

Unfolding God's Plan of Redemption

Themes from the Old Testament: Joshua (Part I)

Francis Schaeffer writes in his commentary on Joshua, *Joshua and the Flow of Biblical History*, (IVP, 1975, p.9),

Joshua is an important book for many reasons—for the history it records and for its internal teaching. But what makes the book of Joshua overwhelmingly important is that it stands as a bridge, a link between the Pentateuch (the writings of Moses) and the rest of Scripture. It is crucial for understanding the unity the Pentateuch has with all that follows it, including the New Testament.

I. Interpreting Joshua: Hermeneutics & Application

A. An important hermeneutical principle is that a text can have one, and only one, meaning. There may be many applications to one's life or circumstances, but there is only one true meaning of any passage of Scripture. This meaning is understood through the study of the grammar and historical context of the passage and can be expressed simply: The Bible means exactly what it says.

1. The Bible may only be interpreted figuratively when the plain sense of the words would be literally impossible. (*He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.* Jn 6:54)
2. The Bible has symbolic and metaphoric or allegorical passages, but they are rooted in a historical context which is literally true, in other words, the event which has symbolic meaning actually happened in time-space history.

B. Joshua: The History and the Application

1. The history of the beginning of the conquest of Canaan under Joshua's leadership. This is the literal, historical meaning of Joshua.
2. The symbolism of the Spirit-filled life: Rooted in the literal history of the conquest of Canaan is the story of personal salvation from sin to spiritual victory:
 - a. Egypt: the land of sin, leaving it through the Passover Lamb
 - b. Wilderness: wandering in a desert place under the Law
 - c. Canaan: crossing the Jordan (baptism in the Spirit) into the promised land of rest and victory with wonderful, fruitful provision...and there are many enemies. (See Hebrews, Chapter 4)
3. The general application: the Old Testament teaching regarding spiritual warfare. Joshua has a parallel relationship to Ephesians much the same as Leviticus has a parallel relationship to Hebrews. As such, Joshua has many personal applications to us about the life of faith in the Spirit-filled journey.