

Conquest and Settlement

Apprentice Track Workshop

Session 4

Tell us about an influential leader you've had in your life.

[Thomas]

Introduction

Today we'll be discussing the period of Conquest and Settlement. This period covered primarily in the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth and 1 Samuel 1-8. As our title for today's class implies, this period of history can really be broken into two parts:

- 1) Conquest - covered in Joshua.
- 2) Settlement – covered in Judges, Ruth, and 1 Samuel 1-8.

[Justin]

Conquest: Joshua

Context

- 1) At the start of the book, as you might remember, the nation of Israel is outside the land of Canaan, eastward over the Jordan River. But by the end of the book they will have taken and occupied the land (**as you can see from the map**). We can summarize Joshua by saying: Joshua is all about conquest. The Israelites enter the land, take the land, possess the land, and come to rest.
- 2) By the end of the Book of Joshua Israel will basically have everything it needs to be considered a nation – a population, a law, a leader (sort of), and finally a land. So God's promise to Abraham is nearly complete- at least on paper.

[Thomas]

Overview - Well, with this context in mind let's start into Joshua with an overview of the whole book and then we'll drill down into the major theme of the book. The book of Joshua divides neatly into four chronological sections. As we quickly run through these sections, you can flip through your Bible to watch the chapter headings and follow along.

- 1) In chapters 1-5 they **ENTER the Promised Land**.
 - a. The Israelites start off (chapter 1) confidently trusting God in the plains of Moab.

- b. But they must depend on God as they spy out the land (chapter 2),
- c. and then finally as they cross the Jordan (in Exodus-like fashion in chapters 3 and 4).
- d. And in chapter 5, on the plains outside Jericho they renew the covenant and celebrate the Passover from their central location in the land – the camp at Gilgal. Again, these events, bring the Pentateuch to a conclusion.

2) **TAKE the Promised Land (6-13).**

- a. **As you can see on your map,** The Israelites employ a timeless battle strategy: divide and conquer.
 - i. The Central Campaign – Jericho and Ai
 - ii. The Southern Campaign – Philistines, Canaanites, Jebusites, the 5 kings
 - iii. The Northern Campaign – Phoenicians, Hamor, Giliad, etc.
- b. Summary:
 - i. Joshua 10:40-41 – “Joshua subdued the whole region... from Kadesh-Barnea to Gaza, and from the whole region of Goshen to Gibeon.”
 - ii. The land was taken but not yet occupied.

3) **DIVIDE the Promised Land** in chapters 13 to 21. The land to be shared by the 12 tribes is reviewed in chapters 13 and 14. And then dividing it up goes all the way from chapter 15 to chapter 21.

4) **ACCOMPLISH promised rest** (Joshua 22-24)

- a. And so in these last three chapters Joshua leads God’s people reflect on how they are to enjoy this rest. That is, rest from war, from wanderings, and from their enemies.
- b. The book ends with Joshua speech to Israel’s leaders, we are told that when Joshua was old, “the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their surrounding enemies.” (21:44) The journey was over, the fight was over, now they could serve the Lord in perfect shalom.

[Justin]

Main Theme: Trusting God for Land and Rest

The main theme in the book of Joshua is the need to **trust God for land and rest**. This is huge, as you might imagine. Now just to clarify, the significance of the land is a major concept to grasp. Because Canaan is more than just a physical piece of property. It is a picture of what the Garden of Eden was, and what the New Heavens and the New Earth are going to be.

To see this land parallelism fleshed out, turn with me to one fascinating text in chapter 5:13-15. As you turn there let me quickly set the context for you. God's people have just crossed the Jordan, and God's people are about to enter God's place first time. However, this is no easy task - you'll remember how Eden ended up in Genesis 3 - with an angel with a flashing sword barring the entrance forever. And so what does Joshua see as he nears God's promised place? Verse 13:

¹³ When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" ¹⁴ And he said, "No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, "What does my lord say to his servant?" ¹⁵ And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

So the land of Canaan is holy ground—it reminds us that God is there—and because of sin there is no right for sinful people to be in it. That's why an angel's sword met them at Canaan. But now, just as promised in Exodus 23, there is an angel of the Lord. But this time the angel doesn't bar the way to God's place. Instead, he actively helps God's people to take the land.

