

NAME

Both Jews and Christians use Joshua as the name of the book. The title is taken from the principal figure rather than the author. Joshua means "Jehovah saves" or "Jehovah is salvation." The New Testament counterpart is Jesus.

AUTHOR

The book is anonymous. It was possibly written by Eleazar or one of the elders that outlived Joshua. Internal evidence suggests that Joshua furnished much of the material and could have written much of it himself (notice the use of the first person in Joshua 5:1,6).

The book is the first of a group called by the Hebrews the "former prophets" (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings). They were thought to have been written by men with the prophetic gift and office.

Some events may not have occurred until after Joshua had died: 1) The capture of Hebron and Debir (Joshua 15:13-19; Judges 1:10-15); 2) The capture of Leshem (Joshua 19:47; Judges 18:27); and 3) The joint occupation of Jerusalem (Joshua 15:63; Judges 1:21). The last verses (24:29-33) were obviously added at a later date.

About Joshua:

- The date of his birth is not given. He is assumed to be about the same age as Caleb (who was 40 at the time of spying out the land) and about 79 at the time of the crossing of the Jordan. Joshua would have been about 80 when he was commissioned to lead Israel. If Joshua was commissioned in 1406 (the year Moses died) then, subtracting 79 years, he would have been born in 1485 B.C.(?)
- Joshua was born a slave in Egypt of the tribe of Ephraim (Numbers 13:8).
- Some of his ancestor were cattle thieves (1 Chronicles 7:20-22)
- Joshua distinguished himself early as Moses' lieutenant on the way out of Egypt (Exodus 17:9ff). He served as Moses' servant at the giving of the Law (Exodus 24:33).
- He, with Caleb, was one of the spies who had faith in God to overcome the great odds in Canaan. They, and the 2 sons of Aaron, were the only adults of that generation to enter Canaan.
- He was a fearless warrior and general superintending over the invasion and conquest of Canaan.
- He was a man of courage, prayer, faith, leadership, enthusiasm, and steadfastness. He is one of the more noble characters in the Bible.
- He died at the age of 110 and was respected by all Israel (Joshua 24:29).

DATE

Events of this book cover approximately 25 to 30 years. The initial campaigns took about 7 years. If Joshua was 79 at the time of the invasion and 110 when he died then the total time covered is approximately 31 years.

Judging by the date of the fall of Jericho (c. 1400 B.C. by the Tel-el-amarna letters) and the time span of 1 Kings 6:1 (Exodus Early Date theory - see Notes on Exodus) the time covered is c. 1405 BC (c. Moses' death) to 1375 B.C.

The crossing of the Jordan River took place at the time of the barley harvest (Joshua 2:6; 3:15; 4:19). The Jordan overflowed its banks at this time with the melting snows of Mount Hermon (a most difficult time to cross).

Condition of Israel (WCBS Notes):

- Moses had died c. 30 days before (Deuteronomy 34:8; Joshua 4:19).
- 2.5 tribes had settled east of Jordan; 40,000 of their men, however, were to participate in the invasion of the west.
- The entire population of Israel numbered upwards of two million, all of whom were still being fed on manna.
- They were in high spirits after their conquest of the east and were all behind Joshua 100% (Joshua 1:15-18).

Condition of Canaan (WCBS Notes): - see map Halley page 181

- Canaan designated the entire western strip from Sidon in the north to Gaza and Sodom in the south (Genesis 10:19). Its original meaning was “land of purple,” from its manufacturing of purple dyes. The Greeks later named it Phoenicia from the Greek word “purple.”
- Canaanite civilization was located largely in the lowlands rather than in the hills. Important hill cities were Kirjath-arba (Hebron), Jebus (Jerusalem), Luz (Bethel), and Shechem. The valley cities were more invulnerable, being equipped with chariots of iron (Judges 1:19).
- Canaan had been Dominated by Egypt but was also ruled by its local governors, under a feudal, city-state system.
- Canaan was populated by a mixed group. There were Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Jebusites, and the Gergasites (Joshua 9:1). The Canaanites and the Jebusites were the original groups. The Hittites were from Asia Minor in the north. The Amorites were from the Arabian Desert area; the Hivites were probably from the mountains of Seir (Genesis 36:20), and originally from Mesopotamia. Of the Perizzites nothing is known.
- The cities of Canaan were well fortified. Jericho was surrounded by two brick walls, one twelve feet thick and the other six feet thick.
- The religions of Canaan were of base idolatry. El was the chief god; Baal was his chief son who was the paramour of Ashtoreth. Baal was the god of rain, sun, and vegetation, and Ashtoreth was the personification of love and fertility. These deities had not moral character and their worship carried with it the most demoralizing practices in existence. It fostered brutality and base immorality. The culture was due for extinction (Leviticus 18:21-30; Deuteronomy 12:30-32).

