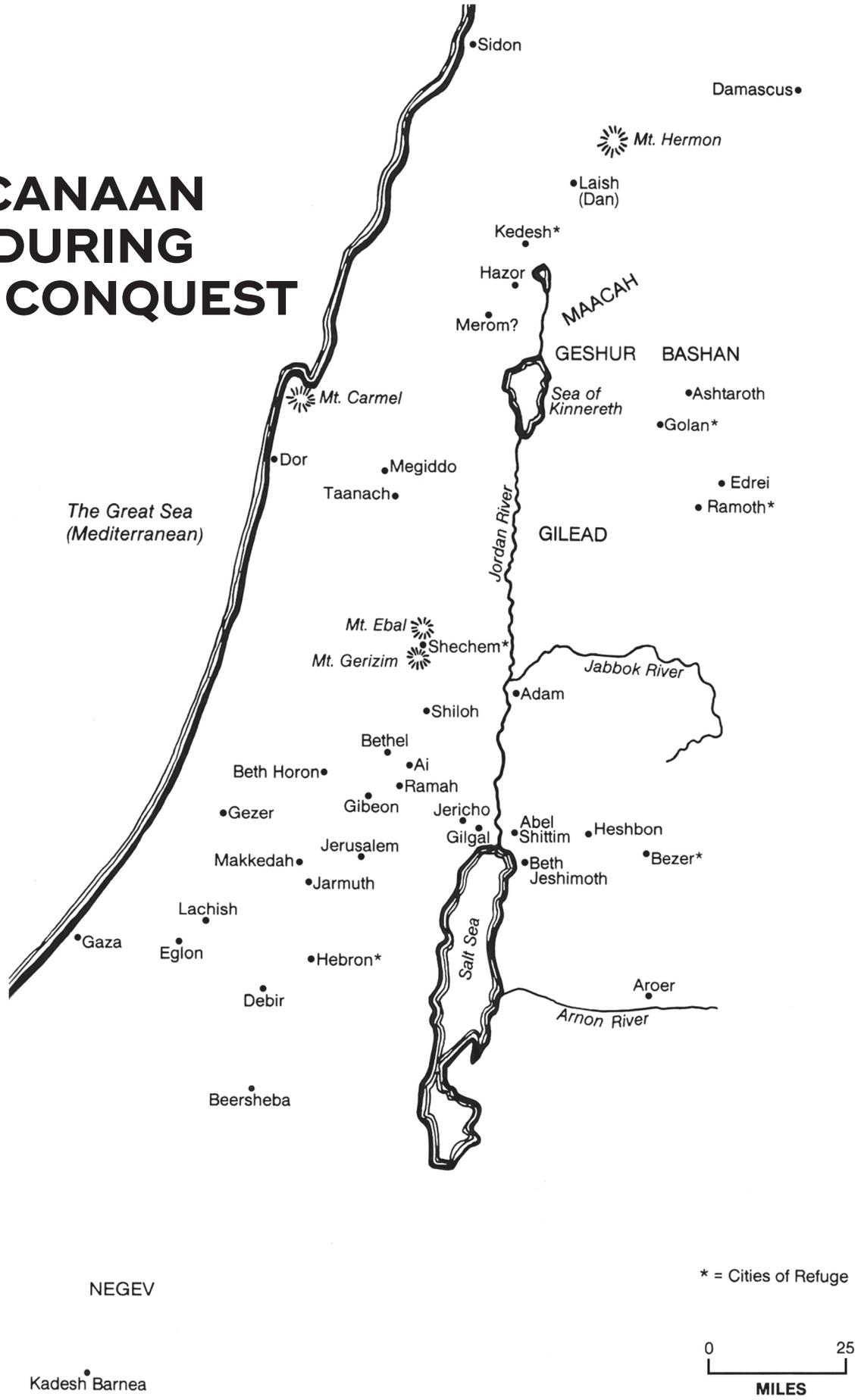


CANAAN DURING THE CONQUEST



Joshua 1

September 9, 2020

1. This semester we are studying the book of Joshua in the Old Testament. Along with the LORD God, Joshua is the main character of this book. Read Joshua 1:1-9. What do you learn about Joshua in verse 1?

2. Read the following verses and record what else you learn about Joshua.

Exodus 17:9-14

Exodus 24:13

Numbers 13:16-21 and 14:6-9

Numbers 27:15-23

3. Until the death of Moses, Joshua has been his right-hand man for 40 years. What does the LORD God now tell Joshua to do in Joshua 1:2-3? What is God's purpose?

