

Examining of the book of joshua religion essay



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The Book of Joshua was likely written between 1400 and 1370 B. C. It begins after the death of Moses. Joshua is called upon by God to lead the Israelites across the Jordan River and to settle down in the Promised Land. God says that in any military campaign, the Israelites will win as long as they obey his laws. Later, Josh send in two spies into the city of Jericho to investigate the territory. When the spies are known of their presence in Jericho, a prostitute named Rahab tells them that the city is afraid of the Israelites success. She seeks refuge by putting her faith in God, and tells them that the city is in a weakened condition.

After finding this out, Joshua makes the Israelites cross the river, which was led by priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant. As they enter the water, the water dries and allows the people to cross on dry ground. When they

approach Jericho, Joshua encounters a mysterious man, who says that he commands Gods army, but that he is neutral to both sides. Joshua acknowledges the man, but pays no attention to his allegiance. God tells Joshua that Joshua must lead the Israelites around the city for six days with the Ark, and that on the seventh day, they will march around the city seven times and the walls will be broken down. Joshua rallies all of the Israelites and tells them to kill everyone except for Rahab. They also will not loot any religious items, but instead burn them as homage to god.

After this happens, Joshua becomes a major figure across the lands, but in their next conflict in the city of Ai, God does not help the Israelites win, and are defeated. Joshua asks why, and says that Achan stole religious items from Jericho. After Achan is stoned with his family beside him, the next attempt against Ai is successful, and the Israelites celebrate by making an altar to God.

While the Israelites had great success, the people of Gibeon were afraid of them and sent in some spies of their own, claiming to be travelers of the land. Joshua makes a treaty quickly without any decision from God and later discovers that they Gibeonites are natives of the land to be conquered. So the Israelites do not attack the city, but five other kings that are local, attack the city of Gibeon. The Israelites come to the aid of Gibeon and destroy the five king's armies. Joshua helps the fighting by commanding God to stop the sun in the sky during the fight, God obeys and the Israelites are successful. This is the only time in history ever told that God ever obeys a human.

The Israelites continue to conquer the lower and southern cities of Canaan, killing all of the people of the lands as God asked. However, much of the land remains to be taken over, the people of Israel begin to settle down in the land, dividing it among their own 12 tribes. After many years of peace for Israel, the dying Joshua makes a farewell pronouncement, and tells the Israelites to be strong and obey all of God's laws. They must not have any idols and not marry with any of the natives of the lands. The people assure Joshua that they will obey, however Joshua reluctantly accepts the people's word and is worried that they will not listen to him, knowing that the obedience will be quite difficult to keep.

Characters in the Book of Joshua and their Importance

Some of the key characters in the Book of Joshua are Joshua himself, Rahab, Achan, Eleazar, and Phinehas.

Joshua, being the character of the book becomes the leader of the Israelite tribes after the death of Moses. His name was Hoshea, but Moses decided to call him by Joshua. Joshua was one of the twelve spies that were sent by Moses to explore the land of Canaan, and after Moses died, he was the leader that took the Israelites into Canaan to conquer the land. It's said that Joshua lived between 1450-1370 BC which was somewhere in the late Bronze Age, and according to Joshua 24: 29, he dies at the age of 110.

Rahab

Another one of the most important characters in the Book of Joshua is a prostitute named Rahab. Rahab ran a small inn that was built into the outside wall of the city of Jericho. The city itself actually had 2 walls for the extra

fortifications. Rahab first is cited in the book when the two spies sent by Joshua and the Israelites stop at Rahab's inn and are planning to escape from the city, since the king of Jericho somehow found out that the spies were at the inn and sent his men to go catch them.

Meanwhile, the Israelites are camped across the Jordan River, to the knowledge of the king and his people. The word spread throughout the city that God was on the Israelites side. Rahab had heard that of this was sure that the city would be defeated by the Israelites. Rehab hid the two spies in the top of her inn and told the kings men when they arrived that the men had already left before dark. After the kings men had left, the spies came down and told Rahab that they would spare her life when they conquered the city. All she would have to do is hang a red cord outside her window so that all in her inn would be spared.

Something interesting that can be found out from reading the Book of Matthew is that in chapter one you find out that Rahab married a man called Salmon. He was the great-great grandfather of King David (who killed Goliath). 26 Generations later, Mary, Jesus' mother, was married to Joseph, who came from David's bloodline. However, when the reader finds this out, it means that Rahab is actually Jesus' grandmother of many generations ago, a fact I personally find interesting.

Achan

Another important character in Joshua is Achan. He is the Israelite who disobeyed God by taking religious possessions in the conquest of Jericho, while God commanded that any possessions would not be taken, or they will

be burned in his Name. Achan was judged faster than the Israelites were in the 40 years of wandering the desert, looking for the Promised Land. The assumption is since he knew that taking possessions was against God's will, God was able to punish him faster.

Achan's disobedience caused the Israelites first battle against the city of Ai to be unsuccessful. Thirty-Six Israelites were killed, and they were wondering why God had not helped them achieve victory. Later on Joshua finds out that Achan had taken religious property and wants Joshua and the Israelites to stone him and his family to death. Disobedience itself is a sin and disobeying God is one of the worst things that one of his own children can do. Achan did not have to be killed, since he could have repented, but even when he was confronted by Joshua, he did not repent. Thus, he was stoned to death.

Eleazar

Eleazar was the Levite priest that took over the place of his father, Aaron when he died. He created the plating of the altar out of the fire pans of Korah's assembly and performed the ritual of the red heifer. He had the next important character in the Book of Joshua, Phinehas.

