

## **Dr. David Howard, Joshua - Ruth, Session 1, Introduction, Part 1, Date, Authorship, Joshua Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

### **1. Abstract of Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 1, Introduction, Part 1, Date, Authorship, Joshua, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

**Dr. David Howard's lecture** introduces his course on the books of Joshua and Ruth. He focuses on Joshua, discussing the **life of Joshua**, his relationship with Moses, and the **book's authorship and dating**, acknowledging scholarly debate surrounding the latter. The lecture also explores the **historical context of Joshua**, including the conquest of Canaan and its significance, referencing archaeological findings and different interpretations of biblical chronology. Finally, Howard addresses common misunderstandings about the book, particularly concerning the depiction of battles and the treatment of the Canaanites. The lecture sets the stage for a deeper exploration of the book's content and themes in subsequent sessions.

**2. 30 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 1 – Double click icon to play  
in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org  
[BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old  
Testament → Historical Books → Joshua-Ruth).**



**Howard\_Josh\_Ruth  
\_Session01.mp3**

### **3. Briefing Document: Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 1, Introduction, Part 1, Date, Authorship, Joshua**

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes, ideas, and facts from the provided source, along with relevant quotes:

#### **Briefing Document: Dr. David Howard on Joshua - Introduction Part 1**

##### **Overview:**

This document summarizes the first part of Dr. David Howard's lecture series on the books of Joshua and Ruth. The focus of this session is the introduction to Joshua, specifically concerning the book's background, authorship, date, and historical/geographical context. Dr. Howard brings his extensive experience as a seminary professor to bear in his analysis, providing both academic and theological insights.

##### **Key Themes and Ideas:**

##### **1. Dr. Howard's Personal Journey and Expertise:**

- Dr. Howard shares his background, emphasizing his lifelong dedication to the Old Testament, driven initially by a personal desire to understand it better: "When I came to be an adult, I realized that I knew a lot about the New Testament and not a whole lot about the Old, even though I'd read it several times."
- He holds a doctorate from the University of Michigan in Near Eastern Studies, has taught at multiple seminaries, translated the book of Joshua from Hebrew, and written a commentary on it.
- This extensive experience establishes his credibility and expertise in the subject matter.

##### **1. First Impressions of the Book of Joshua:**

- Common perceptions of Joshua involve battles, conquest, and the land: "many times people will say, well, it's about battles. I have the song, Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho, and that's the impression we have, and the conquest, and then the land."
- Dr. Howard emphasizes that the battles are not primarily human endeavors, but driven by God's actions and miracles: "it's really, the battles are seen through

God's eyes, and God is the primary actor and mover behind the battles, and Israel, in a sense, is kind of a bystander."

- He notes the book is more about God's gift of the land of Canaan as a place of rest and inheritance for Israel, than just battles.
- He acknowledges the challenging topic of the annihilation of the Canaanites, highlighting the necessity for thoughtful interpretation and a comparison of this to modern conflicts (this will be addressed in more detail later): "Another thing that often people think about in terms of the battles is the annihilation, the destruction of the Canaanites by the Israelites. And that seems rather harsh..."

#### 1. **Joshua the Man:**

- The book of Joshua is named after the main character, Joshua, the successor of Moses.
- His Hebrew name, Yehoshua, means "the Lord saves/delivers," and his name in the Greek translation is rendered Jesus, similar to Jesus. His original name was Hoshea, meaning salvation/deliverance, but Moses changed it.
- Joshua served as an aid to Moses, was present at Mount Sinai, was one of the 12 spies (returning a positive report), and was formally designated Moses' successor.
- There was a formal commission where Joshua received Moses' authority, and the Spirit of God was seen to reside in him.
- The book shows how Joshua "grew into" his leadership role. Initially, he is referred to as "Moses' assistant," not "servant of the Lord".
- Moses is called "the servant of the Lord" multiple times in the book of Joshua, but Joshua is only called the "servant of the Lord" after his death: "So, in a sense, Joshua had to die before he was designated as the servant of the Lord..."

#### 1. **Authorship and Date of Composition:**

- The book of Joshua is anonymous; the author is not identified within the text itself or elsewhere in scripture.
- There is no explicit claim in Scripture about who wrote the book: "Basically, the book is anonymous. There is no claim in the book who actually wrote the whole book. There is no claim elsewhere in Scripture about who wrote the book, so we just really don't know."

- While the Rabbis attributed authorship to Joshua or Samuel, Dr. Howard stresses that guessing at authorship isn't essential, and there are indications of later writing.
- While Joshua recorded some parts, specifically at Shechem, Dr. Howard states we don't know who penned the final form of the book.
- The date of composition is unknown, but references to "until this day" suggest a time later than Joshua's life.

