



## SESSION 13

# GOD TOOK THE ISRAELITES INTO CANAAN

God said that the generation of people that he had brought out of Egypt would not enter the promised land of Canaan. He said that because when the Israelites were in Kadesh Barnea, they did not believe him. They spoke against God and against Moses. God said they would not go into the land, and that is what happened. Because they did not believe what God said was true, the Israelites of that generation died in the wilderness.

But Joshua and Caleb had listened to God. They had told the people to trust in God. So they were the only two people from that generation to enter the promised land. God told Moses to make Joshua the new leader of the Israelites.



NUMBERS 27:18-23

<sup>18</sup> The Lord replied, “Take Joshua son of Nun, who has the Spirit in him, and lay your hands on him. <sup>19</sup> Present him to Eleazar the priest before the whole community, and publicly commission him to lead the people. <sup>20</sup> Transfer some of your authority to him so the whole community of Israel will obey him. <sup>21</sup> When direction from the Lord is needed, Joshua will stand before Eleazar the priest, who will use the Urim—one of the sacred lots cast before the Lord—to determine his will. This is how Joshua and the rest of the community of Israel will determine everything they should do.”

<sup>22</sup> So Moses did as the Lord commanded. He presented Joshua to Eleazar the priest and the whole community. <sup>23</sup> Moses laid his hands on him and commissioned him to lead the people, just as the Lord had commanded through Moses.

## HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

Not long after that, God told Moses to go to the top of a mountain overlooking<sup>155</sup> Canaan.



<sup>1</sup> Then Moses went up to Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab and climbed Pisgah Peak, which is across from Jericho. And the Lord showed him the whole land, from Gilead as far as Dan; <sup>2</sup> all the land of Naphtali; the land of Ephraim and Manasseh; all the land of Judah, extending to the Mediterranean Sea; <sup>3</sup> the Negev; the Jordan Valley with Jericho—the city of palms—as far as Zoar. <sup>4</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when I said, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ I have now allowed you to see it with your own eyes, but you will not enter the land.”

<sup>5</sup> So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, just as the Lord had said. <sup>6</sup> The Lord buried him in a valley near Beth-peor in Moab, but to this day no one knows the exact place. <sup>7</sup> Moses was 120 years old when he died, yet his eyesight was clear, and he was as strong as ever. <sup>8</sup> The people of Israel mourned for Moses on the plains of Moab for thirty days, until the customary period of mourning was over.

God told Moses to remember his promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He said that this land was what he had promised to give to their descendants. God showed Moses the land, but Moses could not go in. Moses died there and the Israelites mourned<sup>156</sup> for 30 days.

God’s story tells us about many things that happened as he helped the Israelites move into Canaan. We can’t discuss all of them here, but you can read about them later in your Bible. Joshua led the Israelites in many battles against the tribes who were living in Canaan. Some of the time, they trusted in God to help them and he did help them to beat their enemies. But sometimes they did not believe God would help them. Because they did not always believe him, they had a very difficult time. They had many enemies living all around them. They did not listen to God, so they could not take over the whole land like he had wanted. Many enemies who wanted to kill the Israelites lived near them.

Also, because God’s people lived among the other tribes, they started to act like them.



<sup>7</sup> And the Israelites served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and the leaders who outlived him—those who had seen all the great things the Lord had done for Israel.

<sup>8</sup> Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of 110. <sup>9</sup> They buried him in the land he had been allocated, at Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

<sup>10</sup> After that generation died, another generation grew up who did not acknowledge the Lord or remember the mighty things he had done for Israel.

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155. **overlooking** - from the top you can see over the whole land

156. **mourned** - to feel sorry because of the death of someone

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<sup>11</sup> The Israelites did evil in the Lord's sight and served the images of Baal. <sup>12</sup> They abandoned the Lord, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They went after other gods, worshiping the gods of the people around them. And they angered the Lord. <sup>13</sup> They abandoned the Lord to serve Baal and the images of Ashtoreth.

