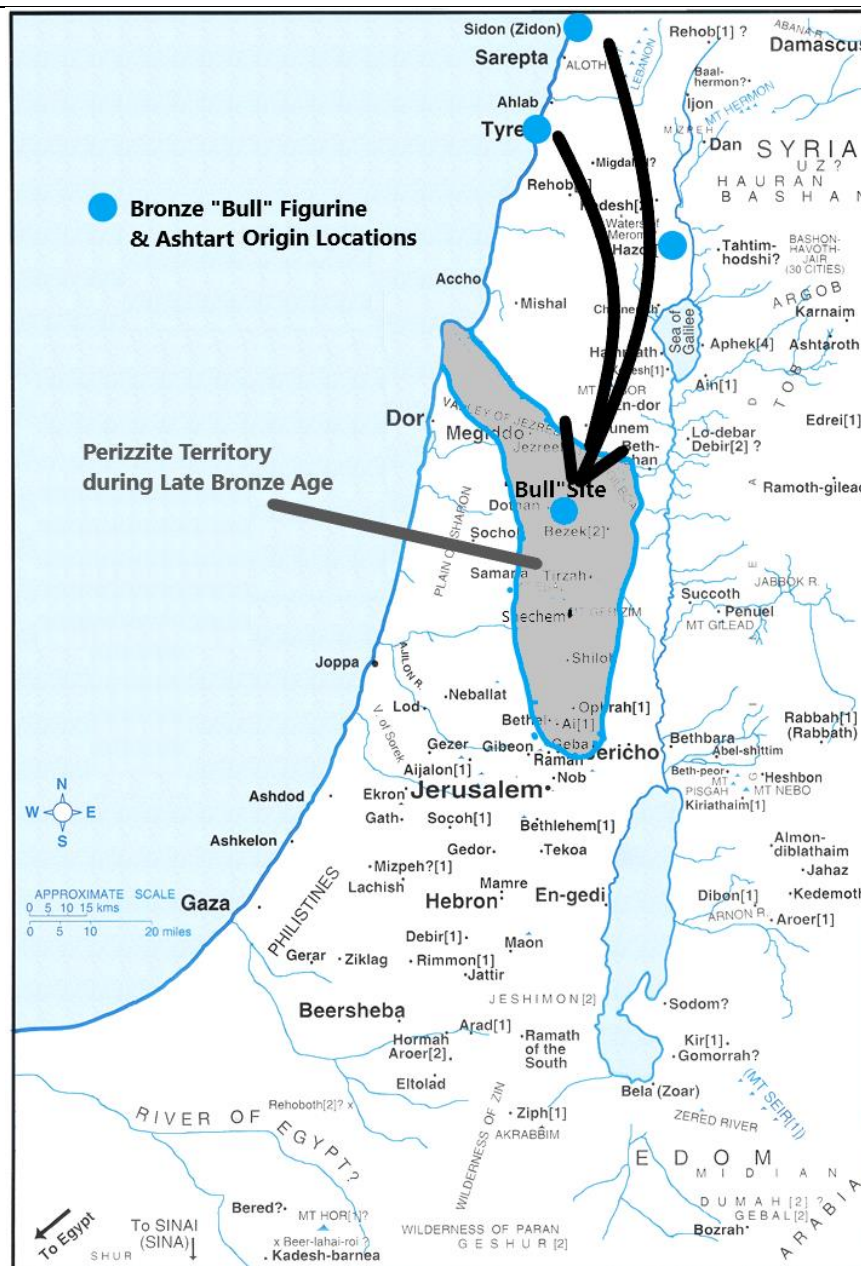


Figure 4.1, Perizzites migrate from the north and settle in the central hill country during the Bronze Age.

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It has become evident that the Perizzites lived in the hill country of Ephraim and

Manasseh throughout the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. They aggressively migrated

¹³⁹ Ahlström, 81.

north into the Jezreel Valley, Mt. Carmel, and the Megiddo area during the Early Iron Age because of the expansion of Israel into the hill country of Ephraim and the Philistine insurgence along the coast of the Mediterranean. Israel eventually compromises their political and military strategy of relying on God to deliver the land and adopt an assimilation policy with the indigenous people of Canaan instead. The archaeological evidence supports the biblical proclamation that, “the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods” (Judges 3:5-6). The impact of this decision or practice can be witnessed for hundreds, if not thousands, of years.

“The Bible frequently provides information on the worship of Tyrian or Sidonian deities, against which the prophets and priests of Yahweh cast their invectives.”¹⁴⁰ The Perizzite religious practices are tied very closely with the Phoenician religious practices. It is probable that the origin of such practices came from Ugarit, Sidon, and Tyre. “In northern Israel, where the older Canaanite legacy was stronger, we find also private names with Canaanite theophoric endings like Baal. Indeed, the population of the Northern Kingdom included many indigenous Canaanites, who inhabited the main northern valley. In addition, Israel was influenced by nearby Phoenicia.”¹⁴¹ Perhaps, more specifically, the Phoenicia influence is evident in the Perizzite culture and religious practices that are adopted by Israel. It is common for the cities of Canaan to adopt or create their own deities. By example, “the Phoenician pantheon itself was amorphous, so each city had its own primary deity...Melqart was the primary god of Tyre, El/Baal was the preeminent deity in Sidon, and the goddess Baalat...stood supreme in Byblos.” The territory of

¹⁴⁰ Sabatino Moscati, *The Phoenicians* (New York, NY: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1997), 120.

¹⁴¹ Israel Finkelstein & Amihai Mazar, *The Quest for the Historical Israel* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 175.

the Perizzites have revealed Baal and Ashtoreth cult practices that include the funerary practices of *marzēāh* that are common in Ugarit, Sidon, and Tyre. In this same area, the Northern Kingdom of Israel absorbs and continues the religious practices of the Perizzites. It is not a coincidence that the very first divine intervention in the Book of Judges has to do with the fact that “the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God, and served Baalim (i.e., Baal) and the groves (i.e., Ashtoreth).” The anger of the LORD is against Israel, and they are “sold” to Chushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia (Judges 3:8) because of their disobedience and their commitment to worship Phoenician and Perizzite deities. The Baal and Ashtoreth worship leads to an eight-year oppression of the neighbors to the Northeast.

Following numerous occurrences of the “people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD gave them” over to a neighboring enemy, the story of Gideon shows the ramifications and hallmarks of the Perizzites as well. As Gideon was hiding “under the terebinth at Ophrah,” he was threshing the wheat to evade the Midianites that would take his harvest. Why is this important? The area of Ophrah is northeast of Bethel and in the established area of the Perizzites during the Late Bronze Age. Gideon is called by God to “Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove (i.e., Ashtoreth) that is by it: And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove (Ashtoreth) which thou shalt cut down” (Judg. 6:25-26). Following this act of desecrating the “high places” of worship of Baal and Ashtoreth, the Midianites and Amalekites came across the Jordan and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel (Judg. 6:33). Gideon travels through Ephraim and Manasseh while recruiting warriors to meet their enemy. This biblical record shows that Israel does not have complete control of the Jezreel

Valley and has not completely controlled the large cities of Beth-Shean and Megiddo at this time. Such biblical evidence shows support for the migration of the Perizzites into this same territory during the Early Iron Age. Of course, “And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim (Baal), and made Baal-Berith their god.” As mentioned by Charles River, many local Canaanite sites, including early Israelite sites, would worship Baal and attach their city or function they desire of their deity. By example, Baal-Berith, means “Lord or Master of the Covenant” and was the god the Israelites worshiped in Shechem after Gideon’s death (Judg. 8:33).¹⁴²

Hallmarks of Perizzite Worship

It is possible that Shechem is occupied by the Perizzites after Simeon and Levi “came upon the city boldly and slew all the males. And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword and took Dinah out of Shechem's house and went out” (Gen. 34:25-26). Since Simeon and Levi “killed all the males,” including Hamor and his son Shechem, there would be an opportunity to occupy a geographically strategic town that later plays a significant role in the history of Israel and Samaria. Therefore, by the time of Gideon, perhaps the Early Iron Age, Shechem was continually occupied by various people groups. There was continual occupation of Shechem from 1900 B.C. through 475 B.C. with abandonment only from 1540-1450 B.C. and 1125-975 B.C.¹⁴³ The latter period matches well with the story of Gideon, Abimelech, and the people of Shechem, and the former period fits well with the timing of Genesis 34-35, the “defiling of Dinah,” and the revenge of her brothers. It is unlikely that Shechem would remain

¹⁴² The dictionary also suggests the origin is from Ugarit with proof from the Ugarit text. David Noel Freedman, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company:2000), 1030.

