

1. Traditionally the Hebrew Scriptures are divided into three sections.

[a] **the Law** - the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. Were in their present form by about 1000BC

[b] **the Prophets** - [finally edited after the Exile] - these were divided into

[i] The Former prophets - these are the historical books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings. The last mentioned were later divided into 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings.

[ii] The Latter Prophets - are the great preachers of Israel, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Included with them are the 12 Minor Prophets, who were often written in a single scroll.

[c] and **the Writings** - [collected after the exile around 550BC]. Psalms, Proverbs and Job are books of poetry and devotion. Five of the books, written on individual scrolls, were read separately at annual feasts.

[i] Song of Solomon at Passover

[ii] Ruth at Pentecost

[iii] Lamentations on the ninth of Ab, the day Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 BC

[iv] Ecclesiastes at the feast of Tabernacles

[v] Esther at Purim.

Daniel is the only prophet among them, and the writings conclude with the historical narratives of Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles.

The Hebrew Canon

2. As we read the book Joshua we are leaving the Pentateuch and beginning in the section the Hebrews call the former prophets.

Joshua is a varied historical account. The crossing of the Jordan, the rites at Gilgal, the capture of Jericho and Ai are given with considerable detail. But the conquest of south Canaan is succinctly stated and the conquest of the north scantily covered.

The book Joshua is one of the Former prophets

3. Date of Entry into Canaan?

[i] 1 Kings 6.1 records that it was in the 480th year after the people came out of Egypt that Solomon commenced the building of the Temple. Since this is dated in the 4th year of his reign this would give us a date of the Exodus of 1446 BC

[ii] However, since the Hebrew slaves built the store-cities of Raamses and Pithom [Ex 1.11] we note that there is no evidence of the name Raamses prior to the reign of Raamses I, and since the building operations in the eastern Nile delta were not carried out to any extent before Seti I [1305-1290] and Raamses II [1290-1224] the Exodus would be about 1290 BC.

[iii] Since the account of Moses' dealing with Pharaoh implies that the residence was not far from the Hebrews, then it suggests the palace in the lower delta. Whereas the Pharaohs in the fifteenth century lived much further north on the Nile by some 500 miles. All this, plus the archaeological evidence of the Canaanite cities destroyed suggests the 1290 date to be the best.

Date of Entry

4. Taking up where Deuteronomy left off the setting is the plains of Moab and the story is resumed. The story is presented in two, roughly equal parts

[a] the rapid survey of the conquest of the land

[b] a description of how the land was divided among the 12 tribes

Conquest and Settlement

5. A total victory?

There are statements within the book that would give us, on a casual reading, the sense that the whole of the land was conquered [10.40; 11.16]. But the book also bears witness that the whole of Canaan was not taken - this is spelled out for us in 13.1-7. The Philistine area and some areas of the North remained unconquered, especially the Canaanite enclaves that had local altars and high places which

Not a total conquest

later proved to be a snare to the Israelites.

6. The Outline would be as follows:

Outline of the Book

- [1] Commission of Joshua 1.1-9
- [2] Entry into the promised land 1.10-5.12
 - [i] Preparations to cross the Jordan 1.10-18
 - [ii] Spies in Jericho 2.1-24 [Rahab [i] gave shelter; [ii] spoke words key to their report. Parallel Ju713-15]
 - [iii] Crossing the Jordan 3.1-4.18
 - [iv] Camp at Gilgal 4.19-5.12 [Covenant renewal and circumcision]
- [3] Conquest of the land 5.13-12.24
 - [i] Commander of the army of the Lord 5.13-15
 - [ii] Fall of Jericho 6.1-27
 - [iii] Campaign against Ai 7.1-8.29 [Achan]
 - [iv] Altar built on Ebal 8.30-35 [De 27.4-7]
 - [v] Treaty with the Gibeonites 9.1-27
 - [vi] Campaign in the South 10.1-43
 - [vii] Campaign in the North 11.1-23
 - [viii] Summary of the Conquest 12.1-24
- [4] The Division of the Land 13.1-22.34
 - [i] Allotment of the Transjordan tribes 13.1-33
 - [ii] Portion of Caleb 14.1-15
 - [iii] Portion of Judah 15.1-63
 - [iv] Portion of Joseph 16.1-17.18
 - [v] Portion of the remaining tribes 18.1-19.51
 - [vi] Cities of Refuge 20.1-29
 - [vii] Levitical cities 21.1-42
 - [ix] Conclusion and departure of the Transjordan tribes 21.43-22.9
 - [x] The Altar by the Jordan 22.9-34 [a witness of unity not a sign of division]
- [5] Joshua's last days 23.1-24.33
 - [i] Joshua's first address 23.1-16
 - [ii] Joshua's second address and the covenant at Shechem 24.1-28
 - [iii] Burials of Joshua, Joseph's bones and Eleazar 24.29-33

7. Joshua - the long preparation for leadership

Joshua - a prepared leader

[i] What we know about Joshua is that he was born in Egypt of the tribe of Joseph [the half tribe of Ephraim] and he was a young man at the time of the Exodus [Ex 33.11]. He was named Hoshea [=salvation Nu 13.8] but Moses called him Jehoshua or Joshua [=YHWH is salvation Nu 13.16; the Greek form is Jesus Acts 7.45].

[ii] He participated in the battle of Rephidim [Ex 17] with the Amalekites. He would have learned as a general in that warfare that power was not just simply about the military might but also about prayer and the power of God Ex 17.11.

[iii] He was aware of the memorial book that Moses was instructed to record these things in [Ex 17.14] and he would find that this book was decisive for his own entry to the promised land.

[iv] He was chosen by Moses to be his personal attendant; he was present on the mountain when Moses received the Law [Ex 24.13ff].

[v] He was present when the golden calf episode was in full sway. He would have learned that to merely use the name of God was nothing compared to the making of the golden calf. He would have known a righteous anger and seen things from Moses' perspective.

[vi] He was the guardian of the tent of meeting when Moses met with Yhwh [Ex 33.11]. He would have been very impressed with the glory of God and the reality of His Person to Moses and the elders.

He was in charge of a detachment of Israelites at the battle of Rephidim when the Amalekites attacked [Ex 17.9] and he was one of the spies sent out to spy out the land. He

submitted a minority report with Caleb, urging the people to go ahead and enter it.

He was commissioned to become the leader when Moses died [De 31.14ff]. He would have known that spiritual leadership does not come from the hands of men but from God.

Leading ideas.

8. Theology

[a] The faithfulness of God as a covenant partner. The continuity of the covenant .

[b] The renewal of the covenant is reminiscent of Moses' renewal.

[c] The entry into the land was a rest from wandering.

[d] The written book - Ex 17.14, Nu 33.2, De 31.9-13; De 31.26; Jos 1.1-8; 24.26

[e] The supernatural leader - Jos 5.13-17; 6.2 The captain of the Lord of Hosts

[a] paralleled Moses' episode of the burning bush Ex 3.5

[f] The power of God Jos 6.16

[g] Two memorials

[a] the stones, two piles Jo 4.1-11

[b] the Ark; the character and the promises of God.

9. New Testament

[a] James 2.21-25 Abraham and Rahab paralleled.

[b] Mt 1.4-6