

Dr. David Howard, Joshua - Ruth, Session 3, Introduction, Part 3, Literary Context 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 3, Introduction, Part 3, Literary Context, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. David Howard's lecture discusses the literary context of the Book of Joshua within the Old Testament canon. He explores different scholarly perspectives on the authorship and composition of the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History, including the Hexateuch theory and Martin Noth's Deuteronomistic History theory. **Howard emphasizes Joshua's unique position** as a hinge book, looking both backward to the fulfillment of God's promises and forward to Israel's subsequent history in the Promised Land. He ultimately argues for a traditional understanding of the Pentateuch's authorship while acknowledging the value of alternative perspectives. **The lecture aims to provide a deeper understanding of the book's place and significance within the larger biblical narrative.**

**2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 3 – 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
_Session03.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 1, Introduction, Part 3, Literary Context

Okay, here is a briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, focusing on the literary context of the Book of Joshua:

Briefing Document: Literary Context of the Book of Joshua

Overview:

This document summarizes the third part of a lecture by Dr. David Howard on the book of Joshua, focusing on its literary context within the Old Testament. Howard explores how the book of Joshua fits within the larger canon and discusses various theories about its relationship to the books that precede and follow it, particularly the Pentateuch and the historical books.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Joshua as a Literary Composition:

- Howard emphasizes that Joshua is not just a historical record but a literary composition with a specific intent.
- The intent is that the "gift of the promised land is the people of Israel."

1. Placement within the Canon:

- **Traditional Protestant View:** Joshua is the first of the "historical books," which detail Israel's life in the promised land. This period runs from the entrance into the land in Joshua to the exile described in 2 Kings. The historical books are seen as a narrative that continues the story begun in the Pentateuch.
- **Jewish Tradition:** In Jewish tradition, the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, and 1 & 2 Kings are known as the "former prophets." These are not prophets in the traditional sense of those who directly proclaimed God's word, but they are considered prophets because the authors are "writing down the events and interpreting them through God's eyes." This perspective shows an understanding of authors who interpreted events through a divine lens.

1. The Pentateuch and the Hexateuch Theory:

- The traditional Pentateuch consists of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, commonly attributed to Moses.

- "The first five books of the Bible...are sometimes called the books of Moses, and this would be because Moses was the primary author of these books."
- A 19th and early 20th-century theory proposed the existence of a "Hexateuch," which includes Joshua. This theory argued that the storyline from Genesis did not end in Deuteronomy, but culminated in the fulfillment of the promises in Joshua.
- The Hexateuch Theory suggested that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch, but someone much later, which was writing about this, and threads that would go through all of these books ended in Joshua.
- The Pentateuch is forward-looking: "The movement in the Pentateuch is always in a forward-looking direction...at the end of every book in the Pentateuch, there's this kind of forward-looking lean." There is anticipation for the promised land.
- Joshua, in contrast, has a sense of fulfillment: "...a sense of, ah, we're here. Finally, after all these centuries, the promises are fulfilled, we're in the land, and life is good. So, there's clearly a sense that the book of Joshua looks back in appreciation for all of this."

1. **The Deuteronomistic History Theory:**

- Introduced by Martin Noth in 1943, this theory posits that Deuteronomy serves as the introduction to a larger literary work: the Deuteronomistic History.
- This history consists of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings.
- Noth believed that these books were compiled during the exile, after the fall of Jerusalem, and that themes found in Deuteronomy echo throughout. "Noth argued that this entire corpus of all these big books was written during the exile after Jerusalem fell."
- Deuteronomy looks ahead: "It's clear the book of Deuteronomy looks ahead a lot to life in the land, Moses' instructions at the end of his life, looking ahead to how they should live, and so on."
- Howard agrees that many themes connect these books, echoing the themes from Deuteronomy: "...Many of the things about obedience and God's promises and so on that are mentioned in Deuteronomy are fulfilled in these books." However, he disagrees with the idea that it is one author during the exile.
- Howard emphasizes that a unity of theme does not necessarily indicate a unity of authorship. He affirms the traditional view of the Pentateuch as primarily Mosaic.

1. Joshua as a "Hinged" Book:

- Both Deuteronomy and Joshua serve as pivotal "hinged" books.
- Deuteronomy looks back at God's faithfulness over the generations but also looks forward to the life in the promised land, repeating laws from 40 years earlier. "Even the name of the book, Deuteronomy, comes from the words Deutero and Nomos, meaning second law. The law had been given originally in Mount Sinai to the first generation. Those people died off in the wilderness and now Moses was speaking to the second generation."
- Joshua looks back at the fulfillment of promises but also looks forward as the first book of life in the promised land until the exile in 2 Kings.
- Joshua "Looks backward saying, these are the fulfillment of the promises. And yet, there is also a way in which Joshua looks ahead as the first book in which Israel was living until the end of 2 Kings when Israel is taken away from the land."

