

Week 8. Joshua and the Judges. Class Notes

[A] THE BOOKS OF THE HEBREW BIBLE.

- Three main divisions: *Torah* = Law/ Teaching; Prophets (*Nevi'im*); Writings (*Kethuvim*); together they form the *Tanak* (made-up word): T for Torah; N for Nevi'im and K for Kethuvim tied together with two 'a' sounds. Jesus aware of three-fold division (Lk 24:44).
- English Bible list based on Greek translation, Septuagint, Bible of the early church!
- Joshua, Judges - among the Prophets, in 'Former Prophets' (see Zech 1:4; 7:7, 12 AV). Present a prophetic or theological assessment of Israel's history.

[B] THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

Compare and contrast opening and closing passages. Opening (1:2): preparations for crossing Jordan into the land; Closing (24:28-33), Joshua buried in the land; Joseph's bones buried in the land Jacob had bought.

[1] The Theme of Land.

(a) The Fulfilment of the Promise of Land in the Abrahamic Covenant.

- Promise of land first given explicitly to Abraham in Genesis 12:7; often repeated (see, Gen 24:7; 26:3; 50:24). Referred to here (1:6) - fulfilment of promise.
- Faith of Joshua, Jacob and Joseph recognised in closing verses of Joshua: v 30, Joshua, buried in the land – true of only himself and Caleb of that generation; v 32 Joseph's bones buried (see Gen 50:24-25), in land purchased by Jacob (Gen 33:19f). Faith in operation (Heb 11:13). And ourselves? For whom all promises will be fulfilled.
- Joshua 1-12 - 'conquest' of the land: three movements: (i) centre; (ii) North; (iii) South. Joshua 13-22 - division of the land among Israelite tribes – by lot.

(b) The Land as a Kind of New Eden

(i) A good land (23:13, 15, 16) – echoes of creation (Gen 1:10); ideas of new creation for God's new humanity? (ii) Place of abundance (5:6) 'flowing with milk and honey' (see Ex 3:8, 17; etc), and productivity (5:11f). See also Deut 8:7. Like the garden of Eden? See Genesis 13:10. A kind of New Eden? (iii) Place of rest (Ex 33:14; Deut 12:9; Josh 1:13, 15; 21:44; 22:4; 23:1)

(c) The Land as the Firstborn Son's Inheritance

Inheritance (see Josh 1:6; 11:23; often from 13:6 onwards). Reminds us of Israel's sonship (Ex 4:22f). The Father brings his firstborn son 'home,' to a 'New Eden'/ paradise under the leadership of Joshua=*Iesous*/ Jesus. Illustration or type of the Christian's homecoming to glory. Jesus to thief: 'Today, you will be with me in Paradise.' Hebrews 4:11.

[2] **The Theme of (Covenant) Law**

- 1:7-8. Law (i) his meditation, in his thoughts; (ii) in his mouth = instructing the people; (iii) in his walk, as he did it – the way of success.
- Joshua 1 – start of Former Prophets – history of Israel assessed on the basis of Law
- Writings – Psalm 1 - emphasis on law of the Lord (vv 3-4)

[C] **THE BOOK OF JUDGES**

[1] **A Period of Breath-taking Decline**

- Compare/ contrast beginning and end. 1:1 – seek the will of God; 21:25 - follow own inner light. Final tragic chapters: gross idolatry (17-18); gross immorality (ch 19); deep divisions among the tribes and great loss of life through inter-family battles (chs 20-21)
- Decline: politically, militarily; above all spiritually and morally. UK today.
- decline evident in character of judges: Othniel (3:7-10) to Samson (chs 13-16).

[2] **A Repeating Pattern of Decay and God's Saving Intervention**

Judges 2:11-19 pattern worked out in chapters 3-16: (i) vv 11-13 Israel indicted for her apostasy - broke first commandment (Ex 20:3). (ii) Yahweh was angry with them; handed them over to the oppressor (vv 14-15) - reversing in measure the Exodus and Conquest. (iii) vv 16-19 judge raised up by Yahweh alone. Primary function (v 16b) to save/ deliver Israel from oppressors, reversing vv 14-15. Yahweh present with the judge (v 18). See stories for role of the Spirit of God in this renewal/ revival (3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14). Sadly, v 19, the pattern repeats on death of the judge. Spiral downwards (as in Gen 1-11).

[D] **OVERVIEW OF THE FORMER PROPHETS.**

Compare/ contrast start and finish. Joshua 1: ready to enter Promised Land. End of 2 Kings - removed from Promised Land; a conquered and subjected people. Paradise Gained and Lost. Repeat of Genesis 2-3. What hope for us, then? Obedient Last Adam exiled for us.