

# MORE ON THE SEVEN NATIONS: GIRGASHITE FLIGHT AND THE CANNANITE NATION

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In a previous paper (“Nations and Super-nations of Canaan”, *JBQ*, 46:2), we mentioned the existence of multiple lists of Canaanite nations in the Bible and the various issues with those lists. We focused on the major discrepancies between the list of Canaan’s sons in Genesis 10 and the list of ten of nations whose land God promised Abraham in Genesis 15. In doing so, we explored the various approaches to understanding the identities of the Hivites, as well as the Kenites, Kenizzites, and Kadmonites. Afterwards, we analyzed the different Canaanite-nation lists in Exodus and beyond, most of which only counted six nations – leaving out the Girgashites. We offered several ways of accounting for the absence of the Girgashites in those lists and, in this installment, we will add another. The paper concluded with a discussion of the idea that the term “Canaanite” can serve as the name of a simple nation – alongside whom other Canaanite nations exist – and as the name of a super-nation which includes other nations.

In this paper, we will offer another reason for the omission of the Girgashites in most lists of Canaanite nations in the Bible. While previously we focused on the possibility of the Canaanite *super-nation*, in the following paragraphs, we seek to clearly define what/who the Canaanite *nation* might be. In doing so, we will justify the disappearance of the Sidonians from all Canaanite nation lists, save for the genealogical table of Genesis 10. Finally, we will provide a Midrashic insight into understanding the nature of the pre-Israelite occupants of the Holy Land and their Canaanite affiliations, in light of the accepted wisdom in the academic study of ancient history and archeology.

## THE FLEEING GIRGASHITES

Previously, we offered several approaches for why the Girgashites are generally absent from lists of Canaanite nations. We entertained the possibilities

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that they are omitted from such lists because they were an unimportant people, because they lived in non-bountiful parts of the Holy Land, or simply because they are to be included in the general term “Canaanites”. Nonetheless, rabbinic tradition offers another reason as to why the Girgashites are generally absent from lists of Canaanite nations.<sup>1</sup>

Rabbinic tradition records that before the Israelites arrived in the Holy Land, Joshua sent letters to the occupying Canaanites informing them that they could safely flee the Holy Land before the Israelites come.<sup>2</sup> In response to Joshua’s letter, the Girgashites fled the Holy Land and migrated to Afriki.<sup>3</sup> Those exiled Canaanites still constituted a community in the time of Alexander the Great, as rabbinic sources relate that the Canaanites of Afriki appealed to him to force the Jews to allow them to return to the Holy Land.<sup>4</sup> Some medieval commentators explain that these Canaanites were the descendants of the original Girgashites who fled the Holy Land in the time of Joshua.<sup>5</sup>

Based on this tradition concerning the flight of the Girgashites, Rashi writes in his commentary to Exodus 33:2 and 34:11 that the Girgashites are omitted from those lists because they left the Holy Land of their own volition and did not need to be driven out.

Nonetheless, there are some difficulties with Rashi’s opinion. One such difficulty is why Rashi waited until Ex. chapters 33–34 to make his remarks about the fleeing Girgashites, if the Girgashites are already absent from lists of Canaanite nations from the beginning of Exodus (Ex. 3:8; 3:17; 13:5; 23:23). R. Meir Benjamin Menaḥem Danon (a 19<sup>th</sup> century Bosnian rabbinic figure) grapples with this issue and answers by differentiating between the context of Exodus 33–34 and the earlier passages in Exodus. Earlier lists of Canaanite nations in the Holy Land simply describe the Promised Land based on the names of the nations which occupied it then. Exodus 33–34, on the other hand, speaks about the future driving out of those occupants. Only in the latter context, did Rashi find it appropriate to note the absence of the Girgashites and the tradition about their willing evacuation.<sup>6</sup>

In another passage, Rashi seems to contradict his own view. As mentioned in my prior paper, Deuteronomy 20:17 lists six Canaanite nations that the Israelites were commanded to destroy, *as the LORD, your God, has commanded you*. In that context, the Bible again omits mention of the Gir-

gashites. In light of the above, such an omission is quite understandable because the Israelites ultimately did not destroy the Girgashites – the Girgashites fled of their own volition. However, Rashi defends the exclusion of the Girgashites there differently: He cites *Sifrei* which exegetically adds the Girgashites to the list at hand by hermeneutically expounding the words *as the LORD, your God, has commanded you* to include an otherwise unmentioned nation.<sup>7</sup> Why did Rashi have to resort to such hermeneutics if he elsewhere endorses the tradition that the Girgashites vacated the Holy Land? R. Elijah Kramer of Vilna addresses this question by suggesting that even though most of the Girgashites left, some remained.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, *Peirush ha-Rokeah*, ascribed to the school of R. Elazar Rokeah of Worms (1176–1238), similarly explains the absence of the Girgashites from Exodus 3:8 by explaining that most of them voluntarily vacated the Holy Land and therefore they did not need to be evicted. His wording clearly implies that not all the Girgashites fled the Holy Land, leaving room for the supposition that some remained.<sup>9</sup>

