

# Open Bible Stories — The Promised Land

---

## Introduction

### Key Idea

The story of the promised land teaches us how God fulfills his promises to bring his people into the land of promise.

### Core Belief Verse

*"Our fathers had the tent of witness in the wilderness, just as he who spoke to Moses directed him to make it, according to the pattern that he had seen. Our fathers in turn brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before our fathers." Acts 7:44-45*

### God's Big Story

The eternal God created all things in six days.

He made a good and perfect world.

He made humans in his image to fill the earth and rule over creation.

But humans rebelled against God and ruined God's creation.

God set to restore his world through his promise.

God made a covenant with Abraham.

He promised to bless all nations through Abraham.

God kept his promises across the generations.

God provided Abraham with a promised child, Isaac.

God gave Isaac a wife and she bore twins, Jacob and Esau.

God blessed Jacob and his sons, and the blessing continued to the next generation.

God rescued Joseph, one of Jacob's sons, and used him to rescue his family.

God caused his people, the Israelites, to multiply in the land of Egypt; eventually, they became slaves.

But, God raised up a deliverer, Moses, to deliver his people from their slavery.

God sent judgment on the Egyptians with harsh plagues; in the final judgment, he passed over his people who covered their doorposts with the blood of a sacrificed lamb.

Then, God delivered the Israelites by bringing them out of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea on dry land.

God made a covenant with the Israelites and made them his people.

God tested Israel in a series of wilderness wanderings and eventually brought his people into the promised land of Canaan.