THEME

Type of Literature: History & Government

Halley (page 43): The Conquest of Canaan

Kartozian: How to conquer and find rest in the battle of our spiritual lives. Joshua 1:8,9

Mitchell: The Victory of Faith

The exploits of Israel under Joshua proclaim the great New Testament truth of 1 John 5:4 (“*For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.*”). Israel conquered not by cunning but by faith. WE are clearly told that it was “*By faith the walls of Jericho fell down...*” (Hebrews 11:30). Simply walking around Jericho would never have caused its walls to tumble. The walking was simply an expression and evidence of Israel’s faith. Israel believed God and therefore obeyed God. This is likewise true of us.

Thus Exodus was the way out of slavery, Joshua is the way into the promised inheritance. Likewise salvation (redemption) is always out of something bad into something good.

Key Word (Nelson's): "Conquest" The entire book of Joshua describes the entering, conquering, and occupying of the land of Canaan.

Key Verses (Nelson's):

"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." (Joshua 1:8).

"So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had spoken to Moses. And Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war" (Joshua 11:23).

Key Chapter (Nelson's): Chapter 24: Joshua reviews for the people God's fulfillment of His promises and then challenges them to review their commitment to the covenant, which is the foundation for all successful national life. of Israel, *"And the people said to Joshua, 'The Lord our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey.' So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and put in place statutes and rules for them at Shechem."* (Joshua 24:24,25).

Some Spiritual Lessons Emphasized:

- How to conquer and find rest in the battle of our spiritual lives (Joshua 1:8,9)
- The Christian life is not passive. It is constantly utilizing the resources of God.

Outline:

I. The Conquest of Canaan chapters 1-12

1. The entrance into Canaan 1-5
2. The central campaign 6-9
 - Jericho, Ai, Bethel
 - The pilgrimage to Mounts Ebal & Gerezim to fulfill Deuteronomy 27
 - The Gibeon deception (The Gibeonite Maneuver)
3. The southern campaign 10
4. The northern campaign 11
5. Recapitulation of the whole conquest 12

II. The Distribution of the Land chapters 13-21 - see map Halley page 185

1. Unprocessed land / east of Jordan 13
2. Caleb's portion 14
3. West Jordan divided among 9.5 tribes 15-19
4. Cities of Refuge 20
 - Purpose: to protect accidental slayers & provide amnesty while awaiting the death of the High Priest
5. The Levitical Cities 21

III. Dispute With The East Jordan Tribes chapter 22

IV. Final Discourse and Death of Joshua chapters 23,24

1. First Discourse 23
 - Cleave to land
 - I will choose 1,000
 - Apostasy + Integration = Destruction
2. Second Discourse 24:1-28
 - Personal choice given to people 24:14-15
 - People's resolve to serve the Lord 24:16-18
3. Death of Joshua 24:29-31
4. Burial of Joseph at Shechem 24:32
5. Death of Eleazar the Priest 24:33
 - Death of the High Priest signifies the end of an era. QUESTION: How did Eleazar write the last chapter if he is dead?

RECIPIENTS

God's people - specifically the Hebrews...and us.

CONTRIBUTION TO CANON

Typical Teaching:

Historically this book records the entrance of Israel into the land. It tells how this entrance was effected by the power of God; the conflicts that arose when Israel came into the land; the partial conquest and division of the land among the tribes. However, this book is also rich in spiritual application. Viewed in this fashion, one can see examples of the Christian position, experience, and conflict. Some leading types are:

1. Joshua is a type of our New Testament Commander Jesus Christ. Christ, whose earthly names (Jesus) is the same. Joshua was the first in Biblical history to bear that name. In Jesus Christ there is rest for the Christian. He said, *"Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"* (Matthew 11:28). This rest is the rest of faith which may be ours now. There is rest in the hereafter too - the rest which was proclaimed by a voice from heaven, *"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!"* (Revelations 14:13)
 - Joshua & Jesus come after Moses (John 1:17; Romans 8:3,4; Galatians 3:23-25)
 - Joshua & Jesus lead us to victory (Romans 8:37; 2 Corinthians 2:14)
 - Joshua & Jesus is our advocate when we suffer defeat (Joshua 7:5-9; 1 John 2:1)
 - Joshua & Jesus allot our portions (Ephesians 1:11)
2. The Jordan River Crossing is a type of our death with Christ (Ephesians 2:5,6; Colossians 3:1-3). The Jordan River has always been thought to symbolically represent death. But not the death of the Christian as indicated by the famous hymn: "I'll Never Cross Jordan Alone." Rather the Jordan River Crossing represents the death of Christ. As Israel was brought into Canaan by crossing the Jordan, the believer is brought into his inheritance (Canaan) by the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The believer is to make an identification with Christ's death and resurrection, and thereby leave behind our old life of sin (Egypt and Wilderness Wandering) and to enter into the enjoyment of our spiritual Canaan (Romans 6:1-14).