¹⁴³ “Bethel, Khirbet Marjama, Shiloh, Sheikh Abu Zarad, and Khirbet el-Urma.” Ephraim Stern, *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society & Carta, 1993), 1347.

occupied by the Hivites because all the males were killed. The women and children would become slaves to Israel, through Simeon and Levi, or other surrounding people groups. It is probable that the Perizzites, a neighboring indigenous people group throughout the Late Bronze Age, would take over the city that Jacob was unwilling to occupy. After all, Jacob retreats south to Bethel as he declares to Simeon and Levi, “Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house” (Gen. 34:30).

In the account of Gideon in Judges 9, it becomes evident that Abimelech is the son of Gideon through a “female servant” that is from Shechem (Judg. 9:18). It is likely that the “female servant” is a Perizzite and not a Hivite because nearly 400 years (nine generations) has passed since Simeon and Levi slaughtered the Hivite males of Shechem. Abimelech “went to Shechem unto his mother's brethren and communed with them” and eventually appeals to “the men of Shechem” to support his cause of becoming the king of Shechem and (by default) the judge of Israel (Judg. 9:1, 2, 22). His “appeal” is completely based upon their “kinship” through his mother and the men of Shechem. Abimelech returns to his father’s city of Orah (Perizzite territory of Bethel) and kills his seventy brothers, sons of “Jerubbaal” (i.e., Gideon). The leaders of Shechem then make Abimelech king “by the oak of the pillar at Shechem,” referring to the perpetual Baal worship and covenant (i.e., Baal-berith). The rebels of Abimelech are funded by “seventy pieces of silver out of the house of Baal-berith” (Judg. 9:4) that provides victory over “Jerubbal rule” (i.e., Gideon) for the people of Shechem and the elevation of Abimelech as king.

Jotham eventually comes against Abimelech and the leaders of Shechem and gives a parable about “trees going out to anoint a king” (Judg.9:7-21). Ultimately, the climax of the

parable is in verse 15, "...let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon." Why Lebanon? Is it simply because of the strength and reputation of the cedars of Lebanon or is there a direct correlation to Phoenician worship that was brought by the Perizzites in Shechem? It should be noted that the temple of Baal-berith funds the conspiracy and the Shechem leaders that are considered "cedars of Lebanon" in this parable. Certainly, a direct correlation of the religious cult and its Lebanese origin. Perhaps it is not just a coincidence or simply a common metaphor within an uncommon Old Testament parable? The abandonment and reoccupation of Shechem, during the Late Bronze Age, would indicate that the Perizzites established their presence with Baal and Ashtoreth worship. "What modern scholars know of Phoenician religion seems to suggest that trade and religion were closely intertwined, as timber expeditions in the mountains of Lebanon also doubled as pilgrimages to Baalat, the goddess of Byblos,"¹⁴⁴ which is a form of Ashtoreth in Tyre and Sidon. "The popular belief of the ancient Near East was that particular deities owned particular sections of land. When people moved from one area to another, they were expected to worship the gods of their new area. They had to respect the local deity in order to be blessed by that deity."¹⁴⁵ This is the same worship that the Israelite nation and people of Shechem made their own.

Ultimately, "Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and he took the city, and slew the people that was therein, and beat down the city, and sowed it with salt" (Judg. 9:45). He then pursues a neighboring city named Thebez, which is also in the territory of the Perizzites (Judg. 9:50). Again, the Bible does not identify if these people are "Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, or Jebusites" (Judg. 3:5). However, given prior evidence, it is probable that

¹⁴⁴ C. River, *The Phoenicians: The History and Culture of One of the Ancient World's Most Influential Civilizations*. (Monee, IL: Charles River Editors, 2021), Chapter 3: Phoenician Religion.

¹⁴⁵ N. Thomas, *The Chronological Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 274.

they are Perizzites. Abimelech makes a quick example of the people of Thebez by burning their “strong tower” where they have all gathered (Judg. 9:51-52). Ultimately, “God returns the evil of Abimelech” by allowing “a certain woman (to) cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech's head, and all to break his skull.” Abimelech tries to escape the shame of being killed by a woman by having his amor-bearer kill him with his sword (Judg. 9:54). Although the Bible does not identify the people group of Thebez, the “certain woman” may have been a Perizzite, being used by God to avenge the death of Gideon’s sons by the hands of Abimelech. It is difficult to identify the time period of the Judges, but it is certainly before the United Kingdom of Israel during the time of King David (1035-970 B.C.). Therefore, the Late Bronze or Early Iron Age is probable.

Returning to Judg. 9:15, “let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon,” commentators are persistent regarding the “cedars of Lebanon” as referring to “the leaders of Shechem” and, of course, the “bramble” referring to Abimelech. John Gill, by example, declares that if the people of Shechem (i.e., “trees”),

...did not heartily submit to his government, and put confidence in him, and prove faithful to him, they should smart for it, and feel his wrath and vengeance, even the greatest men among them, comparable to the cedars of Lebanon; for thorns and brambles catching fire, as they easily do, or fire being put to them, as weak as they are, and placed under the tallest and strongest cedars, will soon fetch them down to the ground; and the words of the bramble, or Abimelech, proved true to the Shechemites, he is made to speak in this parable.¹⁴⁶

Respectfully, Gill leads the assessment that “cedars of Lebanon” are meant to be a metaphor for the leaders of Shechem because, “The greatest men among them...(are) comparable to the cedars of Lebanon.” However, it reasonable to presume that most commentaries were not in the process of examining forensic, biblical, and bibliographical evidence on the origin and history of the

¹⁴⁶ StudyLight.org, “Bible Commentaries: Gill's Exposition of the Whole Bible: Judges 9,” <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/geb/judges-9.html> (accessed January 1, 2022).

Perizzites. Therefore, we must ask if the “cedars of Lebanon” are simply a metaphor for leaders or if the phrase is specifically suggesting that these same leaders are of Lebanese (i.e., Phoenician) origin as well. The “cedars” is not mentioned earlier in the parable but is simply used at the end as the “curse” or prophesy that is communicated directly to these specific leaders of Shechem. The author of Judges intentionally calls the leaders of Shechem “ba’al” in 14 verses in Chapter 9 (9:2, 3, 6, 7, 18, 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 39, 46, 47, 51). Many popular Bible translations use the English word “leader” or “men” for the “ba’al” Hebrew word. Interestingly, the author does not use the common Hebrew word “bēn,” as in “sons of Jerubbaal,” or “îš,” as in “seventy men” to identify the people of Shechem. He chooses to overemphasize the word “ba’al” as compared to other uses of the word in the Old Testament. To increase the irony or intrigue, “Jerubbaal” is the name that is given to Gideon after he breaks down the altar of Baal and cuts down the Ashtoreth (Judges 6:28-30). Jerubbal means “let Baal contend against him” (Judg. 9:32). Yet, Abimelech is the “slave son,” and probable Perizzite, of Jerubbal and a cohort of Baal and the leaders (“ba’al”) of Shechem. Abimelech, the Perizzite, eventually devours “his own kin” that are in Shechem because of their rebellion against him. The Perizzite leaders of Shechem rely on their Phoenician god of Lebanon but “to no avail.” The “cedars of Lebanon” are devoured by fire.

All fourteen occurrences of the word “ba’al” refer to the leaders of Shechem. The only exception is in reference to neighboring people of Thebez (9:51) because they too are considered wicked. The judgement of the two “ba’al” towns are identical and the reign and life of Abimelech comes to an end. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Shechem and Thebez are

the same people group.¹⁴⁷ Given 1) the established origin of Baal worship in the Lebanese territories of Ugarit, Tyre, and Sidon, 2) the intentional use of “ba’al” for the people of Shechem and Thebez, and 3) the established territory of the Perizzites that worships Baal and Ashtoreth, it is reasonable to conclude that the “cedars of Lebanon” may mean more than simply “leaders of Shechem” but also identify the deep opposition to God’s righteousness and deep commitment to depravity and sin. At minimum, it seems to be a play on words that relates to the etymology of the word Baal and its origin from Lebanon.¹⁴⁸ These “cedars of Lebanon” seem to identify the leaders of Shechem and Thebez that are committed to the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth, as is evident beginning with Gideon’s opposition (Judg. 6:32) and supported in Jotham’s parable and prophecy (Judg. 9:15). The people of Shechem, and potential Perizzites, were not like the people of Israel, “the people that applies to Samuel for a king, is a very different one from these criminal Shechemites, who attempt to get a king in opposition to God. These latter, for this reason, can only use a king who has nothing to lose, and is worthy of them: whose fit symbol is the thorn-bush.”¹⁴⁹

But, since Israel did not follow God as king, “the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim [i.e., Baal], and Ashtaroth [i.e., Ashtoreth], and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the LORD, and served not him” (Judg. 10:1). Matthew Henry may have said it best: “It looks as if the chief trade of Israel had been to import deities

¹⁴⁷ There are three more references to “ba’al” in the book of Judges but is not extremely relevant to this study; Judges 19:22-23, 20:5. However, the depravity of the “master” of the house and “leaders” of Gibeah are relevant because it reflects on the Perizzite or people of Canaan that are committed to depravity and opposition to God.