## **The Story: The Promised Land**

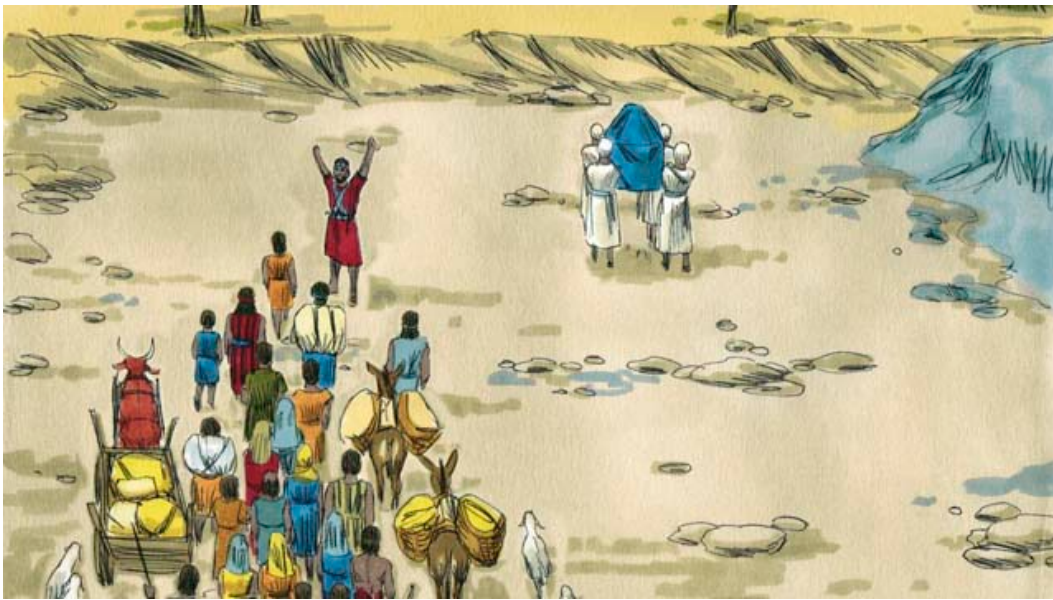
---

15-01



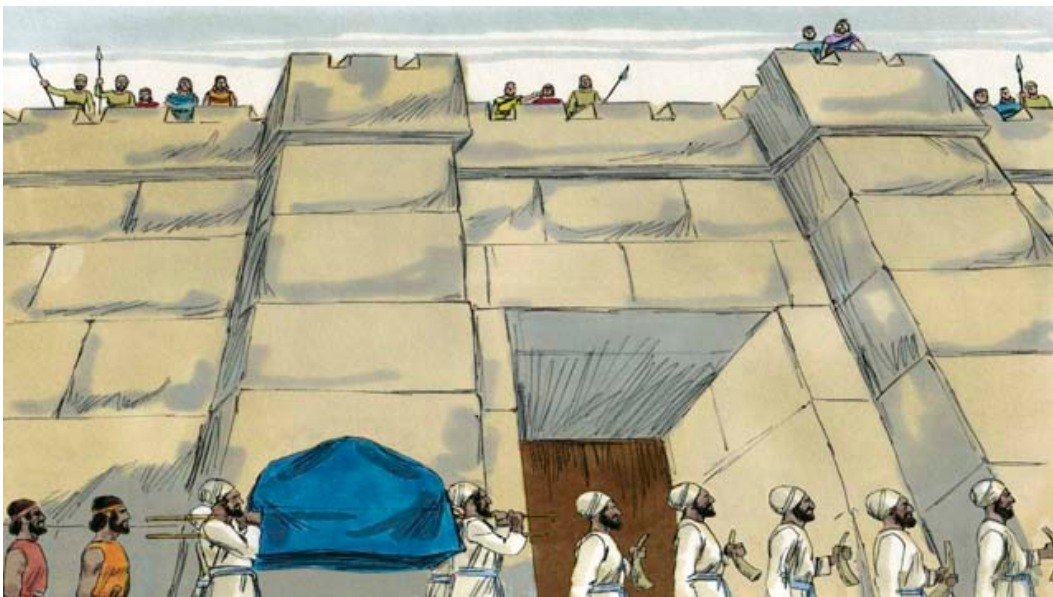
At last it was time for the Israelites to enter Canaan, the Promised Land. In that land was a city called Jericho. It had strong walls around it to protect it. Joshua sent two spies to that city. In that city lived a prostitute named Rahab. She hid these spies, and later she helped them to escape from the city. She did this because she believed God. The spies promised to protect Rahab and her family when the Israelites would destroy Jericho.

15-02



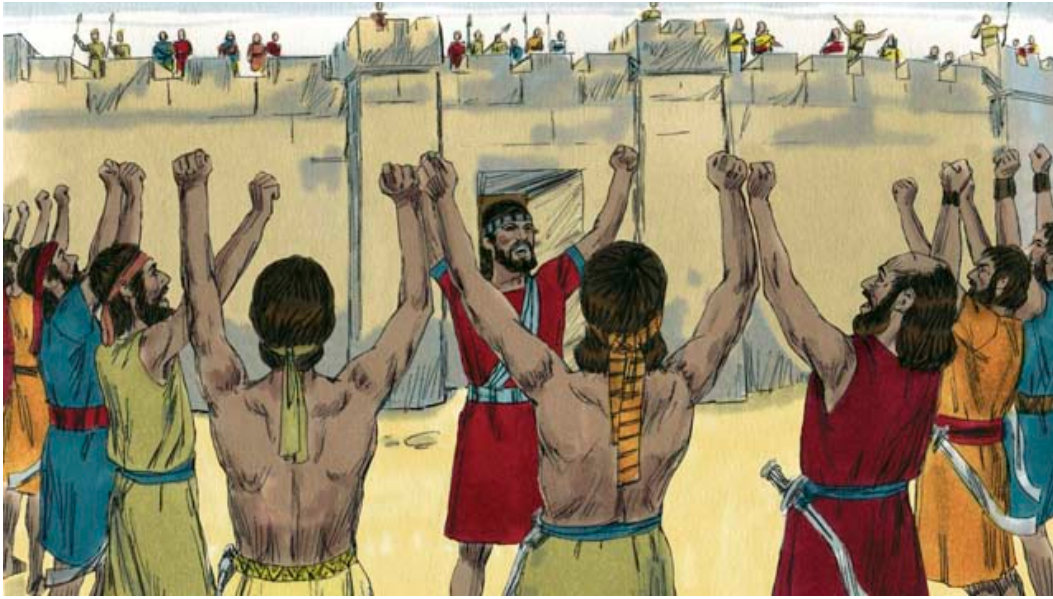
The Israelites had to cross the Jordan River to enter into the Promised Land. God told Joshua, "Have the priests go first." When the priests started to step into the Jordan River, the water upstream stopped flowing so the Israelites could cross over to the other side of the river on dry ground.

