

JOSHUA 6:15-27 STUDY NOTES (3/13/22)

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: In Part 2 of the fall of Jericho, we see the "devoted" things of God: what's saved, what's burned, and what's killed. In the midst of God's frightening judgment of Jericho, we also see His freeing mercy in the rescuing of Rahab the prostitute and her family.

Additional Study Notes:

- In Joshua 6, we see the fulfillment of what was promised to Rahab in Joshua 2. There, the language is that she and "all [her] family" would be saved (2:18). However, in Joshua 6, the language becomes looser and more open when it says "all who belong to her" will be saved (6:17, 22, 23, 25). This change in wording may be insignificant, or it may intentionally speak to a growing number of Jericho-ites who have since defected and are now seeking God's mercy within Rahab's house.
- God's judgment here on Jericho is so severe and total that He even curses the land. In verse 26, God says that anyone who tries to rebuild the city will themselves be cursed. In fact, we see this exact thing happen in 1 Kings 16:34!
- It's important to recognize that the judgment of Jericho and the killing of its people is specific to this moment and this place. While it is carried out by the army of Israel, it is determined by God alone, not the people. We do not have the power to call a "holy war" in the way that God does. God alone is Judge.
- The "*herem*" (the devotion of items to God) is spoken of specifically in Deuteronomy 20:16-18, but it pops up over and over again in the first 5 books of the Bible.

- While it is scary to see God's judgment upon this foreign city, we see God's judgment handed out in the same way towards Israel next week...

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 5:13-6:20? 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: How have you seen God's mission for justice unfolding in the earliest books of the Bible?
- (6) Are any words or phrases repeated in this passage? What might they emphasize?
- (7) How do we see God's justice in this passage? How do we see His mercy? What seems to be the main focus on this passage?

GROWING Together

- (8) **If people in your group are following the Alpha and Omega reading plan, take time to discuss/encourage their reading for 5-10 minutes.*
- (9) How does Joshua 6 sit with you? Does it make you uneasy? How do we reconcile God's justice and God's love in a passage like this?
- (10) Do you feel the need to perfectly defend and explain God's actions (to yourself or others), such as in passages like this one? What do you make of Eugene Peterson's quote: *"The proper work of a Christian is witness, not apology?"*
- (11) How does understanding God's justice help us grasp His mercy? Do you feel like you have a good grasp of both? How do we find more joy in God's gift of mercy?
- (12) How do we perfectly justice and mercy at the cross? What does this mean for us?
- (13) What questions, ideas, or themes would you want to study further?

SHOWING God to Others

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

PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

- (15) For next week, spend some time reading Joshua 7. What's interesting? What questions do you have?

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

- (16) What stood out to you in this story? What did you find interesting and what was confusing?
- (17) What is justice and what is mercy? How do you see both of these happening in this story? Do you find God's justice to the people of Jericho difficult to understand? Why or why not?
- (18) The fate of the people of Jericho seems horrible to us as humans but it's also what we deserve; we too sin and fall short of God's expectations. Why are we able to receive God's mercy? How do you live each day knowing that you have this gift? How can you share this knowledge with others today?