3. Canaan is a type of the higher Christian life to be won by warfare (Romans 7:23). The "heavenlies" of Ephesians are to the Christian what Canaan was to the Israelite. Canaan does not represent heaven as some have imagined. Israel had to fight her way through Canaan. She entered the land without battle; but once in the land, her battles really began. This hardly reminds one of heaven! Also, the possibility always existed for Israel to be driven out of Canaan. We believe this is not true of heaven. Rather Canaan reminds us more of our heavenly position in Christ Jesus. As believers we are called upon to possess all that is positionally ours in Christ. Or to state it another way, Canaan is the sphere of our spiritual blessings given in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). As a believer we are called upon to possess and enjoy these blessings. Egypt is Satan's domain. The Wilderness is the unsundered life. Canaan is the surrendered life.
4. The Canaanites are a type of our spiritual enemies (Ephesians 6:12).
5. The warfare of Israel is a type of the fight of faith. Israel's enemies were the various pagan peoples she encountered in the conquest of her Canaan inheritance. As Christians we encounter enemies in the process of possessing our inheritance but they are spiritual forces (Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 Timothy 1:8; 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:3,4).
6. Israel's rest after the conquest (Joshua 11:23) is the type of the rest of the soul (Hebrews 4:8,9). Joshua is a book full of geographical names - each place became a home for men who had been wandering for long years in the wilderness.
7. That the Canaanites were only partly conquered is a type of sin and spiritual enemies only partly subdued (Hebrews 12:1)
8. Israel, as God's heavenly people, is seen as a type of the Church.

Mitchell: This book is actually the account of a military campaign. The Pentateuch leads up to Canaan and the book of Joshua leads into Canaan. The next twelve books (historical books) describe Israel's settlement in the land. Thus Joshua is a connecting link between the Pentateuch and the historical books. It follows up the history after Deuteronomy somewhat as the book of Acts follows on the Gospels. The book shows how a faith that results in obedience and loyalty meets with success.

The relationship of the book of Joshua to other books in the Bible:

- To the Pentateuch: The book of Joshua stands in somewhat the same relation to the Pentateuch as the Acts of the Apostles to the Gospels. The Pentateuch gives the origin and principles of Judaism and the Gospels give the origin and principles of Christianity. In the books of Joshua and in the Acts of the Apostles we see these principles in action. Joshua is the first historical book of Judaism and the Acts is the first historical book of the Christian Church. Neither the Pentateuch nor the Gospels are primarily historical. They are the textbooks of the Old and New Covenant. The book of Joshua and the Acts are primarily historical. The historical elements in the Pentateuch and the Gospels is given in order to explain and illustrate the meaning of the two covenants.
- To the Book of Hebrews: In the book of Joshua the account of the extermination of the Canaanites, the partition and settlement of Canaan, and the military exploits of Joshua are recorded. Much space is devoted to these. Just as the description of the Old Testament sacrifices related at length in Leviticus are full of deep spiritual truths required for the growth of the holy soul, so the long accounts in Joshua are given to us as examples (1 Corinthians 10:11). The clue to this inner meaning is given by the writer of the book of Hebrews in chapters 3 and 4 (3:18,19; 4:1-11). There is great spiritual significance in the account related

in the book of Joshua - it tells of that satisfaction of rest, wealth, and victory which may be enjoyed by those who have come to know the secret things which God has prepared for them which love Him and which are revealed by His Spirit.

- To the Book of Ephesians: The book of Joshua is to the Old Testament what the epistle to the Ephesians is to the New Testament. The characteristic word of Ephesians is “the heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:3,20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12). This expression stands for the spiritual experience of oneness with the risen Savior in His resurrection and exaltation which is the privilege of all the saints. Just as Israel possessed the earthly inheritance given in Abraham, Christians are to possess the heavenly inheritance given in Christ. The analogy between “the heavenly places” and the land of Canaan may be traced in the following particulars:
 1. Each was the goal to which God’s purposes led His people - each book sets for the predestined inheritance of a chosen people.
 2. Each was impossible by means of the law - in each book the inheritance is presented as a gift of God to be received by faith.
 3. Each was entrusted to a representative - each inheritance is opened up by a Divinely ordained leader.
 4. Each was missed by many
 5. Each was infested by many adversaries (Ephesians 6:12) - in each book the inheritance is described as a scene of conflict.

Additionally - in each book a striking Divine revelation is given (Joshua 4:24; Ephesians 3:8-10).

RESOURCES

Gromacki, Robert C. *New Testament Survey*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Book House, 1978

Halley, Henry H. *Halley’s Bible Handbook*, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Zondervan Publishing House

Horton, David, General Editor. *The Portable Seminary*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Bethany House Publishers, 2006

Nelson’s Quick Reference - Bible Maps And Charts, Nashville, Tennessee; Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1994

As general resources I’ve relied on my class notes from various professors at Biola University (especially those of Dr. Curtis Mitchell), Western Conservative Baptist Seminary (WCBS), and Talbot Seminary as well as notes shared with me by Annie Kartoian.

Additional reference material has come from the study Bibles of the English Standard Version, New American Standard Version, and The New Living Translation.

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