15-03



After the people crossed the Jordan River, God told Joshua to get ready to attack the city of Jericho, even though it was very strong. God told the people that their priests and soldiers must march around the city once a day for six days. So the priests and the soldiers did this.

15-04

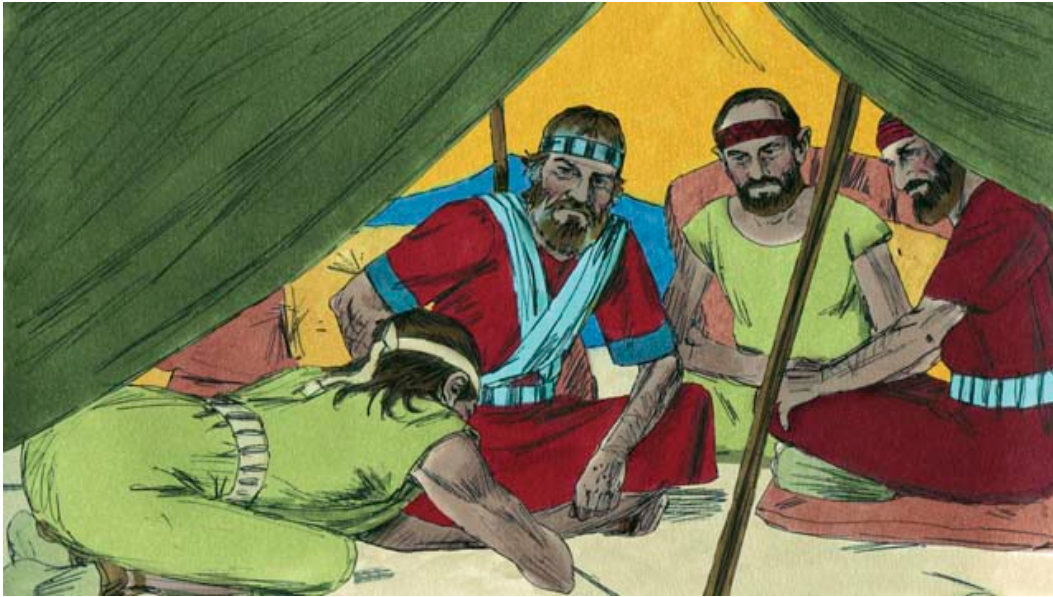


God also said that on the seventh day the Israelites must march around the city seven times. Then the priests must blow their trumpets and all the people must shout loudly. So they did this.