¹⁴⁸ The “leaders of Gilead” in Judges 10:18 does not use the word “ba’al” for leaders but uses “sar.” There certainly seems to be a correlation of utilizing “ba’al” for wicked non-Israelite people in the Old Testament (82 occurrences, per Strong’s Concordance).

¹⁴⁹ John Peter Lange, *Lange’s Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Joshua, Judges, Ruth*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959), 146.

from all countries.” The worship of Baal and Ashtoreth have been complimented by other active nations and people of their time. In chapter 10 of Judges, their apostasy increases, if that is possible, or at least their appetite for other gods continues to grow as though Israel has its own pantheon. This unfaithfulness and worship of local gods is a common practice for the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The first nine kings of the Northern Kingdom are identified with doing “evil in the eyes of the LORD” and they “did not turn from [their] evil way” (1 Kings 13:33, 15:26, 16:7, 16:13, 16:19, 16:25, 16:30, 22:52, and 2 Kings 3:2). Therefore, there is no surprise in the wickedness of Ahab and the geography of Shechem and Samaria. “And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years” (1 Kings 16:29). The reign of Asa and Ahab is well into the Early Iron Age. However, the unfaithfulness of Israel and the propensity to create treaties with its neighboring nations is evident in the biblical narrative (Deut. 7:1-2) prior to the Iron Age. “And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians [i.e., Sidonians], and went and served Baal, and worshipped him” (1 Kings 16:31-32). Although the name of the “Perizzites” are not mentioned directly in the text, the introduction of Ahab in the Book of 1 Kings speaks volumes to the impact that the Perizzites had on the Northern Kingdom within the area of Samaria. The origin of Baal worship is institutionalized or authorized by King Ahab of Israel as he marries Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians. As we learned earlier, “Sidonian” becomes a continuation of the “Phoenician” term and the people of Ugarit, Tyre, and Sidon. The same origin of the religion and culture that the Perizzites brought into the area of Samaria (i.e., hill country of Manasseh, Mt. Carmel, Jezreel

Valley, and Beth-shean). The marriage of a Sidonian, Jezebel, has as much to do with a treaty with Ethbaal as it does with the continuation of the religious cult practices that were present in the land when Israel began to conquer the land of Samaria. The worship of Baal and Ashtoreth (1 Kings 16:32-33) may have originated in Ugarit and Sidon, but it was brought to Samaria by the occupation of the Perizzites. Israel's unwillingness to "show no mercy" on the inhabitants of the land has an immeasurable price. The evidence of Israel's disobedience and the vulnerability of unfaithfulness adds credibility to the continued existence of the Perizzites through much of the Early Iron Age. Ahab's marriage treaty also brings temporal peace or unity with the indigenous inhabitants (i.e., Perizzites, Hivites) of the land and their neighbors to the north (i.e., Lebanon, Sidonians).

As God's anger kindled and Israel's depravity became the norm, the prophet Elijah is instructed by God to go to Zarephath to meet a widow that "will provide for him" (1 Kings 17:9). Zarephath is located approximately eight miles south of Sidon and fifteen miles north of Tyre.¹⁵⁰ Specifically, these cities are in modern-day Lebanon. Why is it that God sends "Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead" (1 Kings 17:1) all the way to Zarephath? It is likely that the prophet Elijah travels north, along the Jordan River, until he gets to Mt. Hermon before he navigates the Lebanon mountains, west to Zarephath (i.e., Sarepta). This is approximately 162 miles. Alternatively, it is also possible that the prophet Elijah passed through the Jezreel Valley, after passing Mt. Gilboa on the west of the Jordan River, then navigated Mt. Carmel on his way to the coast of the Mediterranean, only to return to the same spot in a few years to slay the prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth. He would then have walked north on the coast until he passed

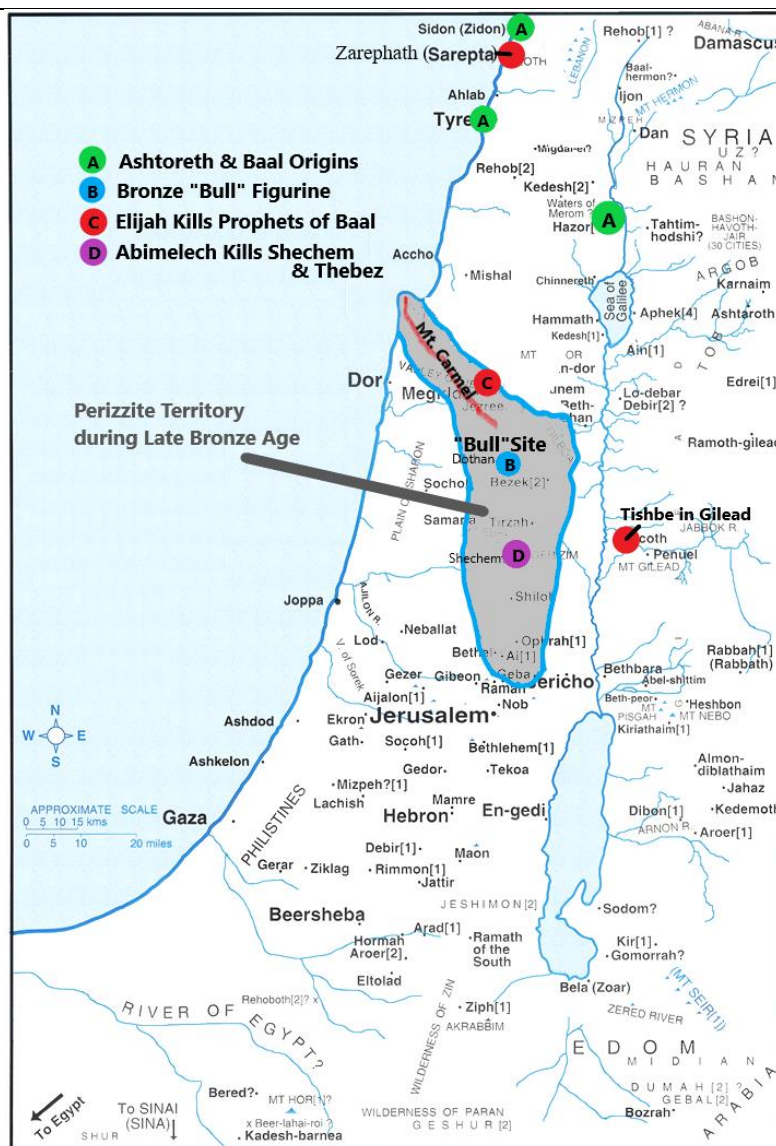
¹⁵⁰ Son Light Publishers, Inc., *Personal Map Insert*, (Ft. Smith, AR: Son Light Publishers, Inc., 1997), 10.

Tyre and reached Zarephath. This would be a total of approximately 143 miles.¹⁵¹ Figure 4.2 identifies the area of Baal and Ashtoreth worship in Lebanon, Perizzite territory in the Bronze Age, and the location of the events of Abimelech (Judges 9) and Elijah (1 Kings 17 and 18) that were impacted by Perizzite culture and worship.

Abimelech kills the people of **Shechem** and **Thebez** [D] but attempts to escape the shame of being killed by a woman by having his armor-bearer kill him with his sword (Judg. 9:54). The evidence of the Perizzite worship of **Baal** is persistent throughout the text of Abimelech.

The prophet **Elijah** travels from “the brook Cherith” (1 Kings 17:1-7), which is not far from where he lived in **Thisbe in Gilead** (1 Kings 17:1) in modern-day Jordan, to **Zarephath** (1 Kings 17:8-24) in modern-day Lebanon.