Based on this, R. Yitzhak Sorotzkin explains how we find Girgashites as part of the coalition that fought the Israelites at Jericho (Josh. 24:11), even though the Girgashites were said to have already fled the Holy Land.<sup>10</sup> Those Girgashites who remained joined five other Canaanite nations in order to defend Jericho.<sup>11</sup>

The Tosefta *Shabbat* 8:12 asserts that of all the nations of the world, the Amorites are the most thoughtful because they believed in God and exiled themselves to Afriki, so God gave them a nice piece of land and the Land of Israel is known after their name (see below). However, R. David Pardo (1718–1792)<sup>12</sup> questions this rendering of the Tosefta on the basis that there is no other source which praises the Amorites for vacating the Holy Land before the Israelites' arrival. Instead, he proposes emending the text of the Tosefta to read "Girgashites" instead of "Amorites". This emendation is endorsed by R. Yitzhak Schwadron (1856–1919)<sup>13</sup> and R. Yehezkel Abramsky (1886–1976).<sup>14</sup>

There are, nonetheless, two alternate traditions recorded by Radak (to Josh. 9:7 and Isa. 17:9) about the Canaanite nation that fled. One tradition says that the generic "Canaanites" left and another tradition says that the Perizzites were the nation that vacated the Holy Land.

## CANAANITES AS A NATION

In the aforementioned earlier paper, we presented the view that the term “Canaanites” can be taken as the name of a super-nation—a sort of category which includes other Canaanite nations—or as the name of a simple nation, alongside whom other Canaanite nations coexisted. When the term “Canaanites” means a simple nation, who is that nation and what evidence is there of their existence? Moreover, why would they share the same name as their parent nation, the super-nation of Canaan?

Nahmanides (to Gen. 10:15) explains that the Canaanites are considered an independent nation within the Canaanite super-nation because one of Canaan’s sons did not successfully build a truly independent nation. Therefore, his descendants did not self-identify as descendants of that specific son and instead bore the name of their patriarch Canaan.<sup>15</sup> This explains why the same name is sometimes used in the sense of a super-nation of Canaan, which includes other nations, and sometimes refers to a nation known as the Canaanites, which is part of the super-nation of Canaan.

More specifically, Nahmanides suggests that the Canaanites are largely the descendants of Canaan’s firstborn Sidon, who as his father’s firstborn, assumed his father’s name. Thus, the Sidonians plus the descendants of Canaan’s abovementioned unsuccessful son together created the umbrella nation “Canaanites”—a subgroup of the larger Canaanite super-nation. This also explains why the seemingly quintessential Canaanites, the descendants of Canaan’s firstborn Sidon, never appear in lists of Canaanite nations. Since the Canaanite nation refers largely to the descendants of Sidon, they are not listed separately.

However, the descendants of Sidon actually do appear in the Bible in a few places as a nation under their own name, the Sidonians (Deut. 3:9, Josh. 13:6, I Kgs. 5:20; 16:31). How, then, can Nahmanides contend that they were subsumed within the general “Canaanite” nation? To answer this, Nahmanides explains that the Sidonians mentioned elsewhere in the Bible are not actually descendants of Canaan’s son Sidon, but are actually ethnic Philistines (who are descendants of Mitzrayim, the progenitor of the Egyptians), who conquered the areas historically occupied by the original Sidonians. Those Philistines – possibly known as the “Sea People” in extra-biblical

sources – are only known as Sidonians because they lived in the lands originally settled by the descendants of Sidon.

