

JOSHUA

Seizing the Promises

The Book of Joshua tells the story of Israel's conquest of the Promised Land and the subsequent distribution of the land to "all Israel." It is a story of military success and military failure and of Israel's obedience and disobedience.¹ It is a story of how "Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass" (Josh 21:45). It is a story that teaches that the promises of God are accomplished in and through the obedience of His people.

Introductory Issues

Authorship

The Book of Joshua is silent regarding the identity of its author. Critical scholarship has tended to view it as a composite document with multiple authors or redactors and completed sometime around the time of Deuteronomy (late seventh century B.C.). But this theory does not seem to square with the internal evidence. In Joshua 5:1, 6, the author appears to have participated in the events (note the pronouns "we" and "us"). Furthermore, the detail present in some of the narrative suggests that they were composed by an eyewitness. Rahab is said to still be alive "to this day" in 6:25. Similarly, Joshua 16:10 states that the Israelites had not driven out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer "to this day" (cf. 15:63). Therefore, a better suggestion is that Joshua or one of his contemporaries (Eleazer and Phinehas have been suggested by some) authored the book. The case for Joshua is bolstered by the fact that the book twice records Joshua writing (8:32; 24:26). Later Jewish tradition also identified Joshua as the author (*Baba Bathra* 14b). But, the fact is, we simply cannot know for certain who authored the book.

Date

The issue of dating Joshua really involves two issues: (1) the date of the events, (2) the date of writing. The date of the events contained in the Book of Joshua is tied to the dating of Exodus from Egypt since the events of Joshua is intimately linked to this event. Since we have already concluded that the Exodus from Egypt occurred in 1446 B.C. and that the conquest described in Joshua followed after the forty year period of Israel's wanderings in the Wilderness, the starting point of the events of the book is about 1406. The dating of the writing of the book is tied to the issue of authorship. Critical scholars with its composite authorship/redaction posit a late seventh century (or later date). However, since we have suggested that an eyewitness wrote the book (or at least most of it), this would suggest a fourteenth century date.

¹ While Joshua is clearly Moses' successor as leader of the nation, he does not function as Moses did as the law giver. Rather, Joshua refers back to the Mosaic Law and serves as the law's teacher, implementer, and enforcer.

Historical Setting

The Book of Joshua provides a history of the conquest of the Promised Land. The conquest begins around 1406 B.C. (see previous section) and continues for about seven years. Although Josephus gives the length of the conquest as five years (*Ant.* 5.1.19), internal evidence in Joshua and the Pentateuch suggests that the length was actually seven years. This is based on Caleb's statement that the Lord had promised that he would enter Canaan forty-five years earlier (14:10) and the fact that this promise was made thirty-eight years before the beginning of the conquest (Num 14:24; cf. Num 10:11). The *terminus ad quem* is difficult to determine but some chronological determination can be made with the death of Joshua at 110 years of age (24:29–30). Since Joshua was active during the initial events of the Exodus then he would have at least been a young man (probably at least in his twenties if not older) in 1446. If Joshua was twenty that means he would have been born around 1466 and his death about 1356. But it is possible that Joshua was older than twenty in 1446.² Eugene Merrill suggests that Joshua's death occurred around 1366.³

The conquest occurred during the period referred to as the Late Bronze Age (1550–1200 B.C.). Politically, the small city-states of Canaan were under the dominion of larger empires, most notably the Hittites and Egyptians. However, it appears that during the time of the Conquest the control of these larger empires waned temporarily which of course, allowed Israel more freedom to carry out the conquest.

Original Audience

The original recipients of Joshua are not explicitly identified. Presumably, it was originally written for Israel. The purposes (see below) of the book may suggest that the original recipients were Israelites living during the time of the Judges or the early monarchy.

