

Joshua 1:1, Introduction; Textual Indicators of Divine Inspiration; The Tripartite Hebrew Canon

Mullins, Jesse F. "Until We Meet Again: Happy Trails, Roy Rogers." *American Cowboy*, Sept./Oct. 1998, 8.

II. Joshua, Chapter 1:

A. Verses 1-4: Command for Conquest

Introduction:

I think it might be appropriate to begin our study by observing the viewpoint of the book of Joshua by certain prominent individuals. The book is considered by some to be a treatise on leadership. In fact, a couple of our nation's most highly respected leaders regarded Joshua as a source of inspiration and guidance for them.

General Douglas A. MacArthur listed Joshua among those men whom he considered to be the great generals of history. President Theodore Roosevelt often said that the book was his favorite in the Bible and he quoted from it often in his speeches.

I think it of particular interest that modern historians accept the biblical account of the conquest of Canaan as historically accurate. We theologians welcome them into the fraternity of biblical isagogics. Here is a quote from:

Johnson, Paul. *A History of the Jews*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1987; p. 42:

With the entry into and conquest of Canaan ... archaeological evidence confirms or illuminates the Biblical record. The Book of Joshua, called after the Israelites' first great military commander, can now be regarded as essentially an historical account.

Joshua, son of Nun of the tribe of Ephraim, was Moses' security chief, acting as his bodyguard at Sinai and commanding the guard of the tent. He established his military reputation during the wanderings in a desperate encounter at Rephidim with a band commanded by the sheikh Amalek. Just before his death, Moses transferred the leadership to Joshua and 'set him over the congregation' at a solemn public ceremony.

Thus, Joshua began and to a great extent completed the conquest of Canaan.

Joshua at the time of the invasion of Canaan was in his 80s. He was not only a man of wisdom but he also possessed the enduement of the Holy Spirit. His experiences in the Jornada, his apprenticeship under Moses, and his divine appointment by the Lord made him the perfect leader for the Israelites.

As the believer grows in grace and learns doctrine, he eventually gets to the point where he begins to reevaluate his life in the light of God's Word. As he starts to consider his proper place in God's plan he often questions whether he is doing what he should be doing. This can lead to Operation Overthink and notions of quitting his job; attending seminary; becoming a missionary, or an evangelist, or even a pastor; divesting himself of possessions or giving his assets to some Christian organization; dumping his wife now convinced she is not his right woman.

However, the proper place for the believer is first and foremost in Bible class. There is no reason to make changes in your life until there is a clear and unmistakable guidance perceived from principles of biblical truth under the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Until then you maintain the status quo in which you find yourself.

We must all remember that we as believers are in God's plan and He will not use us ahead of schedule. All things must occur on God's timing not ours, on God's agenda not ours, and under the power of the Spirit not ours.

Joshua thus becomes an encouragement to be patient and wait on the Lord. At the time he assumed command of the Israelite Army he was about 80 years of age. Principle: God uses prepared men, their ages are inconsequential. Joshua had been prepared in the Jornada under the aegis of Moses. He was his special forces commander at Rephidim, his aide-de-camp at Sinai, his assistant at the Tabernacle, his protégé at the Sinai Military Academy, and ultimately, general of the armies and Governor of Israel. It was a forty-year training experience.

Not only does God use prepared men, when He does so He has taken the necessary time to prepare the men He appoints. Jesus Christ controls history. Men are always unprepared.

Therefore, whenever God removes a man from a position of leadership, He always has someone prepared to carry on in his place. Leaders come and go, God's plan moves on!

Joshua never promoted himself as Moses' successor. Joshua didn't audition for the job of general of the armies. Joshua did not volunteer to lead the invasion of Canaan. God commissioned him governor of Israel; God recruited him to be general of the armies; and God commanded him to take the land; but He did these things all in His own good time.

On the other hand, it is sobering to remember that God's permissive will often allows men to remove their leaders from duly appointed positions of power. But the Scripture is clear that revolutions, coups d'état, and assassinations are never approved of by the justice of God and nothing good ever comes from them.

But no matter what the circumstances, whenever a leadership transition occurs it produces a crisis for the citizens of that nation. In the case of a leader's death a power vacuum is created causing uncertainty and anxiety among the people as they consider whether the abilities and attributes of the successor can measure up to the task.

Even so, God had taken the time to prepare the people as well. He had ordered both a public commissioning of Joshua as Moses' successor and also a public change-of-command ceremony following the Transjordan Campaign and Moses' Commencement Address.