Elijah spends three years in Zarephath with the widow and her son until God sends him back to **King Ahab** (1 Kings 18:1-19). Eventually, the 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Ashtoreth are killed on [C] **Mt. Carmel** (i.e., Kishon Valley), 1 Kings 18:18, 40.



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Figure 4.2, The Perizzites bring Baal and Ashtoreth worship into the territory of Manasseh and Ephraim during the Bronze Age. As a result, God contends with the Northern Kingdom’s worship of Baal throughout the Iron Age.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 10.

There is life in obedience to God’s Word, as is manifested in the story of the prophet Elijah, the widow, and her son. After three years of drought because of Ahab and Jezebel’s continual worship of Baal and Ashtoreth, God directs Elijah to “Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth” because the famine was severe in Samaria (1 Kings 18:1-2). Jezebel attempts to kill all the “prophets of the LORD” and Ahab condones the depravity and worship of Baal and Ashtoreth (1 Kings 16:32-22). Elijah delivers God’s message, “I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim [i.e., Baal]. Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves [i.e., Ashtoreth] four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.” It is important to notice that they are on Mt. Carmel, in the territory of the Perizzites during the Iron Age. They are also south of Jezebel’s homeland of the Sidonians (i.e., Lebanon). The southeastern border of Mt. Carmel is located near Jenin and into the hill country of Manasseh. This too is within the established territory of the Perizzites. As a matter of fact, the well-known “bull site” is approximately six miles southwest of Jenin.¹⁵² Figure 4.2 identifies the “Bull” Site location as well as the Mt. Carmel location where God brought judgment to the prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth.

If we consider collectively the journey 1) of the prophet Elijah into the area of Lebanon, 2) the killing of the prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth on Mt. Carmel, 3) the persistent sin of Shechem and Baal cult practices, 4) the reference to the “ba’al” leaders of Shechem and the “cedars of Lebanon,” 5) Jezebel’s practice and institution of Baal worship in Israel, 6) the mass killing of the prophets of the LORD, and 6) King Ahab’s secular alliance to Sidon (i.e., Lebanon)

¹⁵² Son Light Publishers, Inc., *Personal Map Insert*, (Ft. Smith, AR: Son Light Publishers, Inc., 1997), 10.

through his marriage to the daughter of King Ethbaal, such events and calamity identify the hallmarks of the Perizzite people, a continuous temptation and failure of Israel throughout the Iron Age. Although the names of the Perizzites are not manifested on the lips of the people of Israel, their actions are much louder than their words.

The Bramble of Israel

“In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes” (2 Kings 17:6). Although the reign of Ahab and Elijah’s victory at Mt. Carmel, it is evident that the nation of Israel, the Northern Kingdom, continue to worship the local gods of Baal and Ashtaroah and struggles with faithfulness to the LORD. Ahaziah (son of Ahab) worships Baal (1 Kings 22:53); his brother Jehoram also directs worship of Baal (2 Kings 3:2), and they “provoked to anger the LORD God of Israel.” All the kings of Israel “did evil in the eyes of the LORD,” except for Jehu, who “destroyed Baal out of Israel. Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Bethel, and that were in Dan” (2 Kings 10:28-29). However, Jehu does have Jezebel executed and kills Ahab’s descendants after he is anointed the king of Israel (2 Kings 9,10). He also attempts to kill the prophets of Baal in the land of Samaria (2 Kings 10:18-36). Ultimately, while the kings reigned in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, the people “walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made” (2 Kings 17:8) and they “left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove (i.e., Ashtoreth), and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal” (2 Kings 17:16). The influence of the Perizzites on the Northern Kingdom is persistently evident across multiple

generations, and the security that Israel found in the statutes of the local people ultimately caused their swift destruction and exile.

The Judean Kingdom is not exempt from worshipping the gods of the Perizzites and other nations. Even King Solomon struggled at times to be faithful. In 1 Kings 11:1-2, we witness that Solomon “loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.” Although the KJV Bible utilizes the word “strange” to define “foreign” or “alien” women, it is evident that Solomon did not follow God’s wisdom regarding women and concubines. They certainly stole his heart, and he eventually worships and makes offerings to their gods (1 Kings 11:8). Solomon was diverse in his idolatry, “Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians (Sidonians), and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites” (1 Kings 11:5), he did not wholeheartedly follow the LORD. It is notable that the Sidonian (i.e., Phoenician) goddess, Ashtoreth has an impact on King Solomon and the Kingdom of Judah. The same religious practices that were evident in the people of the Perizzites, that dwelled north of Jerusalem and Judah, impacted the Kingdom of Judah for many generations. Although this study is not all-inclusive, it does recognize the hallmarks of the Perizzites and sin that does not discriminate based on culture and time. There is much evidence that this same style of worship continues to exist in the territory of the Perizzites. The worship of Ashtoreth continues in the Divided Kingdom until the time of King Josiah’s reforms, approximately fifteen generations after King Solomon (2 Kings 23:13-14). Depravity begets more depravity, and the Perizzites were instrumental in leading such a charge.

Chapter 5: The Probable Rise and Influence of the Perizzites

The Bible warns Israel of the people who were occupying the land of Canaan and what Israel's responsibilities would be as they were given the land by God's sovereign choice and purpose. One of the most mysterious groups is that of the Perizzites. They have no specific biblical genealogy and no land that easily identifies them throughout the book of Genesis and the historical books of the Old Testament. However, the remaining "Significant Six" (Exod. 3:8) people groups are directly introduced in Genesis 10, with the addition of Girgasite and a few other people groups:

Now these are the generations of the sons of **Noah**, Shem, **Ham**, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood (Gen. 10:1) ...And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and **Canaan** (Gen. 10:6) ...And Canaan begat **Sidon** his first born, and Heth, And the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgasite, And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad (Gen. 10:15-18).

The Perizzites are not included in this biblical genealogy of Noah. "These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations" (Gen. 10:20). Although the Perizzites are mentioned in their interaction with Abram (Gen. 13:7), God's covenant to Abram (Gen. 15:20), and Jacob's concern of becoming a "stench" in their nostrils (Gen. 34:20), their genealogy or lineage is not identified. "Some have even suggested that the Perizzites were the pre-Canaanite population of Palestine, in view of the omission of them in the list of Genesis."¹⁵³ However, since "all men" came from Noah and the Perizzites are no exception, it is simply a matter of "following the evidence" in order to determine the probable genealogy of the Perizzites.

¹⁵³ Walter A. Elwell, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible – Volume 2* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company: 1988), 1645.

Canaan had at least eleven sons (Gen. 10:15-18). It is interesting that the “firstborn” son, Sidon, is not mentioned in the Canaanite tribes during the time of Abram through the time of Israel’s entry into the land of Canaan. The Sidonians are only mentioned in passing as related to the conquest of King Og of Bashan (Deut. 3:9) and are not mentioned until the time of Joshua, when they are identifying land that is “yet to be conquered” (Jos. 13:1-7). As mentioned earlier, during the Early Iron Age, various kings of Israel struggle with worshipping the gods of the Sidonians (1 Kings 11:5, 11:33, 16:31, 2 Kings 23:13), the same gods of the Perizzites that lived in the land of Canaan during the Late Bronze Age.

The Sidonian reference (i.e., Zidonian, Phoenician) in the Bible is utilized to identify a distinctive people group from Sidon in Lebanon. This is simply not the case with most other sons of Canaan. Most of Canaan’s offspring do not have cities or locations named after them that identify the location of their land. The Bible reveals that “the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha” (Gen. 10:20). This is a broad description of the land of Canaan that is more extensive than the land Israel currently occupies (Fig. 2.1). The purpose of this study is not to debate the extent of Israel’s inheritance, but it is to identify the origin of the Perizzites and determine their genealogy, as well as their occupation of the land of Canaan. Certainly, just because they were indigenous people of the land of Canaan during the time of Abram and Jacob doesn’t automatically qualify them as descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham. Ahlström may have presented it best, based on archaeological finds, the “bull figurine can be seen as an indication that a group of northerners arrived in the hills of Manasseh” during the

Bronze Age.¹⁵⁴ Besides the Mt. Carmel location of the bull figurine, “other Zebu bull figurines have been found in Lebanon, Syria, and Cyprus...and one has surfaced, at Hazor, in the Late Bronze temple.”¹⁵⁵ All these locations, as mentioned in Chapter 3, support the argument that these specific indigenous people groups are originally from the north, as far as Sidon or Ugarit. Although, Sidon, as a nation, is not influential until the close of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Early Iron Age, “the oldest surviving remains of the settlement date back to mid-way through the 4th millennium B.C.”¹⁵⁶ The migration of the Sidonian people is witnessed in the biblical and archaeological evidence. Figure 4.1 supports Ahlström’s original argument regarding “northerners” that settle in the territory of Manasseh during the Late Bronze Age that is based on biblical and archaeological evidence. Also, given their patterns of worship (Chapter 3; Baal, Ashtoreth, marzēäh), archaeological artifacts (“Bull” Site, sherds), geography (Chapter 2), biblical evidence (Chapter 4), and genome similarities (Chapter 3), it has become probable that the Perizzites are directly related to the inhabitants of Sidon. Therefore, it is also reasonable to consider them an offspring of Sidon, the first son of Canaan.

