

The Book of Joshua

Joshua : “The Lord Saves” : Jesus in Greek

A shift in the story

Dating the material : [15th - 13th] [7th - 5th]

Notion of Holy War : Kherem

Four Sections

1-5 Entering the Promised Land

6-12 Conquest of the Land

13-21 Distributing the Land among the 12 tribes

22-24 Joshua’s final words to Israel

How do we understand the violence of Joshua?

Key concepts to keep in mind...

Bible is written by real people living in real places in real times...

Jesus, our true “exegesis” [John 1:18]

The consistency of God’s character

Joshua is not an epic account of Israel’s heroic generation or the story of Israel’s conquest of Canaan with the aid of her national deity. It is rather the story of how God, to whom the whole world belongs, at one stage in the history of redemption re-conquered a portion of the earth from the powers of this world that had claimed it for themselves, defending their claims by force of arms and reliance on their false gods.

Who are the Canaanites?

The LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'I am the LORD your God. You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices. *Leviticus 18:1-3*

Joshua is the story of kingdom of God breaking into the world of nations at a time when national and political entities were viewed as the creation of the gods and living proofs of their power. Thus the Lord’s triumph over the Canaanites testifies to the world that the God of Israel is the one true and living God, whose claim on the world is absolute. It was also a warning to the nations that the irresistible advance of the kingdom of God would ultimately disinherit all those who opposed it, giving place in the earth only to those who acknowledge and serve the Lord.

The battles for Canaan were therefore the Lord's war, undertaken at a particular time in the program of redemption. God gave his people under Joshua no commission or license to conquer the world with the sword but a particular, limited mission. The conquered land itself would not become Israel's national possession by right of conquest, but it belonged to the Lord. So the land had to be cleansed of all remnants of paganism.

NIV Study Bible, page. 286

Other Themes in Joshua

The character of Rahab

Sacred Memory

Joshua's rise to leadership in Israel

God as the "divine warrior" in our lives

The God of Second Chances

Faith & Fear

Food for Thought

Who is your Rahab? *[Someone willing to help you through difficulty if you have the courage to ask?]*

In what ways are you recording the moments of your life to create a “sacred memory” for your future?

How might God be lifting you up for the future God has planned?

In what ways do you need God to fight for you in your life?

In what ways have you seen God “level the playing field” in your journey to becoming more and more like Christ?

How has God given you a second chance?

In your life, how is faith replacing your fears?

What actions am I taking in my life that are reflections of my faith?

How are you modeling for others your daily decision to “choose whom you serve?”