He assisted in the distribution of the land Canaan after the Israelites took over. When he died, he " was buried at Gibeah, which had been allotted to his son Phinehas in the hill country of Ephraim" (Joshua 24: 33). The high priesthood stayed in the Eleazar bloodline until Eli became the new high priest. It was later put back into Eleazar's family when Zadok was cast out by Solomon.

Phinehas

Phinehas was the son of the previous high priest, Eleazar. He played a role when the tribes of Reuben and Gad went out to take over the lands beyond the Jordan. They together build an altar on the other side of the river. While the rest of the Israelites wonder if it is a separatist movement, they send Phinehas to investigate in Joshua 22: 9-34.

The Israelites believed that the tribes were breaking the faith of the God of Israel. However the leaders of the clans explain, “ No! We did it for fear that some day your descendants might say to ours, ‘ What do you have to do with the Lord, the God of Israel? The Lord has made the Jordan a boundary between us and you-you Reubenites and Gadites! You have no share in the LORD.’ So your descendants might cause ours to stop fearing the Lord.” (Joshua 22: 24). When Phinehas had heard what Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh said, they were pleased and said that they acted faithfully towards the Lord and that they rescued the Israelites from His hand. The Reubenites and the Gadites gave the altar the name of “ A Witness Between Us that the Lord is God.”

Book of Joshua and the New Testament

The Book of Joshua also made a fulfillment in Colossians in the New Testament. “ The Israelites had moved about in the wilderness forty years until all the men who were of military age when they left Egypt had died, since they had not obeyed the Lord. For the Lord had sworn to them that they would not see the land he had solemnly promised their ancestors to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. So he raised up their sons in their place, and these were the ones Joshua circumcised. They were still

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uncircumcised because they had not been circumcised on the way. And after the whole nation had been circumcised, they remained where they were in camp until they were healed” (Joshua 5: 5-8).

These verses from the Old Testament in the Book of Joshua would soon relate later to Colossians later on in the New Testament by saying that “ For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ” (Colossians 2: 9-11).

By circumcising oneself each man that does it is basically saying that they are giving themselves fully to Christ. They are purging all sins from them, and that it represents not only a circumcision from the hands of man, but it is done with the Spirit of Christ also. The men in the Old Testament who circumcised themselves were obeying the covenant that God made with Joshua, and anyone who was circumcised was able to enter the Promised Land. Those who didn't, either weren't allowed in, or died.

“ Verses 1-9 [of Joshua 5] describe God's commandment that those who were born in the wilderness were to be circumcised when they came into the Promised Land. By so doing, God ' rolled away the reproach of Egypt' from them, meaning that He cleansed them from the sins of their former life. Colossians 2: 10-12 describes believers as having been circumcised in their hearts by Christ Himself, by whom we have put off the sinful nature of our former lives without Christ” (“ Book of Joshua”).

The Messages and Lessons of the Book of Joshua

Some of the main key points in the Book of Joshua are that: God is Faithful, His word is true, God is a Holy Judge, and even when God's workers die, His own work keeps on going.

When I say that God is faithful, I mean that if someone who worships Him is faithful to Him, God will be faithful back. Anyone who does what God asks of them will be rewarded and have His favor. As proven in the Book of Joshua, you can see many examples of where God helps those that are faithful. Some examples are Rahab helping the two spies infiltrate and escape from Jericho. As a reward for helping His workers, God and Joshua spare her and her family's life. At the same time, Joshua is obeying God's word and is helping him win all of the battles to take over the lands of Canaan. This is another example of faithfulness to God, and the rewards he will give you for remaining that way.

When I say that God's word is true, I mean that when God promises something as a reward for faithfulness to Him, He will always keep His word. This applies to doing things against God's word as well. As we saw earlier, Archan disobeyed God when he took religious possessions from the city of Jericho. This in turn caused God to be angry and to keep to the deal that He made with Joshua. This led to the Israelites losing to the city of Ai in the first battle against them. It was then found out that Archan had stolen something from Jericho, and God and Joshua decided to have him stoned to death, along with his family. This shows that in good or bad, God will keep to His word. Rewarding the faithful, and punishing the unfaithful to His word.

When I say that God is a Holy Judge, I mean that He has the right to punish sinners and reward the faithful. He can make any decision He wants on a situation, and the people that are faithful to Him will agree with whatever He says; that is, if they are faithful to His word. God's judgment is ultimate and final and is always the right decision, since God is higher than us.

Finally, when I say that when God's workers die, His work keeps going on, it means that even when his servants and prophets and priests pass on to Heaven, He will always have a replacement for them. Even if it is not time for someone to pass on, God will have a plan and a place for him or her in Heaven. God will always live on in someone else when a person dies. Whether it be a family member or friend, He will always be somewhere in the world, at all times. God's work is never done and He will always have something new going on in everyone's lives. Everyone has a purpose in this life and only God Himself knows what is in store for each person.

Conclusion

The Book of Joshua is a well-rounded book, although relatively short, it shows many sides of the Old Testament that are important throughout the whole Bible itself. In my opinion, The Book of Joshua is probably my favorite book that I have read so far out of the Old Testament. It shows the faithfulness, honor, and commitment that God gives to His people, and inspires me to listen and heed to His word.

Overall, the stories and lessons learned in the Book of Joshua are definitely something for every human being that believes in God to live by. These lessons are something that can keep our relationship with God favorable,

and if we all abide by what God has told us to do, and live the lives that he has presented before us, we know that we will ultimately be rewarded. All we have to do is simply have faith.

Citations

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