Another interesting piece of evidence that helps to solidify the timing of the Perizzite or Canaanite dominance in the Jezreel Valley and Mt. Carmel, comes from the “Inlay plaque depicting a Canaanite Ruler” in Appendix III. This unique Megiddo artifact depicts a Canaanite ruler that is in the territory of the Perizzites during the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age (i.e., 1300-1130 B.C.). The visual description of the story includes the use of chariots against the probable people of Israel during the same period that Egypt forces tribute from the city of

¹⁵⁴ Gösta W. Ahlström, “The Bull Figurine from Dhahrat et-Tawileh,” *The Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research (BASOR)* No. 280 (Nov. 1990): 77.

¹⁵⁵ Ahlström, 81.

¹⁵⁶ Moscati helps to identify the beginnings of the nation of the Sidonians in the Early Bronze Age, having been influenced by Tyre and Ugarit. Sabatino Moscati, *The Phoenicians* (New York, NY: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1997), 168-183.

Megiddo. Such evidence helps to solidify the rising conflict with Israel in the Early Bronze Age and probable control of the northern hill country by the Perizzites and Canaanites during this same period. Such an artifact helps to clarify the complaint from the “sons of Joseph” during the occupation of their land that is experienced in Joshua 17. Figure 2.9 identifies the cities in the northern hill country of Manasseh that are listed in Joshua 17:11, but Israel was unable to drive them out of the land and could only force them to labor or possible tribute. “And the children of Joseph said, The hill is not enough for us: and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both they who are of Bethshean and her towns, and they who are of the valley of Jezreel” (Josh. 17:16). Part of their complaint is that the indigenous people of Canaan, and probable Perizzites, are too strong and they have “chariots of iron” in the valley and urban areas. “The land of the Perizzites and Rephaim...is in the territory of Joseph, and its full possession is to be achieved by deforestation of the mountain and the subjugation of the valleys.”¹⁵⁷ Ephraim and Manasseh must work together to evict the Canaanites and Perizzites from the land. The biblical and archaeology evidence seems to communicate the strategy: first occupy the “hill country of Ephraim” and then gradually progress further north, into the “stronger” controlled cities and the land of the northern Manasseh territory and valleys. Eventually, Israel will overcome the chariot cities. The method is beyond the scope of this paper. It is likely that complete control and occupation of the territories took considerable time and multiple generations.¹⁵⁸

Although the Perizzites occupied the hill country of Ephraim and Manasseh during the Late Bronze Age, it is probable that they occupied the land much earlier according to genome

¹⁵⁷ C. Brekelmans & J. Lust, *Pentateuchal and Deuteronomistic Studies* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 201.

¹⁵⁸ Yohanan Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible – A Historical Geography*, (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1979) 240.

research and matching characteristics that are shared in Chapter 3: Geographic Location and Ancestry. Figure 2.11 helps to identify the biblical territory of the Perizzites from the time of Abram through the Late Bronze Age. However, as mentioned in Chapter 2, by the end of the Bronze Age, the Perizzites are forced to migrate north as Israel occupies the central hill country of Ephraim. The Israelites clearly do not force the Perizzites and Canaanites out of the northern cities (Josh. 17:10-12) as represented in Figure 2.9. It isn't until the period of King David and King Solomon that we see any evidence of domination over these cities in the northern part of Manasseh, Mt. Carmel, Jezreel Valley, and Mt. Gilboa. By example, 1 Kings 5-9 documents King Solomon's temple, palace, and various other building projects throughout the kingdom. Specifically, "all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which were not of the children of Israel, their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bondservice unto this day" (1 Kings 9:20, 21). It is probable that the same garrison cities that the Egyptians utilized, such as Megiddo and Beth-shean, have become the garrison cities of Israel by the time of the United Kingdom. However, it does seem that "the Perizzites were among the tribes that were not subject to tribute by Solomon" (1 Kings 9:20-21).¹⁵⁹

The Conclusive Story of a 3200+ Year-Old Cold Case

God reminded Israel that "I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11). This truth was communicated to Israel while they were in exile, under the "yoke of Nebuchadnezzar." The cause for their exile was because of their sin and disobedience. However, the sins of Israel were

¹⁵⁹ Isidore Singer, Ph.D., *The Jewish Encyclopedia: A Descriptive Record of the History, Religion, Literature and Custom of the Jewish People*. 12 vols (New York, NY: Funk and Wagnalls:1906), Vol. IX, 288.

not a recent phenomenon. These sins began at the very beginning of their entry into the land of Canaan. Although the LORD explained the criticality of not “uniting” with the indigenous people of Canaan, the people of Israel quickly turned their hearts to the gods of Canaan and compromised God’s plan for them. In the territory of Shechem, Joshua renews the covenant with the God of Israel (Joshua 24). The irony of this location is that this same geographical area becomes a stumbling block for Israel as they adopt the practices of the Perizzites and settle into the land that God provided. Upon his deathbed and just before the covenant renewal, Joshua appeals to Israel,

“So be very careful to love the LORD your God. If ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you: Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you” (Josh. 23:11-13).

It becomes clear that “these that remain among you” are more than a single nation that Israel failed to eliminate or drive out from the land. The biblical and archaeological evidence reveals much of the land that Israel occupied by the end of the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age was occupied by the Perizzites, specifically in the critical geographical areas of the hill country of Ephraim and Manasseh, including Shechem. On the surface, it initially appears that very little is known about these Perizzites, other than the fact that they are listed as indigenous people in the Land of Canaan (Exod. 3:17, Deut. 7:1-2, Josh. 3:10). Even *Zondervan’s Pictorial Dictionary* claims that “The Perizzites seem to have left no other marks on history...no non-Biblical document mentions them.”¹⁶⁰ However, this simply is not true. Although their name is vaguely known, their influence and cultural practices lead Israel astray and perpetually becomes

¹⁶⁰ Merrill C. Tenney, *Zondervan’s Pictorial Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967). The “well defined biblical references” include (Gen. 13:7; 34:30; Exod. 3:8,17; 23:23; 33:2; 34:11; Deut. 20:17; Josh. 3:10; 24:11; Judg. 1:4), p.637.

a covenant failure on behalf of God's people. Much of what Israel experienced during the exile and captivity in Assyria and Babylon originated hundreds of years earlier as they traversed the territory of the Perizzites in the land of Canaan and adopted their corrupt practices.

The biblical, historical, scientific, and archaeological evidence reveals the fact that the Perizzites lived in the central hill country of Ephraim and Manasseh during the Late Bronze Age (Fig. 2.11) and consolidated further north into the of hill country of Manasseh (more specifically, Mt. Carmel, Jezreel Valley, and Mt. Gilboa) during the Early Iron Age (Figure 2.12). After being pushed out of the central hill country of Ephraim, it is probable that many Perizzites settled in the northern cities such of Issachar, Bethshean, Ibleam, Dor, Endor, Taanach, Megiddo and "their towns" or villages (Josh. 17:10-11). It is possible that the Perizzites had occupied Shechem and Thebez, as discussed in Chapter 4, and witnessed the destruction of the cities by the hand of Abimelech, "the bramble." This same evidence leads to the conclusion that the Perizzites are most probable descendants of the Phoenicians and therefore the offspring of Sidon, the "first son" of Canaan, son of Ham, and son of Noah.