4. God made a covenant promise to Abraham and later confirmed this promise to Abraham's son and grandson. Read this multi-faceted promise of land, descendants and blessing in Genesis 12:1-3. What part of the promise is explained in Genesis 12:5-7?

How does Moses describe this land in Exodus 3:17 and in Deuteronomy 8:7-10?

5. Read Joshua 1:1-9 again. What phrase does God repeat in verses 6-7 and 9?

With this phrase in mind, how might Joshua be feeling? Why do you think he would feel this way?

6. God encourages Joshua with a powerful promise in verses 5 and 9. If you feel comfortable, think of a difficult time you faced and describe how God encouraged or strengthened you with His presence.

7. Read Joshua 1:7-8. God also encourages Joshua to obey God's law so that he may be successful in his leadership. What are some ways Joshua is to engage with God's Book of the Law?

Share some specific ways you can engage with God's Word, the Bible.

Joshua 2

September 16, 2020

1. Joshua 2 begins with the Israelites encamped east of the Jordan River about to cross the river and begin the invasion of the land of Canaan, which God has promised to give them. Before the first battle, Joshua sends out spies. Read Joshua 2:1. Using your imagination, list some of the information the spies might want to collect.

What surprising place do they choose for their lodging?

2. Read Joshua 2:2-7. When the spies' identity and mission are detected, what bold steps does Rahab take to protect them?

How does she respond to the king of Jericho's command to hand over the men?

What character traits do you see in Rahab, both admirable and not-so-admirable?

3. Read Joshua 2:8-11 where the spies learn that Israel/God's reputation is known in Jericho. Read about the incidents below, and imagine and record some responses the Canaanites might have knowing the Israelites are about to invade their land.

Victory over the Egyptians – Exodus 14:19-30

Victory over King Sihon – Numbers 21:21-25

Victory over King Og – Numbers 21:33-35

According to Joshua 2:9 and 11, how did the people of Jericho respond to these reports of Israel's success?

4. Look closely at Joshua 2:11 and write down what Rahab realizes about Israel's God.

Jericho is in the middle of Canaan, a pagan land where the people create and worship numerous false gods. Why does this make Rahab's statement about Israel's LORD God so significant?

Read Deuteronomy 4:34-35. Consider and record what God wants to accomplish when His mighty and powerful acts are observed and talked about.

5. Rahab's knowledge of God gives her courage to act with boldness instead of fear. Make a list of things you know about God that encourage you in fearful circumstances. Share this with your group.
6. Read Joshua 2:12-14. After expressing her knowledge of God and demonstrating kindness to the spies, what does Rahab ask in return?

How do the Israelite spies answer? What one condition do they require?

7. Read Joshua 2:15-21 and describe the actions Rahab takes to facilitate the spies' escape.

What must Rahab do to protect her life and the lives of her family members from Israel's future attack? (See verses 18-20.)

8. If you were a Canaanite, knowing the mighty army of God would soon descend on your city intent to destroy you, what options might you consider?

What act of trust and obedience does Rahab immediately demonstrate in verse 21?

What is at stake for Rahab?

9. Rahab is a Canaanite prostitute who schemes and lies. She is not an Israelite. And yet, God's protection and inclusion extends to her and her family. Write down what you learn about God's character and God's plans for the world from this story.

Read the original promise made to Abraham in Genesis 12:2-3. Where do you see Rahab in these promised blessings?

10. Rahab is saved when her home is marked by a red cord. In the New Testament, God also uses something red to mark the people who are saved. Read Romans 5:6-9 and record what saves us.

Take time this week to thank God for His extravagant grace and mercy toward you and the world's Rahabs.

11. Read about the spies' return in Joshua 2:22-24. What is their good report in verse 24? What words would you use to describe their outlook?

12. Look at the definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1-2 and use your own words to describe faith.

How is Rahab's faith demonstrated in this chapter?

How do the spies demonstrate faith in this chapter?

How does God act faithfully in this chapter?

13. When we believe the promises of God, we can be courageous and bold instead of fearful and defeated. What can you do to remember the promises of God?

