

JOSHUA

The God of Angel-Armies is Always by my Side

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- A number of elements in Joshua suggest an early date for its composition, and there is no reason to rule out Joshua as author.
 - Joshua 16:10 mentions that the Canaanites were not driven out of Gezer and lived there “to this day.” 1 Kings 9:16 reports that Pharaoh conquered Gezer and killed all the Canaanites living there. This suggests that Joshua was written before the time of Solomon.
 - Joshua 8:32 gives an indication that there was scribal activity among the Israelites during that lifetime, so there is no reason to rule out the possibility that this is a contemporary record.
 - Depending on the dating of the exodus, the events of Joshua took place at the end of the fifteenth century B.C. or sometime during the thirteenth century B.C.
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Writing of the Book

I. Entrance into the Land

- A. Preparation for Entering the Land (1-2)
- B. Crossing the Jordan (3-4)
- C. Circumcision (5:1-12)

II. Conquest Narratives

- A. The Commander of the Lord's Army (5:13-15)
 - B. Jericho (6)
 - C. Ai (7-8)
 - 1. *Defeat at Ai (7:1-5)*
 - 2. *Achan's Offense (7:6-26)*
 - 3. *Victory at Ai (8:1-29)*
 - 4. *Reading of the Law at Ebal and Gerizim (8:30-35)*
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Outline of Joshua

II. Conquest Narratives

- D. Southern Coalition (9-10)
 - 1. *Treaty with Gibeon (9)*
 - 2. *Battle at Gibeon (10)*
- E. Northern Coalition (11)
- F. List of Conquests (12)

III. Description of Allotment of Land

- A. Settlement of Prior Claims (13-17)
 - 1. *Reuben, Gad, and Half-Manasseh in Transjordan (13)*
 - 2. *Caleb (14)*
 - 3. *Judah (15)*
 - 4. *Manasseh and Ephraim (16-17)*
 - B. Remainder of Tribes (18-19)
 - C. Cities of Refuge Established (20)
 - D. Levitical Cities Allocated (21)
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Outline of Joshua

IV. Covenant Matters

- A. Potential Violation in Altar Building (22)
 - B. Covenant Exhortations to Tribal Leaders (23)
 - C. Covenant Renewal at Shechem (24)
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Outline of Joshua

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- The book of Joshua is not mainly about the person of Joshua or a military record of Israel's conquests.
 - **The purpose of the book is to convey how God kept his covenant promise** to bring the Israelites into the land he had showed to Abraham.
 - The faithfulness of God in carrying out his end of the covenant **is important to affirm.**
 - It explains why there is frequent reference to the Lord's giving the land to the people and why his role gets so much attention.
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Purpose and Message

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- The **message is that God keeps his promises**, no matter how impossible they may seem.

Theological Purpose in the Book of Joshua

- God instructs the Israelites to enter the land (1:1-9)
 - God has gone before them to terrify the occupants of the land (2:9-11)
 - God brings them across the Jordan (3-4)
 - God requires circumcision for rededication (5:1-12)
 - God commands his armies (5:13-15)
 - God gives strategies (6:2-5; 8:2)
 - God gives victories (6:16; 8:7; 10:42)
 - God allows defeat when his instructions have been violated (7:5-12)
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Purpose and Message

Covenant and Land

- In Israel's perception of herself as the covenant people of God, **nothing is more central than the land.**
 - The **delivery of that land into the hands of Israel is the focus of the book of Joshua.**
 - The book of Joshua, then, **has great theological significance, for its narratives demonstrate, more than anything else could, that the Lord was keeping the covenant promises he had made to Abraham.**
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Major Themes

The Ban

- A prominent theme of Joshua is found in the instructions regarding **how the conquered cities of Palestine were to be treated.**
 - The term ban means, *"Consecrate something or someone as a permanent and definitive offering for the sanctuary; in war, consecrate a city and its inhabitants to destruction; carry out this destruction; totally annihilate a population in war, kill."*
 - **Why the ban?** ...various explanations have been offered.
 - Scripture suggests that the Canaanites brought this destruction on themselves by their own wickedness (Deut 9:5). This is indicated not only in their abhorrent practices (e.g., fertility rites and child sacrifice), but also in their resistance to God's actions (cf. Josh 9:1-4; 10:1-5; 11:1-5).
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Major Themes

The Divine War

- The Lord is frequently described, from the time of Samuel, as “YHWH of armies.” But he is seen earlier, in the book of Joshua (10:14), as engaging in combat on behalf of the Israelites as a **divine warrior**.
 - When the Israelites set out from Sinai with the ark in the lead, the formula recited by Moses addressed Yahweh as one going forth in battle (Num 10:35).
 - The significance of this theology is laid out clearly in Proverbs 21:31: ***“The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the Lord.”***
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Major Themes

Sovereign Intervention

- It seems clear that **the miraculous element cannot be removed from the book of Joshua without severely damaging its theological intent.**
 - This is not portrayed as haphazard intervention like that evidenced in the polytheistic theology of the ancient Near East.
 - Rather, it is part of the **ongoing, consistent plan of God** that is **delineated by the historical literature, projected further by the prophetic literature, and brought to a climax in the birth, life, and death of Jesus the Christ.**
 - The **exodus and the conquest represent the first great demonstration of the sovereignty of God** in the history of Israel.
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Major Themes

Corporate Solidarity

- In Joshua 7 the consequences of Achan's sin first fell on all Israel as they lost a battle against Ai (with thirty-six Israelite casualties), and then the punishment fell on Achan's family, who were all stoned to death.
 - The sense of national or ethnic identity was much stronger for Israel than it is in today's Western societies, though corporate identity still survives in areas where teamwork is necessary and "team spirit" is valued (e.g., small companies, the military, or organized sports).
 - This solidarity was reflected positively in the laws of levirate marriage (Deut 25:5-10) and land redemption (Lev 25), which provided that family members come to the aid of a disadvantaged member of the clan. Negatively, all could suffer for the sake of one.
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Major Themes