

HISTORICAL BOOKS: LIFE AS GOD DESIGNED IT *Joshua through Esther*

Joshua – 1.8; 8.32-35; 23.6-16; 24.26-27

The two dominant themes of the book of Joshua are the possession of the land and the covenant. God had repeatedly promised the land of Canaan to Abraham (Gen. 12.7; 13.14, 15, 17; 15.18-21; 17.8; 22.17), to Isaac (Gen. 26.3, 4), to Jacob (Gen. 28.4, 13; 35.12), and to succeeding generations (Gen. 48.4-22; 50.24).

Therefore, the purpose of Joshua was to show future generations that the Hebrews did ultimately conquer and occupy the land in accordance with God's covenant promise, thus demonstrating his loyal love (Ex. 34.5-7; Deut. 9.5).

Judges – 17.1-6; 18.1; 19.1; 21.25

The book of Judges was designed to show the bridge between Joshua's conquest and David's monarchy. Now that Israel had a king, the book reinforces how such a king can deal with the religious and political problems faced by Israel. The book also serves to correct and encourage God's people.

Ruth – Leviticus 19.9-10; Ruth 2.15-16; Deuteronomy 23.3; 2 Samuel 24.25

Ruth has a twofold purpose. Historically, it relates an episode in David's ancestry that accounted for the introduction of non-Israelite blood into his family line. And theologically, it was to show the place of the spirit of the law over the letter of the law, illustrating that the exception to the law is based on faith and loyalty to God.

Samuel – 2 Samuel 7.1-17; John 14.1-4, 23; Hebrews 3.1-6; 1 Timothy 3.14-16

The book provides an official account of the ministry of Samuel along with the rise and development of the united monarchy. The book is intended to show the sovereignty of God as he raises up, removes, and commands the rulers of Israel.

Kings – 1 Kings 24.6b; 3.7-10; 4.20-25, 29-34; 2 Kings 17.1-41; 23.36-25.30

The books at their core were written to show why God's people fell into such great destruction and then captivity. They disobeyed God, and as a result they were judged. It is important to note that although they were judged, they were not completely destroyed. God was faithful to his covenant with David, so a seed would be preserved.

Chronicles – 2 Chronicles 36.15-23; Ezra 1.1-11 (539 B.C.)

The book of Chronicles was designed to bring encouragement to those who had returned to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. The author wanted Israel to think over history, to view David and Solomon positively, with a stress on political and religious unity.

Ezra – 3.10-13; 4.1-5; 5.1; 6.13-16

Ezra was written to show how God was behind those who had returned from the Babylonian captivity and to encourage them in light of the difficult task that lay before them.

Nehemiah – Reproach, 1.3; 2.17; 4.4; 5.9; Purification, 1.5-9; 5.7-9; 7.2; 9.3; 10.28-29; 13.1-3

The book of Nehemiah was designed to round out the story of the postexilic reconstruction of the nation of Israel. It shows God's support for the rebuilding through faithful men like Nehemiah who had to fight against hostile enemies and unfaithful Israelites.

Esther – 8.1-2; 9.20-28

Esther was given to record the origin of the feast of Purim, which was a time of both lamentation and celebration. Thus, the book records the events and the emotion around them and provides a context for the feast. The book also gives insight into the preservation of the nation outside the land. There are also examples of encouragement, God's sovereignty, and his faithfulness to the universal aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant that extends to the entire world. The key element is the risk of obedience in a foreign land.