Occasion and Purpose

The occasion and purpose of Joshua must be discussed together. The latter appears to relate to the former. There appears to be at least two purposes for the book. First, Joshua was written to provide an inspired account of the conquest of the Promised Land as a fulfillment of YHWH's promise to the Patriarchs and to Moses. This purpose can be clearly seen in 1:1–9. A second purpose for the writing of the book is motivational. Even though YHWH is gracious and faithful, remaining in the land would require keeping the Mosaic covenant (see especially the blessings and curses in Deuteronomy). Thus, Joshua was written to motivate Israel to keep their covenant with YHWH. This purpose can be seen in 1:7–8. Furthermore, as Donald Madvig has observed,

² For example, C. J. Goslinga has suggested that Joshua was eighty to ninety years old when he entered the Promised Land (*Joshua, Judges, Ruth*, trans. Ray Togtman, Bible Student's Commentary [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986], 32).

³ Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008), 242.

The inclusion of Joshua with the ‘Former Prophets’ in the Jewish canon shows keen insight into the true function of the book. The author’s intention was not to preserve history for its own sake, not even a prophetically interpreted history. He presented a careful selection of historical and traditional materials in order to preach. He wanted to proclaim that Israel was blessed at the time of the Conquest because she was faithful to her God and to his law and that this would be the secret of Israel’s success and blessing in every generation.⁴

Madvig goes on to show how this message would have been appropriate for the Israelites during the period of the Judges or early monarchy. He writes, “This message would have special relevance at a time when the temptation to apostasy was strong or when Israel was suffering from a great national disaster. The period of the Judges nicely fits these criteria, as does the time of the early monarchy under Saul.”⁵ Therefore, while dogmatism is unwarranted given the paucity of the evidence, the period of the Judges provides a reasonable and defensible suggestion regarding the occasion of the book.

New Testament Significance

The significance of Joshua for the New Testament is debated. On the one hand, there are about twenty allusions to the book sprinkled throughout the New Testament (e.g., Matt 1:5; 12:29–30, 33; 22:37; Luke 10:27; John 4:5, 20; 9:24; Acts 7:16, 45; 13:19; 1 Cor 5:13; Heb 4:8; 11:30–31; 13:5; James 2:25) and Rahab not only appears in Jesus’ genealogy (Matt 1:5) but also twice serves as a model of faith (Heb 1:31; Jam 2:25). Some interpreters have also seen great typological significance in Joshua as a type of Christ and Rahab’s scarlet thread as a type of redemption. Furthermore, “Many have also drawn comparisons between Joshua and the book of Acts. After redemption from Egypt in the exodus, Israel began the conquest of her inheritance; after the redemptive work of Jesus at the cross, his people move forward to conquer the world in his name.”⁶ On the other hand, other interpreters suggest that the destruction of the Canaanites (e.g., Josh 11:20) represents a sub-Christian ethic that is incompatible with the ethic of Jesus (see the discussion below).

Special Issues

The destruction of the Canaanites

The complete extermination of the Canaanites evidenced periodically in the Book of Joshua has often troubled interpreters. Furthermore, for some Christian interpreters there is great difficulty in resolving the utter destruction of the Canaanites commanded in Joshua with the teachings of

⁴ Donald H. Madvig, “Joshua,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Walter C. Kaiser Jr. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 244.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Tremper Longman III and Raymond B. Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2006), 132. However, caution should be exercised in making such comparisons given certain events in Christian history, most notably, the Crusades.

Christ and the gospel. What follows is a very brief reflection on some of the issues that one should take into consideration in working towards a solution.

First, it must be remembered that the extermination of the Canaanites is part of a broader concept related to God's justice and wrath. That is, God judges sin and metes out the resulting punishment. In the process of punishing sinful people God has the prerogative to use a variety of means, including people to carry out His judgment.⁷ Thus the extermination of the Canaanites must be viewed as an extension of God's sovereignty.

Second, the extermination of the Canaanites must be viewed within the broader context of YHWH (or Holy)⁸ war. The magnitude of the topic is beyond the scope of this introduction, but a few points might prove helpful.⁹ By YHWH war we mean a war that YHWH initiates, facilitates, and participates for the fulfillment of His covenantal promises and purposes. Thus, the extermination of the Canaanites in Joshua is not motivated by material greed or by racial or ethnic hatred. Rather, the motivation is tied intimately to the covenantal promises. For Israel to receive the land promised to the Patriarchs, the current inhabitants would have to be displaced.

