**JOSHUA**

**Entry into the Promised Land**

**09/24/2020**

**What you need to REMEMBER:**

The Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) establish certain foundational principles on which all Scripture is built – and is the set up for the book of Joshua.

The Pentateuch establishes that God is the one who spun up the universe and that He is eternally in charge. It also explains that the universe was originally created with God-infused, life-giving goodness that was vandalized by Devil-infused, decay, destruction and death.

In response, God established a plan to restore His creation to its original state. The centerpiece of the plan involved the coming of a Promised Child who would do what was necessary to accomplish the task. The coming of the Child was so vital that God went to the trouble of establishing a special nation for the Child to be born into. This nation was formed from the descendants of Abraham and became known as Israel.

The Pentateuch ends with the nation of Israel possessing a large population with a strong religious and cultural identity, as well as, a robust legal and governmental system. What they lacked was a national homeland.

**What you need to KNOW:**

The book of Joshua describes how God provided a national homeland for Israel to create a place for the Promised Child to be born, live and die. God decided that Joshua, one of Moses’ chief lieutenants, would lead the people into the land. Joshua was a strong and capable leader who almost always did the right thing in God’s eyes (see chapter 9 for an exception). Joshua’s exceptional faithfulness to the Lord makes him a stand out among biblical figures.

It is noteworthy that centuries later, the Expected Child would be named, “Jesus,” which is the Greek version of the Hebrew name “Joshua.” The name means “to save.” As such, Joshua led the people into the Promised Land where the Savior would do the necessary work to lead believers into the Promise of Heaven.

In the book of Joshua, Israel dramatically enters the land as a conquering army. The first half of the book describes how Israel forcefully took the land of the Canaanites, which was also occupied by groups called Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. Chapters 1-12 tell the story of how God fulfilled His promise to give them the land. The second half (chapters 13-21) describe how the land was divvied up and settled by the various subsets of Israel.

The book gives many details about the nation’s military exploits and the organization of their society, however, the strongest emphasis is placed on their need to remain obedient to the Lord. Throughout the narrative they are continually reminded that the secret to their success would always hinge on their faithfulness to God and their obedience to His precepts.

A troubling aspect of the book of Joshua are the repeated God-given commands to destroy both the combatants and non-combatants (including women and children) in their military campaigns. It can certainly appear that God was favoring the Israelites while being brutally unfair to the other nations. But, perhaps God’s statement to Abraham many years before can give us some insight into why this happened. The statement is recorded in Genesis 15 when after promising Abraham that his descendants would have a national homeland, God said that they would have to wait four generations for this to happen because *“the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure” (vs. 16).*

The implication of the Lord’s statement is that the annihilation of the pagan tribes in the land of Canaan was not unfair, but was the penalty for their sinful religious idolatry and cultural practices. In fact, the centerpiece of their idolatrous devotion involved the utilization of both male and female temple prostitutes which was believed to elicit favor and prosperity from their fertility god, Baal, and his female counterpart, the goddess, Ashtoreth. To put it bluntly, the high point of their worship experiences consisted of unholy, extravagant orgies in the Temples of Baal and Ashtoreth.

Seen from this perspective, the invasion of the land of Canaan happened when the people of the land were most deserving of punishment for their sin against the Holy Creator. The purpose of the total destruction of the Canaanites was to demonstrate the truth that *“the wages of sin (really) is death” (Romans 6:23).* In other words, crushing the evil that was practiced in Canaan was a foreshadow of the way the Promised Child of Genesis 3:16 would crush the evil that is practiced in all of God’s good creation.

**GET GOING!**

**Continue your personal Walk Through the Bible by taking a hop, skip and a jump through Joshua.**