After Joshua died, the next generation of Israelites forgot about God. They started to worship false gods. God's enemy, Satan, was leading them to forget about God. He didn't want them to follow God. He didn't want God's rescue plan to work out. The Israelites forgot that only God could save them. They tried to find another way to save themselves by asking for help from false gods. God's story says that *they angered the Lord*. God had a plan to rescue all people through the children of Israel. But they forgot about him. So when they forgot about him, he let their enemies defeat them in battle.<sup>157</sup>

This happened many times over the next few hundred years. The Israelite people turned away from God and worshiped other gods. When they did that, God let their enemies win. He even let their enemies take some of their land. Then, when their enemies defeated them, the Israelites would turn back to the Lord and repent.<sup>158</sup>

At this time, God helped some of the Israelites to become leaders over their people. God raised up these leaders to help the Israelite tribes fight their enemies.



JUDGES 2:16-19

<sup>16</sup> Then the Lord raised up judges to rescue the Israelites from their attackers. <sup>17</sup> Yet Israel did not listen to the judges but prostituted themselves by worshiping other gods. How quickly they turned away from the path of their ancestors, who had walked in obedience to the Lord's commands.

<sup>18</sup> Whenever the Lord raised up a judge over Israel, he was with that judge and rescued the people from their enemies throughout the judge's lifetime. For the Lord took pity on his people, who were burdened by oppression and suffering.

<sup>19</sup> But when the judge died, the people returned to their corrupt ways, behaving worse than those who had lived before them. They went after other gods, serving and worshiping them. And they refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.

The English word used for these leaders is 'judges.' Another word that is sometimes used for them is 'deliverers,' which means 'rescuers.' God brought these leaders to the Israelite people to help them. Even though the people kept turning against God, he always helped them when they came back to him. God had a plan that he had promised long ago. He would not give up on the Israelite people and he would not give up on his plan. He was going to send a Rescuer who would destroy the power of Satan, sin and death.

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157. **battle** - in wars or fights

158. **repent** - to agree with God that you have sinned against him

## HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

The last of the judges was called Samuel. He spoke the words of God to Israel for many years. Someone who speaks the words of God is called a *prophet*. When Samuel was old, there was nobody to take over from him.



1 SAMUEL 8:1-7

<sup>1</sup> As Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons to be judges over Israel. <sup>2</sup> Joel and Abijah, his oldest sons, held court in Beersheba. <sup>3</sup> But they were not like their father, for they were greedy for money. They accepted bribes and perverted justice.

<sup>4</sup> Finally, all the elders of Israel met at Ramah to discuss the matter with Samuel.

<sup>5</sup> “Look,” they told him, “you are now old, and your sons are not like you. Give us a king to judge us like all the other nations have.”

<sup>6</sup> Samuel was displeased with their request and went to the Lord for guidance. <sup>7</sup> “Do everything they say to you,” the Lord replied, “for they are rejecting me, not you. They don’t want me to be their king any longer.

The people asked Samuel to give them a king. Samuel thought that this was a sinful idea. Why? Because God was the leader of the Israelites. God was the one who had led them out of Egypt. He was the one who had helped them. Samuel talked to the Lord about it. The Lord said that the people were rejecting him, God, as their king. They wanted a king like all the other nations around them. They did not want God to lead them anymore.

God let them have a king because that was what they wanted. Their first king was called Saul. He started out well. Then he began to become angry at the Lord’s words that were spoken by Samuel.



1 SAMUEL 13:13,14

<sup>13</sup> “How foolish!” Samuel exclaimed. “You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you. Had you kept it, the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. <sup>14</sup> But now your kingdom must end, for the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart. The Lord has already appointed him to be the leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord’s command.”

Saul did not listen to the words of God that Samuel spoke. So God found another leader for his people. His name was David. When David was young, he was a shepherd. There are many stories about David’s life in the Bible. When he was young, he fought against a giant<sup>159</sup> called Goliath. David trusted God and he beat Goliath.

David was Israel’s greatest and most famous king. David had a very close relationship with God. Just like all people, David was a sinner and he did not always do the right thing. But he always talked to God about his sins. He always knew that he should die for his sins, but that God had made a way for him to come to him. David is a great example of a person who wanted to have a close relationship with the Lord.

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159. **giant** - a huge, very tall man

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God made David the King of Israel. God also made David one of his storytellers – someone who spoke the words of God. David was a prophet. David was also a very good musician.<sup>160</sup> He wrote many songs about God and about his relationship with God. Another word for the songs that worship God is ‘psalms.’ Many of David’s songs are written down in the Book of Psalms. You can read these songs later in your Bible. When David wrote his songs, he was very open and honest<sup>161</sup> about how he felt. God made sure that these songs are in the Bible for us to read today. God wants to have a close relationship with every person. David’s songs show us an example of God’s close relationship with a person that he loved very much.

King David led the nation of Israel well. They enjoyed a time of peace and they grew strong. The Israelites did not need to move around anymore. David lived in a beautiful palace.<sup>162</sup> He wanted the Lord to have a beautiful place to live in too. David did not think that the tabernacle tent was a good enough place for God anymore.



<sup>1</sup> When King David was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all the surrounding enemies, <sup>2</sup> the king summoned Nathan the prophet. “Look,” David said, “I am living in a beautiful cedar palace, but the Ark of God is out there in a tent!”

<sup>3</sup> Nathan replied to the king, “Go ahead and do whatever you have in mind, for the Lord is with you.”

<sup>4</sup> But that same night the Lord said to Nathan,

<sup>5</sup> “Go and tell my servant David, ‘This is what the Lord has declared: Are you the one to build a house for me to live in? <sup>6</sup> I have never lived in a house, from the day I brought the Israelites out of Egypt until this very day. I have always moved from one place to another with a tent and a Tabernacle as my dwelling. <sup>7</sup> Yet no matter where I have gone with the Israelites, I have never once complained to Israel’s tribal leaders, the shepherds of my people Israel. I have never asked them, “Why haven’t you built me a beautiful cedar house?””

<sup>8</sup> “Now go and say to my servant David, ‘This is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies has declared: I took you from tending sheep in the pasture and selected you to be the leader of my people Israel. <sup>9</sup> I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies before your eyes. Now I will make your name as famous as anyone who has ever lived on the earth! <sup>10</sup> And I will provide a homeland for my people Israel, planting them in a secure place where they will never be disturbed. Evil nations won’t oppress them as they’ve done in the past, <sup>11</sup> starting from the time I appointed judges to rule my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies.

“Furthermore, the Lord declares that he will make a house for you—a dynasty of kings! <sup>12</sup> For when you die and are buried with your ancestors, I will raise up one

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160. **musician** - someone who plays music and writes songs

161. **honest** - to speak the truth and not to hide anything

162. **palace** - a large and beautiful building where a king or ruler lives

## HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

of your descendants, your own offspring, and I will make his kingdom strong.<sup>13</sup> He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. And I will secure his royal throne forever.<sup>14</sup> I will be his father, and he will be my son. If he sins, I will correct and discipline him with the rod, like any father would do.<sup>15</sup> But my favor will not be taken from him as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from your sight.<sup>16</sup> Your house and your kingdom will continue before me for all time, and your throne will be secure forever.”

<sup>17</sup> So Nathan went back to David and told him everything the Lord had said in this vision.

Nathan the prophet spoke the words of God. Through Nathan, God told David that it was a good idea to build a house for God. But God said that David should not build it; instead, it was David’s son who would build it. God also said that David’s *throne will be secure forever*. God was making a promise that the Rescuer would come from David’s family. The Promised One, who would come to defeat Satan, would be a direct descendant of David. This was the same promise that God had made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God was saying that he would still carry out his plan and that he had not forgotten his promise.