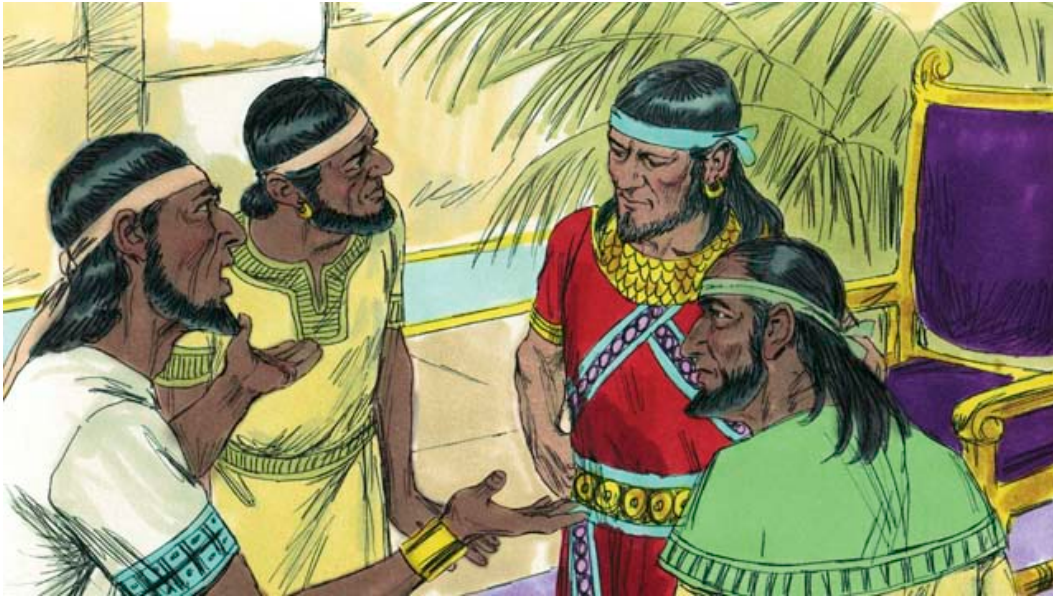
15-05



Then the walls around Jericho fell down! The Israelites destroyed everything in the city, as God had commanded. They only spared Rahab and her family, who became part of the Israelites. When the other people living in Canaan heard that the Israelites had destroyed Jericho, they were terrified that the Israelites would attack them also.

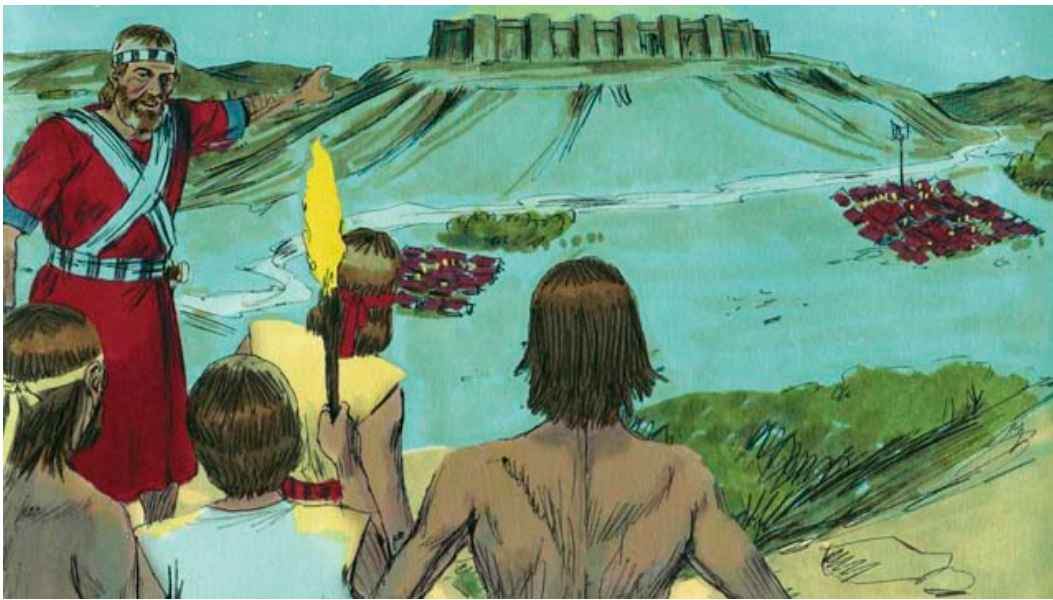


God had commanded the Israelites not to make a peace treaty with any of the people groups in Canaan. But one of the Canaanite people groups, called the Gibeonites, lied to Joshua and said they were from a place far from Canaan. They asked Joshua to make a peace treaty with them. Joshua and the other leaders of the Israelites did not ask God what they should do. Instead, they made a peace treaty with the Gibeonites.



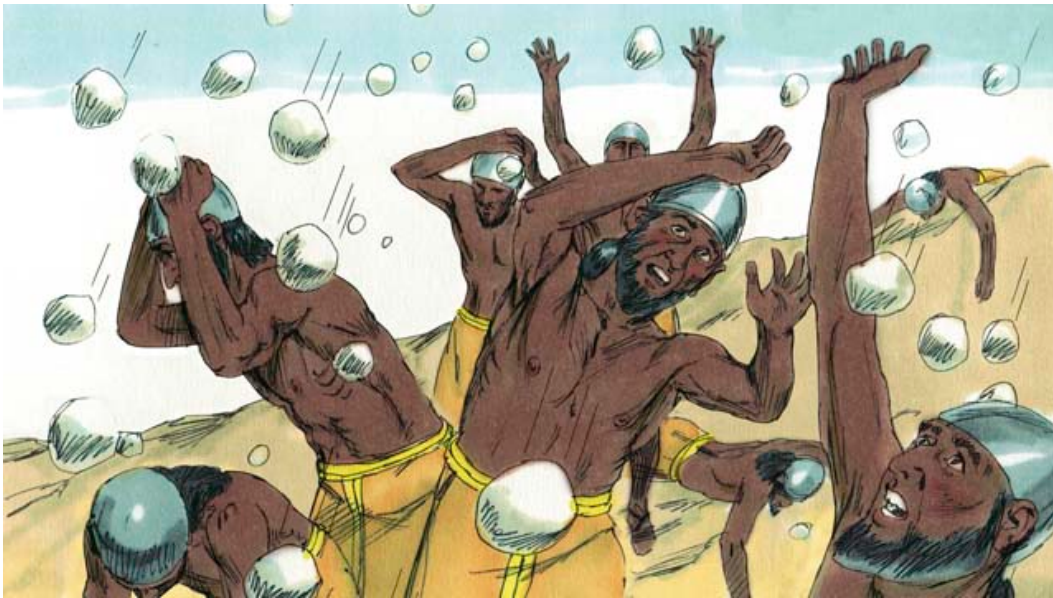
Three days later, the Israelites found out that the Gibeonites really did live in Canaan. They were angry because the Gibeonites had deceived them. But they kept the peace treaty they had made with them because it was a promise before God. Then, some time later, the kings of another people group in Canaan, the Amorites, heard that the Gibeonites had made a peace treaty with the Israelites, so they combined their armies into one large army and attacked Gibeon. The Gibeonites sent a message to Joshua asking for help.

15-08



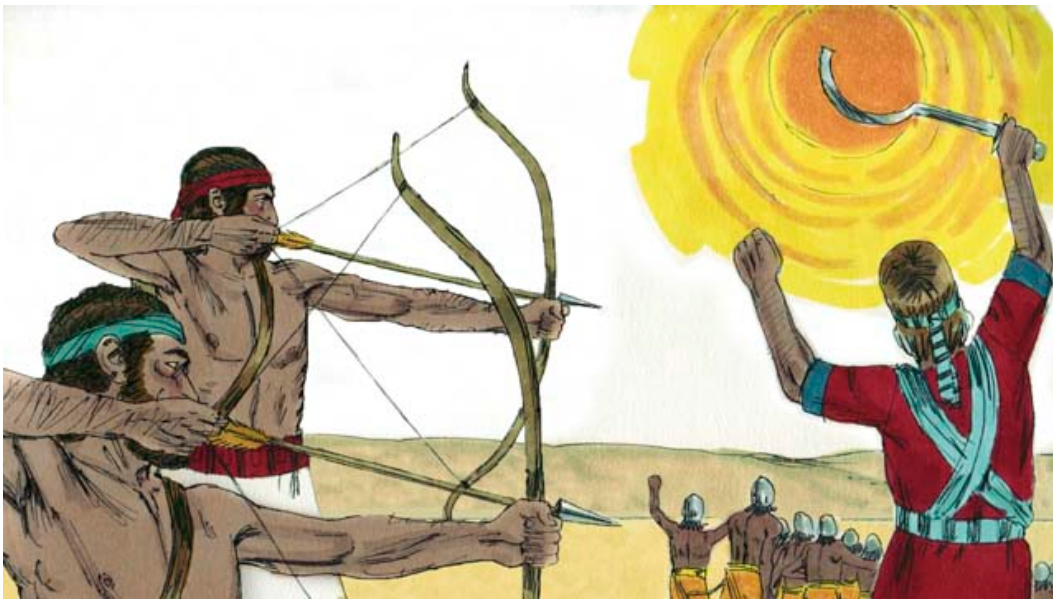
So Joshua gathered the Israelite army. They marched all night to reach the Gibeonites. In the early morning, they surprised the Amorite armies and attacked them.

