

## **Lesson 19 - The warrior leader**

### **Joshua and the battle of Jericho, from Joshua 3 and 6**

*The Jesus Storybook Bible - pgs. 108 - 115*

#### **Lesson**

The book of Joshua is not merely a history book. It is not less than true history, but it is much more.

As the history of the Israelites unfolds, through Joshua and then the book of Judges, we see a people becoming increasingly dysfunctional and flawed. They do many appalling things, and their disobedience and sinfulness continually resurface. They constantly deviate from God's will and suffer deep moral lapses.

It is worth repeating that the Bible is not about emulating moral examples; it is about a God of mercy who continually works in and through us despite our constant resistance to his purposes.

With that in mind, these are a few of the themes that emerge from this history:

- ❖ God relentlessly offers his grace to people who do not deserve it or seek it or even appreciate it after they have been saved by it.
- ❖ God wants lordship over every area of our lives. God wanted Israel to take the entire land of Canaan, but instead they only cleared out some areas and they learned to live with idols in their midst. In other words, they neither wholly rejected God nor wholly accepted him. Their history shows that this halfway discipleship and compromise does not work.
- ❖ God is in charge, no matter what it looks like. God is never absent from the scene. He works out his will through weak people and in spite of weak people. His purposes are never thwarted, regardless of appearances.
- ❖ Again and again what emerges is that the only true hero is God; the only true savior is the Lord.

The Israelites are told to "take possession of their land," as the nations are "push[ed] . . . out" (Joshua 23:5) and "drive[n] out" (23:9) by God when the Israelites do battle with them. It is clear, especially from Joshua 23:5, that this is a very direct judgment of the Canaanites by God himself: "The Lord your God himself . . . will drive them out before you."

It is surprising how careful Joshua is in his wording. He never exactly says that the Israelites are to "drive out" the Canaanites. Rather, they are to be driven out by the Lord through the means of military action. So God is coming down to mete out justice against these nations, and the Israelites are his instruments.

It is also clear that the purpose for "driving out" the Canaanites is not vengeful or economic/political but spiritual. They are to be removed so the Israelites will thrive spiritually and not follow other gods (Joshua 23:7). The Israelites were instead to build a home country in which to serve God.

The text also makes clear that the Israelites are to be brave in their fighting, expecting God to give them military victory (Joshua 1:9; 23:3, 9 – 10). It takes strong faith in the Word of God to conduct a campaign in the way God wishes. Ordinary military policy dictates that you don't fight superior forces, but here even in the first battle at Jericho that is exactly what they are to do.

However, the text makes clear that this military activity is to be accompanied by a very close and vital spiritual life — a walk with God. This implies that they are not to expect success if they do not accompany all their work with meditation on God's Word with the mind (Joshua 1:8), obedience to God's will with the life (Joshua 1:7), and love to the Lord with the heart (Joshua 23:11). This is a very complete description of the life of faith.

**Memory Verse**

Exodus 20:3

"You shall have no other gods before me."

\*\*\*Lesson taken from *The Jesus Storybook Bible Curriculum*, written by Sally Lloyd-Jones and Sam Shammas.

If you do not have a copy of The Jesus Storybook Bible, we will have them for purchase in Cranmer Hall for \$10.