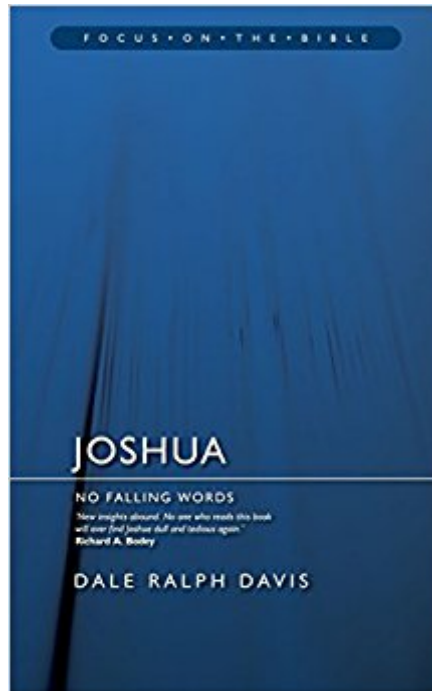




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# Joshua: No Falling Words (Focus On The Bible)



## Synopsis

This exposition is rooted first in a thorough analysis of the Hebrew text, employing helpful insights from archaeology and linguistics, and second in the major theological and literary themes discovered in each section. Finally the author brings the fragments together in an expository treatment 'that is not ashamed to stoop to the level of application.'

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

One of the reasons I enjoy Davis's exposition so much is that I feel confident that he has done his exegetical homework, and so is not just delivering blessed, unhistorical thoughts on the text. (Themelios Journal)... The blurb on the back cover is on the point: 'Readable, Reliable, Relevant', and I wish I could have thought of those words first to describe this book. (Churchman Journal)What a great book... not only faithful to the text but also full of great illustrations, practical challenges and contemporary language. This is a great addition to any library! (Evangelical Times)One of the reasons I enjoy Davis's exposition so much is that I feel confident that he has done his exegetical homework, and so is not just delivering blessed, unhistorical thoughts on the text. Yet at the same time, he applies the text so well. (Simon Gathercole ~ Director of Studies, Theology and Religious Studies, Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge University, Cambridge)"A happy blend of exegetical and historical study on the one hand, and homiletical treatment and application on the other. Ideas pop out everywhere, even in the most unlikely places. New insights abound. No one who reads this

book will ever find Joshua dull and tedious again." (Richard A. Bodey, Professor of Homiletics, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School)

"A happy blend of exegetical and historical study on the one hand, and homiletical treatment and application on the other. Ideas pop out everywhere, even in the most unlikely places. New insights abound. No one who reads this book will ever find Joshua dull and tedious again." ~ Richard A. Bodey, Professor of Homiletics, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

Few authors are uniquely gifted with the ability of explaining Old Testament texts on a level that is accessible to the layman. Dale Ralph Davis is one of those men. He serves as a pastor at Woodlands Presbyterian Church in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. He has written commentaries on several other Old Testament books including Judges, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, and II Kings. His pastoral ministry has impacted the manner in which he presents the materials of his commentaries. This commentary contains exegetical insight and theological examinations of the highest quality while leaving behind the *soigné* style and scholastic vocabulary that often accompany a work of this caliber. Davis explains in his preface that he desired for this book to achieve the highest level of "instructability." He succeeded. There are two specific qualities of his book that stand out as unique and refreshing. Theologically there is one area of concern that must be addressed.

**Accessible Approach** The first of these qualities is Davis' style. His writing is perhaps best described as pastoral exegesis. Each chapter is like a miniature sermon with clear illustrations that illuminate the original intent of the text. The regular use of pneumatic devices such as alliteration and idioms bring a delightfully light feeling to heavy topics. This practice can be observed even in weighty passages such as Joshua chapter two concerning Rahab the harlot and Joshua chapter fifteen concerning the geographical division of the land. Davis' accessible style goes beyond his mastery of illustrations and wordplay. His content is specifically aimed to avoid higher level scholastic debates that do not alter the onus of the text. He would rather determine what Rahab's story tells us about the Sovereignty of God than spend many pages debating whether her lie was sinful. He is more concerned with the Israelites response to Yahweh's gifts than tribal geography. By focusing on the heart of the text Davis has helped to make the book of Joshua accessible to those who are too uninformed, unintelligent, or unmotivated to understand such higher level debates.

**Pastoral Purpose** This book is undeniably aimed to do more than educate the mind; it seeks to ameliorate the soul. Just like a skilled preacher pleads with the hearts of men, Davis' words elicit a response. His words are both convicting and encouraging. He achieves this through two specific

methods. Conversational Introductions. Each chapter commences with a compendious preamble. These opening lines are by no means aimless formalities. Davis utilizes the opening page of each chapter to draw the reader's attention to the value of the text. His down-to-earth style and engaging metaphors suffuse the reader with eager anticipation for the meaning of the passage to be revealed. The average Christian may be intimidated by an Old Testament book like Joshua, but Davis relinquishes the reader's fears by plainly enunciating the treasure that is to be found within. On certain occasions he utilizes the imagery of a Christian cartoon comic, a ramshackle chair, and even airline food to lasso the attention of the reader. On other occasions he simply reminds the reader not to get bogged down in the "tedium" of the details and search for the big picture. These introductions allow the reader to enter into the passage in a fearless manner as they desire to mine the depths of the text.