Third, and related to the second point, is the fact that mere displacement is insufficient. The extermination of the Canaanites is necessary for at least three reasons. First, the Canaanites must be removed for prophylactic reasons. That is, Israel needed to be protected against the spiritual and moral defilement of the Canaanites (Deut 7:16). As Gleason Archer notes, "The subsequent history of Israel serves to illustrate very pointedly the grave danger that remained for Israel so long as the Canaanites were permitted to live in their midst."¹⁰ Second, the removal of the Canaanites served a didactic purpose. That is, the judgment of the Canaanites would serve as vivid warning against moral and spiritual transgressions. And third, although it may be a bit difficult to grasp, the extermination of the Canaanites was merciful in the sense that it prevented further and future godlessness.

Finally, it should be noted that the extermination of the Canaanites was a limited event. The contention that the Old Testament contains many such events is simply not true. As Christopher Wright notes, "The conquest narratives describe one particular period of Israel's long history."¹¹

While these observations do not resolve all the ethical and theological difficulties associated with this issue, and while modern sensibilities and geo-political realities tug at the interpreter, for this writer the above provides a necessary and sufficient context for moving towards a resolution.

⁷ God can also use nature (flood, famine, locust invasions, plagues, etc.), angels, or even a person's own disposition or personality (the hardening of pharaoh's heart for example).

⁸ For discussions concerning the designation YHWH war see Gwilym H. Jones, "'Holy War' or 'Yahweh War'?" *Vetus Testamentum* 25 (1965): 654–8; Rudolph Smend, *Yahweh War and Tribal Confederation*, trans. Max Grey Rogers (New York: Abingdon, 1970) 36–7; P. U. Lilley, "Understanding the Herem," *Tyndale Bulletin* 44 (1993): 173; Eugene Merrill, "The Case for Moderate Discontinuity," in *Show Them No Mercy*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 65.

⁹ The classic study of holy war is still Gerhard von Rad's work entitled *Holy War in Ancient Israel*, ed. And trans. Marva J. Dawn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991).

¹⁰ Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, Updated and Revised ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1994), 273.

¹¹ Christopher J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 474.

The long day of Joshua

The so-called “long day” of Joshua 10 has been much debated and at least five explanations have been offered.¹²

Some suggest that the earth miraculously and physically stopped rotating.¹³ This explanation has a long history of proponents both Jewish and Christian.¹⁴ The main problem with this view is the seeming catastrophic result that such an event would have on the entire planet. The perceived scientific impossibility has therefore led many interpreters to look for other explanations.

Another explanation is that the sun’s light merely lingered either through some refractory phenomena or diffusion of light due to meteor shower. Or in other words there was some kind of optical illusion. However, this view has not gained many adherents and is purely speculative.

A third view takes a radically different view of what occurred in Joshua 10. Namely, instead of some extension of light there was actually a reduction of light. This reduction of light is often attributed to a solar eclipse or cloud cover associated with the hailstorm mentioned in 10:11. The “miracle” then is not that the sun stopped but that it was blocked in order to provide relief from the oppressive Middle-Eastern sun and allow Israel to fight more effectively. However, this view does not explain adequately how this relief was not also experienced by the Amorites who presumably would also welcome the same relief from the sun’s heat.

Fourth, some suggest that Joshua’s language should be understood in terms of a special astrological sign or omen. That is, in the ancient Near Eastern world certain astrological phenomena were understood as good or bad omens. The issue then was not really the physical phenomena but how that phenomenon involving the sun and moon would have been interpreted by a superstitious culture that put great stock in such things. However, this view seems alien to the text itself. The reference to the sun and moon does not occur before the battle, but during it.

