The Message of the Deuteronomic History

Assignment 3-1 for BI5533 Old Testament History

Jarret Hutchison

The book of Joshua was most likely written sometime around 1405-1385 B.C. by Joshua.[[1]](#footnote-1) This book starts off right after the death of Moses and Joshua is preparing to lead the Israelites into the promise land. The Israelites are requested by God to prepare for the siege of Canaan by being circumcised in ch.5. After the Israelites follow God’s request and take the land then Joshua is instructed to divide the land among them. Then we see God’s people being called to obedience in the new promise land that they have been given. The outline I just described above is better-stated and outlined in The World and The Word which outlines 4 major themes in the book being the entrance into Canaan, the conquest of Canaan, The division of Canaan, obedience in Canaan.[[2]](#footnote-2) Joshua is more than just about land and the conquering of it though, I believe it is about God showing us his faithfulness and still coming through on his covenant with Israel. Israel was completely at the mercy of God when it came to conquering Canaan and I find it comforting to know the following after reading this book “Israel could not boast of its military strategy or prowess. It was the Lord’s might and sovereignty that accomplished the victory.”[[3]](#footnote-3) To see how disobedient Israel was and yet God still loved them and wanted to work through them is amazing.

Judges is the next book in the bible and is almost like a sequel to Joshua. The book opens and we very quickly see Israel fall from its obedience we saw at the end of Joshua. The 3 main themes of this book are Israel failing in the holy war, cycles of apostasy and depths of failure of Israel.[[4]](#footnote-4) The judges in the book of Judges mainly deal with matters of military which is seen in Judges 2:16 “Then the Lord God raised up judges who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them.” Reading through judges we almost get a on again off again type feel and what I mean by that is it seems like Israel is constantly going through a cyclical cycle of oppression and deliverance. We can actually summarize this time period in Israel’s history with a repetitive sequence of events mainly Israel’s rejection of God, God’s punishment, Israel pleads to God for deliverance and God then raises judges who free Israel from its oppressors.

1 and 2 Samuel written by Samuel sometime around 931 – 722 B.C. even though this is hard to prove.[[5]](#footnote-5) The Lord brings about the end of the judges in 1 and 2 Samuel and ushers in a new time of kings beginning with Saul. The Lord gave Saul the throne and everything was well for a time but Saul started to turn to his own evil desires and be selfish. Saul did not carry out the Lords commands so in return God did not grant Saul with a dynasty but instead granted that dynasty to David. David was known as a man after God’s own heart and we see this in his reign being filled with justice and the fear of the Lord. The Lord established an everlasting covenant with David here, one that would bring Israel many blessings under his reign and his offspring’s reign. David is also promised to be part of the lineage that God uses to save the whole world and bring all men back to Him.

1 and 2 Kings by an unknown author sometime between 561-538 B.C. starting out with the reign of Solomon. Everything seems to be going great, but Israel find its self not far into the book in exile in Babylon. The key theme established early on in Kings is that the Lord requires obedience to the Mosaic laws. We see all throughout this book the reliability of God’s word and his covenant with Israel even though that is the main reason why Israel is in exile because they could not keep the covenant stipulations. These two books don’t leave much room for hope on Israel’s end until we reach the end and see the Davidic line is still intact offering glimpses of hope to future generations.

The message of Deuteronomic history is interesting because it feels like each book flows very well into the next. I almost get a sense that each book plays off the next and gives a deep look into the long history of Israel. Israel’s past is not much different than ours now a days even though it is easy to point finger and say how could they not follow God when he was right there with them. I find it interesting though because a lot of time we are so quick to blame Israel but I was getting a sense reading through theses books that I falter in a lot of the same areas and we have Christ with us so what is our excuse. These books definitely got me thinking more about our connection now a days to Israel than I thought orinially.

1. The MacArthur Study Bible, English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Eugene H. Merrill, Mark E Rooker and Michael A. Grisanti (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2011) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The King In His Beauty, Thomas R. Schreiner (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2013) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Eugene H. Merrill, Mark E Rooker and Michael A. Grisanti (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2011) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The MacArthur Study Bible, English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)