

The Bible is full of examples of leadership, good leaders and not so good leaders. Leaders of families, leaders of churches, leaders of governments, and so on. God often works through human leaders to accomplish His purposes.

Discuss: What *leader* in the Bible stands out to you, either for good or not so good reasons?

This evening we come to a book that presents a leadership transition, the book of Joshua. In this book God transitions leadership responsibilities from Moses to Joshua. As we begin let's consider a key promise-text in Genesis 12:1-3.

Joshua: Background

God made three basic promises to Abraham in Gen 12:1-3.

Promise #1	Become a people	>>	Fulfilled in Egypt
Promise #2	Relationship with God	>>	Fulfilled at Sinai (Law given)
Promise #3	Land	>>	Fulfilled with Joshua

Who wrote the book?

Actually, we don't know. Joshua is the main character, but that doesn't make him the author (although Schofield says so). In fact, consider this:

1. The events described in 24:31 took place up to 100 years after Joshua died.
2. The phrase "unto this day" in the book (14 times) points to a later time.

(Josh 4:9) "And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan , in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there **unto this day.**"

(Josh 5:9) "And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal **unto this day.**"

(Josh 6:25) "And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even **unto this day;** because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho ."

(Josh 7:26) "And they raised over him a great heap of stones **unto this day.** So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor , **unto this day.**"

(Josh 8:28) "And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever, even a desolation **unto this day.**"

(Josh 8:29) "And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide: and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcase down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, that remaineth **unto this day.**"

(Josh 9:27) "And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD, even **unto this day**, in the place which he should choose."

(Josh 14:14) " Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite **unto this day**, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel ."

(Josh 15:63) "As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem , the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem **unto this day.**"

(Josh 16:10) "And they drove not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer : but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites **unto this day**, and serve under tribute."

Key: This indicates a date of no later than 1000 B.C. in David's day.

(Josh 22:3) "Ye have not left your brethren these many days **unto this day**, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God."

(Josh 23:8) "But cleave unto the LORD your God, as ye have done **unto this day.**"

(Josh 23:9) "For the LORD hath driven out from before you great nations and strong: but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you **unto this day.**"

So who wrote the book? Possibilities:

1. Schofield (and Archer) suggests Joshua did.
2. Harrison suggests Samuel did.
3. Since the book is anonymous, the issue is unclear.

When was the book written?

The events recorded in Joshua took place in the 14th century B.C., but the date the book itself was written is unclear. One clue is to look at the themes in the book. The themes can give us a hint as to the kind of issues that were facing the Israelites at the time God gave them this book.

Suggested Date of Writing: During the period of the Judges (Samuel 1045 B.C.)

Why was the book written?

Certainly to tell us how the Israelites got the Land, but there's more.

Key: What kind of literature is Joshua? Narrative, theological narrative.

God didn't give us Joshua merely to give us dry historical facts. He is very selective about which facts are included (and which left out--remember the conquest of the land took years). There are certain themes God addresses

in this book, themes which were vital for the people of God when the book was written.

Notice some key features about the content of the book, namely the comparison between Moses and Joshua.

1. Joshua begins with the death of Moses (ch 1) and ends with the death of Joshua (ch 24).
2. Moses led the people out of Egypt through water. Joshua led the people into the Promised Land through water.
3. Moses observed the Passover before the Exodus. Joshua observed the Passover after entering the Land.
4. Moses renewed the covenant as his last deed in life. Joshua renewed the covenant as his last deed in life.
5. Neither Moses nor Joshua could do anything by themselves. God did it through them. There were no superhuman feats done by the men themselves.

Discuss: If the book of Joshua was written by Samuel in 1045 B.C., why would this theme of leadership be critical?

Key: The Israelites had just come through the chaotic time of the Judges. They needed to know what's the kind of leader God approves. Before David, Joshua was the model. After David lived, he became the paradigm of true leadership.

What is the outline of the book?

Josh 11:23 is perhaps the key verse of the book. It gives us the "Big Picture."

I. The Conquest

"So Joshua took the whole land"

II. The Fulfillment of Promise

"According to all that the LORD had spoken through Moses"

III. The Allotment to the People

"And Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes"

IV. The Rest

"And the land had rest from war."

The Outline of the Book:

I. The Commission of Joshua (1:1-9)

II. The Entry into the Land (1:10-5:12)

III. The Conquest of the Land (5:13-12:24)

IV. The Division of the Land (13:1-22:34)

V. Joshua's Final Charge (23-24)

Note: Joshua records what happens when God's people obey God's covenant (Judges records what happens when they don't).

What is the message of the book in one sentence?

Joshua is the record of how God fulfilled His promise to the Abraham by giving the Israelites the Promised Land.

What contribution does the book make to biblical theology (that is, how does this book relate to the rest of the Bible)?

1. Joshua emphasizes the importance of the covenant in the life of God's people.

The term "covenant" appears 17 times in Joshua, often in the phrase "ark of the covenant." It's interesting how as a leader, Joshua kept reminding the people of the covenant God made with Israel at Sinai, and then renewed it in contemporary terms.

As a covenant people, we are linked to the past, but we live in the present.

See the following:

8:30-35 Joshua rehearsed the covenant at Mount Ebal , and copied and read the Law

23:6, 16 At the end of his life, Joshua called an assembly and challenged the people.

24:25 Joshua renewed the covenant at Shechem.

Other texts: The prophets constantly called the people to look back to the covenant established by Moses (note: The word "covenant" appears 75 times in Isaiah to Malachi).

Also see: 1 Cor 11:25 "This cup is the new covenant...do this in remembrance..."

2. Joshua provides us with God's perspective on success.

See: 1:8

First, whatever success is, it comes from God. Second, it doesn't mean there won't be battles, but that God will see us through the battles. Third, as in Israel 's case in taking the Land, sometimes God fights FOR us, and sometimes He fights THROUGH us.

3. Joshua gives us a model of the marks of a godly leader.

Discuss: What do we learn about God's kind of leader from this book?

4. God is holy and takes sin seriously.

See: What happened to Achan (ch 7) and to the Canaanites (11:20)

5. *Joshua reveals how highpoints are often followed by lowpoints in the lives of God's people, but God is faithful through it all.*

Highpoint	Lowpoint
Jericho (ch 6)	Achan's sin & Ai (ch 7)
Covenant renewed (ch 8)	Gibeonite deception (ch 9)
Land Taken (ch 13-21)	Near Civil War (22:12)

Other Texts: The book of Judges

Discuss: How should this insight affect us this evening?

6. *Joshua is a book that reveals that God keeps His promises.*

Note: The tedious list of city names in chs 13-22 may be monotonous to us, but to the Israelites who lived in the Land, every name said, "Our God keeps His Word!"