



Joshua

Joshua 1:2 *“Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them.”*

The worst thing that could happen to you is being the one to replace greatness. You might be great but you do not want to replace an honored and revered person. A hall of fame coach retires. A historical figure dies. The bench mark is high because they set the bar. Is your bar as high as theirs? Moses is dead. Joshua has been groomed by God and Moses for well over forty years or more. Joshua is a book that does not define itself. He is not Moses. Yes, Joshua leads them through parted waters just like Moses. Yet, it is the Ark and God doing it. The land is divided and portioned. God’s promise land is taken. Somehow, you get the feeling that the Israelites are not doing well. Then Joshua dies. Oh dear, who will lead them now?

Narrative

After all this time you would think Joshua was ready to lead Israel. He was with Moses through much of his desert wanderings. Joshua was there when Moses spoke to God. Yet, the beginnings of the book of Joshua are as much about success at Jericho and failures at Ai. The ending of Deuteronomy hints that all is not well in the Israel camp. Joshua must learn to lead these people as Moses did. Joshua must deal with the sin of Achan. Joshua must deal with his failure at Ai. From chapter 13 forward we see Joshua dealing with the division of the land. Yet, much of the promise land still needs to be taken. Already some of the clans and tribes did not

want to possess the land that God gave them. The reign of Joshua is short. Judges were needed because Israel was slowly moving away from the Lord thy God.

Intent

One of the things I admire about the Bible is its honesty. I know that seems funny because it's the holy Bible. Yet, the Bible is honest in its telling of the Israelites. It's honest in its portrait of humanity and sin. The Israelites took the promised land in spite of themselves. Joshua is not Moses. These nomads have no king, leader, or land. God is drawing them into their land but they must fight for it. Generally speaking, this is the first time these people had to fight. They needed to gain a backbone. God sends them into the land of milk and honey. Joshua is the passing of the torch. The wandering people are now to become the nation of Israel. Will they fight with God to be a nation under God?

There is a curious connection between Joshua and Jesus. Joshua takes the people into the promised land. The prostitute Rahab is saved in the Jericho story. She is in the line of Jesus. The name Jesus can be called Joshua. God leads His people as did Moses though the wilderness. Jesus is to lead God's people out of the wilderness. I get the distinct feeling this book is a bridge to Judges and beyond. Just as Jesus is a bridge from the Law of Moses to grace. In Biblical terms, what is on the other side of greatness? That is the book of Joshua to me. There is a theme that *God gave the land* but the people must take it. It's the same with Jesus. He offers salvation and all that it entails. It's us who must decide to receive it.

Characters

Moses, Joshua, Caleb, and God

Who wrote this book?

By tradition Joshua wrote it, however he does die in his own book.

Famous verses

Joshua 1:2, Joshua 6:25, Joshua 10:13, Joshua 13:22, Joshua 21:43-45

Controversies, issues, and Questions

Joshua 2 and the problematic Prostitute Rahab. Why is it easy for me to believe in God? It's because why would Jewish writers make their saviour come from an imperfect line. Why would they include non-Jewish lineage that might cast a bad light? Christians say they hate sin. We ban bad acts and rebuke people for all kinds of sin. Yet, God used a prostitute in the line of Jesus.

I am sure there are more than one Jericho. Many archeology advances have bolstered the Bible. Yet, Jericho and the dating of artifacts has plagued it. There are as many (and maybe more) than 7 Jericho sites ranging in timelines that don't fit the Bible narrative. Some had walls and some did not. Some of these Jericho's don't fit the Bible timeline for Joshua. Secondly, there are the miracle skeptics. Blowing trumpets to bring down a wall? Some have said this story does not exist. Yet, the New Testament insists on Rahab as being real.

In Joshua 10 there is the strange story of a battle. This battle has God holding the sun still so that Joshua can win the fight in the daylight. Technically, it's impossible. Yet, we hear that nothing is impossible with God. Could God, do it? Did it happen? Was it a solar eclipse? Yet, the Bible is a miracle waiting to happen. Joshua is a book full of falling walls, prostitutes saving spies, and suns standing still. That does not include the Jordan river parting.

One final controversy in Joshua. It's called the Palestinian covenant. The war and controversy between Israel and the Arab world are based squarely on the land. Deuteronomy 30:1-9 outline the promise. Yet, who really is the people God gave the land too? Arabs and Jews claim it. Where are its borders. Joshua divides up much of Palestine to the Jewish people. It's theirs to take. Yet, they never owned it all, but God promised it in Joshua 21:43-45.

Connections

Joshua 2, Matthew 1 (Rahab in the line of Jesus); Joshua is the same name as Jesus (both will lead us into the promised land)