1. Dual Perspective:

- Howard emphasizes that Joshua operates with both a backward and forward-looking perspective. It celebrates the fulfillment of promises while also marking the beginning of a new chapter for Israel within the promised land.

Conclusion:

Dr. Howard presents the book of Joshua as a significant and complex text, deeply interconnected with the books that precede and follow it. While the Hexateuch and Deuteronomistic History theories offer valuable insights, Howard advocates for retaining a traditional understanding of authorship, while still appreciating the literary and thematic links between these books in the Old Testament. The book of Joshua acts as a hinge, looking back to the promises and forward to the consequences of Israel's actions in the land, making it a pivotal book within the Old Testament canon.

4. Study Guide: Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 3, Introduction, Part 3, Literary Context

Joshua: Literary Context Study Guide

Short Answer Quiz

1. What is the primary focus of the "literary context" of a book, as discussed in the lecture?
2. What is the Pentateuch, and which books does it traditionally include?
3. In the Protestant tradition, what is the name typically given to the books that follow the Pentateuch (from Joshua to 2 Kings), and why might the lecturer dislike that designation?
4. What is the Jewish tradition's name for the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, and 1 & 2 Kings? How does that designation differ from the traditional idea of a "prophet?"
5. Explain the theory of the Hexateuch and what it proposes about the ending of the storyline from Genesis.
6. According to the lecture, how does the movement of the narrative differ in the Pentateuch compared to the book of Joshua?
7. What is the "Deuteronomistic History" theory, and who proposed it?
8. How does Deuteronomy look both backward and forward in the biblical narrative?
9. Explain why the book of Joshua can be described as a "hinged book" according to the lecturer.
10. What is the meaning of the word "Deuteronomy," based on its etymology?

Short Answer Quiz Answer Key

1. The literary context of a book refers to its place within the biblical canon and how it functions as a written composition with a specific intent, not just as a record of historical events.
2. The Pentateuch refers to the first five books of the Bible, which are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; traditionally understood to have been primarily written by Moses.

3. The books following the Pentateuch are typically called the "historical books" in the Protestant tradition. The lecturer dislikes this term because it might imply that other parts of the Bible are not historical.
4. In the Jewish tradition, these books are known as the "former prophets," signifying that the authors are speaking God's words through interpreting events, not in the way a typical prophet would deliver a direct message from God.
5. The Hexateuch theory suggests that the storyline from Genesis does not end in Deuteronomy, but actually concludes with the book of Joshua, viewing the first six books as a unified composition.
6. In the Pentateuch, the narrative movement is always forward-looking towards the promised land, whereas in the book of Joshua, the narrative looks back in appreciation because they are now in the land.
7. The "Deuteronomistic History" theory, proposed by Martin Noth, suggests that Deuteronomy serves as the head of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, and that all of these books were composed as one during the exile.
8. Deuteronomy looks backward by reviewing God's faithfulness from Abraham until that time but looks ahead by anticipating life in the promised land and the things the people should remember.
9. The book of Joshua is a "hinged book" because it looks both backward toward the fulfillment of God's promises and forward as the beginning of the Israelite's life in the land which continues until the exile.
10. "Deuteronomy" comes from the Greek words "Deutero" and "Nomos," which mean "second law;" referring to the re-telling of the law given at Mount Sinai.

Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the Hexateuch theory with the Deuteronomistic History theory. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each in your view?
2. Discuss the significance of viewing the book of Joshua as a "hinged book." How does this perspective influence our understanding of the book and its placement within the Old Testament canon?
3. How does the lecturer's understanding of the literary context of the book of Joshua differ from other perspectives? Explain the implications of the lecturer's viewpoint.
4. Trace the forward-looking movement of the Pentateuch and how this movement culminates in the book of Joshua. How does this movement emphasize the idea of God's promise and fulfillment?
5. Assess the lecturer's view of Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch within the context of the different theories mentioned in the lecture. How does the lecturer reconcile the Pentateuch's Mosaic authorship with these theories?

Glossary of Key Terms

Canon: A collection of books or writings accepted as genuine and authoritative, particularly in a religious context (e.g., the biblical canon).

Deuteronomistic History: A theory that proposes that the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings were compiled as a unified historical narrative during the Babylonian exile.

Deuteronomy: The fifth book of the Pentateuch, containing Moses' final speeches and laws before the Israelites entered the promised land. Its name means "second law."

Former Prophets: A term in the Jewish tradition for the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings, which are considered to contain prophetic messages through the interpretation of historical events.

Hexateuch: A theory that suggests that the first six books of the Old Testament (Genesis to Joshua) should be seen as a unified literary unit.

