

Sunday, February 16, 2025 pm

JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE (38)

The Conquest of Canaan Continued

Joshua 9 – 12

Today, we continue our “Journey through the Bible”, a study of the 17 time periods of Bible history. We are continuing to examine the 7th time period – Conquering the Land of Canaan. This time period involves the book of Joshua which is divided into 2 parts: 1) The conquest (1-12) and the dividing and settling of the land (13-24).

In our last lesson, we addressed the defeat of Jericho and Ai. We concluded our study by noting how Israel renewed their covenant with YHWH in a valley between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim. This was known as the central campaign. To conquer the land there would be 2 more campaigns – a southern and northern campaign.

I. Conquering the Land – Our text

a. A treaty with Gibeon (Ch. 9).

- i. 9:1-2 – because of Israel’s victories, all the kings south of Jericho and Ai, gathered together to fight against Joshua and Israel. Likely, this was to devise a plan of attack. The battle will come later, and not as expected.
- ii. 9:3-15 – the Gibeonites, knowing of YHWH’s power over Jericho and Ai devised a plan to make a covenant with Israel. They pretended to be from a far away country who wanted to make a treaty with YHWH’s people. They took old bread and clothes and acted as if they had come from far away. Joshua was somewhat hesitant (vs. 7), but their story was very convincing, and they did make the treaty (vs. 15). Some observations to consider:
 1. Consider what the LOM said about making treaties. Deuteronomy 20:10-15 made provisions for treaties with cities and nations “very far from you” (vs. 15). BUT cities within their inheritance were to be totally conquered. None were to remain alive lest they teach Israel their idolatry (vs. 16-18). Several nations are mentioned.
 2. Note vs. 3, 9-10 – the Gibeonites did not mention Jericho and Ai as they sought their treaty – part of their well planned scheme (the battles were too recent to include as they made their case for the treaty).
 3. Vs. 14, ***“Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the LORD.”***
- iii. 9:16-27 – 3 days later, they (4 cities in that region) are discovered to be nearby neighbors and Israel would NOT attack them because of the covenant. The men were upset with their own leaders (rightly so). When Joshua finds out and asks why they did what they did, they declare their knowledge of YHWH and are willing to submit to Joshua and Israel. They were made servants – wood cutters and water carriers for the congregation and altar of the LORD. NOTE: We do not read of their names again until 2 Samuel 21 while David is king. During the reign of King Saul, he attempted to destroy the Gibeonites and David was tasked by YHWH to make matters right. 2 Sam. 21:2 reminds us of the treaty, some 400-500 years earlier. SOME believe that the Gibeonites might have been (part of) the Nethinim who were described as temple servants after the return from Babylonian exile (Ezra & Nehemiah). It fits and IF SO, it seems that they remained loyal to and assimilated into Israel.

b. The battle of the south –

- i. 10:1-5 - Adoni-Zedek, king of Jerusalem heard how the Gibeonites had made peace (and other conquests), musters 4 other kings and together they go to attack Gibeon.

- ii. 10:6-15 - Gibeon sends to Joshua for help. Joshua musters his army. Vs. 8, YHWH tells him, *“Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you.”* This gathering together of forces consolidates the southern enemies of Israel’s inheritance. YHWH helps to defeat these Canaanites by 1) causing them to be killed in a great slaughter at Gibeon and as they fled; 2) He cast down great hailstones which killed more than the soldiers did; and 3) by causing the sun to stand still so that they could finish the battle before dark.
- iii. 10:16-27. The 5 kings had fled from the battle and hidden in a cave at Makkedah. It was sealed and a guard set while Israel finished their battle. Then the kings were brought out and executed. Joshua had his captains put their feet on the necks of the kings before executing them and hanging them. Vs. 25 explains why – it gave them confidence to know that YHWH would deliver their enemies as He had promised.
- iv. 10:28-43 describes their southern campaign and various cities they conquered. After they finished, they returned to Gilgal. NOTE: WE have the various cities mentioned, bear in mind this took some time to accomplish – perhaps 2-3 years of war. Israel had to work to inherit their promised land.
- c. The battle for the north -
 - i. 11:1-5 – Jabin, king of Hazor, hearing of Israel’s success calls together numerous kings and their armies to fight against Israel at the waters of Merom. Their armies together were described *“as many people as the sand that is on the seashore in multitude”* along with numerous horses and chariots. (vs. 4).
 - ii. 11:6-15 - YHWH tells Joshua not to fear them because *“tomorrow about this time I will deliver all of them slain before Israel.”* He was instructed to hamstring their (war)horses and burn their chariots (YHWH did not want Israel to have chariots – cf. Deuteronomy 17:16 – not to multiply horses, Ps. 20:7 - *Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the Lord our God.* Isaiah 31:1, etc.). The large army is defeated (we are not given much detail), but Israel likely ambushed them (vs. 7 says Israel came upon the suddenly and attacked). They were attacked until none were left remaining. Following this, they turned to Hazor and totally defeated the city and burned it with fire. The rest of the cities were conquered and the people destroyed, but the spoils of the city was kept and given to Israel. They did obey YHWH by striking every man with the edge of the sword. Vs. 15 notes, *As the Lord had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that the Lord had commanded Moses.*
- d. The conquest reviewed - 11:16-12:24 describes the various conquests of Joshua and Israel. The kings that both Moses and Joshua had defeated are recorded by name. This shows God’s power.