The last biblical references to the Perizzites come from the Prophets Ezra and Nehemiah. Nehemiah reflects on God's covenant promise to Abram and mentions the nations of Canaan that will be driven out as Israel confesses their sins. Ezra is informed by the leaders of Israel that,

The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass. (Ezra 9:1-2)

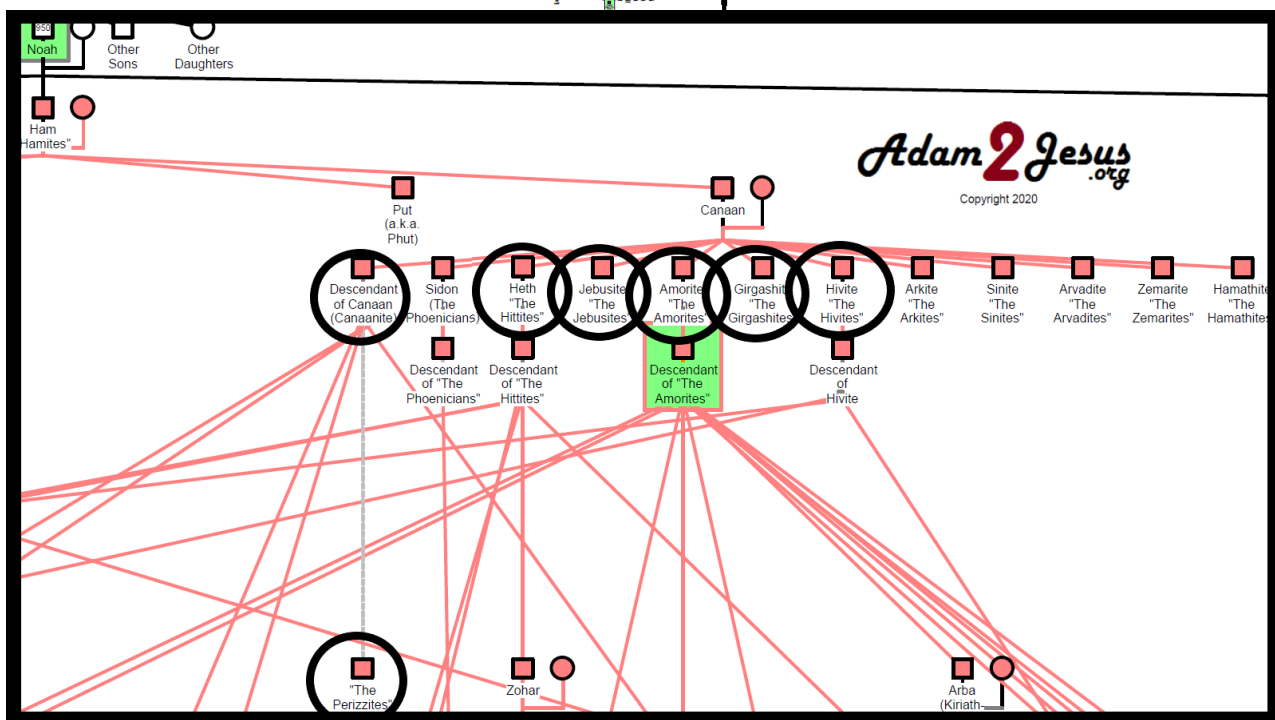
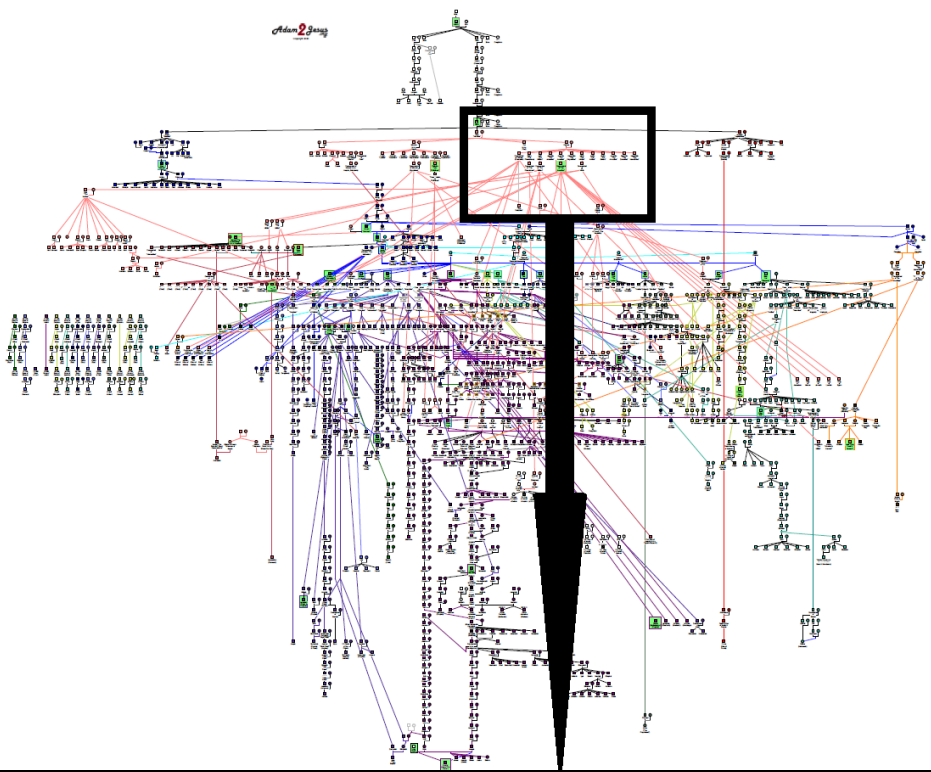
Although there are no cities or national boundaries established in the name of the Perizzites, it has become evident that their influence on Israel began during the Late

Bronze Age and continued through the entire Iron Age. The “abominations” of the Perizzites were still influencing Israel’s faithfulness and continued to be a “snare and trap” (Josh. 23:11-12). The Perizzites do have a unique place in history and should not be ignored or jettisoned. God used the Perizzites as an example of His providence and patience to the nation of Israel. God enabled His purpose to be revealed through His faithfulness and the forced movement of the Perizzites, and other Canaanite tribes, throughout the central hill country of Canaan. The evidence has shown that the Perizzites are more than simply a group of “unwalled villagers” or “rural dwellers” that briefly occupied the central hill country. Perhaps their name lends better to the unwalled hearts of the Israelites that took their land but also coveted their gods, their people, and their depraved practices.

It is not a “light thing” to consider that Israel assimilated with the Perizzites and other Canaanite people throughout the Iron Age and especially throughout the history of the Northern Kingdom. The Perizzites were a significant factor and cause of Israel’s unfaithfulness, demise, and exile by the hands of Assyria and Babylon. Unfortunately, there may be little difference in 21st century America. What distinguishes God’s children from others within our community? Do we live among a people that we assimilate and covet? Do we project ourselves onto others or are we more swayed by the influence of our neighbors? Is there any distinction between the Christian and non-Christian within today’s culture? Viewed objectively, how wide is this margin in character and lifestyle? Has our commitment to the kingdom of God, as followers of Jesus Christ, become cold and unfruitful? Do we find greater joy in building our kingdom here on earth? Do we spend our time, energy, and resources accumulating the things of the world? Do we love

the world and the things of the world? Ezra's grief and call to righteousness should not be viewed as legalism but as a necessary heart-change to seek God's will and not be yoked with the world. The Perizzites are among us today. Be cautious and fervent. Learn from Israel's failure and the Perizzites' persistent integration and adoption of the marginal and unfaithful children of God.

Appendix I: Genealogy of Canaan



Appendix II: "Perizzite(s)" in Scripture

Genesis 13:5-7

5 And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

6 And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.

7 And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the **Perizzite** dwelled then in the land.

Genesis 15:18-21

18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

19 The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites,

20 And the Hittites, and the **Perizzites**, and the Rephaims,

21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

Genesis 34:30

30 And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the **Perizzites**: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.

Exodus 3:8

8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the **Perizzites**, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

Exodus 3:17

17 And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the **Perizzites**, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.

Exodus 23:23

23 For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the **Perizzites**, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off.

Exodus 33:2

2 And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the **Perizzite**, the Hivite, and the Jebusite:

Exodus 34:11

11 Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the **Perizzite**, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite.

Deuteronomy 7:1-2

1 When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the **Perizzites**, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou;

2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them:

Deuteronomy 20:17

17 But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the **Perizzites**, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee:

Joshua 3:10

10 And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the **Perizzites**, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites.

Joshua 9:1

1 And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the **Perizzite**, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof;

Joshua 11:3

3 And to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and to the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the **Perizzite**, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and to the Hivite under Hermon in the land of Mizpeh.

