

The Book of Joshua

An Introduction to the Book of Joshua

- I. Title
 - A. Generally, it is thought that the book is named for its main character rather than its author. {*However, this does not mean that Joshua is not the author of this book.*}
 - B. The name Joshua means, “Jehovah is salvation” or “Jehovah saves.”
 - C. The Greek form of the name Joshua is “Jesus” (cf. Heb. 4:8).

- II. Author
 - A. It is possible, and very likely, that Joshua penned the book that bears his name.
 - B. In fact, some parts of the book are identified as the work of Joshua (cf. 24:1-26).
 - C. However, the author of the book is nowhere stated in Scripture.
 - D. It should be noted, however, that every event in the book of Joshua took place within 10 years of Joshua’s death.
 - 1. Some claim that Joshua could not have written about things that happened after his death.
 - 2. From that premise, they then attempt to argue that the book must have been written long after the conquest of Canaan.
 - 3. Yet, the evidence does not warrant this conclusion.
 - E. It seems that Joshua wrote most of the book, while the events following his death were recorded by another inspired individual whose identity is unknown.

- III. Date
 - A. The contents of the book cover the period of the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites.
 - B. Joshua was 85 when he began leading the people of Israel and he died 25 years later, at the age of 110 (cf. 24:29).
 - C. This puts the date at approximately 1450 - 1425 BC.

- IV. Purpose
 - A. The book of Joshua shows and emphasizes the faithfulness of God (cf. 21:43-45).
 - B. It also serves to relate the history of Israel following the books of Moses.
 - C. Also, it reveals the character of Joshua - establishing him as a type of the Christ to come (cf. Heb. 4:8-9).
 - D. Lessons from the book: (*adapted from Charles Pledge*)
 - 1. To succeed, one must “wholly follow the Lord” (14:8, 9, 14).
 - 2. One’s greatness is measured by his surrender to God.
 - 3. One must pray to meet the challenge before him rather than to seek an easier life.
 - 4. One should always be prepared for opportunities presented by God.

- V. Brief Outline
 - A. Preparation for the Conquest of Canaan (Chapters 1 - 5)
 - B. The Battle for Canaan (Chapters 6 - 12)
 - C. The Division of Canaan (Chapters 13 - 24)

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- VI. The Independence of Joshua
- A. Modern, liberal scholars often argue that the book of Joshua should be grouped with the Pentateuch.
 - 1. This stems from their denial of Moses as the sole author of the first 5 books of the Bible.
 - 2. They claim that since it continues the history of the first 5 books it should be categorized with them.
 - B. Yet, the evidence clearly shows that the book of Joshua is its own narrative - independent from the writings of Moses.
 - 1. If Joshua should be included because it continues the history of Israel, why stop there?
 - 2. Why not Judges, Samuel, and Kings?
 - C. First, Joshua was not a successor of Moses to carry on the work that God had begun with him.
 - 1. Moses was chosen to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage and to bring them to the land of Canaan.
 - 2. Joshua was chosen to lead Israel into the land of Canaan.
 - 3. There is an ending with the death of Moses and a new beginning with the leadership of Joshua (cf. 1:1-2).
 - D. The internal evidence of the books shows that it stands on its own.
 - 1. The style and language are different from the books of Moses.
 - 2. Its narrative is complete in itself.
 - 3. It stands in perfect harmony as one, united book.
 - E. The people of God never grouped Joshua with the books of Moses.
 - 1. In Jewish scripture, the book of Joshua was the first book of the second section of the Old Testament.
 - 2. This section was known as the "Former Prophets."
 - 3. It included Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel (one book), and 1 & 2 Kings (one book).
 - a. The second grouping was called the "Latter Prophets."
 - b. It included Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the 12 Minor Prophets.
 - c. The third division was called "The Writings."
 - d. This included the poetical books: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Ruth, and Esther.
 - e. It ended with historical books: Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and 1 & 2 Chronicles (one book).
 - 4. Remember that prophets were inspired spokesmen for God - not just men who foretold future events.
 - F. These men and their writings were put to the test by the people of God.
 - 1. A prophet spoke only by inspiration - not divination, sorcery, or idolatry.
 - 2. A prophet was conscious of his prophetic work - and his call to such an office (cf. Amos 7:14-15).
 - 3. A prophet was confirmed by God - miraculously and the fulfillment of his prophecies (cf. Deut. 18:21-22).
 - 4. A prophet spoke only in the name of Jehovah (cf. Deut. 13:1-5; 18:20).
 - 5. A prophet always harmonized with the previously revealed will of God (cf. 1 Kings 13).
 - 6. A prophet always spoke a message of quality - appealing to God and the higher calling of man, not to the fleshly or sensual.
 - 7. A prophet demonstrated moral character.