II. Lessons

- a. **Before acting, inquire of God.** Note how Israel had failed to inquire before attacking Ai. Here they again did not inquire of Him and it DIRECTLY resulted in the treaty with Gibeon. We must always seek authority from God before we act – Colossians 3:17. Far too many THINK something is a good idea, and assume that God will be pleased, so they act. But over and over we find examples of how God means what He says and says what He means. This is why HOW we establish authority for what we do is so important.
- b. **Keep your promises** – even though Gibeon had gained their covenant through deceit, Israel had given their word. They HAD to keep that word. Consider Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 reminds us of the importance of

keeping your vows. In the NT, Jesus said it this way, *But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.'* For whatever is more than these is from the evil one (Matthew 5:37, cf. James 5:12).

c. **Concerning the sun standing still –**

- i. We do not know all the natural details associated with this event, but based upon what is taught in scripture, we know SOMETHING spectacular and miraculous happened. Some want to describe it as an eclipse of sorts, while others describe it as allegorical (it did not really happen), but I choose to believe God was able to do what the text says.
- ii. Consider the effect this would have had on the fleeing enemies of Israel. They were anticipating darkness to help them hide and possibly find refuge in cities. But it did not happen. They were unprepared. Israel, on the other hand, was following Joshua and YHWH. They had the clear advantage.
- iii. Some lessons from this event.
 1. God is able to accomplish His will, even in supernatural ways.
 2. The power of prayer – Joshua spoke to God about this.
 3. God has a plan. We see in the battle, God's plan is being accomplished.
 4. A lesson about faith – trusting God. I am reminded of what Jesus told His disciples about faith – Matthew 17:20. I am not advocating for miracles today, but I am saying that when you pray, you need faith. You need to believe God.

d. **When facing battles, we need God on our side!**

- i. Let us never forget that we are at war spiritually. It is a battle for our eternal soul. Satan is waging warfare – Ephesians 6:10-12. Paul told Timothy to “fight the good fight of faith” - 1 Timothy 6:12. The question is: Whose side are we going to fight for!
- ii. Throughout examples of scripture we find WHY we need to trust God and be on His side. He has shown Himself the victor and He WILL win in the end.
 1. Colossians 2:13-15 notes how Christ has made us alive with Him, *Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.*
 2. Hebrews 2:14, *Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,...* But consider the text – Heb. 2:14-18.
 3. This gives greater meaning to passages like
 - a. Romans 8:31, If God is for us, who can be against us?
 - b. 1 Peter 3:12, His eyes are on the righteous, His face against those who do evil.
 - c. 1 John 4:4 reminds us that *“He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*

And thus we can see the conquest of Canaan. Just like Jericho and Ai, the land that God promised to give to Israel was a gift from Him. The entire campaign (which is estimated to have taken 5-7 years) was under God's control. He kept His promises to Israel and we can take confidence that He can keep His promise to us as well.

God gave Canaan to Israel. He has promised us our “Canaan” too. AND He has given us directions to lay claim to it. Will you follow His instructions and receive your inheritance? Think about it!