#### 1. **Date of the Events:**

- The date of the events in Joshua is linked to the date of the Exodus from Egypt.
- **Traditional View:** Based on 1 Kings 6:1, where it states that the foundation of the temple occurred 480 years after the exodus and using the widely accepted date of 966 B.C. for Solomon's building of the Temple, the Exodus is placed at approximately 1446 BC, and the entry into Canaan under Joshua at 1406 B.C.
- **Later View:** Archaeological evidence suggests a large-scale destruction of cities around 1200 BC (the end of the Late Bronze Age), some scholars believe this was caused by the Israelite invasion. These scholars then place the exodus at this later date.
- Dr. Howard leans towards the earlier date of 1446 BC for the Exodus, citing the specificity of the dating reference in 1 Kings 6:1 as a solid argument. He acknowledges that both the early and late dates require some compression of historical time, such as the period of the judges.
- He estimates the events within the book of Joshua to span around 30 years, consisting of 5-7 years of active battles and another 25 years for settlement.

#### 1. **Geographical and Historical Context:**

- Dr. Howard presents a map illustrating the Near East over 3,000 years of Old Testament history, placing Israel within the context of major empires like the Hittites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, and Egyptians.
- The map also indicates the locations of neighboring peoples of Israel, such as the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites.
- He traces the movements of Abraham from Ur to Haran to Canaan, and the subsequent migration of his descendants to Egypt, their bondage, the Exodus, and the journey to the edge of Canaan.

- He highlights the significance of the wilderness wanderings, the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai, and the final speeches of Moses in Deuteronomy before the action shifts to the book of Joshua.

### **Key Quotes:**

- On the nature of battles in Joshua: "it's really, the battles are seen through God's eyes, and God is the primary actor and mover behind the battles, and Israel, in a sense, is kind of a bystander."
- On Joshua's name: "His name in Hebrew is Yehoshua, and it means the Lord saves, or the Lord delivers, or Yahweh, the personal divine name of God saves or delivers."
- On Joshua's status as "servant of the Lord": "So, in a sense, Joshua had to die before he was designated as the servant of the Lord..."
- On authorship: "Basically, the book is anonymous. There is no claim in the book who actually wrote the whole book."
- On the dating of the Exodus: "in the 480th year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt." (referring to 1 Kings 6:1)

### **Implications and Further Study:**

- This introduction lays the foundation for a deeper understanding of the book of Joshua by emphasizing God's role, not just the military aspect.
- It challenges simplistic readings of the conquest narrative and encourages a more theological interpretation.
- It highlights the importance of understanding the historical and geographical context of the book.
- The discussion about authorship and dating underscores the need for humility in biblical interpretation and focuses the reader on the message, regardless of the human author.
- The historical information sets the stage for examining God's work in delivering the land to his chosen people, and the fulfillment of promises.

This document provides a comprehensive overview of the introductory material for Dr. Howard's Joshua lectures, highlighting his key points and laying groundwork for future sessions.

## **4. Study Guide: Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 1, Introduction, Part 1, Date, Authorship, Joshua**

### **Joshua and Ruth: A Study Guide**

#### **Quiz**

**Instructions:** Answer each question in 2-3 complete sentences.

1. What was Dr. Howard's initial career path before entering seminary?
2. According to Dr. Howard, what is a common first impression of the book of Joshua?
3. How is God portrayed in the battles described in the book of Joshua, according to Dr. Howard?
4. What is the significance of the land of Canaan in the book of Joshua?
5. What does the name "Joshua" (Yehoshua) mean in Hebrew?
6. How did Moses play a role in Joshua's life?
7. What was unique about Joshua's commissioning ceremony?
8. Why does Dr. Howard say that the book of Joshua is anonymous?
9. What is the traditional date for the exodus from Egypt, and how was it calculated?
10. What is the significance of the geographical context of the book of Joshua?

#### **Quiz Answer Key**

1. Dr. Howard initially pursued a biology pre-med major in college but did not get into medical school. This led to an identity crisis, and eventually to his calling to study the Old Testament.
2. A common first impression of the book of Joshua is that it primarily focuses on battles and the conquest of Canaan. Many people also associate it with the popular song "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho."
3. In the battles of Joshua, God is portrayed as the primary actor and the one who brings about the victory. Israel is more of a bystander, as God is seen directing the battles and performing miracles to ensure their success.

