

ISRAELITES LIVE IN CANAAN

Joshua 13-24

Lesson Memory Verse: Philippians 3:14 – “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

Lesson Aim: Encourage the students to accept God's challenge to be like Jesus Christ.

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

KEY (for Attention): Today's lesson might remind us of a race. Have you ever been in a race? What kind of races have you been in? (There are races on foot, on a bike, in a canoe, in a car, in an airplane, on a snowmobile, on a horse; there are crawling races, wheelbarrow races, three-legged races; there is a race to get dressed first, to finish a job first, to catch a fish first, to find some treasure first.) Have you ever won a race? (Let the children tell of some experience where they won a race.)

HE (for Authority): It is fun to win a race and God has a race for every Christian. It is a race which you can win, if you are a Christian. The Apostle Paul tells what he was doing in this race. In Philippians 3:14, which is our memory verse. He says, “I press toward the mark,” which means he was putting all of his strength into reaching the goal of this race just like a runner puts all of his effort into reaching the finish line first. Then he tells what the mark or goal is: it is “the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” What does this mean? “The high calling” is the upward calling, also known as the rapture. The rapture is when all true believers, dead and alive, are called by Jesus to meet Him in the clouds and from there He will take us to Heaven. In Heaven believers will be judged by Jesus to see how well they lived their Christian life. Those that lived to please Him will receive “the prize,” which is called a crown of righteousness (2 Tim 4:8). It is a special recognition that Jesus Christ will give to those who tried to be like Him. Paul wanted to be completely like Jesus Christ every day that he lived on this earth. In that way, he would be ready for that day when he would meet his Savior. Do you want to be like Jesus and win His prize? Do you want to be like Jesus while you live on this earth? There will be many winners. Be like Jesus every day and in every way and then you will be ready for that day when Jesus calls you to Heaven to reward you. Since this race is only for Christians, the first thing you must do is to receive Jesus Christ as your Savior. Then you can run in this race and try to be like Jesus Christ each day of your life.

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application); PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scriptures for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

In today's lesson we shall learn that we need faith and obedience to win the race that God has for us.

I. God's Challenge (13:2 – 14:5)

In today's lesson the tribes of Israel had a “race” to see who would be first to possess the land that God had given them. They had to conquer every city in the Promised Land and destroy all of the wicked people that worshipped idols in the land. Why would God command His people to destroy these wicked people living in the land? All land belongs to God; He created it. If people are misusing His land, He has the right to remove them from His land. So He told each tribe to remove all the wicked people that lived in the land that was assigned to them. They also were to destroy all of their idols. Judah was the first tribe that tried to win the race, but they got discouraged. They had some victories, but quit before the job was done and lost the race. They soon began to do the wicked things in the land that was done by the others.

WE: We must destroy all of the evil things in our lives that we did before we became a Christian. If we do not destroy them, we will begin to do some of the wicked things that we were supposed to destroy. God has put us in a race; our race is to become more and more like Jesus. Are you trying to be like Him? Do not quit the race. Keep trying to be like Jesus every day. Those who become more and more like Jesus Christ will win the race and receive His prize when He comes.

II. Caleb's Confidence (14:6-15)

Caleb had faith to do what God told him to do. He asked for Hebron, a city where giants lived (Joshua 14:12; Numbers 13:28, 33). By God's strength he destroyed the wicked people that lived in Hebron. Caleb did his part. He helped his tribe (Judah) in the “race” to be the first to remove all of the wicked people in that city.

WE: We must clean up our lives, whether others do it or not. No habit is too big for us to destroy. They may look like giants, but we can destroy them, if we depend on Christ for strength to help us.

III. Israel's Carelessness (Joshua 15-17; Judges 1-2)

Israel was careless about obeying God's command. They did not destroy the wicked people in His land. Not one tribe did the job that it was supposed to do. Judah failed (15:63); Ephraim failed (16:10); Manasseh failed and made excuses (17:12ff); the whole nation failed (Judges 1:19-36). They all lost the race because they allowed sin to come into their lives (Judges 2:20-23).

WE: We must not be careless with God's commands. We must remember that disobedience is sin and it will make God angry with us. When God is angry with us, we cannot expect Christ to help us to be like Him. We must confess our sins and turn away from them. This is what Israel failed to do.

IV. Joshua's Counsel (23:1-16)

Joshua told Israel that obedience to God's commands would allow God to give them His power. They would be so strong that one man would chase a thousand men. God would fight for them (v. 10). God's promises never fail (v. 14). However, disobedience would keep them from having God's power. Instead they would have God's anger (vv. 15, 16); they would be destroyed instead of their enemies.

WE: We can be powerful against sin and Satan, if we obey God. God wants to keep His promise to make us like Jesus. God will bless us with victories. But God will punish us if we disobey Him.

V. Joshua's Charge (24:1-28)

Joshua reminded the people how God chose them and how He delivered them from Egypt and from all nations that stood against them. He reminded them how God had now given them a land of their own.

WE: We should remember what God has done for us by saving us. This will encourage us to keep in the race to be like Jesus. But Satan wants us to forget what God has done for us. He wants to discourage us.

Then Joshua charged them to make the Lord their God and to serve Him faithfully by putting away all of their idols (24:14-28). He warned them that God would hurt them and destroy them if they would change their minds and would serve their idols (24:20). They decided to serve the Lord (24:21).

WE: We should desire to serve God with all of our hearts. This is what Jesus did and this is what we must do if we want to be like Jesus. We must put away all sin in our lives. Jesus never sinned and we should seek to be like Him. If we do sin, we must confess it right away.

BE (for Action): Do you want to win the race God has given you? Ask yourself these questions:

Am I really a Christian? You cannot be in this race without being a Christian.

Am I really in love with Jesus Christ so that I want to be like Him in every way?

Am I ready to give up all of my sins?

Am I ready to ask Jesus Christ to give me power to destroy all the sinful ways in my life?

Are you ready to ask God right now to help you to be like Jesus Christ no matter how many friends you may lose? Do you want to be more and more like Jesus each day until you meet Him?

If you want to make that decision, raise your hand and I will pray for you. I will be happy to talk with you after class and give you some Bible verses to help you be more like Jesus Christ (Mt 6:33; Mk 8:34-38; Lk 11:9-10; Jn 13:34-35; Act 5:29) .