

Promised Land 1 Study and Discussion Questions

Lesson Two: The Campaigns - Joshua 5:13 – 12:24

Joshua 5:13 – Joshua 6

- 1) Give an opinion about the identity of the mysterious “Commander of the Army of the Lord” in Joshua 5:13-15. For help, compare Genesis 18:2 with Genesis 18:22 and 19:1, compare Genesis 32:24 with Genesis 32:30, and see Numbers 22:23, 31, 1 Chronicles 21:16 and Revelation 19:11-16. **The Old Testament contains a number of instances where the Lord seemed to manifest Himself in some physical form. Bible students refer to such divine self-revelations as theophanies (or “Christophanies,” based on the reasoning that the second person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, is the only person of the Godhead known to have put on flesh). Just as a “man” appeared to Joshua, a “man” also appeared to Abraham and to Jacob, and in the latter instances, the text identifies the “man” as the Lord. Some Bible students believe that Joshua met an angelic messenger, but the “Commander of the Lord’s Army” was more likely the same One sometimes called the “Angel of the Lord” (a Christophany). The facts that the “man” whom Joshua met received Joshua’s worship (Joshua 5:14) and said that Joshua was standing on holy ground (Joshua 5:15) are consistent with the opinion that the “Commander of the Lord’s Army” was the Lord Jesus Himself. According to Revelation 19, at the end of this age, Jesus will lead the armies of heaven in battle with a drawn sword.**
- 2) From Joshua 6, describe the Israelites’ strategy in overthrowing Jericho. Was this a military strategy a human commander would be likely to devise? **The Israelites marched around the city of Jericho once a day for six days. An armed guard led the way, followed by seven priests sounding seven trumpets, the Ark of the Lord, and a rear guard (in that order). Except for the sound of the trumpets, they marched in eerie silence and returned to their camp for the night. On the seventh day, the procession marched around the city seven times. At the sounding of a long trumpet blast and Joshua’s signal, the Israelites gave a loud shout and the walls around the city collapsed. They charged in, destroyed every living thing with the sword (except for Rahab and her household), and burned the city. Any object that would not burn (such as those made from precious metals) was put in the treasury of the Lord. From a human perspective, the strategy was insane, but ultimately, it proved that the judgment was *God’s judgment*, carried out by His power, and under His authority.**
- 3) Read Ephesians 6:12-18. What battle are you fighting that may involve spiritual warfare? **Personal sharing**

Joshua 6: The Beginning of Israel’s Military Campaign in Central Canaan

- 4) Imagine being a resident of Jericho and observing the processional around the city day after day for seven days! What would have gone through your mind (see Joshua 2:8-13, 5:1)? **On each of the seven days Israel marched around Jericho, its inhabitants were given yet another opportunity to repent. Surely they were terrified by the prospect of imminent death, yet apparently, no one repented. Each resident could have followed Rahab’s example and thrown him or herself at the mercy of Israel’s God, but they did not. Joshua 11:20 indicates that once the Canaanites repeatedly refused to repent (an act of their own will), God passed judgment by hardening their hearts, revoking any further opportunity.**
- 5) According to Romans 1:18-20 and 2:14-16, by what means do all people possess certain knowledge about God? What further knowledge about God did the Canaanite/Amorite peoples possess (see Joshua 2:10 and 5:1)? **All people possess some general knowledge of God through nature (creation) and through their consciences. The Canaanites also knew of God’s miracles in bringing Israel out of Egypt, His deliverance at the Red Sea, the more recent victories He had given them against Sihon and Og, and how He enabled them to cross the Jordan River on dry ground during its flood stage.**
- 6) From Leviticus 11:44-45, what is God’s righteous standard and, from Genesis 2:17-19, Romans 1:32, 5:12, 6:23, 8:13, Galatians 6:7-8, and James 1:15, what is the deserved consequence of our sin? **God’s righteous standard is holiness and the deserved consequence of sin is death.**

- 7) Revisit the following references from Lesson One and estimate the minimum number of years God patiently endured the Amorites' extreme depravity (sin): Genesis 15:13-16, Exodus 12:40-41, and Numbers 32:13. **A minimum of 600 years: Roughly 200 years in which the Patriarchs lived in Canaan, 430 years in which the Israelites lived in Egypt, and another 40 years in which the Israelites wandered in the wilderness.**
- 8) It is difficult for us to think about the destruction of an entire city.
- Can you think of a reason why it was necessary (and perhaps even merciful) for God to order the deaths of the young along with the old (see Romans 2:6, Hebrews 4:13, 9:27, and Revelation 20:13)? **It is difficult to accept the slaying of young children along with responsible adults. God is not accountable to us for His judgments, but we know He is just. Over at least five generations, the Canaanites had proved that they were not moving toward God but away from Him. Any children spared would likely have carried their parents' pagan influence into yet another generation, and among other things, have been a snare to the Israelites. Considering the Bible's teaching about future judgment, perhaps God was merciful in bringing swift death on the Canaanite children. Those who live short lives will have less for which to be accountable than those who have lived long but immoral lives. Our eternal condition is far more important than length of life on earth.**
 - According to Romans 3:10-11, 23 and 1 Peter 3:18, who has ever deserved God's mercy and what provision has God made for our salvation? **No one has ever deserved God's mercy. All have sinned. God has mercifully provided a means of salvation by Christ's substitutionary death for our sins.**
 - Read Titus 3:5. If you have experienced God's mercy and salvation through personal faith in Jesus Christ, how will you express your thanks to Him today? If you have not, what exactly is holding you back from receiving Jesus as your Savior and Lord this very moment (what assurance do you have that your life will not end and you will stand before God this very day)? **Personal sharing**