Study Questions. Each chapter concludes with a quintuplet of study questions. These questions have two pronounced purposes. First, they seek to make the reader certain that they have grasped the main point of the chapter. Secondly, and more importantly, these questions solicit the reader to apply the text to their spiritual life. These questions are often devotional in nature. They implore the reader's mind to observe the grace of God that they have experienced in their own life. This can be seen in questions such as, "Are you amazed when God answers your prayers? If so, why?" These study questions also indirectly give the reader practical ways to apply the text. One example can be found at the close of chapter 18, "Does Yahweh's fidelity to you cause you to worship him or do you simply expect fidelity?" Such questions drive the reader to a humble response of obedience and worship.

Doctrinal Dispute The only area of theological concern that arises throughout this book stems from Davis' biblical theology. It is clear that, as a Presbyterian, he holds to a strong continuity between the Old and New Testament. His comparison of the conquest of Canaan to the New Testament sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper was confusing and concerning. Where Davis sees strong continuity, I believe there is cause to observe indomitable discontinuity between the testaments concerning the nation of Israel and the church. This is a minor dispute on the scale of importance, but it is the one aspect of this book that I believe could be improved upon.

Conclusion I highly recommend this book, especially to those who would like to spend a season devotionally studying the Old Testament. Davis's superb exegesis and simple format would be a welcome addition to the library of scholars and laymen alike. I have personally been blessed beyond measure by devoting a short season of my life to the study of this short book. This work is God honoring, Christ magnifying, and waiting to be used by the Spirit in the life of the reader.

Overall this commentary was enjoyable to read. It is very practical and devotional. As such, Davis includes numerous applications and insights for Christians today. I, however, tend to prefer my commentaries to be more technical, so by the end of this commentary I was getting anxious to dive deeper into the text. In the introduction Davis writes, "As you read and study Joshua, try to keep asking yourself the question: What is the writer preaching about when he tells me this story? He is not telling you the story only to inform you (although that is part of it); he has a message to proclaim, a God to press upon you." This is certainly the perspective Davis keeps throughout! For instance, when dealing with 5:13 - 6:5 (The Appearance of Yahweh's Help), Davis comments, "Sometimes we need to see that Yahweh is not so much partisan as sovereign, that it is more important to recognize God's position than to know God's plan. We can easily become more interested in special guidance than with a right relationship with the Guide." (p. 53)

I'm one of the young adult discussion leaders for a middle school group at my church. When the leader informed us we would be studying Joshua with the middle schoolers I was thrown. Why Joshua? I didn't really know anything about Joshua, knew about the New Testament but not Joshua, not that book. So I went looking for a book to help me help the kids discuss what the text meant. No Falling words really helped bring context and break down what the text was saying about God and his promises. Now I know Joshua is a pretty important text and really cool to do with Middle school kids. Since I bought the book, my leader asked me to write the discussion questions. I guess I seemed that knowledgeable. But it's all because of this book, which not only lays things out in a simple way breaking it down and discusses the down to earth issues one might have when it came to reading the bible text, but the book inspired me to do further study. I'm actually going to recommend some of my students buy and read it. It's that easy to understand.

I'm usually not impressed with commentaries that try to be humorous and "contemporary" in style. However, with Davis's commentary I was impressed by his ability to combine pithy remarks with powerful insights into the redemptive-historical doctrines contained in the book of Joshua. Perhaps the most refreshing aspect was Davis's humorous rebuttals to the higher criticism of liberal scholarship, without getting too bogged down in minutiae. This commentary provides excellent outlines of the biblical author's thoughts, including careful consideration of literary patterns. Unlike some who make use of literary structures, Davis doesn't get carried away with trying to fit everything into a tight chiasm or absolute structure, but allows the thought of the passage to dictate his decisions. The commentary is written from a Reformed perspective. Those who appreciate the

Covenantal pattern of God's revelation will enjoy Davis's exposition of the text.

Bought this because it was highly rated as one of the best commentaries on Joshua, and it was cheap through an partner. Not disappointed. This is probably how commentaries on narrative literature should be written. Not overly detailed with Hebrew semantics (like Keil & Delitzsch, not that there's anything wrong with that), Davis takes the flow of the narrative, puts it in context, and makes a few pastoral thoughts. That's really what I want in my narratives.

I was looking for a commentary, and this is organized more like a small group study. However, it does have a lot of useful exegetical information in it - footnoted so that you can see where the info came from.

Another excellent commentary from Dale Ralph Davis. I absolutely devour his books and consequently have tons of notes written all over the margins of my Bible. Great book from a great teacher--and it helps that he gets me laughing while he's teaching!

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