R. Yaakov Kamenetsky (1891–1986)<sup>16</sup> suggests that Canaan’s “unsuccessful” son was his second son Heth. He bolsters this supposition by noting that when listing Canaan’s sons, all of them are given as names of nations except for Sidon – who is described as the firstborn – and Heth. This suggests that Heth’s descendants did not grow into a full-fledged nation (at least right away) in the same way that the other sons of Canaan became complete nations. R. Kamenetsky notes that this is why Genesis consistently denotes Hittites with the genealogical marker “sons of Heth” (see multiple instances in Gen. 23 and Gen. 25:10; 27:46; 49:32), instead of the regular formula “Hittites” (found elsewhere in the Bible).

There is another way of explaining why the descendants of Sidon seem to not appear in lists of Canaanite nations. Ibn Ezra (to Gen. 13:7) takes note of the fact that the Perizzites appear in lists of Canaanite nations, but do not appear in the genealogical list of Canaan’s sons.<sup>17</sup> Based on this phenomenon, Ibn Ezra asserts that the Perizzites must be descendants of one of Canaan’s sons, and later commenting on Exodus 3:8 reasserts this by explaining that the Perizzites are the descendants of Canaan’s firstborn Sidon.<sup>18</sup>

#### COLONIAL CANAANITES

Some academics question the historicity of the Canaanite nations listed in the Bible, as their names do not seem to match up with the locations of such-named nations in extra-biblical sources. They explain that such terms as “Amorite”<sup>19</sup> or “Hittite” in the Bible serve as rhetorical pejoratives for the non-Israelite population, rather than as historically real polities.<sup>20</sup> For example, historians and archeologists understand that the Hittites were an Indo-European nation who lived in the region of Anatolia in modern-day Turkey – quite north from the Holy Land.

Nonetheless, Wood points out that the Bible actually mentions these Anatolian Hittites. He notes that there the Bible uses two different nomenclatures for denoting the Hittite people in the plural form: *bnei/bnot Het* (lit. “sons/daughter of Heth”) and *hittim/hittiyot* (“[male] Hittites” and “[female] Hittites”). Wood argues that only the former appellation refers to the Canaanite Hittites, while the latter term refers to the Anato-

lian Hittites. He supports this view by showing how in context, the former term always refers to people in the Holy Land, while the latter term always refers to a foreign nation located to the north of the Holy Land.<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, the exact relationship between these two homonymous nations is not so clear.<sup>22</sup>

We might posit that the Anatolian Hittites were possibly made up of the remnant Hittites/Canaanites who fled northwards after Joshua's conquest of the Holy Land (see Radak to Jud. 1:26 who seems to support this contention). However, the accepted chronology of the ancient Near East understands that the Anatolian Hittites existed before Joshua's conquest of the Holy Land. How, then, shall we understand the connection between the Anatolian Hittites and the Canaanite Hittites?

A little-known midrashic tradition concerning the nature of the thirty-one Canaanite kings whom Joshua conquered (Josh. 12:9–24) may help shed some light on this matter:

“R. Judah says: Were all thirty-one kings king in the Land of Israel? Rather, just as they do in Rome that any foreign king who has not acquired for himself a palace in Rome has not accomplished anything, so too each king who did not acquire a palace and a stretch of land in the Land of Israel was not considered to have accomplished anything, as the Scripture says, *And I will give to you a cherished land, the inheritance desired by the multitudes of nations* (Jer.3:19).”<sup>23</sup>

R. Hillel the Greek (a medieval commentator)<sup>24</sup> explains that because the Holy Land is relatively small in terms of its spatial territory, it is illogical to assume that there were thirty-one kingdoms within such a small area.<sup>25</sup> Because of this, the Midrash proposes that (at least some of<sup>26</sup>) the thirty-one kings in question were not all native Canaanite kings, but included some foreign kings who had palaces and small colonies in the Holy Land.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, Hizkuni (to Gen. 1:1) writes that there were several kings in the Holy Land who were not descendants of Canaan, like the king of Hazor (Josh. 11) and others. R. Haim David Joseph Azulai (1724–1806)<sup>28</sup> explains that because their holdings in the Holy Land made them into “successful” kings, even foreign kings are known after the cities which they held in the Holy Land, instead of their home capitals.<sup>29</sup>

## LAND OF CANAAN

Throughout the Bible, the Holy Land is known as the “Land of Canaan”, a term which appears close to seventy times. Some of the above-cited sources which discuss the Girgashite (or Amorite) flight from the Holy Land report that because the Girgashites respected God’s plan to give the Holy Land to the Israelites, that Land is known as the “Land of Canaan”. In other words, of all the different peoples who originally held the Holy Land, the land is known as the Land of Canaan because the Girgashites, who fall within the super-nation of Canaan, honored God by fleeing the Land and allowing the Israelites a peacefully takeover of their territory. This may allow for understanding that some of the nations who lived there and did not flee were in fact not part of the super-nation of Canaan.

