

Episode: Promised Land Series No. 12

Narrator: Rahab

Primary Scriptures: Joshua 1-6

Story Summary: Joshua leads the people across the Jordan River; Jericho conquered

Location: Canaan

Time: c. 1526 BC Birth of Moses
c. 1446 BC The plagues and exodus
c. 1445 BC The Ten Commandments
c. 1406 BC The Israelites enter Canaan

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Joshua 1:7-8; 2:11; 3:5; 4:24

Joshua 1-6 is an intriguing passage. We get to see a war from the viewpoint of both opponents. The Israelites are numerous, but after forty years in the wilderness, they are still shepherds and former slaves. They have gotten some battle experience through victories over King Og, King Sihon, and the Midianites but they are not warriors at heart. They have just seen 24,000 of their kinsmen killed in a plague sent by God to punish them for their sexual misdeeds in the worship of false gods. They continue to behave as if they have some trust in God, but not complete trust.

The people of Jericho and other Canaanite cities greatly fear the Israelites. They don't know about the plague on the Plain of Moab nor the other times God has punished the Israelites. Their information consists only of glowing reports about the strength of the Israelites and the power of their God. They know of the Egyptians' destruction at the Red Sea, and the victories over Og and Sihon. They know the massive Israelite force is ready to invade Canaan, and they can do nothing but wait for it.

Against these backdrops, General Joshua prepares his troops and the people. He must have hoped for detailed instructions from God about what to do. Instead, he gets these instructions: be strong and courageous, meditate on the Law, obey the Law. Joshua tells the people to prepare to cross the Jordan River in three days, and sends two spies to check out the nearby city of Jericho.

Try to think of Rahab as a typical resident of Jericho. She is most interested in protecting her family. She has heard rumors of the invincible Israelites and is terrified. When she gets an opportunity to save her family, she makes a deal with the two spies: she saves them if they agree to save her family. She probably weighs the possibility of getting executed for being a traitor against probable death if the Israelites invade. It is not easy choice.

When the Israelites cross the Jordan, God dries it just as he did the Red Sea. That fires up the Israelites. When God causes the men to be circumcised, they finally feel like God's people. When they celebrate the Passover at Gilgal, they finally shake off the bonds of Egypt and its gods. The destruction of Jericho is a foregone conclusion.

Discussion Questions:

1. What were God's instructions to Joshua when he took over from Moses?
2. How long did Joshua give the people to prepare to cross the Jordan River?
3. Rahab seemed to have complete faith in the power of the God of the Israelites. Why did she have more faith than many of the Israelites?
4. Describe how God stopped up the Jordan River so the people could cross over.
5. Joshua 4:9 gives a little information about when *Joshua* was written. What might you ascertain? Does that fit with Joshua 6:25 and 9:27?
6. What was the effect on the enemies of the Israelites of God drying up the Jordan?
7. Why did the Israelite men have to be circumcised after crossing the Jordan?
8. When did the manna from heaven stop coming down? Why?
9. Why were the men of the army to stay away from the metals of Jericho?

1. Be strong and courageous, obey the law, meditate on the Book, do not be discouraged. 2. Three days. 4. It was as if he built a dam across the river. The water piled up to the north, and the river dried up below it. 6. It took away all of their courage. 7. The men born in the previous 40 years of wandering in the wilderness had not be circumcised. 8. When the Israelites celebrated Passover after crossing into the Promised Land. It was harvest time, and the Israelites would eat the produce of the crops that had already been planted. 9. They were dedicated to God. Joshua knew the men would be tempted to take some.

Application Questions:

1. Joshua sent two spies to check out Jericho. He sent them in secret. Why? Do you always want to hear the opinions of others before acting? What did Joshua learn from the experience with the twelve spies?
2. The two spies saw the fortifications of Jericho, but they were more impressed by the fear of the people of Jericho. Why did they assess the fear of the people to be a certain sign of an Israelite victory? (Josh. 2:24)

Application Questions for Teens:

1. When the Israelites crossed over the Jordan, God had backed up the river's water to the north. This would have created a giant lake. When the cloud of God reflected off the lake, the people in Jericho must have surely been impressed. Describe what the people of Jericho might have seen during the day and during the night.
2. The Israelites placed twelve stones in the Jordan as reminders of how God helped them cross the river. What's a way you remember the important milestones of your life? How important is it to keep these reminders?
3. If you were Joshua and had 40,000 warriors, how would you have attacked Jericho? Now imagine you were an inhabitant of Jericho. How would you have reacted to the Israelites' strange invasion?