14. Write out a personal prayer request in one or two sentences to share with your small group.

Joshua 3-4

September 23, 2020

1. Consider these lyrics from an encouraging Christian song: *God will make a way where there seems to be no way*. Can you share an example when you witnessed God doing what seemed impossible?

2. Last week we learned about the two spies Joshua sent out to view the land and Jericho. Read Joshua 2:23-24 to review the result of their spying. What words would you use to describe their faith in the promises of God?

We often face obstacles in our lives that seem overwhelming and unconquerable. What are some promises of God that give you the courage to believe what seems impossible?

3. Read Joshua 3:1 as Israel prepares to enter the land God has promised them. First they must cross the Jordan River. At this time of year the river would have been in a flood stage. What might have been some of the people's thoughts as they camped on the banks of this mighty and rushing river for three days?

Considering God's previous words to Joshua in Joshua 1:9, what truth about God must Israel remember in order to move forward courageously? Also read Isaiah 43:1-2.

In what ways has this truth about God's constant presence changed the way you face frightening circumstances in your life?

4. Read Joshua 3:2-6. Summarize a list of the specific commands that God gave His people before the crossing of the Jordan River would take place.

Read Joshua 3:5 again. Why is spiritual preparation more important than physical preparation when we face challenging issues in our lives? Also read 1 Peter 5:6-8.

According to verse 5, what should be Israel's expectation regarding God's involvement in crossing the Jordan?

Why is this kind of attitude important when we face our own mighty trials?

5. The Ark of the Covenant was the sacred tabernacle chest where God dwelled among the Israelites. Read Joshua 3:7-13. Why did God command Joshua that the Jordan River was to be crossed with the Ark of the Covenant leading the way, according to verse 10?
6. Read about the wonders of God in Joshua 3:14-17. The Jewish exodus from Egypt began with the parting of the Red Sea, and now their exodus is ending with the parting of the Jordan River. Make a list of the realities in this event that point to the miraculous work of God.

Record just one recent mighty work of God in your life and thank Him for it.

7. When God does great things we need to acknowledge it. We see the Israelites doing just that in Joshua 4:1-8 and 4:19-24. Read these passages and explain the stone memorial and its purposes.

How can we acknowledge God's greatness today in ways that the world can see?

We learn from this passage that both *show* and *tell* are important in bringing honor to God. What do we learn from 1 Peter 3:15?

8. In the midst of the Jordan, Joshua set up another stone memorial which would not be visible. Read Joshua 4:9. What insights can we gain about Joshua from his actions here?
9. Read some more details of the crossing of the Jordan River in Joshua 4:10-18. What would be the significance of the priests and the Ark being the first and the last ones in the river? Also read Psalm 20:7.

In the midst of turbulent times in our lives, where are we often tempted to put our trust?

Why can we trust that our God will make a way to return us to solid ground according to Romans 8:28, 31?

10. Write out a personal prayer request in one or two sentences to share with your small group.

Joshua 5

September 30, 2020

1. Think about a time when you saw evidence of God's power in the world around you. What was your reaction?

Read Joshua 5:1 and describe the reaction of the kings already living in the land as the Israelites crossed the Jordan.

Why do you think that was their reaction? Read Joshua 2:10-11 for insight.

2. Instead of commanding the Israelites to immediately conquer the land of Canaan, God gives them a surprising directive. Read Joshua 5:2-9 and write down His command from verse 2.

When were the Israelite men first commanded to be circumcised? Read Genesis 17:1, 7-11.

What was the significance of circumcision for Israel?

Read Joshua 5:4-7. In your own words, explain why this generation needed to be circumcised.

Circumcision was an external sign that marked the nation of Israel as belonging to God through His covenant with them. What do you think the lack of circumcision of the next generation reveals about the previous generation of Israelites that left Egypt and wandered in the desert?

3. Now that Israel has completed the circumcision of their men, what pronouncement is made by God in Joshua 5:9?

The word “reproach” means shame, disgrace or rebuke in Hebrew. Read Deuteronomy 9:27-29 and describe the disgrace that could have been the legacy of their disobedience in the wilderness.

What will give Israel a new start in their relationship with God as they enter the good land? Read Deuteronomy 28:1-2 for insight.

If you feel comfortable, share how obedience to God’s commands in your life has made a difference.

4. Read Joshua 5:10-12. What important events do you observe in these verses?

This is only the third Passover that Israel has celebrated in the last 40 years. The first one was the night before God liberated them from Egypt. Read Exodus 12:21-27. What is the significance of this third Passover celebration?