Encamped on the banks of the Jordan, Joshua is now ensconced in a place of power and authority over all Israel. He is their new leader. His duty is to stand in the gap and lead the people of the second generation into the land promised to them and their forefathers by the God of Israel. Joshua's moment in history has arrived. He is God's specially chosen man for the crisis. And the attribute which most qualified Joshua for his leadership role was his genuine humility. For without genuine humility, no man, no matter how well prepared or how highly talented, can ever successfully lead men into battle or a people into freedom.

We learn in Joshua 1:1 that Joshua is the Lord's chosen warrior to accomplish these things for God's people Israel. And so in verse 1 we meet the replacement of Moses:

► **JOSHUA 1:1** - [NASV] Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying,

The verse begins in the English translation, "Now it came about after the death of Moses." The Hebrew words, which open the book, are *way^e hi*: "And it came about."

- 1- The word "and" links the book of Joshua with Deuteronomy indicating that it is a continuation of that which is found in Deuteronomy.

- 2- This is another nuance in the Scripture, which speaks of divine authorship.
- 3- The book of Genesis has no “And” at the head of its opening verse since it is obviously “the beginning.”
- 4- However Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers all begin with the copulative conjunction “And” which indicates that the first four books are a unit all linked together in this fashion.
- 5- The book of Deuteronomy however, although a completion of the other four, does not begin with the conjunction but the pronoun “These”—“These are the words which Moses spoke ...”
- 6- As we have learned, Deuteronomy is a synopsis, reiteration, and review of the first four books of the Pentateuch. It implores the Second Generation to make it their source of guidance for both life and godliness in taking and securing the land.
- 8- In other words, Moses gives a summary of what they have learned at the Sinai Seminary and then challenges them to not only remember these things but if success is to accompany their entry into the land they must make daily application of its mandates.
- 9- Joshua begins with the word “And” indicating that it is now time for them to apply what they know.
- 10- Interestingly, the four books which follow Deuteronomy all begin with the copulative conjunction “And.”
- 11- To appreciate this it is important to understand the sequence in which the books of the Old Testament are arranged in the Hebrew Bible. It has three major divisions:

The Sequence & Arrangement of the Tripartite Hebrew Canon

- I. **The Pentateuch** or, The *Torah* (five books): Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

II. **The Prophets** or, The *Nabhiim* (eight books divided into two categories):

1. **The Former Prophets** (four books): Joshua, Judges, *Samuel, and *Kings.
2. **The Latter Prophets** (four books in two subcategories):
 - (1) **The Major Prophets** (three books): Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.
 - (2) **The Minor Prophets** (one book): The Twelve: (1) Hosea, (2) Joel, (3) Amos, (4) Obadiah, (5) Jonah, (6) Micah, (7) Nahum, (8) Habakkuk, (9) Zephaniah, (10) Haggai, (11) Zechariah, and (12) Malachi.

III. **The Writings** or, The *Kethubhim* (11 books in three sections):

1. **Poetical** (three books): Psalms, Proverbs, and Job.
2. **The Five Rolls** or, The *Hagiographa* (five books, or *Meghilloth* /Me-GIL-lowth/): Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther.
3. **Historical** (three books): Daniel, *Ezra-Nehemiah, and *Chronicles.

* Divided into two books in Christian bibles.

- 12- Now please note the first division called the Torah. Its first book is Genesis whose opening word is *bereshith*, “In the beginning.”
- 13- The following three books of the Torah: Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, begin with the copulative conjunction “and.”
- 14- This indicates that these three books are linked to Genesis and to each other indicating a progressive revelation and the formation of a unit of Scripture.

- 15- Deuteronomy does not begin with this conjunction but rather forms a transition from what comes before and gives direction for what lies ahead.
- 16- It is Moses' summary of the first four books and his admonition for the second generation to utilize it as a source of guidance and leadership as they take and hold the Promised Land.
- 17- Consequently, we note the second division of the Old Testament is called the Prophets. Take note of the first category called the Former Prophets. It contains four books, Joshua, Judges, *Samuel, and *Kings.
- 18- Each book opens with the connective conjunction *way hi*, best translated "and," "and after," "and following this," "and then."
- 19- This indicates that all the books in the Former Prophets category are linked forming the second division of the Hebrew canon, introduced by Deuteronomy.
- 20- Thus we are able to observe the organization of divine revelation.
- 21- The first four books of the Torah give a history of the people of Israel *outside* the land beginning with Adam down through Moses.
- 22- Deuteronomy is a transitional book that reviews the history with emphasis on the Law given in the second, third, and fourth books.
- 23- The next eight, beginning with Joshua and going through 2 Kings gives a history of the people of Israel *in* the land.
- 24- The key to the transition is the death of Moses followed immediately by the Lord's initial mandates to Joshua as the new leader of His people.

► **JOSHUA 1:1** - And it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying,