

Prayer

Speak, Lord, for your servant hears. Grant us ears to hear, eyes to see, wills to obey, hearts to love: then declare what you will, reveal what you will, command what you will, demand what you will.

Christina Rossetti.

Thought to carry into the week ahead:-

God promises to forgive us – if we forgive others.

God promises to bless us financially – if we tithe and sow generously.

God promises to direct our path – if we acknowledge him in all your ways.

God's one big plan

Conquest (almost) & dark times - unit 6



This week we are looking at the nation Israel following God's instruction and taking over the promised land. Many of us have ourselves experienced a definite leading at times in our lives, sometimes dramatically but more often it comes as an unease, a gentle encouragement to action/change, followed by confirmation. Would anyone in the group be able to share such an experience?

Read Joshua 5: 13-15 & 6: 1-5, 13-20

So the conquest begins (the year is about 1240BC). The Ark of the Covenant went before the Israelites as they crossed the Jordan,

- ◆ who will now go before them now?
- ◆ 7 priests, 7 days, 7 encirclements on the seventh day. God is beginning a new order to the world. Does this bring to mind anything?
- ◆ Today, do we or should we expect that God will still go before us?

Joshua chapters 6 to 11 detail some of the major battles, and chapter 12 lists the captured kingdoms. Importantly chapter 13: 1-7 informs that not all the promised land was taken. (Chapters 14 to 19 detail the dividing of lands among the 12 tribes of Israel).

- ◆ What is the importance that some Canaanite and Philistine peoples remained in the land?
- ◆ Can we draw any comparison with life in the UK today?
- ◆ Are there any lessons that can be drawn from the passages we have read?

Read Joshua 23: 1-13

As Joshua's time comes to an end, he once again reminds the people of all that God has provided. The providence remains conditional and the warnings are reiterated.

Read Judges 2: 10 to 3:6

This makes sad reading. It is a summary of what is to follow, and a four-part pattern can be observed which is repeated time and again.

- ◆ Try to summarise in one or two words each of the following verses (1) verses 2; 11-13, (2) verses 2: 14-15, (3) 2: 18b (3: 9 makes this more obvious), (4) 2: 16-18, to see the pattern.

Read Judges 3: 12-30

- ◆ Can you see the pattern of events as per the previous question?

Some of us will be able to relate this pattern to our own lives (in not such a dramatic way!), and there is both frustration and relief for us in this cycle (pattern).

- ◆ What frustration?
- ◆ What relief?
- ◆ So can we say that God's promises are guaranteed or conditional? If conditional, then conditional on what?
- ◆ Did Jesus say or give any indication that changed this conditionality?

Read 1 John 2: 3 - 8 for your answer.