Now, the people trust God for the land. God sends his angel ahead of them. And . . . well, no surprise: they win! So Joshua 21:43-45 gives us the peak of redemption history so far:

⁴³ Thus the Lord gave to Israel all the land that he swore to give to their fathers. And they took possession of it, and they settled there. ⁴⁴ And the Lord gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the Lord had given all their enemies into their hands. ⁴⁵ Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.

Not a single word has failed. The people are in possession of God's place, safely with him. This is the historical context that informs Jesus' preaching as well. He has come ushering in the kingdom of God, the place where God's presence and rule exist. And this is what all of history is heading for, the bible ends with a description of the new earth, the new land where God will reign, in Revelation 21 we read that "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be

their God. ⁴ ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’^[a] or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

[Thomas]

Time of the Judges

Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel 1-8

Context:

- 1) Everything that happens in this part of the bible falls into the “Time of the Judges” (Ruth 1:1). Whereas Joshua is like the capstone for the Pentateuch. The period of the Judges anticipates the formation of the monarchy.
- 2) The book of Judges picks up right where Joshua leaves off. The events told in Judges and 1 Samuel 1-8 take place over a period of roughly 350 years, from the time Joshua died until the time of Israel’s first king. Israel has taken the land, but now the question is whether or not they’ll be able to keep it. As the **second map shows**, God’s people come under pressure from a number of surrounding nations.
- 3) If Joshua was all about Land and Rest, Judges is all about Leadership (or the lack thereof).
 - a. Judges starts with the death of Joshua. The tribes of Israel stop resembling a nation and are at best a loose federation. Characteristics of the federation:
 - i. No central leadership
 - ii. Brief periods of unity under temporary deliverers.
 - iii. Failure to fully drive out their enemies .
 - iv. Disunity: There was no king in the land (17:6, 18:1; 19:1; 21:25).
 - v. Devolving Civilization: “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes (17:6)
 - b. This material really looks forward to the coming of a king. By the end of the book we’ll see that self-rule has put the federation in dire straits.

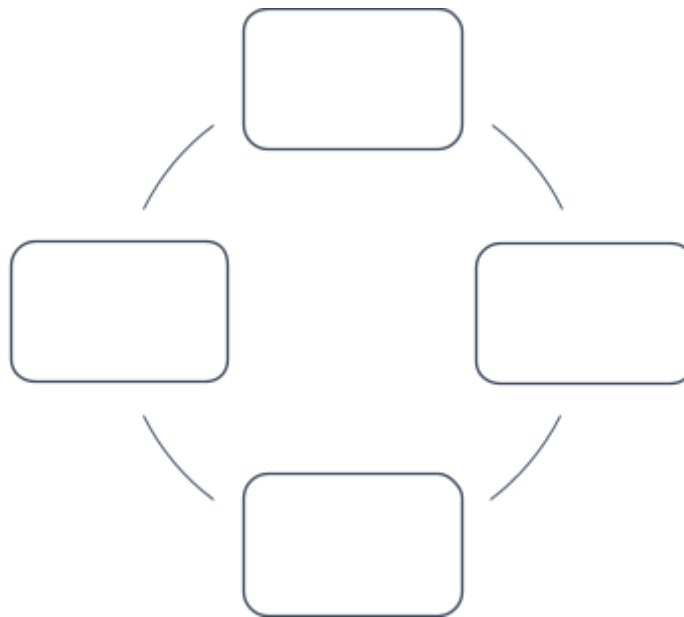
[Justin]

Overview Judges

1) Failure to Complete the Job (Ch. 1-2)

In chapter 1 the picture starts off rather bleak – five words in and Joshua has already died. But then we are greatly encouraged to find the tribe of Judah is wildly successful in driving out the Canaanites from the land allotted to them. Unfortunately, they're the only tribe which can be praised. In the rest of chapters 1-2 we discover that Israel has failed in their mission to completely drive out the other tribes. And this sets the stage for all the drama and conflict that will follow.