4. The land of Canaan is depicted as a gift from God, a place of rest, and an inheritance for Israel. The book's focus is on the land as the place where the Israelites will live for centuries, fulfilling God's promises.
5. The Hebrew name "Yehoshua" means "the Lord saves" or "the Lord delivers." It is a significant name that connects to the themes of salvation and divine deliverance found in the book.
6. Moses was Joshua's mentor and leader. He appointed Joshua as his assistant and was also responsible for changing Joshua's name. Additionally, he also designated Joshua as his successor.
7. Joshua's commissioning was a solemn ceremony involving the entire congregation, presided over by Eliezer, the high priest, and where Joshua was given Moses' authority through the laying on of hands. It also emphasized the God's Spirit residing in Joshua.
8. The book of Joshua does not explicitly state who the author is, nor does any other scripture make the claim. Because of this, Dr. Howard says that the book of Joshua is anonymous.
9. The traditional date for the exodus is 1446 BC, based on the reference in 1 Kings 6:1, which states that the temple was built 480 years after the exodus. This calculation places the exodus in 1446 BC.
10. The geographical context of the book is important for understanding the events in relation to both the ancient world and to God's promise to Abraham. It places the Israelites in a specific place at a specific time, with the events unfolding in a location that is both a gift from God and a place of conflict.

## Essay Questions

**Instructions:** Write a well-organized essay addressing each of the following prompts. Be sure to integrate concepts and details from the provided sources.

1. Discuss the significance of Joshua's name, and how it relates to the overall themes of the book. How does Joshua's role as Moses' successor shape the narrative of the book?
2. Analyze the portrayal of battles in the book of Joshua, emphasizing the role of God. How does this perspective differ from typical human understandings of warfare? What are the implications of this view on the concept of divine justice?
3. Explore the various perspectives surrounding the dating of the exodus. What is the debate between the traditional and later dating of the exodus, and how do these views impact the understanding of the book of Joshua?
4. Discuss the importance of the land of Canaan within the book of Joshua, considering both its historical context and its theological significance. How does the theme of the land connect to the idea of divine promise and inheritance?
5. Considering the challenges related to the authorship of Joshua, what conclusions can be drawn about the nature of biblical texts? How does an understanding of the book's anonymity contribute to or detract from one's understanding and interpretation of the text?



## Glossary of Key Terms

**Annihilation:** The complete destruction of something or someone. In the context of Joshua, this refers to the destruction of the Canaanites.

**Canaan:** The land promised to the Israelites by God, often referred to as the "Promised Land." It is the main location of the events in the book of Joshua.

**Canon:** The official list of books considered to be divinely inspired and authoritative scripture. In this case, the discussion is concerning the canon of the Old Testament.

**Exodus:** The departure of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, led by Moses, a foundational event in Israel's history.

**Historical Context:** The social, political, economic, and cultural setting of a particular time and place, important for understanding events in the Bible.

**Iron Age:** A period in history following the Late Bronze Age where iron became the dominant material for tools and weapons. Dates vary depending on the region, generally around 1200 BCE.

**Joshua:** The main character of the Book of Joshua, Moses' successor and leader of the Israelites.

**Late Bronze Age:** A period in history characterized by the use of bronze tools and weapons. Ended with a widespread societal collapse and the rise of the Iron Age around 1200 BCE.

**Literary Context:** The way a book fits into the rest of the biblical canon, understanding how it is influenced by and influences the books around it.

**Pentateuch:** The first five books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) also referred to as the Torah.

**Promised Land:** The land of Canaan, which God promised to give to Abraham and his descendants.

**Stele:** An upright stone slab bearing an inscription, relief carving, or both, used for commemorative purposes. A reference to one in the context of the book of Joshua, mentioned by Dr. Howard, gives historical and extra-biblical support.

**Yehoshua:** The Hebrew name for Joshua, meaning "the Lord saves" or "the Lord delivers."

## 5. FAQs on Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 1, Introduction, Part 1, Date, Authorship, Joshua, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions about the Book of Joshua

