

Episode: Promised Land Series No. 13

Narrator: Joshua

Primary Scriptures: Joshua 7-24

Story Summary: Joshua and the Israelites conquer most of Canaan

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 8:34; 9:14; 10:14; 14:9; 17:18; 21:45; 23:12-13; 24:14-15

The Israelites crossed into the Promised Land, the men were circumcised, Jericho was defeated, and Joshua was at his pinnacle of recognition by both the Israelites and God. The Israelites followed God's orders completely in the destruction of Jericho and the disposition of the devoted things. Except, unknown to the rest of the Israelites, one person...only one person...disobeyed God by stealing some of the devoted things.

Because one person disobeyed, the entire nation was punished. After this person was annihilated by the Israelites, God relented and allowed the Israelites to continue on their path of being victorious.

Once more, the pattern is set. The Israelites must obey God completely and exactly. If they do so, God will protect them and lead them to certain, low-cost victories. It is hugely important that the Israelites understand this pattern. Among other things, they know they must completely drive out or destroy the inhabitants of Canaan. They must not allow any of the inhabitants to live among the Israelites because they will cause the Israelites to worship other gods. Specifically, they must not make any treaties with the inhabitants. The Israelites must also completely conquer the land that has been promised to them. They cannot stop short. If they follow Joshua and rely on the Lord for his leading, all of this will happen.

The Israelites get a good start by renewing the covenant at Mount Ebal, just as Moses had instructed them to do. But things start falling apart immediately. Joshua and the people fail to inquire of the Lord, and so they are deceived into making a treaty that allows the Gibeonites to live among the Israelites. They make the best of the failure, and God leads them on a massive conquest of the Promised Land.

As you read through Joshua, the Israelites experience victory after victory. They allocate the land as they were supposed to do. But if you look closely, you see signs that things are not well. They do not completely drive out the Canaanites and they continue to worship other gods.¹

¹ Joshua 24:23

Discussion Questions:

1. Why would the Israelites have been so disheartened by the defeat by Ai?
 2. Why might God have designed a complex battle plan for Ai instead of just miraculously destroying it?
 3. Joshua 11:20 describes God wanting to destroy many people groups. How does that desire fit the notion of God being a good God.
 4. Study Joshua 11:22. Who was he talking about?
 5. When Joshua was old, God instituted another plan to conquer Israel. What was it?
 6. Discuss Joshua 24:14-15. How does that relate to your life and family?
4. Goliath and his relatives. 5. God would drive the inhabitants out. Joshua 13:6.

Application Questions:

1. When the Israelites were defeated by Ai, Joshua immediately laid the blame at the feet of the Lord. If he had had faith in the Lord, what would he have assumed? Do we sometimes incorrectly blame God?
2. The story of Achan illustrates how our sins may be hugely destructive to our families. When you contemplate sinning, do you consider the effects on your family members? If you have done so in the past, did the effects end up being greater than you expected?
3. In Joshua 10:12, Joshua made an audacious request of the Lord in the presence of the people of Israel. If God had not fulfilled it, Joshua would have lost a lot of authority. God chose to fulfill the request, and that was a most special day in history. If you could make an audacious request of the Lord today, for which he would get the glory, what would that request be? Why?
4. Joshua 14 describes Caleb and his ambitions when he was 85 years old. How will you keep having goals and ambitions as you age?
5. Joshua 23:14-15 indicates that God will keep his promises...both for reward and punishment. Do you tend to remember God's promises for rewards and neglect the others?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. Joshua 7:1 says that Achan took some of the precious metals devoted to God, and the Lord was angry with all of the Israelites because of it. Was that fair? Why did God feel that way? Was it fair that he demanded the death of Achan and his family?
2. Joshua 9:14 says the Israelites sampled the provisions of the Gibeonites, but did not inquire of the Lord. People tend to trust their own judgments and forget to inquire of the Lord. How could you put up some check points to keep you from doing that?
3. Joshua 15:63 describes one of the people groups that the Israelites did not choose to destroy. All of the people groups that were not destroyed ended up causing trouble to the Israelites by tempting them with idols and sexual immorality per Joshua 23:13. Is that a good example of why you should completely destroy sin in your life?