King David started to collect all the gold, silver, special timber and other materials to build God’s house. The word we use for this house of God is ‘temple.’ The temple would be built in Jerusalem, the main city of Israel. David’s son, Solomon, was the one who would build the temple, just like God said. This is what Solomon said about it.



<sup>5</sup> “This must be a magnificent Temple because our God is greater than all other gods.<sup>6</sup> But who can really build him a worthy home? Not even the highest heavens can contain him! So who am I to consider building a Temple for him, except as a place to burn sacrifices to him?

Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem. It was a huge and beautiful building made of stone, wood, gold and silver. It used the same plan for the rooms and had the same furniture as the tabernacle. When it was finished, the people offered many animal sacrifices<sup>163</sup> to God. God went into the temple and the people could see a very bright light. The bright light was in the Most Holy Place in the temple. God was showing them that he was there in the temple. God wanted to live with his people. He wanted them to know he was there with them.

When David and Solomon were kings of Israel, there was a time of peace. Israel became powerful and rich. But after David and Solomon were dead, Israel split into two kingdoms<sup>164</sup> – the northern and southern kingdoms. These two kingdoms were called Israel and Judah. Over time, each kingdom had about 20 kings that came to power. Most of these kings did not follow God. They followed other

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163. **sacrifice** - to kill an animal or to give something else as an offering to God

164. **kingdom** - an area and a group of people who are ruled by one king

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gods and did the things that the nations around them did. God was very sad that the people of Israel did not follow him. But he never gave up on them. He kept trying and trying to speak to them, to correct them and to punish them. He wanted them to return to him. Whenever they came back to him and asked him for help, he did help them.

God tells us in his story about many things that happened to Israel over the next 500 years. The people of Israel did not always follow God. Many times they worshiped other gods and turned away from God. They did not obey God's laws and they did not keep their agreement with him. But God always tried to speak to them in many ways. He loved them and he wanted them to remember him. He wanted to have a real and close relationship with them.

The main way that God spoke to Israel and Judah during this time was through his prophets. Some of the most well known prophets from this time were Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. They told the people not to follow other gods. They said that a time was coming when the people would be judged<sup>165</sup> for what they were doing. You can read what each of these prophets said in the books of the Bible named after them.

Jonah was another prophet of God during this time. God sent him to speak to the nations around Israel. He told them that terrible things would happen if they did not turn to the true Creator God. You can read about what happened to Jonah in the Book of Jonah in the Bible.

Some people did listen to the prophets and turn back to God. And sometimes one of the kings would guide the people to turn back to God. But that did not happen very often. During these 500 years, most people forgot about God. They kept offering sacrifices to God in the temple, but they did not really know or love God. This is what God said about them.



ISAIAH 29:13

<sup>13</sup> And so the Lord says,  
"These people say they are mine.  
They honor me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me.  
And their worship of me  
is nothing but man-made rules learned by rote.

God is always real and true in everything he does. He wants to have real and true relationships with people. He knew that the people offering sacrifices in the temple did not really follow him. They were doing things that he said were *man-made rules*. God always knows what people are really thinking. The people offered sacrifices and followed rules, but they did not really believe that what God said was true. They did not think about God as if he were a real person that they could know and love. They did not want a true relationship with God.

The prophet Isaiah delivered a message from God to Israel, the northern kingdom. He said that the Assyrians would defeat them in war if they did not repent. The Assyrians were a very strong enemy

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165. **judged** - to be told how you will be punished or rewarded for what you have done



## HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

nation but Israel did not listen to God's message. So the Assyrians took over Israel's northern city of Samaria around 722 BC. Then Israel was ruled by the Assyrians. Thousands of Israelite people were taken away as slaves. Then, the Assyrians brought other people to live in the northern areas of Canaan. These people did not know the true, Creator God. They worshiped other gods.