15-09



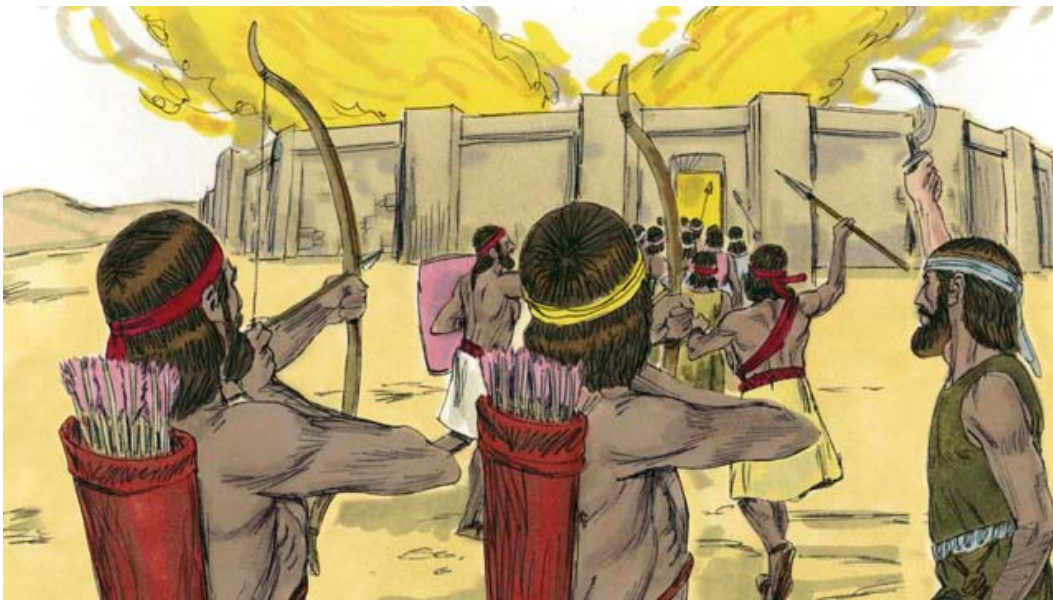
God fought for Israel that day. He caused the Amorites to be confused and he sent large hailstones that killed many of the Amorites.

15-10



God also caused the sun to stay in one place in the sky so that Israel would have enough time to completely defeat the Amorites. On that day, God won a great victory for Israel.

15-11



After God defeated those armies, many of the other Canaanite people groups gathered together to attack Israel. Joshua and the Israelites attacked and destroyed them.

15-12



After these battles, God gave each tribe of Israel its own section of the Promised Land. Then God gave Israel peace along all its borders.

15-13



When Joshua was an old man, he called all the people of Israel together. Then Joshua reminded the people that they had promised to obey the covenant that God had made with the Israelites at Mount Sinai. The people promised to be faithful to God and obey his laws.

*A Bible story from: Joshua 1-24*

## Spiritual Battle-Taking Every Thought Captive

- Key Idea: engaging the spiritual battle in the mind
- Key Passage: 2 Corinthians 10:3-5
- Main Session: OBS 15 (The Promised Land)

### Recite the Core Belief Verse (3-5 minutes)

The verse below summarizes the teaching of the current passage. Read the verse out loud as a community. Read it again several times as a group until the whole community can recite it from memory.