Joshua 6 – 8: The Continuation of Israel's Military Campaign in Central Canaan

- 9) Skim Joshua 7 and 8 (see especially 7:1-12, 20-21, 24-26; 8:1-2, 20-22).
- Explain what happened that resulted in Israel's humiliating defeat at Ai. **In direct disobedience to God's orders, an Israelite named Achan coveted, took, and hid some of the "devoted things" at Jericho. His direct disobedience was the cause of Israel's defeat at Ai. God is serious about sin, holiness, and absolute obedience to His commands.**
 - Revisit Joshua 7:12. In what way does this verse explain the problem? What specifically did God say He required of Israel in order that He would be with them and grant them victory against Ai? **The Israelites were God's chosen instruments of justice. Their war was a holy war. However, because of Achan's sin, the Israelites' themselves were "liable to destruction." In order for the Lord to be with them in battle, they had to purge their camp of sin by destroying all that was "devoted to destruction."**
- 10) Read Joshua 8:30-35 with Deuteronomy 27:1-13 and 28:1-2, 15. After Israel occupied key cities in central Canaan, they renewed their covenant with the Lord (as Moses had instructed). According to the verses in Deuteronomy 28, why was it important for Joshua to recite the Book of the Law in the presence of all Israel? **The Israelites needed to be reminded of what God required, since obedience to the His commands would result in His blessing and disobedience in cursing.**
- 11) Read 1 John 1:8 – 2:6. In light of the passage, what attitudes toward sin and obedience should characterize believers? Do you currently need to adjust any of your attitudes? **The passage teaches that no one is without sin, but when we confess our sin to God, He forgives and purifies us through Jesus. Rather than persisting in sinful patterns, those who belong to God should be characterized by an obedience that is motivated by gratitude and love. We should be humble (since we are sinners), grateful for God's provision in Jesus, and eager to please and obey Him. Personal sharing**

Joshua 9

- 12) Read Joshua 9:1-6, 14-27. What does verse 24 reveal about the degree to which the inhabitants of the land understood Who ordered their destruction? **The Gibeonites “were clearly told” that the Lord Himself had commanded Moses to wipe out all the inhabitants of the land.**
- 13) What explanation for Israel’s failure with regard to the Gibeonites is given in Joshua 9:14? Is there a matter you have recently considered too unimportant or unnecessary to pray about and assumed your own good judgment would suffice? **The men of Israel did not inquire of the Lord to find out if they should make a treaty with the Gibeonites or not. Personal sharing**

Joshua 10 – 12: Israel’s Southern and Northern Military Campaigns in Canaan

- 14) Read Joshua 10:1-15, 42; 11:1-8, 15. Using these verses, summarize Joshua’s campaigns in southern and northern Canaan. **Joshua defeated the Amorite kings, who made war against him in the south and in the north. In both cases, after Joshua heard from the Lord, he initiated a “sudden” or “surprise” attack. The five kings of the south (the king of Jerusalem appears to have been their leader [Joshua 10:1, 3]) were incensed by Gibeon’s treaty with Joshua. When they attacked Gibeon, Joshua attacked them (it was in this campaign that the “sun stood still in the sky” [Joshua 10:12-13]). Then, at the king of Hazor’s initiative (11:1, 10), the Northern kings led an army “as numerous as the sand on the seashore” against Joshua (Joshua 11:5), but again, the Lord gave Joshua victory.**
- 15) Reread Joshua 10:9-14.
- How do these verses illustrate the interplay between human effort and divine involvement? **This passage portrays the Israelites’ effort and the Lord’s mighty arm accomplishing the victory. The Israelites marched all night to engage the five southern kings (10:9 [25 miles up a 4,000 foot ascent]), but the Lord threw their enemies into confusion and gave Israel victory (10:10). While Israel pursued the enemy, God hurled down large hailstones (10:10-11). Joshua asked the Lord to make the sun stand still (10:12), and the Lord listened and did it (10:14 [He was fighting for Israel]).**
 - What effort is currently being demanded of you that you will trust God to divinely oversee? **Personal sharing**