A fifth view understands the reference in figurative or non-literal terms. In this view the sun and moon are personified as witnesses of the battle or that the reference is merely a metaphorical description of the battle in cosmic terms. Such descriptions do occur in prophetic and apocalyptic literature (e.g. Joel, Revelation). While this view is certainly possible the emphatic nature of the description in vv. 13–14 and the fact that Joshua is not of the prophetic or apocalyptic genre would seem to argue against it.

Deciding among the options is difficult. Perhaps the book is describing a phenomenological event that was truly experienced by the Israelites, but something less than an actual physical cessation of the earth’s rotation. That is, to the Israelites it appeared that this day was unique.

¹² What follows is indebted to the discussion in David M. Howard, Jr., *Joshua*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1998), 241–7.

¹³ There have been certain reports from time to time that the long day has been discovered through certain astronomical calculations. However, further investigation of these reports have indicated that these stories are almost certainly apocryphal.

¹⁴ The Jewish proponents include the author of *The Wisdom of Sirach* (Sir 46:4) and Josephus (*Ant.* 5.1.17). Christian proponents of this view include Augustine, Jerome, Luther, and Calvin

Structure

It is generally recognized that Joshua can be divided into two parts. The first part of the book (1–12) deals with the conquest of the land and the second half deals with apportioning the land. Some commentators also see major divisions at 1:1–5:12 (or 15) which narrates the preparation of Israel prior to entering the land and 22:1 (or 23:1)–24:33 as an epilogue or appendix. Trent Butler identifies the following theological structure that helps to highlight Deuteronomic concerns.

- I. Theological prologue: Qualification for occupying the land (1:1–18).
- II. Cultic composition: Directions for a sinful people occupying the land (8:30–35).
- III. Theological summary: The results of meeting the qualifications (11:23).
- IV. Theological review: Program in face of unfinished task (13:1–7).
- V. Theological acclamation: God has been faithful in everything (21:43–45).
- VI. Theological program: A life of obedience beyond the Jordan (21:1–6).
- VII. Theological justification: Leaving the Lord loses the land (23:1–16).
- VIII. Theological hope: A covenant with God (24:1–28).¹⁵

The structural approach utilized here can be outlined as follows.

- I. Preparations are made for taking the Promised Land (1–5).
- II. Israel begins the conquest of the Promised Land (6–12).
- III. The Promised Land is distributed (13–21).
- IV. Joshua’s last days as the leader of Israel (22–24).

Message

We suggest that the message of the book is, “The promises of God are accomplished in and through the obedience of His people.” The land promised to the Patriarchs and Moses by YHWH is unconditional, but the realization of the full extent of the promise is contingent upon the covenantal obedience of His people Israel.

Exposition

I. Preparations are made for taking the Promised Land (1:1–5:15).

Three Preparations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational (a new leader in Joshua) • Spiritual (e.g., circumcision, observance of the Passover) • Geographical (crossing the Jordan River).

¹⁵ Trent C. Butler, *Joshua*, ed. John D. W. Watts, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), xxv.

A. Joshua, YHWH's leader, takes charge of Israel in preparation for the conquest of the Promised Land (1:1–18).

1. YHWH charges Joshua to take the Promised Land with courage and obedience (1:1–9).

“Joshua is the authentic successor to Moses (Josh 1:5; 3:7; 4:14), and he follows the pattern set by Moses in several ways. Joshua's encounter with the commander of the Lord's army echoes Moses' experience at the burning bush (5:13–15 and Exod 3:2–5). He repeats Moses' function as intercessor (Josh 7:6–9 and Deut 9:25–29) and duplicates the Red Sea crossing by leading Israel across the Jordan (Josh 4:23). He holds up his sword against the enemy the way Moses held up his arms (Josh 8:18 and Exod 7:11). Joshua also follows Moses in the role of conqueror and distributor of the land (cf. Josh 12:1–6 with 7:24)” (Richard D. Nelson, *The Historical Books*, ed. Gene M. Tucker, Interpreting Biblical Texts [Nashville: Abingdon, 1998], 89).