Joshua 12:8

8 In the mountains, and in the valleys, and in the plains, and in the springs, and in the wilderness, and in the south country; the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites, the **Perizzites**, the Hivites, and the Jebusites:

Joshua 17:15

15 And Joshua answered them, if thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the **Perizzites** and of the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee.

Joshua 24:11

11 And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the **Perizzites**, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand.

Judges 1:4-5

4 And Judah went up; and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the **Perizzites** into their hand: and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men.

5 And they found Adonibezek in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the **Perizzites**.

Judges 3:5

5 And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and **Perizzites**, and Hivites, and Jebusites:

1 Kings 9:20

20 And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, **Perizzites**, Hivites, and Jebusites, which were not of the children of Israel,

2 Chronicles 8:7

7 As for all the people that were left of the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the **Perizzites**, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which were not of Israel,

Ezra 9:1

1 Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the **Perizzites**, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.

Nehemiah 9:8

8 And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the **Perizzites**, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous:

Appendix III: Inlay Ivory Plaque

“Inlay plaque depicting a Canaanite Ruler”

Megiddo, 1300-1130 B.C. ivory

Collection the Israel Antiquities Authority, Photo Courtesy © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem,



<https://www.imj.org.il/en/collections/432048>

“This wooden-furniture inlay relates a narrative in two scenes whose hero is a Canaanite ruler. On the right the ruler is depicted in his chariot after returning victoriously from battle. On the left he is shown enthroned at the victory banquet held in his honor, his wife standing opposite him. The plaque exhibits a local style, but such motifs as the lotus flower and winged sun disk attest to a desire to emulate the Egyptians.”

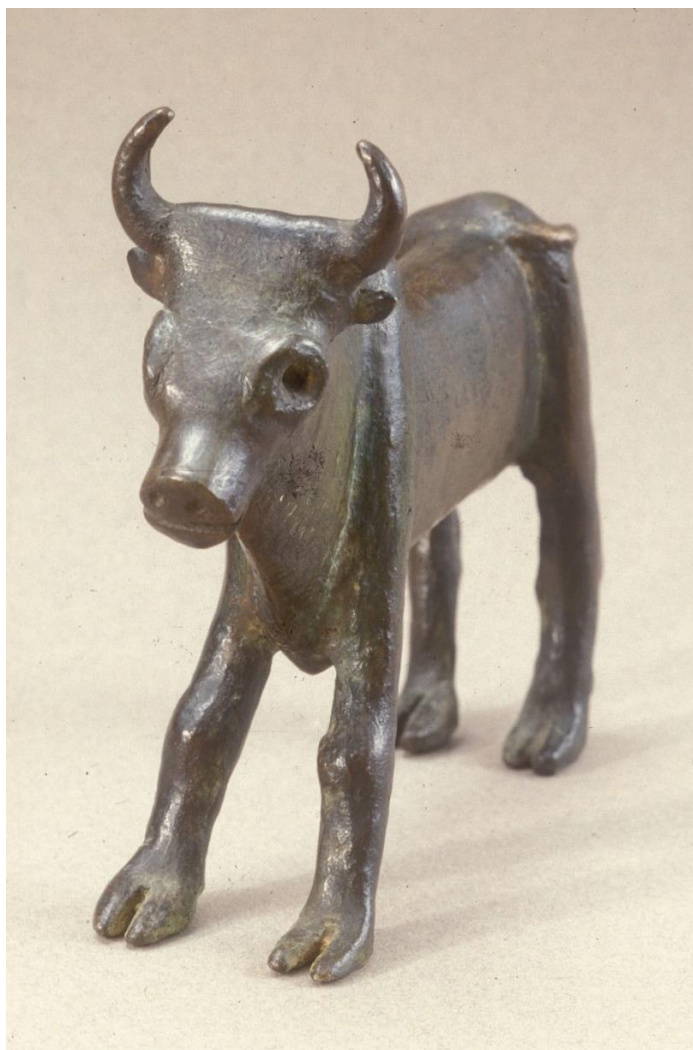
Appendix IV: “The Cult Site:

Located between Dothan & Tirzah

1200 B.C. – Early Iron Age

Collection Zev Radovan, Photo Courtesy © BibleLandPictgures.co

“Location of the Cult Site,” Map Courtesy © Biblical Archaeology Society



“The bull figurine itself is unique. It is not only the largest bull figurine ever found in Israel – indeed, in the entire Levant - it also combines naturalistic and stylized elements in an unusual way.”¹⁶¹ Originally published in *Biblical Archaeology Review* (1983), the article compares the bull cult vessel to a similar, slightly older, bronze bull found in Hazor, Israel during the Late Bronze Age (1550 B.C. to 1200 B.C.) It is possible that the Perizzites were part of the same worshippers or nation that migrated south during the Bronze Age and retreated north during the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age.

¹⁶¹ Amihai Mazar, “Bronze Bull Found in Israelite ‘High Place’ From the Time of the Judges,” *Biblical Archaeology Review*, (September/October 1983): 34-40.

Appendix V: Bonze Age Sidon Population

“Admixture in Present-Day Levantine Populations”

Section “C”

Chart Courtesy © The American Journal of Human Genetics
August 3, 2017

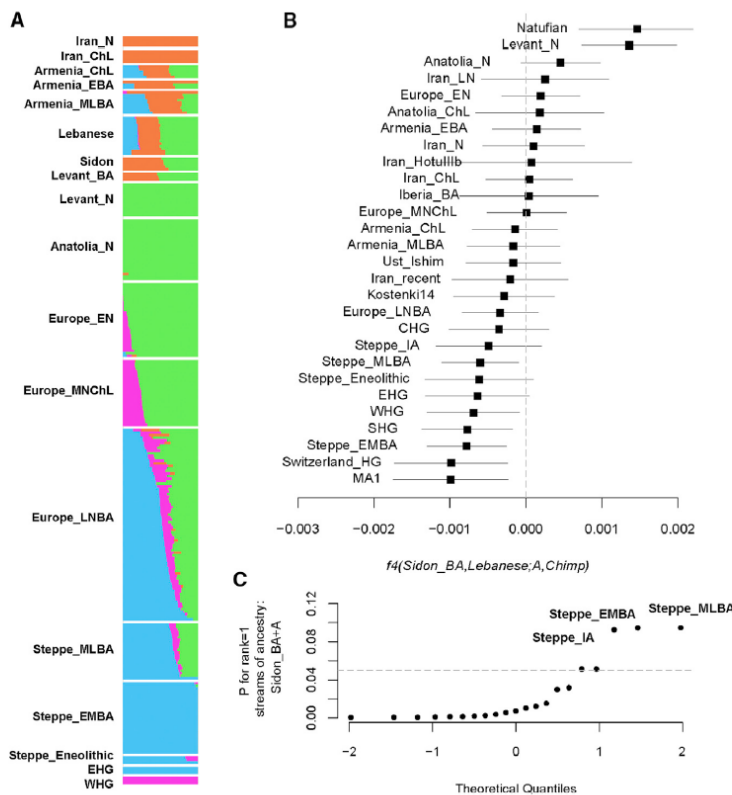


Figure 3. Admixture in Present-Day Levantine Populations

(A) Supervised ADMIXTURE using Levant_N, Iran_N, EHG, and WHG as reference populations. A Eurasian ancestry found in Eastern hunter-gatherers and the steppe Bronze Age appears in present-day Levantines after the Bronze Age.

(B) The statistic $f_4(\text{Sidon_BA, Lebanese; Ancient Eurasian, Chimpanzee})$ confirms the ADMIXTURE results and is most negative for populations from the steppe and Eurasian hunter-gatherers. We show the estimated statistic value and ± 3 standard errors.

(C) Present-day Lebanese can be modeled as mixture between Bronze Age Sidon and a steppe population. The model with mix proportions 0.932 ± 0.016 Sidon_BA and 0.068 ± 0.016 steppe_EMBA for Lebanese is supported with the lowest SE.

p.67, “the Lebanese can be best modeled as Sidon_BA $93\% \pm 1.6\%$ and a Steppe Bronze Age population $7\% \pm 1.6\%$ (Appendix V). The “Sidon_BA” abbreviation is the marker in the study that represents genomic data from the Canaanite bodies in Sidon, Lebanon during the Bronze Age. The “Steppe Bronze Age” is the marker that represents genome data from Eurasian Steppe during the Bronze Age.

The American Journal of human Genetics, 101, Figure 3, p.279, August 3, 2017.