2) The Cycle of Judges (3-16)



Israel descends into a repeated cycle of rebellion or *sin*, followed by *suffering* usually oppression by a surrounding nation. This suffering is followed by a crying out to God, which we can call *supplication*, which is followed by God raising up a savior - a judge who rescues them from their enemies and provides *salvation*. This in turn is followed by more sin, repeating the cycle. **And you can see this in the outline provided.**

This cycle repeats 9 times through 14 chapters. But it's important to note that this cycle isn't the same each time. It's a downward spiral. In fact the victory of each judge is increasingly elusive as the book continues. Othniel, in chapter 3, has complete victory... but Ehud, who follows him, has victory only through deception. In chapter 4, Deborah has victory, but some of the tribes are cursed. Gideon has victory, in chapters 6-8, but eventually we have civil war. Jephthah, in chapters 10-12, has victory but it is marred by the tragedy of his daughter, and again things eventually devolve into civil war. And even though he does great damage, Samson, the last and most famous judge of all, never actually defeats the Philistines, in chapters 13-16.

The Judges:

- Local – the judges exercised authority only in limited areas where they were fighting battles over specific enemies, they didn't exercise authority over all 12 tribes.
- Occasional – The judges were raised up in response to specific problems
- Temporary – The judges only last until the current enemy was defeated, they weren't lifelong rulers.

[Thomas]

3) **Complete Corruption (17-21)** - So by the time we reach chapter 17, Israel is at the depth of their sin.

- Gross Idolatry:** Chapters 17-18 reveal their religious corruption. We're told that a priest is hired out for personal use, and these Levites even tolerate the worship of carved images.
- Gross Immorality:** Then chapters 19-21 reveal their moral and social corruption. And these are the darkest, most perverse scenes painted in all of Scripture. As the book concludes the author sadly reflects on the Israelites' plight and their desperate need for a perfect savior and true rest in the land.

4) **The Final Judge: Samuel**

And it is in this period of gross idolatry and grow immorality that the last judge, Samuel comes onto the stage. And his life is covered in 1 Samuel 1-12. As we'll see next session, 1-2 Samuel are all about the rise of the Monarchy in Israel, but the first part which covers the life of Samuel is technically still in the period of the Judges.

Through a lot of controversy and drama Samuel restores the people back to God, and judges the people for the rest of his days, until, they begin to complain, and ask for a king, like all the nations around them. And that is where we'll leave the plotline today, we'll resume the narrative next time.

Conclusion: Samuel paved the way for the monarchy. Samuel was the last in the line of judges but he was different than the rest of the judges. Remember, the judges were Local, Occasional, and Temporary. But...

- 1) Samuel brought unification. All Israel was united against the Philistines under Samuel.
- 2) Samuel brought sustained authority. He "reigned all the days of his life." The rest of the judges lost their authority as soon as the crisis was over.
- 3) The Problem: there was no suitable successor to Samuel.

- a. The people loved the benefits of Samuel's leadership and wanted the blessing to continue. The question was, who would lead after Samuel?
- b. His sons did not walk in his ways.
- c. So, the people asked for a king.
 - i. This request was a strategy to ensure that the blessings of a competent ruler who would defend and provide for the nation would continue through a dynastic line. God's design, however, would be that he himself would reign as king over his people *through* his appointed representatives (Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, etc).
 - ii. God had already promised the people a King back in Deuteronomy 17. So it was not a bad desire. The problem was that the people wanted a king for the wrong reasons. They wanted a king "like all the other nations." God wanted them to have a king to represent his reign in Israel. So the people's desire was to reduce their need for trust in God to save and guide them. And we will see this come through in the kind of king they choose for themselves next week.