2. Joshua takes charge and commands the leaders of Israel to prepare to enter the Promised Land (1:10–11).
3. Joshua takes charge and commands the TransJordanian tribes to fight for the rest of Israel (1:12–15).
4. Israel pledges her obedience to Joshua's leadership (1:16–18).

B. Joshua sends spies into the Promised Land in preparation of the conquest (2:1–24).

1. Joshua sends in two spies who find lodging with Rahab (2:1).
2. Rahab hides the spies (2:2–7).
3. Rahab confesses her belief that YHWH is with Israel (2:8–11).
4. Rahab arranges for her and her family to be spared in exchange for helping the spies escape (2:12–21).
5. The spies return to Joshua and give a positive report (2:22–24).

C. Joshua leads Israel in crossing the Jordan River (3:1–17).

“The emphasis in these two chapters is not so much on the crossing per se—this could have been mentioned in a few short verses—as it is on Israel's proper observance and remembrance of this great, defining event” (David M. Howard Jr. *Joshua*. NAC, ed. E. Ray Clendenen [Nashville: Broadman, 1998], 118).

1. Joshua instructs Israel to prepare to cross the Jordan (3:1–6).
2. Joshua instructs Israel on how to cross the Jordan (3:7–13).
3. Israel crosses the Jordan (3:14–17).

D. Israel erects memorials to the crossing of the Jordan (4:1–24).

1. Israel erects memorial stones in the Jordan (4:1–14).

Nine Memorial Cairns in Joshua¹⁶	
Place	Passage
The stones in the middle of the Jordan River	4:9
The stones on the western bank of the Jordan River	4:20-24
The stones in the Valley of Achor	7:26
The heap of stones at Ai	8:29
The altar on Mt. Ebal	8:30
The stones of the Law on Mt. Ebal	8:32
The stones at the cave at Makkedah	10:27
The altar built by the Transjordanian tribes	22:10
Joshua's stone of witness 24:26-28	24:26-28

2. Israel erects memorial stones at Gilgal (4:15–24).

Four Purposes for the Memorials (4:9; 20-24)
1. The memorial was a reminder that YHWH made the crossing possible (4:7).
2. The memorial was a reminder that Joshua was the successor of Moses as leader of Israel (4:14).
3. The memorial was a testimony to all people that the hand of YHWH is mighty, resulting in a fear of the Lord (4:24).
4. The memorials was a witness to future generations of the obedience of this generation (4:22).

E. Final preparations are made for the conquest (5:1–15).

1. The nations in Canaan are made to fear after hearing about the crossing of the Jordan (5:1).
2. All the men are circumcised in preparation of the conquest (5:2–9).
3. The Passover is celebrated in preparation of the conquest (5:10–11).

¹⁶ Slightly modified from Thomas Constable, “Dr. Constable’s Notes on Joshua: 2014 edition,” 81.

4. YHWH stops providing manna in preparation of the conquest (5:12).
5. Joshua encounters the captain of the YHWH's army in preparation of the conquest (5:13–15).

“The whole sequence—circumcision, Passover, and theophany—emphatically declared that the Israel of conquest was the Israel of exodus. The God who had saved his people out of Egypt would now save them in Canaan” (Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 126).

II. Israel begins the conquest of the Promised Land (6:1–12:24).

- A. Joshua leads the conquest of central Canaan (6:1–8:35).
 1. Israel destroys Jericho (6:1–27).
 - a. Joshua is instructed on how to destroy Jericho (6:1–5).
 - b. Joshua instructs the people on how to destroy Jericho (6:6–7).
 - c. Joshua leads Israel in the destruction of Jericho (6:8–21).
 - d. Rahab and her family are spared according to the promise of the spies (6:22–25).
 - e. Jericho is cursed and rebuilding it prohibited (6:26).
 - f. Summary: The Lord was with Joshua (6:27).
 2. Sin leads to Israel's defeat at Ai (7:1–26).
 - a. Israel is defeated at Ai (7:1–5).
 - b. Joshua prays to YHWH regarding the defeat (7:6–9).
 - c. The Lord reveals the problem and directs Joshua to a solution (7:10–15).
 - d. Achan is identified as the cause of the problem and is judged (7:16–26).
 3. Israel destroys Ai as commanded by YHWH (8:1–29).
 - a. YHWH commands Joshua to conquer Ai (8:1–2).

