

Succoth. And so we read in verse 14 that Gideon caught a young man of the men of Succoth and enquired of him: "and he described unto him the princes of Succoth and the elders thereof, even threescore and seventeen men." The Hebrew says "77 men"; 77 men; the old English says threescore and seventeen men. 77 men it says he described to Gideon. Well, do you think Gideon had a memory a hundred times better than mine? Well, maybe it was two or three times better than mine. But I know that if one of you were to step up to me and describe to me 77 men when you got through I wouldn't remember the description of any ~~one of them~~ one of them. So that if his memory were two or three times as good as mine he might remember the descriptions of three or four. But what good would it do to describe 77 men? Well, there's a strange thing here: this word which the King James translated ~~described~~ "described" is a word which occurs hundreds of times in the Old Testament. And every single time, ~~except~~ except about 15, it's translated ~~write~~ "write." Now of these 15, one of them is this case, where it's translated "describe", and the other cases are all in the account in Joshua where they are marking out the borders of the different tribes. And it tells how the committee went, and they "described" a border going between these towns, ~~they~~ and "described" a border. Well, to write it down would be perhaps a better translation there. They wrote down the border there. But how about this case? Well, I don't think those translators in the days of King James dreamed that a young man just caught at random that way would be able to write down the names of 77 leaders and a little bit about them (~~each~~ each of them). So when they came to the word (Hevil?)(Heevil?) "write" here they simply translated it "described." But the Hebrew word is "write." And it is a very interesting evidence of the fact that writing in the days of Gideon was ~~was~~ probably much commoner in Palestine than it was 20 years ago. Writing was very common in the ancient world. If you question whether writing was common you just learn cuneiform and read the Code of Hammurabi. You read in that Code of Hammurabi where Hammurabi said the king of Babylon, about 1700 B.D., he says, "I put this big thing up here in the public square so that anybody who thinks that he has been unjustly treated can come and read it and see what his rights are.