Historical Books: A traditional term in Protestant Bibles referring to the books from Joshua to 2 Kings, which narrate the history of Israel.

Literary Context: The position and function of a text within a larger body of literature (e.g., the placement of the book of Joshua within the Old Testament).

Mosaic Authorship: The traditional belief that Moses was the primary author of the Pentateuch.

Pentateuch: The first five books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), traditionally attributed to Moses.

Promised Land: The land of Canaan, promised by God to Abraham and his descendants, which the Israelites eventually entered under Joshua's leadership.

5. FAQs on Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 3, Introduction, Part 3, Literary Context, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions about the Book of Joshua's Literary Context

1. **How is the book of Joshua situated within the Old Testament canon?** The book of Joshua is traditionally placed after the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) and is considered the first of the "historical books," which continue through 2 Kings (or even further to Nehemiah and Esther in some traditions). In the Jewish tradition, Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel, and 1 Kings are called the "Former Prophets," though they function as historical narrative rather than prophetic pronouncements in the style of Isaiah or Jeremiah. This placement emphasizes Joshua as the start of Israel's life in the promised land, a key transition in the biblical narrative.
2. **What is meant by the term "literary context" when discussing the book of Joshua?** "Literary context" refers to how a book functions within the larger structure and narrative of the biblical canon, considering its purpose and relationship to other books. It looks beyond the historical and geographical aspects to explore the book's place in the overall composition of the Old Testament. This includes understanding how the author may have intended for it to be interpreted in light of what comes before it (like the Pentateuch) and what follows it (like Judges).
3. **What is the significance of the Pentateuch, and how does it relate to Joshua?** The Pentateuch, or the first five books of the Bible, are traditionally attributed to Moses and primarily recount the history of Israel from creation through their time in the wilderness and up to the point of entering the promised land. The Pentateuch sets the stage for the book of Joshua. The story moves from God's promise to Abraham through generations of displacement, leading to a forward direction toward the promised land. The book of Joshua presents itself as the fulfillment of those promises, marking a significant turning point in the story.

4. **What is the "Hexateuch" theory, and why was it proposed?** The Hexateuch theory posits that the first six books of the Bible (Genesis through Joshua) should be seen as a single literary unit. This theory arose in the late 19th and early 20th centuries among scholars who challenged the traditional authorship of the Pentateuch by Moses. They noted that the narrative threads from the Pentateuch culminate in Joshua, concluding the promise made to the patriarchs and ending with the people finally in the promised land. The Hexateuch theory suggested a unified authorship for these six books and an ending to the narrative arc within the land of promise.
5. **What is the Deuteronomistic History theory, and how does it differ from the Hexateuch?** The Deuteronomistic History theory, proposed by Martin Noth, suggests that the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings (or even through 2 Kings) form a single unified historical work composed during or after the Babylonian exile. Unlike the Hexateuch, which focuses on the completion of the narrative arc of promise, the Deuteronomistic History theory emphasizes the themes found in Deuteronomy, and sees those as a lens through which the books that follow should be interpreted. It connects the disobedience of Israel to the loss of the land and the subsequent exile, suggesting that these later historical books are interpreting events in light of what was taught in Deuteronomy.
6. **How do Deuteronomy and Joshua function as "hinged" books within the Old Testament?** Both Deuteronomy and Joshua act as transitional or "hinged" books because they look both backward and forward. Deuteronomy, as Moses' final address, summarizes Israel's history and God's faithfulness, while also anticipating their future in the promised land. Joshua, while recording the fulfillment of promises to the patriarchs, sets the stage for Israel's life and their actions within the land and into the future. They simultaneously summarize the past and introduce new chapters in the narrative.

7. **What does the idea of "second law" or "Deuteronomy" mean, and how does it connect to the book of Joshua?** The name "Deuteronomy" comes from the Greek words "deutero" (second) and "nomos" (law). It refers to the fact that many of the laws originally given at Mount Sinai are restated and explained in Deuteronomy by Moses to a new generation on the cusp of entering Canaan. The second-generation needs to be re-instructed about the original commands. This focus on obedience to God's law, as articulated in Deuteronomy, becomes a critical theme in Joshua and the following books, influencing the interpretation of events and experiences in the land.
8. **What is the significance of the book of Joshua for Israel's history?** The book of Joshua marks the culmination of the promise of land and the beginning of Israel's life within that land. It provides the narrative of the conquest of Canaan. It represents a significant turning point in Israel's relationship with God, showing the fulfillment of his covenant promises and the establishment of a settled life. Joshua also sets a critical foundation for the historical narrative, which would extend through Judges and the books of Samuel and Kings. It also sets the stage for God's covenant with Israel and the consequences of their obedience and disobedience within that covenant, as outlined in Deuteronomy.