1. **What are some common initial impressions people have about the Book of Joshua, and what is the speaker's perspective on these?** Many people initially think of the Book of Joshua as primarily about battles, conquest, and the possession of the land of Canaan, often referencing the popular song "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho." While the battles and conquest are present, the speaker emphasizes that these battles are not simply human endeavors but are fundamentally acts of God, with God being the primary actor and giver of victory. Israel is often depicted as a bystander or instrument of God's will, not winning on the basis of superior military strength. The focus of the book also goes beyond just the battles; it is more about the land as a gift from God, a place of rest, and an inheritance for Israel.
2. **How does the Book of Joshua portray God's actions, particularly in relation to the battles?** The Book of Joshua portrays God as the primary actor and mover behind the battles. The battles are not depicted as human victories based on military prowess but rather as divine interventions where God directs the events, performs miracles, and gives the victory to Israel. Israel's role is often secondary; they follow God's instructions and witness His power in action. This divine agency is emphasized throughout the narrative, underscoring that the victories are a result of God's faithfulness and power, not Israel's strength.
3. **What are some ethical challenges presented by the Book of Joshua, and how does the speaker suggest we approach them?** One significant ethical challenge is the annihilation of the Canaanites by the Israelites, which some may view as harsh. The speaker acknowledges this concern, particularly in light of modern-day extremist violence. However, he suggests that there are important differences between the actions in the Book of Joshua and modern-day violence and that these differences will be discussed later. The overall theme he suggests is to look beyond the surface of the battles and see the grander movements of God and to learn who God is through his interactions with both the Israelites and the Canaanites. He also points out that not all Canaanites were destroyed as there are stories of those who were spared.

4. **Who is Joshua, and what is his significance in the book and in the broader narrative of the Old Testament?** Joshua is the successor to Moses and the new leader of Israel, leading the people into the Promised Land after Moses' death. His Hebrew name, Yehoshua, means "The Lord saves" or "The Lord delivers." He was originally named Hoshea, meaning "salvation" or "deliverance," but Moses changed his name to reflect his role. Joshua served as Moses' aid and confidant. He was one of the 12 spies sent to scout Canaan, and he and Caleb were the only ones to give a positive report. Joshua was ceremonially designated as Moses' successor and was given the authority to distribute the land. Although Moses is presented as a greater figure in the Old Testament, the book makes clear that God was with Joshua as he was with Moses and he is presented as the legitimate successor of Moses.
5. **How does the book portray Joshua's development as a leader, and what evidence is there in the text for this?** The book portrays Joshua as someone who grows into his role as a leader. Initially, in chapter 1, he is described as Moses' assistant and is not yet called "the servant of the Lord," a title frequently used for Moses. Only at the end of the book, in his death notice, is Joshua referred to as "the servant of the Lord." This suggests that his authority and status as a leader developed over the course of the narrative as he carried out God's commands and saw the fulfillment of God's promises. His authoritative speeches in chapters 22-24 also reinforce his evolution into a strong and respected leader.
6. **What can be said about the authorship and date of composition of the Book of Joshua?** The Book of Joshua is anonymous; there is no explicit claim within the book or elsewhere in Scripture about who wrote the entire book. While the book itself indicates that Joshua recorded some events, such as the covenant at Shechem, it is not clear who wrote the whole narrative. Some rabbis attributed authorship to Joshua, Samuel, or a later editor. Regarding the date of composition, it is also uncertain. References to "until this day" suggest a time later than Joshua's own lifetime. The final form of the book was written after Joshua's time. While the exact date is unknown, some evidence suggests it was likely written sometime after the events it describes, possibly in the time of Samuel. The speaker emphasizes that the uncertainty surrounding authorship and date should not diminish its value as scripture.

7. **What are the two main viewpoints on the date of the Exodus, and how does the speaker justify his position on the earlier date?** There are two primary viewpoints regarding the date of the Exodus: the traditional view, around 1446 B.C., and a later view, around 1200 B.C. The traditional date is derived from 1 Kings 6:1, which states that Solomon began building the temple 480 years after the Exodus. The speaker favors the earlier date for a few reasons, including a literal reading of the Kings passage as intended to be a specific date. He acknowledges that some scholars interpret the 480 years as a symbolic number but he does not accept that interpretation. Archaeological evidence is often used to support the later date but the speaker is not persuaded. He also points out that if you add up the years of the judges from the Book of Judges, it is too large for both theories and that compression of the years of the judges must be done no matter which theory one uses.
8. **What is the historical and geographical context of the Book of Joshua, and what key events are important in understanding it?** The Book of Joshua takes place within the larger context of Old Testament history. The narrative begins just after the death of Moses and the Israelites' entry into the Promised Land of Canaan. The events take place in the backdrop of major world empires, such as the Hittites, Assyrians, and Egyptians, which controlled the ancient Near East to varying degrees across the centuries. After the 400 years of slavery in Egypt, the Israelites, led by Moses, escaped from Egypt to Mount Sinai. They received the Ten Commandments and God's law there. After that, the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years before finally arriving at the edge of the Promised Land. This is where Moses gave his final speeches in the book of Deuteronomy. In the Book of Joshua, the narrative shifts to the conquest and settlement of Canaan, with the distribution of the land under the leadership of Joshua.