Similarly, R. Joel (a member of the medieval *Hasidei Ashkenaz* movement) writes in his work *Sefer ha-Remazim* that the Holy Land is called the Land of Canaan because the Canaanites honored Abraham when they said *you are a prince of God in our midst* (Gen. 23:6).<sup>30</sup> Again, this explanation argues that of all the different peoples who originally held the Holy Land, the land is known as the “Land of Canaan” because the Hittites of Hebron, who fall within the super-nation of Canaan, honored Abraham.

Indeed, *Vaiykra Rabbah* §17:5 offers three opinions as to why the Bible calls the Holy Land, “Land of Canaan”. According to the first explanation, the name Canaan homiletically alludes to God’s future deferral of direct punishment against the Israelites; just as Ham committed an atrocity against his father, yet his son Canaan was punished (Gen. 9:20–27), so will the Israelites later commit sins, yet they themselves will not receive punishment, their land will be stricken instead. According to the second explanation, the land is called Canaan because Canaan (son of Ham) was the father of the various nations which settled there, their lineage to Canaan is the common denominator of the tribes that inhabited the Holy Land. The third explanation contends that the word Canaan in the context of the Land of Canaan should not be taken as a proper name referring to the Canaanite people, but as a common noun that means “merchant”, as most of the Land’s population were merchants.

Only the second explanation assumes that all inhabitants of the Holy Land were part of the Canaanite super-nation. The other two explanations allow for the possibility that non-Canaanite nations may also have also lived there.

## NOTES

1. Interestingly, the Qumran sect tended to add the Girgashites to lists of Canaanites even when they are omitted from the MT of the Bible. See L. H. Schiffman, "The Laws of War in the Temple Scroll", *Revue de Qumrân* vol. 13:1 (1988), p. 310.

2. JT *Sheviit* 6:1, *Vayikra Rabbah* §17:6, *Devarim Rabbah* §5:14. See also Eitz Yosef (to *Vayikra Rabbah* there) who notes that in JT *Sheviit*, it seems that Joshua sent letters before the Israelites entered the Holy Land, while *Devarim Rabbah* implies that he sent it afterwards.

3. The term *Afriki* in Rabbinic literature sometimes refers to Africa and sometimes to Phrygia (a Greek province in Anatolia). Many commentators explain that the term *Afirki* refers to the North African settlement of Carthage, which started as a Phoenician (i.e. Canaanite) colony. See S. Lieberman, *Tosefta ki-Fshuta Part III* (Jerusalem/New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 2002), p. 105.

O. Amitay, "Procopius of Caesarea and the Girgashite Diaspora", *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* vol. 20:4 (2011), pp. 257–276 discusses reports from Byzantine writers about an ancient African inscription purportedly written by Canaanite refugees of Joshua's conquest. However, Amitay casts doubts on the historicity of those inscriptions and attempts to propose possible motivations for fabricating such accounts.

Hippolytus of Rome (170–235 CE) writes that some of the Canaanites who fled Joshua's conquest of the Holy Land settled in what would become the Roman province *Hispania Tarraconensis* (i.e. the Spanish isles). See Amitay, pp. 263–264. Ibn Ezra and Radak (to Oba. 1:20) record a tradition that maintains that France and Germany served as the Canaanite diaspora for those Canaanites who fled Joshua's conquest. See also Z. Kasdoi, *Shivtei Yaakov ve-Notzrei Yisrael* (Haifa, 1928), pp. 31–35 who examines evidence of a tradition that the inhabitants of the Caucas Mountains were originally Canaanite, specifically Amorite, refugees of Joshua's conquest of the Holy Land. "Girgashites." *Encyclopedia Judaica* vol. 7 (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), p. 616 cites scholars who propose that the Girgashites might be the Qaraqisha people who allied with the Hittites against the Egyptians. This implies that the Girgashites lived in the area north of the Holy Land, and, in fact, the name Girgash may be attested to at Ugarit.

4. See also *Scholion to Megillat Ta'anit* (25th of Sivan), *Bereishit Rabbah* §61:7.

5. See Y. Lifschitz (ed.), *Sanhedrei Gedolah* vol. 1 *Hiddushei Rabbeinu David Bonfil* (Jerusalem: Harry Fishel Institute, 1968), pp. 83–88 and Y. L. Maimon (ed.), *Yehusai Tanaim ve-Amoraim* (Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 1963), pp. 35–36.