What are some celebrations that we hold today as believers? Why are they important?

5. Describe the new beginning Israel experiences in Joshua 5:11-12 after celebrating their first Passover in Canaan.

Place yourself in the sandals of the Israelites and list some emotions they might have experienced as their diet drastically changed for the first time in decades. Read Numbers 11:4-6 as a reminder of Israel’s reaction to God’s provision of manna.

6. Looking back at question 5, think of a time in your life when God's gracious provision did not immediately live up to your expectations. How did you handle it?

What insight do you glean as you see God's plan for Israel unfold in the good land?

7. Jericho was one of Canaan's most fortified cities with impregnable walls. The Israelites were armed only with slings, arrows and spears. As Joshua scouts out this formidable opponent, he has a divine encounter. Read Joshua 5:13-15. What do Joshua's first words to the visitor tell you about the encounter?

Who is Joshua's visitor and what do you learn from His posture as He stands before Joshua?

Compare Joshua 5:14-15 to Exodus 3:4-6. What similarities do you see?

What key words and actions in Joshua 5:14-15 give insight into the visitor's divine identity?

8. Joshua is a seasoned leader but Jericho's defenses are beyond any he has ever encountered. How might this divine visit change Joshua's perspective about the attack on Jericho that lies before him?

Name some ways you can rest in the Lord's presence and power as you battle challenges and obstacles in your life today.

9. Looking back over Joshua 5, how do you see God preparing the people of Israel for the battles they will face as they begin to conquer the good land of Canaan?

How will this influence how you prepare to face life's battles?

10. Write out a personal prayer request in one or two sentences to share with your small group.

Joshua 6

October 7, 2020

1. Read all of Joshua 6. Imagine yourself as an Israelite hearing Joshua's unprecedented instructions for the first time. Jot down what your first reactions might be.

Have you ever encountered Scripture that seemed too confusing, difficult or countercultural to be believed and followed at that time? If so, please share that experience and how you worked through it.

2. Read Joshua 6:1-2 along with Joshua 5:13-15. How did Joshua's meeting with the commander of the LORD's army prepare him to obey the LORD's battle plan for Jericho?
3. Read Joshua 6:3-7. Each part of God's instructions for Joshua and his people was purposeful. What is significant to you about the following aspects of these orders?

The inclusion of priests marching along with the armed men:

Carrying the Ark of the Covenant on the daily march (also see Exodus 25:21-22):

The repetition of the number seven, which symbolizes completion and perfection:

4. Read Joshua 6:8-14 carefully. Make a rough drawing of what the procession looked like as it marched around Jericho.

5. Read Joshua 6:8-14 once again. What phrase in verse 8 tells us about the level of Israel's obedience to Joshua's command?

What can we learn about the personal benefits of obedience from the following verses?

Deuteronomy 4:39-40

Psalm 119:100-104

Matthew 7:24-27

John 15:14-15

After pondering these verses, write out a simple prayer in response.

6. Look back again at Joshua 6:10. What does Joshua command his people to do? How long is the requirement in place?

How might Joshua's command have been a source of spiritual strength to those who followed his orders? Also read Exodus 14:13-14, 1 Chronicles 16:11 and Lamentations 3:26.

Is there a time in your life when you have chosen silence over speech for the Lord's sake? If so, briefly record that experience and the outcome. If not, is there a time you can look back on when silence would have been the better choice? Please record.

7. Read Joshua 6:15-21. What were Joshua's marching orders for the seventh day?

What did Joshua command the people to do at the completion of their march?

What promise was attached to this command in verse 16?

How did this promise come to fruition in verse 20?

8. Look back at Joshua 6:17-19 and then read verses 21-27. After Jericho was captured, what was Israel to do with the people of the city and all of their possessions?

Canaan and the city of Jericho within it was a deeply sinful and pagan culture at the time of its conquest. How do you think God used the destruction of the city for the spiritual and physical protection of His people as they entered the good land?

9. Read Joshua 2:12-14 along with Joshua 6:22-25. What was the fate of Rahab and her family?

Read Hebrews 11:31. Why was Rahab spared the same consequences as the rest of Jericho?

10. Choose one person or group from Joshua 6 whose faith and obedience stands out to you. What specific encouragement for your own life do they offer you today?

11. Write out a personal prayer request in one or two sentences to share with your small group.