*44 Then Yahweh gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their ancestors. Not one of their enemies could defeat them. Yahweh gave all their enemies into their hand. 45 Not one thing among all the good promises that Yahweh had spoken to the house of Israel failed to come true. All of them came to be. Joshua 21:44*

OR

*3 Call to mind the word that Moses the servant of Yahweh, commanded you when he said, 'Yahweh your God is giving you rest, and he is giving you this land.' Joshua 1:13*

### Think Together (5 minutes)

God promised to give the Israelites a land where they would live in rest and peace. God caused the Israelites to defeat their enemies so they could live in this land of rest. Think about what a life of peace and rest would look like.

*Rest and peace that comes from God would mean...*

### Read the Passage (5 minutes)

One way that God wants to give us rest and peace is by causing us to have good and true thoughts. Our thoughts and beliefs affect the way we live our lives. Read the passage below to understand the battle that takes place in our minds.

*3 For even though we walk in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons we fight with are not fleshly. Instead, they have divine power to destroy strongholds. They bring to nothing misleading arguments. 5 We also destroy every*

*high thing that rises up against the knowledge of God. We take every thought captive into obedience to Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5*

**Explore the Idea** (10-15 minutes)

The thoughts in our mind can be like a spiritual battle. God wants us to believe true and good things. Satan wants us to believe lies. We experience transformation in our lives as we start thinking the way that God wants us to think. After reading the passage above, use the following questions to help your community discuss biblical teaching on personal life transformation.

1. How does this passage describe the spiritual battle that Christians face?
2. What does God tell us to do to gain victory in this battle?
3. How have you seen your thoughts (either true thoughts or bad thoughts) affect the way you live your life?
4. Why is it important for your community to understand the spiritual battle that takes place in the mind?

**Compare Thoughts** (10 minutes)

Think about how our thoughts affect the way we live our lives. Make a list of false ways of thinking that lead to bad ways of living. Then, identify the true way of thinking that would help you start to live in a way that pleases God.

- False Thought
- False Behavior
- True Thought

**Pray to God** (5 minutes)

Pray for each member of your community that God would help them gain victory in the world of their thoughts. Divide into groups of 2-3 and use the specific language of the above passage to pray over each member.

- God, help [name of person] to "not wage war according to the flesh"
- God, help [name of person] to know "the weapons we fight with are not fleshly"

- God, help [name of person] to know "they have divine power to destroy strongholds"
- God, help [name of person] to "bring to nothing misleading arguments"
- God, help [name of person] to "destroy every high thing that rises up against the knowledge of God"
- God, help [name of person] to "take every thought captive into obedience to Christ"

**Sing a Song** (3-5 minutes)

Choose a song that celebrates God's victory over the enemy. Sing this song as praise to God and encouragement of one another.

## **Movement 1: Understand the Story**

---

*Read each question aloud. Give the group time to answer before sharing the answer.*

15-01

When it was time to enter the Promised Land, what did Joshua do first?

Joshua sent two spies to Jericho.

Who helped the two Israelite spies?

A prostitute named Rahab hid the two Israelite spies and helped them escape. She did this because she believed in God.

What did the spies promise to do for Rahab, the prostitute?

They promised to protect Rahab and her family when the Israelites destroyed the city.

15-02

What river did the Israelites have to cross to enter into the Promised Land?

The Israelites had to cross the Jordan River.

How were the Israelites able to cross the Jordan River?

The priests would go into the Jordan River first. When the priests started to step into the Jordan River, the water stopped flowing.

On what kind of ground did the Israelites walk when they crossed the Jordan River?

The Israelites crossed the Jordan River on dry ground.

15-03

What city did God tell the Israelites to attack?

God told the Israelites to attack the city of Jericho.

How did the Israelites attack Jericho?

They marched around the city once a day for six days.

15-04

What did the Israelites do to Jericho on the seventh day?

On the seventh day, they marched around the city seven more times. After they marched around the city for the last time, the priests blew their trumpets and the soldiers shouted.

15-05

What happened when the soldiers shouted and the priests blew trumpets?

The walls of Jericho fell down so the Israelites could destroy everything in the city.

What happened to Rahab and her family?

They were not killed, and they became part of the Israelites.