- b. Joshua communicates the plan to conquer Ai (8:3–9).
 - c. Israel defeats Ai (8:10–29).
 - 4. Israel renews the covenant (8:30–35).
 - B. Joshua leads the conquest of southern Canaan (9:1–10:43).
 - 1. The Canaanites respond in two ways to the destruction of Ai (9:1–27).
 - a. Response 1: The destruction of Ai causes the Canaanite kings to unite against Israel (9:1–2).
 - b. Response 2: The Gibeonites deceive Israel into establishing a treaty with them resulting in their subjugation (9:3–27).
 - 1) The Gibeonites deceive Israel (9:3–15).
 - 2) The deception is discovered and the Gibeonites are subjugated (9:16–27).
- “Joshua 9 sounds a cautionary note for the people of God. Because its enemies are cunning, the church must always be vigilant. If it does not realize its deep dependence on the Lord at all times and look to Him alone for guidance, it will become trapped unawares in a perilous alliance with the world” (Goslinga, *Joshua, Judges, Ruth*, 95).
- 2. The other Canaanite cities respond against Gibeon for their alliance with Israel (10:1–27).
 - a. Five kings prepare to attack Gibeon (10:1–5).
 - b. Israel responds to Gibeon’s plea for help and the five king coalition is defeated (10:6–27).
 - 3. Having defeated the five kings, Joshua leads Israel in the conquest of southern Canaan (10:28–43).
 - a. Joshua leads Israel to seven victories in southern Canaan (10:28–39).
 - 1) Makkedah is utterly destroyed (10:28).
 - 2) Libnah is utterly destroyed (10:29–30).

- 3) Lachish is utterly destroyed (10:31–32).
 - 4) The King of Gezer is utterly destroyed (10:33).
 - 5) Eglon is utterly destroyed (10:34–35).
 - 6) Hebron is utterly destroyed (10:36–37).
 - 7) Debir is utterly destroyed (10:38–39).
- b. The southern campaign is completed and Israel returns to Gilgal (10:40–43).
- C. Joshua leads the conquest of northern Canaan (11:1–23).
1. A northern coalition of Canaanites led by Jabin gathers against Israel at the waters of Merom (11:1–5).
 2. YHWH gives the victory to the Joshua-led Israelites (11:6–15).
 3. The northern campaign is completed and the entire conquest is summarized (11:16–23).
- D. The conquest of the Promised Land is summarized (12:1–24).

Three ideas are emphasized in the conquest accounts: (1) “The *origin* of the wars was God,” “The *agent* of the wars was Israel,” and “The *result* of the wars was rest” (Irving Jensen, *Joshua: Rest-Land Won*, Everyman’s Bible Commentary [Chicago: Moody, 1966], 92).

1. The defeated Transjordanian kings are identified (12:1–6).
2. The defeated Cisjordanian kings are identified (12:7–24).

III. The Promised Land is distributed (13:1–21:45).

“Canaan is apportioned for the good of all Israel, not just for a privileged few” (Jerome F. D. Creach, *Joshua: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, ed. Patrick D. Miller, Interpretation [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003], 97–8).

- A. YHWH commands Joshua to distribute the land even though all has not yet been conquered (13:1–7).
1. YHWH commands Joshua to distribute the land (13:1).

