

**THE CAMBRIDGE BIBLE
FOR SCHOOLS
AND COLLEGES.
THE BOOK OF JOSHUA**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649010219

The Cambridge Bible for schools and colleges. The book of Joshua by C.F. Maclear

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C.F. MACLEAR

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Cambridge:

PRINTED BY C. J. CLAY, M.A.
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

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* * The Text adopted in this Edition is that of Dr Scrivener's *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*, which will account for a few variations, chiefly in the spelling of certain words, and in the use of italics. For the principles adopted by Dr Scrivener as regards the printing of the Text see his Introduction to the *Paragraph Bible*, printed at the Cambridge University Press.

"As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." Josh. i. 5.

*"The voice that from the glory came
To tell how Moses died unseen,
And waken Joshua's spear of flame
To victory on the mountains green,
Its trumpet tones are sounding still,
When Kings or Parents pass away,
They greet us with a cheering thrill
Of power and comfort in decay."*

Keble's *Christian Year*.

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

1. THE Pentateuch is followed in the Jewish Canon by a series which bears the name of *Neviim Rishonim*, "the earlier Prophets"¹, and comprises Joshua, Judges, the first and second Books of Samuel, and the two Books of Kings. This series contains the history of the Israelites,

(a) As governed by the successor of Moses and the elders who outlived him;

(b) As governed by native kings;

(c) As subject to foreign invaders.

2. The first of these Books, *the Book of Joshua*, derives its name, not from its Author, but from the great hero, whose exploits are therein related, and who succeeded to the command of the people after the death of the great Hebrew Lawgiver, and led the nation into the Promised Land.

3. The claims of the Book to a place in the Canon of the Old Testament have never been disputed, and its authority is confirmed by allusions to the events recorded in it, which are found in other Books of Holy Scripture.

4. These allusions are found in (a) *the Psalms*, (b) *the Prophets*, (c) *the New Testament*;

Thus (a) in Pss. xlv. 2, 3, lxviii. 12—14, lxxviii. 54, 55, we find reference made to the events which succeeded the Exodus from Egypt, the expulsion of the Canaanites, the

¹ The Jewish division of the Old Testament into (a) *the Law*, (b) *the Prophets*, (c) *the Hagiographa*, is at least as old as the time of our Lord.

division of the land among the tribes of Israel, and the subsequent apostasy of the people.

Again (*b*) in Is. xxviii. 21, reference is made to the victory in the valley of Gibeon, and, in *Hab.* iii. 11—13, to the miracle which attested that victory, the Divine march "through the land in indignation," and the "threshing of the heathen" in the Divine anger.

Again (*c*) in Acts vii. 45, St Stephen alludes to the bringing of the Ark into the land of Canaan, and the driving out of the nations by Joshua; while *the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (iv. 8) speaks of "the rest" which Joshua gave, in part and in part only, to the people; (xi. 30—31) of the fall of Jericho; the faith of Rahab; and her shelter of the spies; and lastly St James (ii. 25) mentions the same Canaanitess as "justified by her works, when she had received the messengers and sent them out another way."

5. *By whom was it written?* Nothing can be said to be really known as to the authorship of the Book¹. Jewish writers and the Christian Fathers ascribe it to Joshua himself². Others conjecture that it was composed by Eleazar, or Phinehas, or one of the elders who outlived Joshua, or Samuel, or Jeremiah; while others have not hesitated to ascribe it to one who lived after the Babylonish captivity.

6. Many arguments may be alleged which point to Joshua, in preference to any other person, as the *compiler*, at any rate, of the greater portion of its contents. For

(*a*) The example of his predecessor Moses could not but

¹ "It should be observed," it has been said, "that in accepting the written chronicles of any nation as substantially true, we are not accustomed to depend on the personal character of each particular annalist. The trustworthiness of the pictured narratives which cover the temples and tombs of Thebes, or of those equally wondrous inscriptions discovered in the record chambers of Nineveh and Babylon, is not disputed because we do not know by what particular scribes or priests they were originally composed; nor would the attestation be of much value if we did. And many ancient MSS., which throw light on the history of our own country, are the work of men of whom nothing has come down to us but the faded relics of their earnest toil."

