

JOSHUA 5:13-6:20 STUDY NOTES (3/6/22)

Joshua's Big Theme: The Israelites are finally ready to enter into the land that God promised - that God is *gifting* to them - that is currently inhabited by enemy forces which need to be pushed out. Over the course of Joshua, they will learn what it means to be strong and courageous in the Lord as they follow God and trust Joshua in the scariest and most overwhelming of situations.

Today's Context: Today we come to part 1 of 2 of the story of the fall of Jericho. Here, we see Israel take their first piece of territory. However, the author makes clear this is not about *their* might, but God's gift-giving character.

Additional Study Notes:

- Joshua 5:13-15 appears to mirror the stories of Abraham and Melchizedek (Gen 14) and Jacob wrestling a mysterious man (Gen 32). In all of these, our "main character" comes in contact with a strange individual, who appears to be God, and alters their life in some way. Additionally, it mirrors the story of Moses and the Burning Bush in Exodus 3, when God meets Moses on sacred ground.
- Holy land is an indication of God's presence, much like Mt Sinai in Exodus 19. Joshua was called to take off his sandals as a sign of reverence and respect to God.
- In Scripture, one of the signs that a being is God versus a representative (like an angel), is that the representative refuses to be worshiped. In this moment, Joshua bows in a worshipful posture and the commander doesn't rebuke him.
- While Israel is marching around Jericho - building a sense of dread for God's enemies - it's entirely possible that God's mercy is still available to them in those 7 days. While we have no indication of defectors, we do see a broadening of the language used for Rahab's safe-haven home. Instead of mentioning the rescue of just Rahab or her family (as seen in Joshua 2), our text more broadly states, "Rahab...and *all who are with her*

in her house shall be spared.” Throughout the Bible, God continually demonstrates His mercy even up to the last moment of destruction. It is possible that as terrified Jericho-ites confided their fear to Rahab, she welcomed them into the salvation of her home.

- Jericho was more like a town than a city, and most likely covered anywhere from 6-9 acres of land. There were probably about 1000 people inside, though possibly as much as 2000.

For Additional Study (most are available to borrow from CFC):

- NIV Study Bible
- ESV Study Bible
- Other commentaries available upon request

Discussion Questions

CATCHING UP ON LAST WEEK

- (1) What was most significant for you from Joshua 5:2-12? What's stuck with you as meaningful or impactful?

TODAY'S TEXT

KNOWING God

- (2) What questions do you (or members of your group) have about this passage? Discuss.
- (3) What does this passage tell us about God?
- (4) What does this passage tell us about humanity?
- (5) Alpha and Omega Question: Compare and contrast Joshua 5:13-15 with Genesis 32:22-32 and Exodus 3:1-4:17.
- (6) Look at the repeating language in Joshua 6:16; 10:8; and 10:19. What's the significance? Why might God keep repeating this to the people in their battles?

GROWING Together

- (7) **If people in your group are following the Alpha and Omega reading plan, take time to discuss/encourage their reading for 5-10 minutes.*
- (8) In what ways have you sought to use God to affirm *your* plans instead of the other way around?
- (9) What does it practically look like to submit ourselves to God's plans? Why would this produce a joyful and good life?
- (10) Do you see everything you have as a gift from God? Why or why not? How would this realization change the way we live?
- (11) What questions, ideas, or themes would you want to study further?

SHOWING God to Others

- (12) What in this passage serves as good news for the world around us?

PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

- (13) For next week, spend some time reading Joshua 6:15-27. What's interesting? What questions do you have?

QUESTIONS FOR CHILDREN (from Children's Director Emily Reiser)

- (14) What stood out to you in this story? What did you find interesting and what was confusing?

- (15) Does walking around a city to make the walls collapse sound rational to you or crazy? What would you do if God asked you to do that? Has God ever asked you to do something that didn't make sense to you? How did it turn out?
- (16) Did God's plan work exactly how He said it would? What do you learn about God's plans? What an amazing gift it was to the Israelites receiving something they did not earn or deserve, God shows His love for His people and takes care of them. What gift has God given us? How can we share this gift with others?