2. YHWH identifies the unconquered land (13:2–6).
 3. YHWH commands Joshua to distribute the land to the nine and a half tribes (13:7).
- B. The distribution of the Transjordanian territory is recounted (13:8–33).
1. A general recounting is offered (13:8–13).
 2. Specific details are recounted (13:14–31).
 - a. The inheritance of the Levites is recounted (13:14).
 - b. The inheritance of Reuben is recounted (13:15–23).
 - c. The inheritance of Gad is recounted (13:24–28).
 - d. The inheritance of Manasseh is recounted (13:29–31).
 3. The distribution of the territory is summarized (13:32–33).
- C. The distribution of the Cisjordanian territory is recounted (14:1–21:45).
1. The procedure for the distribution of the Cisjordanian territories is stated (14:1–5).
 2. The tribe of Judah is given its territory (14:6–15:63).
 - a. Caleb is given his inheritance (14:6–15).
 - b. Judah's boundaries are established (15:1–12).
 - c. Caleb occupies his inheritance by subduing Hebron and Debir (15:13–19).
 - d. The inheritance of the tribe of Judah is summarized (15:20).
 - e. The cities of Judah are identified (15:21–62).
 - f. Judah fails to drive out the Jebusites from Jerusalem (15:63).
 3. The tribe of "Joseph" is given its territory (16:1–17:18).
 - a. Joseph's southern boundary is established (16:1–4).
 - b. Ephraim's boundaries are established (16:5–9).

- c. Ephraim fails to drive out the Canaanites living in Gezer (16:10).
 - d. Ephraim's western boundaries are established (17:1–11).
 - e. Manasseh fails to drive out the Canaanites living in its towns (17:12–13).
 - f. Joseph complains about their territory (17:14–18).
4. The remaining tribes are given their territory (18:1–19:48).
- a. The remaining land is surveyed and lots are cast for distributing it (18:1–10).
 - b. Benjamin is given its territory (18:11–28).
 - c. Simeon is given its territory (19:1–9).
 - d. Zebulun is given its territory (19:10–16).
 - e. Issachar is given its territory (19:17–23).
 - f. Asher is given its territory (19:24–31).
 - g. Naphtali is given its territory (19:32–39).
 - h. Dan is given its territory (19:40–48).
5. Joshua is given his territory (19:49–50).
6. The distribution of the Cisjordanian territory is summarized (19:51).
7. The cities of refuge are established (20:1–9).
8. The Levitical cities are established (21:1–42).
- a. The distribution of the Levitical territory is introduced in general (21:1–8).
 - b. The distribution of the Levitical territory is given specifically (21:9–40).
 - 1) The priestly Kohathites receive their cities (21:9–19).
 - 2) The nonpriestly Kohathites receive their cities (21:20–26).

- 3) The Gershonites receive their cities (21:27–33).
- 4) The Merarites receive their cities (21:34–40).
- c. The distribution of the Levitical cities are summarized (21:41–42).
9. The fulfillment of the land promise of the Lord is affirmed (21:43–45).

IV. Joshua's last days as the leader of Israel (22:1–24:33).

- A. Joshua bids farewell to the Transjordanian Tribes (22:1–8).
- B. A crisis is averted in the Transjordan (22:9–34).
 1. A crisis is created by Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh setting up an altar in the Transjordan (22:9–10).
 2. The remaining tribes are concerned and send Phinehas and Eleazar to investigate the matter (22:11–20).
 3. The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh are able to alleviate the concerns of the remaining tribes (22:21–29).
 4. The crisis is averted (22:30–34).
- C. Joshua calls upon Israel to complete the conquest (23:1–16).
- D. Joshua calls Israel to covenant faithfulness and renewal (24:1–28).
- E. Joshua's death and other details conclude the story (24:29–33).
 1. Joshua dies and is buried (24:29–30).
 2. Israel continued to be faithful through the elders who lived beyond Joshua (24:31).
 3. Joseph's bones are buried in Shechem (24:32).
 4. Eleazar dies and is buried at Gibeah (24:33).

“Recording three burials is a strange way to end a book like Joshua! But these three peaceful graves testify to the faithfulness of God, for Joshua, Joseph, and Eleazar once lived in a foreign nation where they received God's promise to take His people back to Canaan. Now all three were at rest within the Promised Land. God kept His word to Joshua, Joseph, and Eleazar—and to all Israel. And this encourages God's children today to count on God's unfailing faithfulness” (Donald Campbell, “Joshua,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, ed, John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, [Wheaton, IL: Scripture Press, Victor, 1985], 371).