6. *Beer ba-Sadeh* to Ex. 34:11.

7. R. Danon (*Beer ba-Sadeh* to Deut. 20:17) explains that on the surface, the Girgashites should be no different than any of the other six Canaanite nations. However, since Moses prophetically knew that the Girgashites were destined to flee the Holy Land without a fight, he did not mention them in the Torah's list of Canaanite nations that the Israelites were commanded to destroy.



Accordingly, *Sifrei* means that although the commandment of destroying the Canaanites technically applied to the Girgashites as well, they are not mentioned explicitly because in practice their flight from the Holy Land rendered that requirement moot. R. Danon then cites the view of his teacher, R. David Pardo, who explains in his commentary *Sifrei de-Vei Rav* (to *Sifrei*) that although the Girgashites fled the Holy Land, the *Sifrei* understood that they are nonetheless included in the nations of Canaan whom the Israelites were commanded to annihilate. R. Danon rejects this view largely because he finds it implausible that the commandment to destroy the Canaanite nations would continue to apply even to those who peacefully fled the Holy Land. He reasons that if such was the reality, then Joshua should not have given them the option to flee. See also R. David Pardo's *Maskil le-David* to Deut. 20:17 in which he offers an explanation very similar to R. Danon's.

8. *Aderet Eliyahu* to Deut. 20:17.

9. J. Klugmann (ed.), *Peirush ha-Rokeah al ha-Torah* vol. 2 (Bene Barak, 2001), p. 24. Alternatively, he explains that the land of the Girgashites did not flow with milk and honey to the same degree as the rest of the Holy Land did (similar to Nahmanides' approach I cited in "Nations and Super-nations of Canaan", *JBQ*, 46:2), so when singing the praises of the Holy Land, the fact that it partially belonged to the Girgashites is omitted. However, see there vol. 1, p. 295 and vol. 3, p. 49 which imply that the Land of the Girgashites was not at all flowing with milk and honey (like Nahmanides seems to explain), not just that it did not match the degree of fecundity found in the rest of the Holy Land.

10. R. Shammai Ginsburg (*Imrei Shammai* to Ex. 33:2) answers that the Girgashites indeed participated in the battle of Jericho, but after the Israelites' decisive victory, they fled the Holy Land and went to *Afriki*.

11. *Rinat Yitzhak* to Josh. 24:11.

12. *Hasdei David* to the *Tosefta* (there).

13. *Ateret Yitzhak al Tosefta-Seder Moed* (Jerusalem: Machon Daat Torah, 1981), p. 9a.

14. *Tosefta im Pirush Hazon Yehezkel-Moed* vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 2000), p. 17a.

15. Nahmanides repeats this explanation in his work *Sefer ha-Geulah*, see C. D. Chavel (ed.), *Kitvei Rabbeinu Moshe ben Nahman* vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 1963), p. 284.

16. *Emet le-Yaakov* to Gen. 10:15.

17. G. Deutsch & S. Ochser, "Perizzites.", *Encyclopedia Judaica* vol. 9 (New York, 1906), p. 640 cites the view that the Perizzites were a pre-historic tribe who assimilated within the Canaanites when the latter invaded Canaan. According to that view, the Perizzites are not mentioned in the genealogical tables of Gen. 10 as descendants of Canaan because they were not ethnically Canaanite. However, later scholarship has shied away from this speculation and admits that the Perizzites' origins, and even the etymology of their name, remain basically unknown (although several speculative theories have been proposed). See P. Artzi & I. Grumach, "Perizzites.", *Encyclopedia Judaica* vol. 15 (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), p. 772.

18. Some scholars associate the Perizzites with the Hurrian people, some of whom were known to have been city leaders in the pre-Israelite Holy Land (possibly associating the Perizzites with the Hebrew word *prazi* which means, "unwalled city"). This would suggest that those nations originated in the area north of what is traditionally the Holy Land (i.e. in modern-day Lebanon and Syria), squarely in the vicinity of the ancient city of Sidon. See R. S. Hess, "West Semitic

Texts and the Book of Joshua”, *Bulletin for Biblical Research* vol. 7 (1997), pp. 67–68. Academia also tends to identify the Hivites and Jebusites as Hurrian, see M. I. Gruber, “Hivites.” *Encyclopedia Judaica* vol. 9 (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), p. 294 and A. Lebanon & S. D. Sperling, “Jebus, Jebusite.” *Encyclopedia Judaica* vol. 11 (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), pp. 99–100.