“Continuity and Admixture in the Last Five Millennia of Levantine History from Ancient Canaanite and Present-Day Lebanese Genome Sequences”

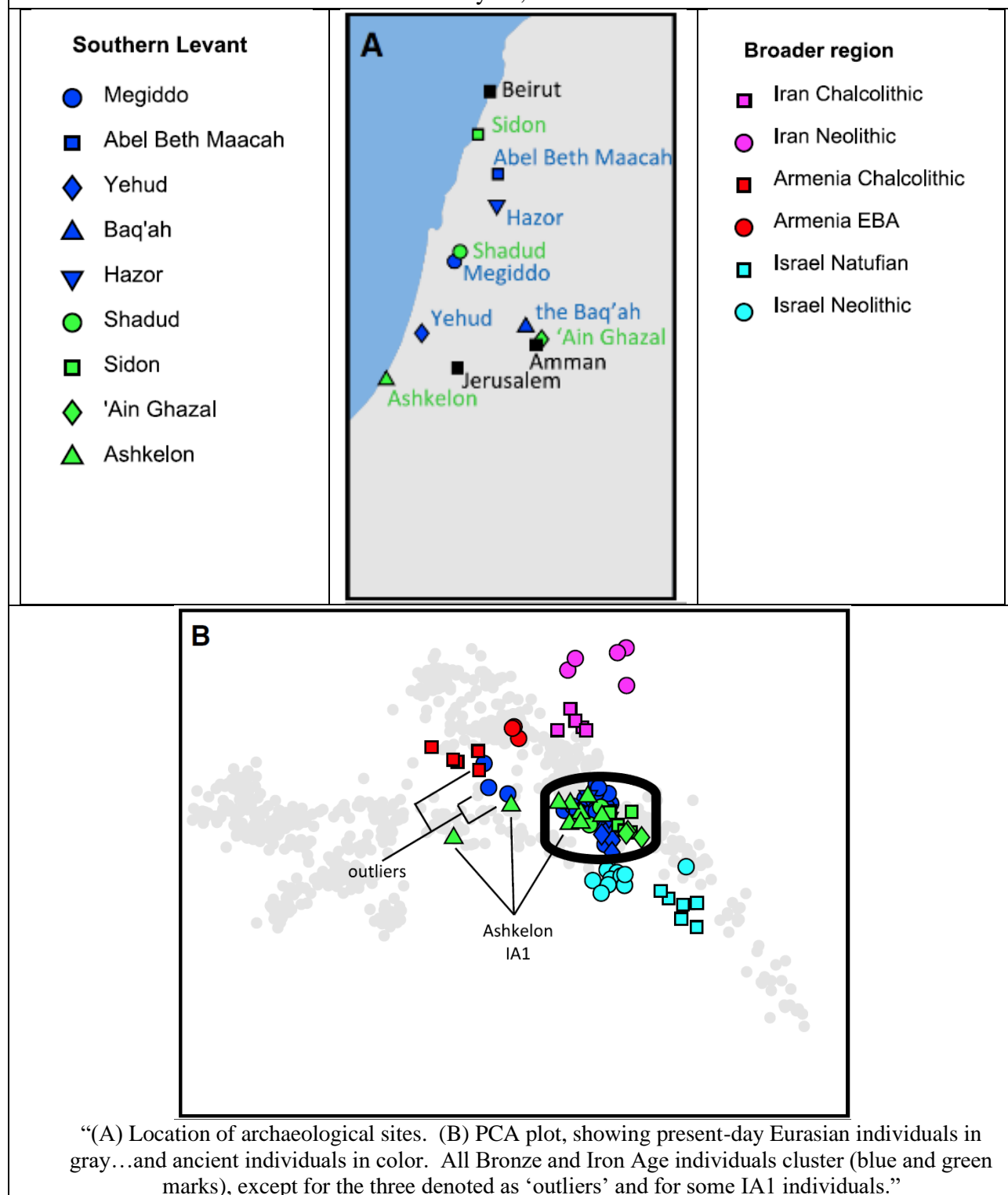
Marc Haber, Claude Doumet-Serhal, Christiana Scheib, Yali Xue, Petr Danecek, Massimo Mezzavilla, Sonia Youhanna, Rui Martiniano, Javier Prado-Martinez, Michał Szpak, Elizabeth Matisoo-Smith, Holger Schutkowski, Richard Mikulski, Pierre Zalloua, Toomas Kivisild, and Chris Tyler-Smith¹.

Appendix VI: Southern Levant Cluster

“PCA Plot, Showing Bronze and Iron Age Individuals”

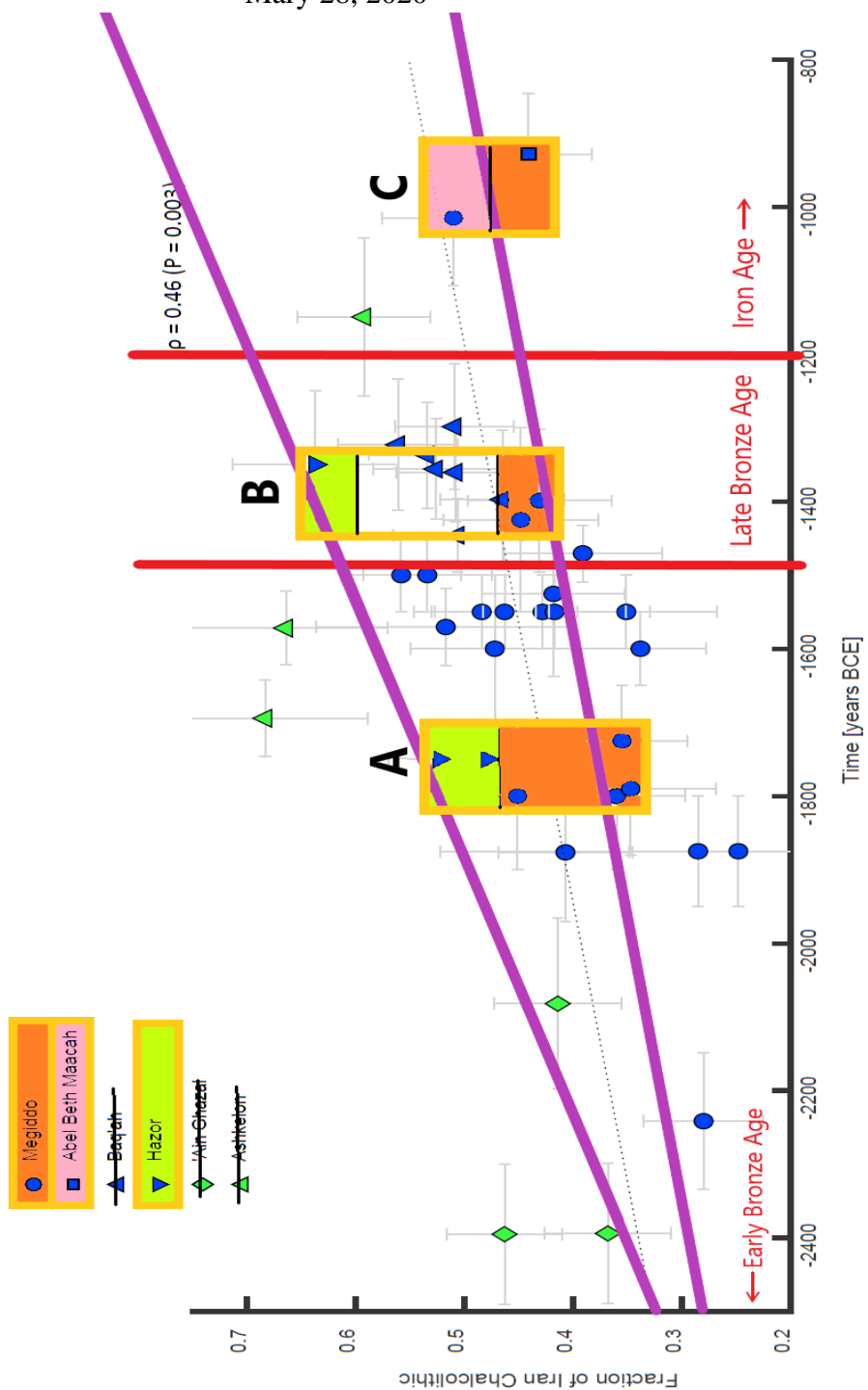
Chart Courtesy © CellPress

May 28, 2020



Appendix VII: Fraction of Iron Chalcolithic Study

Chart Courtesy © CellPress
 Mary 28, 2020



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