

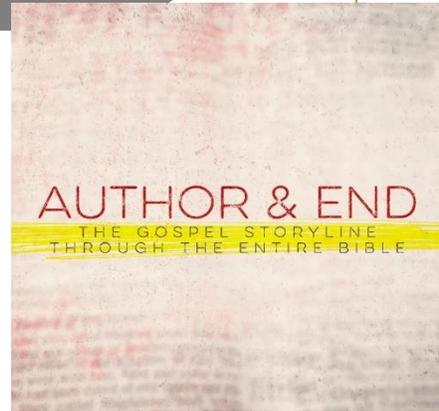
NUMBERS 13-21

Lesson 12 - God Keeps His Promise Again... Giving His People the Land

In our last study, we examined the continual rebellion of the people that God had called His children. Over and over, they chose to ignore His promises, past help, and provision only to complain and fear in distrust. We learned that like the Israelites, we deserve God's judgment and need mercy.

Despite our rebellion, God extends mercy and grace. He promised to fight and help the Israelites if they would trust in faith. He also fought the terrible enemies of sin and death on our behalf. He used Joshua (name means "God is Salvation") to lead His people to victory in Canaan. God sent His Son Jesus (name is a form of "Yeshua/Joshua" meaning "to deliver; to rescue") to win victory over sin and death. In this lesson, we will see how God gave Israel the Promised Land. We will learn again that even though man sins and rebels, God never changes His plan.

Consider: Can you think of a pattern of distrust toward God in your own life? Are there certain circumstances, events, or habits that continually lead you to sin or rebel showing your distrust of your God? _____



GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob keeps His promises. He had promised Abraham a nation of descendants and a land to for them. He is on the verge of fulfilling that promise in our passage. He had promised to those rebellious descendants that some of them would wander in a wilderness and die because they had complained and wished for death over the promises of God. He had fulfilled that promise as well.

Even Moses would not enter the promised land and a time had come for a new leader. Joshua emerged as a military commander and was one of the two trusting spies that desired to enter Canaan. At God's command, Moses publicly conferred authority onto Joshua as the new leader.

A new leader and new generation now stood on the brink of a promised land just like their parents did. They were faced with a choice to trust God or not because just like their parents, they could not take the land of Canaan by their own strength.

Consider: What are some lessons that you have learned from the mistakes of others (particularly those ahead of you like parents, mentors, or authority)? _____

What are some ways that you have followed their mistakes or even seen your own children follow your mistakes? _____

GOD'S PLAN, GOD'S WAY, GOD'S GLORY

Joshua 6

Consider: How would you have reacted if God told you this battle plan the way he instructed Joshua to defeat Jericho? _____

Why would God have designed this plan for the first battle in the promised land? _____

What message did this send to the Israelites and all of those who lived in Canaan? _____

1. The plan that God gave them had no real logical rationale and offered no physical assurance of victory.
2. The plan was solely based on the promise of God. (Joshua 1:3, 6)
3. The plan actually ran counter to logic and seemingly made His people open targets. (1 Corinthians 1:27)
4. The plan required the Israelites to do two things: trust enough to act and receive the promise.
5. The plan could only bring glory to one... God Himself.

Consider: How do you way what God has instructed or called you to do with the doubts or concerns of others? _____

MAN'S PLAN, MAN'S WAY, MAN'S DEFEAT

Joshua 7

We have seen before that the Israelites reaction to hardship or inconvenience was distrust and rebellion. What would their response be after such a clear and incredible victory? God gave the Israelites an incredible victory as they followed His command and trusted His instruction.

As the walls of Jericho fell, God instructed His people to take nothing from the city except the gold, silver, brass, and iron. Everything else was to be burned. Easy instruction, right?

Check out the last verse of chapter 6 and the transition into chapter 7 together:

Joshua 6:27-7:1 - "So the Lord was with Joshua; and his fame was noised throughout all the country. But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing..."

This does not seem like the natural order of events here. God conquers Jericho in a miraculous way, His glory spreads abroad, He continues to bless Israel, and in return there is more disobedience and rebellion. As quickly as you would cast judgment here, place yourself in the situation. You've wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. You have had very few "luxuries" or conveniences in life. Now, you conquer a city full of "good things", but you can keep none of it for yourself. This was actually a great display of faith and trust for those who obeyed. It stated, "God will protect, provide, and care for me in the best way."

Ai "should" have been a relatively easy battle compared to Jericho. However, with the disobedience and rebellion of Achan particularly, God's power and blessing was removed. Once again, Israel was painfully reminded of lessons learned by generations past.

1. Without God, they are weak and insignificant.
2. Sin is never truly a secret.
3. Sin and its consequences affect the sinner and often those around them.
4. Sin is destructive and shames God's name when His believers disobey.

Consider: Have you ever experienced the destructive effects of sin or minimizing sin? Explain: _____

GOD SHOWS MERCY, GIVES VICTORY, AND EXTENDS HOPE

Joshua 8:1-2

God will not leave sin unpunished, but God is also willing to deal with sin and move on. This is immensely encouraging for Christians today because we can trust that our sin has indeed been dealt with by Jesus and that God is not keeping a record of our wrongs.

Achan suffered the penalty of death for his sins. While this seems harsh, we should be reminded we all deserve death in exchange for our sin. His sin was uncovered eventually, but not until it had affected an entire nation of people.

After the sin of Achan had been dealt with, God's anger toward Israel had subsided. He was ready to restore and give victory. You will notice that Joshua did not assume victory as he had before. This time, he listened to the Lord about the number of soldiers and the details of His plan. The Lord gave them a second chance and gave them instructions about how to win the battle, and they obeyed. This time the Lord allowed them to keep the spoils like livestock for personal use. Had Achan waited on the Lord, he would have had all that he needed.

Achan had the opportunity to repent in the days following Jericho but did nothing until his sin was exposed. When we sin against God, we harden our heart against him and grow cold toward Him. Sometimes, this is based on our view of God. We fail to see the loving mercy and grace that God extends daily. We think we can hide and must hide because we don't know Him very well.

Special Note: Joshua 8:26 says that the place of that God's judgment fell on Achan was called the Valley of Achor (meaning "trouble") from then on. However, in Hosea 2:14-15 God promises to forgive and extend mercy to Israel. He prophesies of future restoration. Interestingly, God says that when it comes, He will make "the Valley of Achor for a door of hope." The place of trouble became a door of hope. What a picture of the victory that we find in the Gospel of Jesus! **The wages of sin is death, yet Jesus with His own death gives eternal life. The place of trouble (our sin against a Holy God) becomes a door of hope. In God, we find mercy when we repent, victory when we obey, and hope when we trust!**