

Quarter Four: Lessons of Faith from Joshua

Jill Morikone

Lesson 5—God Fights for You

Tuesday: Dispossession or Annihilation?

October 28, 2025

- **Last Week:** “The Conflict Behind All Conflicts”
 - Joshua 5 & 6
 - Part 1: how to reconcile a God of love with a God who ordered destruction of Canaanites
 - Understand outworking of Great Controversy on earth
 - Lord’s desire to fight for His people
 - Egyptian deliverance (all God) vs Canaan conquest (people fought, too)
- **This Week:** “God Fights for You”
 - Various Scriptures (not specific with Joshua)
 - Part 2: challenges with “divine or holy war” & our sovereign God of love

Memory Text: “And Joshua captured all these kings and their land at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel” (Joshua 10:42, ESV).

The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** The Canaanites’ Iniquity (John D)
 - Various Scriptures – Satanic & degrading practices of the Canaanites; their years of probation which God gave in mercy; need for judgment
- 2. **Monday:** The Supreme Judge (James)
 - Various Scriptures – God as divine Judge; sin cannot exist in presence of holy God; concept of holy war to reestablish God’s justice & peace
- 3. **Tuesday:** Dispossession or Annihilation? (Jill)
 - Various Scriptures – holy war dedicated against Canaanite practices & objects of worship; inhabitants were to be driven out & individuals could repent & follow God & be spared; hardening of the hearts of the Canaanites
- 4. **Wednesday:** Free Choice (SQ)
 - Various Scriptures – total destruction against sin & evil; judgment could come against God’s people, too, if they followed evil practices; God’s mercy toward both camps, if they repented & turned to Him
- 5. **Thursday:** The Prince of Peace (John L)
 - Various Scriptures – coming time of peace – Christ, our Messiah brings this peace (heave & new earth)

Tuesday: Dispossession or Annihilation?

Ex 23:28 – 30; Ex 33:2; Ex 34:11; Num 33:52; (Deut 7:20; Ex 34:13); (Deut 7:5; 9:3; 12:2, 3; 31:3, 4); (Josh 2:9 – 14; Judg 1:24 – 26); Josh 11:19, 20

- **What was God's purpose for the Canaanites?**

- God's original purpose for Israel = be a light to the Gentiles
 - Gen 12:1 – 3 (call of Abram) – “Now the LORD had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house....(2) I will make you a great nation, I will bless you... (3)and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’”
 - Through Abraham’s descendants, others were to discover the one true God
- God's purpose = repentance, turning to Him / forsaking idolatry & heathen practices
 - 2 Pet 3:9 – God is not willing that any should perish...

- **How long had probation lasted for the Canaanites?**

- Gen 15:13 – 16 –
 - Vs 13 - Abram’s descendants would be strangers in a land that was not theirs for 400 years
 - Vs 14 - God would judge this nation (Egypt) & would bring them out with great possessions
 - Vs 16 – “but in the 4th generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”
 - 1 generation = 100 years
 - Amorites represent all the inhabitants of Canaan
 - 400 years for the Canaanites to repent & turn to God

- **Four-fold focus of the Canaanite conquest:**

- **1. Destruction of Canaanite religion**
 - Idols
 - Altars
 - System of worship
 - Deut 7:1, 5 –
 - Vs 1 – “When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites & the Canaanites....”
 - Clearly discussing the Canaanite Conquest
 - Vs 5 – “But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.”
 - Destruction of Canaanite religion
 - Deut 7:25 – “You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the LORD your God.”
 - Ex 34:13, 14 – “But you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images (14) for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God).”
 - In context of covenant renewal (after golden calf experience)
 - Lesson: “In order to avoid contamination, Israel had to destroy all the elements that were propagating corruption.”

○ **2. Dispossession of Canaanites themselves**

- Duet 7:17, 18 – “If you should say in your heart, ‘These nations are greater than I: how can I **dispossess** them?’ (18) you shall not be afraid of them, but you shall remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt.”
 - Dispossess = *yah-rash*’ = can mean possess & inherit but also means (Strong’s def = “cast out, consume, destroy, disinherit”)
 - Strong’s: “to occupy (by driving out previous tenants & possessing in their place)”
 - Driving out Canaanites
- Deut 6:10, 11 – “So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, (11) houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olives trees which you did not plant...”
 - Clear all the cities & villages were not destroyed
 - Complete conquest would have wiped everything out
 - Yet, they enter homes & vineyards & gardens in perfection
 - Archeological evidence points to destruction of 3 cities in the conquest
 - Bible says these 3 cities were burned = Jericho, Ai, & Hazor
 - Military forts at the time (limited women & children)
- Ex 23:28 – 30 – “And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you. (29) I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. (30) Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land.”
 - God is the one who would do the dispossession
- Deut 7:20 – “Moreover the LORD your God will send the hornet among them until those who are left, who hide themselves from you, are destroyed.”
 - Vs 17 says the nations shall be dispossessed
 - Seems to imply that the Canaanites didn’t have to come under the ban had they—upon receiving the miraculous news of the Exodus & the impending conquest—vacated the land so solemnly promised Israel

○ **3. Canaanite Choice**

- The inhabitants of the Canaanite nations could choose to repent & follow God
- Rahab
 - Joshua 2 –
 - Vs 9 – Rahab acknowledge the LORD gave Israel the land
 - Vs 10 – Rahab recognized the hand of God in parting the Red Sea & delivering them from Egypt
 - Vs 11 – Rahab acknowledged that God is God in heaven above & earth beneath
 - Vs 14 – the spies answered her, “...when the LORD has given us the land, that we will deal kindly & truly with you.”

- Rahab
 - The Canaanite prostitute with a past
 - Was spared, forgiven & brought into the Israelite nation
 - Married into the Israelite nation
 - Became the mother of Boaz, the forerunner of the Messiah
 - Mentioned in the Hebrew hall of faith
- Gibeonites (Joshua 9)
- Man in Bethel (continuing conquest of Canaan)
 - Judg 1:24, 25 – “And when the spies saw a man coming out of the city, they said to him, ‘Please show us the entrance to the city, and we will show you mercy.’ (25) So he showed them the entrance to the city, and they struck the city with the edge of the sword; but they let the man & all his family go.”
 - Mercy given to those who recognized sovereignty of God prior to the conquest (Rahab) or during the conquest – this man
- **4. Canaanite destruction**
 - Destruction given to those who
 - Withdrew into fortified cities
 - Continued to rebel against God’s plan for the Israelites
 - Hardened their hearts
 - Josh 11:19, 20 – (part of the Northern conquest) – “There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. All the others they took in battle. (20) For it was of the LORD to **harden** their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might utterly destroy them, and that they might receive no mercy, but that He might destroy them, as the LORD had commanded Moses.”
 - One city made peace with Israel & was spared
 - Harden = *khaw-zak*’ = “to strengthen or to confirm”
 - God strengthened or confirmed the rebellion & idol worship already in the Canaanites hearts
 - He allowed them the consequences of their choices

4-fold focus of the Canaanite Conquest

- 1. Destruction of Canaanite religion
 - Focus was on idolatry & tremendous wickedness of Canaanite religion
- 2. Dispossession of Canaanites themselves
 - Original plan was dispossession, not annihilation
- 3. Canaanite choice
 - Individual Canaanites could choose to repent & turn to God & they would be spared
- 4. Canaanite destruction
 - Those who resisted, who refused to leave, who stood & fought would be destroyed