² This view has been embraced in recent times by König and, as regards the first half of the book, by Hävernick,

have suggested to him the composition of a record of the fulfilment of the Divine Promises through his leadership ;

- (b) No one was better qualified by his position to describe events, in which he had taken so distinguished a part, and to collect the documents contained in the Book ;
- (c) No one would have been more anxious to treasure up in writing his own last addresses and solemn warnings to the people¹ ;
- (d) No one else could have recorded with such accuracy the account of the commands he received from the Most High, and of his own interviews with his Mysterious Visitant, "the Prince of the Host of Jehovah"².

7. But while the Book appears to have been compiled by one, who lived in the time of the events recorded, and was, indeed, an eye-witness of them, there are scattered up and down it a number of historical allusions, which clearly point to a date beyond the death of Joshua. Amongst these may be enumerated,

- (a) The capture of Hebron by Caleb and of Debir by Othniel³ ;
- (b) The remark that "the Jebusites dwelt with the children of Judah at Jerusalem"⁴ ;
- (c) The capture of Laish by the warriors of the tribe of Dan⁵.
- (d) The account of Joshua's death⁶.

8. While, then, there is evidence that much of the materials may have been *collected and furnished* by Joshua himself, we

¹ Josh. xxiii., xxiv.

² Josh. i. 1, iii. 7, iv. 1, 2, v. 2, 9, 13, vi. 2, vii. 10, viii. 1, x. 8, xi. 6, xiii. 1, 2, xx. 1, xxiv. 2.

³ Comp. Josh. xv. 13—20 with Judg. i. 10—15.

⁴ Comp. Josh. xv. 63 with Judg. i. 8.

⁵ Comp. Josh. xix. 47 with Judg. xviii. 7. It is true that, if we consulted only the Book of Joshua, we might suppose these conquests to have been completed before Joshua's death, as he lived for several years after he had dismissed the people to their possessions, but when we refer to the parallel passages, it is clear they were not completed till after his death. See Keil's *Commentary*, Introd. p. 46.

⁶ Josh. xxiv. 29—33. All these incidents, it will be noticed, may very well have taken place within twenty or twenty-five years after Joshua's death.

shall not in all probability be far wrong in conjecturing that the Book was composed partly from personal observation and inquiry, partly out of authentic documents already in existence, by one of "the elders who overlived Joshua¹," and within a few years after his death.

9. *For what object was it written?* Resuming, as it does, the history of the Chosen People at the death of Moses, it was not intended to be a mere biography or a mere collection of authentic documents. It serves as a link between what precedes and what follows², and is designed to shew the faithfulness of Jehovah to His Word of Promise, and to illustrate the operations of His grace and mercy, whereby He placed the people in possession of the land, which He had promised as an inheritance to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob³.

10. In respect to style, the Book of Joshua is less archaic than the Pentateuch, but more so than the Books of Kings and Chronicles. In reading it, it is well to bear in mind the extreme antiquity of the documents on which it rests. We need not, therefore, expect to find in it marks of the finished composition which belong to a later age. The style is plain and inartificial. The narrative follows the course of thought and feeling on the part of the writer, rather than any formal method of arrangement, and sometimes, when the conclusion of any record is deemed of special importance, it is apparently anticipated by the writer, and afterwards restated, though not always in the same identical terms.

¹ Josh. xxiv. 31.

² Just as the Acts of the Apostles is the link between the Gospels and the Epistles of the New Testament.

³ "The design of the writer," observes Keil, "was not merely to display the great deeds of Joshua, nor even to trace the history of the theocracy under him, and thus continue the narrative contained in the Pentateuch from the death of Moses to that of Joshua; but to furnish historical evidence that Joshua, by the help of God, faithfully performed the work to which the Lord had called him; and by the side of that to shew how, in fulfilling the promises which He gave to the patriarchs, God drove out the Canaanites before Israel, and gave their land to the twelve tribes of Jacob for a permanent inheritance."—Keil's *Commentary*, Introd. p. 2.