19. Scholars contend that the Amorites are attested to in extra-Biblical literature as a nation in ancient Syria-Palestine. Their name may be related to the Akkadian word *Amurru* which means “west”, the general direction of the Holy Land from Mesopotamia. See N. K. Gottwald, “Amorites.”, *Encyclopedia Judaica* vol. 2 (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), pp. 95–96.

20. J. van Seters, “The Terms ‘Amorite’ and ‘Hittite’ in the Old Testament”, *Vetus Testamentum* vol. 22:1 (1972), pp. 64–81.

21. See B. G. Wood, “Hittites and Hethites: A Proposed Solution to an Etymological Conundrum”, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* vol. 54:2 (2011), pp. 239–250.

22. T. Ishida, “The Structure and Historical Implications of the Lists of Pre-Israelite Nations”, *Biblica* vol. 60:4 (1979), p. 469, suggests that when the Israelites entered the Holy Land, they encountered a small community of “Hittites” formed by descendants of immigrants or fugitives of the Anatolian Hittites, who had been totally assimilated into the Semitic milieu, but retained a cultural memory of their past relationship to the Hittites in Anatolia.

23. *Sifrei* (to Deut. 11:10; 33:17), cited by Rashi (to Deut. 33:17) and *Yalkut Shimoni* (Josh. §22). A parallel is found in *Tanḥuma*, *Mishpatim* §17 and *Reay* §8. Akhan stole, *inter alia*, a Babylonian garment from the consecrated booty of Jericho (Josh. 7:21). In order to justify the presence of a Babylonian garment in the Holy Land, Rashi cites this midrash and adds that the king of Babylon had a palace in Jericho which he would visit from time to time. On those visits, the Babylonian king would don a special article of clothing, which Akhan stole from the booty of Jericho. However, there are other ways to deal with the Babylonian garment that Akhan stole: *Bereishit Rabbah* §85:14 and *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* §8:12 explain that the king of Babylon had dispatched an envoy to Jericho. As part of the arrangement between the two, the envoy would send the king dried dates, as Jericho was renowned for date production, and the king would send him Babylonian garments. However, see Radak (there) who explains that the garment was simply *made* in Babylon, but did not necessarily belong to the king of Babylon. According to these explanations, the Babylonian garment that Akhan stole proves nothing about the backgrounds of the nations who had a foothold in the Holy Land.

24. S. Kolidetzki (ed.), *Sifrei im Pirush Rabbeinu Hillel* vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1948), p. 38.

25. This explanation is independently offered by the later scholar R. Danon (*Beer ba-Sadeh* to Deut. 33:17).

26. Although the Midrash does not explicitly take note of this, not all of the thirty-one kings listed reflect foreign presences in the Holy Land because at least five of those kings listed are described elsewhere as Amorite. The king of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon appear in the list of thirty-one kings (Josh. 12:10–12), but are also called the five Amorite kings (Josh. 10:5).

27. Naḥmanides (to Num. 35:14) writes that the Land of Canaan comprised of multiple city-states each one ruled by an independent sovereign to whom the term *melekh* could be applied. When the Bible reports that Joshua conquered thirty-one “kings”, it refers to those local over-

lords. This explanation preempts the issue with which the Midrash attempts to deal and justifies the multiplicity of “kings” within the confines of such a limited locale.

28. *Homat Anakh* to Josh. 12:9.

29. R. Jacob Solnik in *Nahalat Yaakov* (to Deut. 33:17) cites this midrash, but finds it too farfetched to take at face value. Instead, he interprets it in the opposite fashion: all the Canaanites kings whom Joshua defeated were so successful that they also had colonies outside of the Holy Land, yet their appreciation of the Holy Land was such that they insisted on living in their palaces in the Holy Land and not elsewhere.

30. J. Klugmann (ed.), *Sefer ha-Remazim le-Rabbeinu Yoel* vol. 2 (Bene Barak, 2001), p. 212.



עשה תורתך קבע

**THE TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR**

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF CHAIM ABRAMOWITZ

July	Nahum	1 – 3
	Habakkuk	1 – 3
	Zephaniah	1 – 3
	Haggai	1 – 2
	Zechariah	1– 14
	Malachi	1 – 3
August	Psalms	1– 28
September	Psalms	29 – 56
October	Psalms	57 – 85
November	Psalms	86 – 113