The prophet Jeremiah, and other prophets, delivered messages from God to the southern kingdom of Judah. He told them to repent. He said they should remember the agreement that they had made with God. If they did not, then the very strong nation of Babylon would destroy them. Judah did not listen to God's message. The Babylonians came and tore down the temple in Jerusalem. They took down the stone walls that were around Jerusalem. Many people from Judah were taken away to Babylon. God's story tells us about this time. You can read about it in your own Bible later in 2 Kings 25:1-12.

After these terrible things happened, many of the Israelites wanted to turn back to God. They read the laws that God had given them. After a generation, some of the Israelite people in Assyria and Babylon came back to Canaan. Later, they rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem and they rebuilt the temple. These people were called 'Jews.' This name probably comes from the name Judah, which was the most important tribe of the 12 tribes of Israel.

God wanted the Jews to be an example to other nations. They should not have been like the people around them. But the Jews did not want a real relationship with God. They tried to follow all of God's laws but that was impossible. They also added many new laws that they had made up themselves. They thought this would please God and pay for their sins. They did not believe that only God could save them. Of course, God knew that this would happen. Many years before, when God was talking to Moses, he said:



<sup>20</sup> For I will bring them into the land I swore to give their ancestors—a land flowing with milk and honey. There they will become prosperous, eat all the food they want, and become fat. But they will begin to worship other gods; they will despise me and break my covenant.

In about 400 BC, Alexander the Great came and took over the land of Canaan. He was a leader from Greece. At that time, the Greek culture and language had spread over a huge area around the Mediterranean Sea. After Alexander died, there were many wars fought in the area. There were wars in the land where the Jews lived. In around 60 BC, the army of Rome came and took over the land where the Israelites lived. The people were ruled by the Romans and they had to pay a lot of tax money to Rome.

The Jews at that time still offered sacrifices to God in the temple. They tried to follow the laws that God had given them and the laws that they had made up themselves. They thought of God just like he was an idol. They did not know him or love him for who he really is. They did not believe the true things about God that God had told them. But God did not give up on them. God loved them and



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wanted them to remember who he truly is. He wanted them to have a real relationship with him. But it had to be because of who he really is and because of who they really were. Any other kind of relationship would have been a lie. And God does not lie. Here are some things God said through the prophet Isaiah.



ISAIAH 51:12-16

<sup>12</sup> “I, yes I, am the one who comforts you.  
So why are you afraid of mere humans,  
who wither like the grass and disappear?  
<sup>13</sup> Yet you have forgotten the Lord, your Creator,  
the one who stretched out the sky like a canopy  
and laid the foundations of the earth.  
Will you remain in constant dread of human oppressors?  
Will you continue to fear the anger of your enemies?  
Where is their fury and anger now?  
It is gone!  
<sup>14</sup> Soon all you captives will be released!  
Imprisonment, starvation, and death will not be your fate!  
<sup>15</sup> For I am the Lord your God,  
who stirs up the sea, causing its waves to roar.  
My name is the Lord of Heaven’s Armies.  
<sup>16</sup> And I have put my words in your mouth  
and hidden you safely in my hand.  
I stretched out the sky like a canopy  
and laid the foundations of the earth.  
I am the one who says to Israel,  
‘You are my people!’”

Even though his people had forgotten him, God did not forget them. And God did not forget his plan to rescue people from Satan, sin and death. But how would he do it?

## HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

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1. The generation of Israelites who came out of Egypt did not go into the Promised Land. Why?
2. How did the people demonstrate that they had turned away from God?
3. When the people turned away from God, what did God do?
4. The Jews tried to follow God's laws – so why was God not happy about that?
5. Did God change his rescue plan because the Israelites forgot about him?



This lesson has been adapted from the book *His Story: The Rescue, The Bible message from Genesis to Christ in easy English* (ISBN: 978-0-9944270-4-5)

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