

PART 3:

THE PROMISED LAND

God had promised Abraham that his descendants would become a great nation, that He would give that nation a promised land, and that all nations of the earth would be blessed through Abraham's Seed. After Abraham's descendants had been enslaved in Egypt, God delivered them. They were now very numerous and entered a covenant with Jehovah God. This covenant centered on the fact that they would be God's people, and He would be their God. He had kept His promise to make them into a great nation. However, they rejected the opportunity to enter the promised land out of fear. Consequently, everyone 20 years old and above would die in the wilderness (other than Joshua and Caleb). Now, we focus on the third major section of the Bible story: "The Promised Land."

DEUTERONOMY 28:1-14

The book of Deuteronomy shows Moses preparing the generation of Israelites God would bring into the promised land of Canaan. In it, Moses reminds them about their history, God's law, and the covenant God had made with them (Deuteronomy 26:16-19). This generation needed to know that if they would faithfully obey God, God would pour out great blessings on them as a physical nation. He would cause them to multiply as a people, prosper in the land He was giving them, and fight for them in battles against their enemies. However, all these blessings depended on their not turning aside from their faithfulness to Him (neither to the right nor the left) and on their refusing to follow other gods.

DEUTERONOMY 28:15-26

While God wanted to bless Israel as His people, He also warned them that there would be great consequences if they refused to carefully follow and obey Him. Instead of Jehovah God blessing them, He would not cause them to prosper. Rather than fighting on their side in battle against their enemies, God would turn away from them and cause their enemies to be victorious. The Israelites, therefore, needed to recognize that they had a choice to make about

whether they would faithfully honor the covenant they had made with Jehovah God or not!

JOSHUA 1:1-9

Due to Moses's disobedience to God (Numbers 20:1-13), he died without getting to lead Israel into the promised land (Deuteronomy 34). Joshua (one of the faithful spies, Numbers 13-14) would do this instead. God promised to be faithful and to make Joshua and Israel successful against all the inhabitants of the land if they kept their covenant with God by doing what God had instructed them to do in His Law. Also note that God had been patient with the people in the land and was now punishing them for their sin by giving the land to Israel (Genesis 15:16; Leviticus 18:24-30).

JOSHUA 3:7-17

The Israelites were camped just across the Jordan River from the land God promised to give them. In fact, God had already given them some land on the eastern side of the Jordan River (Numbers 32). Now, it was time for the nation to cross into the land God had promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and start to take possession of it. First, they needed to cross the river during the time of year it was overflowing its banks. So, God caused the water to stop flowing, and the entire nation crossed into the promised land!

JOSHUA 6:1-5, 15-16, 20-21

The first city the Israelites came to was Jericho. The city was secured by a wall. However, God provided the victory for His people over this wicked city in a way that could only be attributed to the power of God (e.g., marching around the city, blowing the trumpet, shouting). Through this (like with their deliverance from Egypt), the Israelites could clearly recognize that they were being victorious by the power of God rather than by their own strength or wisdom. Furthermore, all should be able to see the greatness of Jehovah God over all the other gods the nations served and worshiped! After Jericho came many other battles throughout the time of Joshua so that the Israelites captured the land (Joshua 10-11). The land was then divided into twelve tribal allotments (Joshua 13-21).

JOSHUA 23:6-16

As Joshua neared the end of his life and addressed the Israelite leaders, he reminded them that there was still work that needed to be done. Although the main battles had been fought and the land was captured, there was

more to do to fully drive out all the inhabitants of the land. As they did this work, though, it was critical that they did not allow them to remain among them, become like those nations (e.g., worshiping their gods, practicing their immoral activities), or intermarry with the people of those nations (Leviticus 18:3; 20:22-23; Deuteronomy 7:1-6). God had kept His promise to give this land to Israel and would continue being with them and blessing them if they would keep their covenant with God to be His people and obey His commands; but warned them about what would happen if they did not!

JUDGES 2:6-23

Joshua had died, as well as the other elders from the generation that conquered Canaan. Next, there was a generation that did not know the Lord or all the works He had done for Israel (e.g., bringing them out of Egypt, giving them the land of Canaan). This generation of Israelites often failed to do what God wanted them to do and keep the covenant their ancestors had made with Jehovah God. Instead, they often made a covenant with the people of the land and worshiped their gods (Judges 2:1-5). Consequently, God would not make the Israelites successful against those remaining peoples. Furthermore, God would even use the enemy nations to punish the Israelites for their rebellion. During this period of time (Judges; Ruth; 1 Samuel 1-7), the following cycle can be seen in Israel's history: Israel sins, God allows Israel's enemies to oppress them, Israel repents and cries out to God for deliverance, and God raises up a judge who helps deliver Israel from the oppression (e.g., Judges 3:7-11, 12-30; 6-8). During this period, there were the following judges: Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, Abimelech, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, Samson, Eli, and Samuel.

CONCLUSION

God had fulfilled His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give their descendants the land of Canaan! God did this by demonstrating His great power over the people of the land, no matter how big and strong the people and cities were. Through this, God demonstrated His superiority over the gods of all the other nations. He promised to bless Israel if they would keep their covenant with Him. However, He warned them about the consequences they would experience if they abandoned their covenant with Him. Sadly, the period of the judges demonstrates that Israel often failed to keep their covenant with Jehovah God and failed to experience all the blessings God desired to give the nation of Israel as a result.

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

What would happen to Israel if they were faithful to God?

What would happen to Israel if they were not faithful to God?

What task did God give Joshua to accomplish?

How did the Israelites enter the promised land?

How did God provide the Israelites victory over Jericho?

Why were the Israelites to drive out all the nations in the Canaan land, 6?

What happened to Israel after Joshua and the elders died?

What cycle happened repeatedly in the book of Judges?