

JOSHUA 2 STUDY NOTES (2/6/22)

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: Joshua 2 introduces to Rahab, the foreigner, prostitute, from the wicked land of Jericho. And yet it's through this "immoral outsider" that we see the first major demonstration of last week's command: to be strong and courageous in the Lord.

Additional Study Notes:

- Joshua is the sixth book of the Bible, immediately following the Pentateuch (Genesis - Deuteronomy). It continues the narrative of Israel's journey home.
- Joshua has appeared before, as Moses' aid, in a variety of settings. This includes Exodus 24:13, Exodus 33:11, Numbers 11:28, and most famously, Numbers 14.
- The land of Canaan is less of a united nation and more so a large territory composed of different cities, tribes, and people. God is giving this land to Israel as a gift and simultaneously using Israel as a demonstration of His justice upon a wicked group of people. This is something that will also happen to Israel in later years. Jericho is the first major city at the edge of Canaan, right after they pass the Jordan river, and therefore, they must conquer this city first.
- In Numbers 13-14, the spies leave their scouting mission in the land of Canaan and spread a message of fear and discouragement. However, *here* the spies exit with a message of trust and hope in God (v. 24). How beautiful to see God's slow and ongoing work of sanctification for His people - their trust is growing!

- This is not the first time that a non-Jew has been saved and welcomed into God's covenant people. We also see this when the "mixed multitude" leaves Egypt during the Exodus (Ex 12:38). However, Joshua 2 is one of the earliest explicit stories of a convert moving from paganism to following YHWH.
- Rahab is not just lauded as a hero of the faith in James 2 and Hebrews 11, but is also a member of the family line of Jesus (see: Matthew 1:5)!
- Joshua 2, Hebrews 11, and James 2 all refer to Rahab as a prostitute. This may be the case, but the Hebrew word here is slightly vague. It is a word which could speak to a matriarchal woman and/or a business proprietor. She may have been a prostitute herself, been a brothel owner, or owned a tavern/hostel-type business in Jericho. The text gives no indication that the spies went to her for sexual relations. Instead, her home/business was probably a community hub of some kind where information traveled quickly.
- The destruction of Sihon and Og is told in Numbers 21:21-35.
- The scarlet cord of Rahab was most likely something Rahab already had, and potentially even used as a way of advertising her business. As such, it wouldn't have raised suspicion for anyone living in Jericho.

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 1? 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: What was your major take-away from the book of Genesis? What questions did it leave you with? What are you looking forward to in Exodus?
- (6) Compare and contrast the spies leaving the land of Canaan in Numbers 13:26-33 and here in Joshua 2:24. How has Israel's mindset and focus changed? How does this speak to God's slow work of growing us in trust?
- (7) How might this passage have echoes of both the Exodus and the Passover (Exodus 12)?

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 Rahab put her fear of God above her fear of Jericho? Have you ever stood in a similar situation? How do you think you'd fair in her shoes?
- (10) What gives Rahab the courage to do what she does? How might our bathing in God's Word/story (i.e. Joshua 1:7-9; Joshua 2:8-11) help us to have similar courage in this broken world?
- (11) What does it mean to trust the true Victory of God over our own pursuits at "victory"? How does Christ claim the victory for the desperate and needy?
- (12) What questions, ideas, or themes would you want to study further?

SHOWING God to Others

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

PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

- (14) For next week, spend some time reading Joshua 3. What's interesting? What questions do you have?

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

- (15) What stood out to you in this story? What did you find interesting and what was confusing?
- (16) God is everywhere in this story from guiding the men to a safe house, to helping Rehab send the King away all the way to blessing Rehab's faithfulness when battle comes. What do you think about God in this passage? How do you see him working in your life right now?
- (17) On top of God being present, Rehab shows how faithful she is to God. Even though she has never had a relationship with God, she believes in Him and fears Him because of the stories she has heard - what amazing faith that is! Do you have this kind of faith in God? Why or why not? Do you know anyone in your life who could use this kind of faith? How can you share all of the miraculous things God has done with your friends who don't know Him?