[Justin]

Three Central Themes of Scripture

1) God's Promise

- a. Thus far in our story God has entered into 3 covenants: 1) Adam (be fruitful and multiply- spread my reign across the whole globe, this is reiterated in the Noahic Covenant)), 2) Abraham (I will begin to spread my reign through one man's descendants who will become a great nation), 3) Mosaic (specifically, this nation will represent my reign by living out the national covenant of the Law of Moses).
- b. God has been faithful to his promise to Abraham – the Israelites now have a population, a law, and a land.
- c. The Israelites, however, have been unfaithful to their end of the covenant.

2) God's Presence

- a. God continued to dwell with his people through the tabernacle and Ark of the Covenant.
- b. Over and over again we're told that Joshua and the Judges were successful in battle – carrying out the God's promise to Abraham and Israel – because "God was with them."

- c. Yet, God's presence was not to be taken for granted or treated as a tool. When the Israelites brought the Ark into battle thinking it could be used as a talisman, they were sorely disappointed.

[Thomas]

3) God's Kingdom

- a. God's King and Kingdom is likely the biggest theme for us to notice in this period. You see, every cycle in Judges reminds us that God's people need a perfect Savior. Previously God's people had Joshua, and before him Moses, but both die. After them come these judges, who are *types* of Christ. But they are neither lasting nor faithful, including Samuel. Yes, they save them briefly, but these judges are not the best ethical role models, nor do they ever bring a lasting rule. What is needed is a lasting, stable, honorable, monarchy - a line of perfect savior kings, who lead God's people to obey His word perfectly. So by the time we reach the end of the book it is no surprise to read the final summarising line of Judges 21v25: "In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes." It's as though the author is saying that, "This sort of stuff that we've seen in Judges, all the sin of the people and the invasions of the foreign armies and the loss of rest. That wouldn't happen if we had a king who was faithful to God's covenant!" We need a faithful king!
- b. What's interesting is that in Judges, right in the center of the book, right in the center of this dark book, God's people get a king. No it's not Saul or David, but Abimelech. Look with me to Judges 9v6: "all the leaders of Shechem came together, and all Beth-millo, and they went and made Abimelech king, by the oak of the pillar at Shechem."
- c. But this is no faithful king. He does whatever he thinks is right: he has many wives, he ruthlessly kills his own brothers, and leads God's people in total unfaithfulness.
- d. This is the momentum that pushes the narrative forward into the rest of the Old Testament. The people need more than the prophet Moses. They need more than the priest Aaron. They need more than the savior Joshua, and definitely more than these savior judges. They need a king! But what kind of king? They need the serpent crusher promised in Genesis 3:15, they need the king from the line of Judah who would wield the scepter forever promised in Genesis 49:10. They needed the kind of king described in Deuteronomy 17, who would sit under God. They need a king of God's own choosing, a king after God's own heart. These books are making the case that Israel cannot be the nation God intended without a king anointed by God, who is a man of character, and who represents God's kingship over the entire unified nation. And we'll see a glimpse of what this could

look like next week as we study the United Monarchy, particularly under David and Solomon. But as you know, even these kings would fail.

- e. Who do all these leaders point us to? As you can guess, Jesus. Only He can perfectly deliver His people from all their pain. Only He brings a lasting “rest.” Only Christ solves problems that these judges could only temporarily address. Only he can keep us holy in face of temptation from the surrounding culture. For only Christ ever obeyed all the laws of God. And only Christ is the perfect King over His people. But, I get ahead of myself. We’ll talk more about Christ as our great king next week. For now, we leave off with the book of Judges calling and praying and hoping for a king.