What did the other people living in Canaan think when they heard about Jericho?

The other people living in the land were terrified that the Israelites would also attack them.

15-06

What did God forbid Israel to do with the people living in the land?

God commanded the Israelites not to make a peace treaty with any of the people living in the land of Canaan.

How did the Gibeonites trick the Israelites into making a peace treaty with them?

The Gibeonites lied to the Israelites. They said they were from a place far from Canaan.

Why did Joshua and the Israelites not know the Gibeonites were lying?

They did not ask God.

15-07

Why did the Israelites keep the peace treaty and defend the Gibeonites?

They did not kill them because the Israelites had made a promise before God.

What did the Amorites do when they heard about Israel's peace treaty with the Gibeonites?

The Amorites combined their armies into one big army and attacked the Gibeonites.

What did the Gibeonites do when the Amorites attacked them?

The Gibeonites sent a message to Joshua asking for help.

*15-08*

What did Joshua do when he heard about the Amorites attacking the Gibeonites?

Joshua gathered the Israelite army, march to the Gibeonites, and attacked the Amorites.

*15-09*

How else did God fight for the Israelites against the Amorites?

God confused the Amorites and sent large hailstones on them.

*15-10*

How else did God fight for the Israelites against the Amorites?

God caused the sun to stay in one place so the Israelites had enough time to completely defeat them.

Who won the battle?

God won a great victory for the Israelites.

*15-11*

What did Joshua and the Israelites do to the other Canaanite people groups who attacked them?

Joshua and the Israelites destroyed them.

*15-12*

What did each tribe of Israel receive?

God gave each of the 12 tribes of Israel its own section of the Promised Land.

What did God give to Israel on its borders?

God gave Israel peace along all of its borders.

15-13

Why did Joshua call the Israelites together when he was old?

Joshua called them together to remind them of their obligation to obey the covenant that God had made with them.

How did the Israelites answer Joshua?

They promised to remain faithful to God and to follow his laws.

## **Movement 2: Theological Questions**

---

### **What Does This Story Teach Us?**

1. How does God use his people to accomplish his promised plan? How does God use the Israelites to bring about the fulfillment of his covenant promises?
2. How does God bring victory to his people? What does the defeat of the Canaanites teach us about God and victory over his enemies?
3. What does it mean to be faithful to God? What does it mean to be in covenant relationship with God? How does Israel's example teach us positive and negative examples of being faithful to God?

## **Movement 3: Live It Out**

---

### **Personal Implications & Applications From The Story**

*Guide the group to discuss practical obedience from this story and name concrete next steps.*

1. How has God prepared you to serve him?
2. How have you seen God bring about victory in your own life?
3. How has God fulfilled his promises to you?
4. Think about this week. Where does "The Promised Land" challenge you to obey God in a practical way?
5. How does this key idea shape one decision you need to make right now: The story of the promised land teaches us how God fulfills his promises to bring his people into the land of promise.

## Movement 4: Retell the Story

---

*Invite the group to retell the story several times until they can tell it clearly and faithfully.*

1. Can someone retell "The Promised Land" from beginning to end in their own words?
2. Retell this story again, but focus on what God did at each key moment.
3. Retell the story in three parts: beginning, middle, and ending. What changed in each part?
4. If you were teaching this story to your family tonight, how would you tell it simply and clearly?

### Church Ministry

Reflect on how this story can edify and mature the Christian community. Design a way to minister this story to your church community.

**Ministry Preparation:** Take time to consider how you could minister this story to others. What setting, audience, or approach would you use? Record your ideas below.

**Ministry Implementation:** Minister this story to a group of believers as you had planned. Use the information in this study to help develop a teaching or lead a discussion. Record your ministry plan below.

**Ministry Reflection:** Think about what you learned from ministering this story to other believers. What went well? What would you do differently? Reflect on your experience below.

## Movement 5: Share It

---

*Help each person plan how they will share this story with others before the next gathering.*

1. Who is one specific person you will share "The Promised Land" with this week?
2. When and where will you share this story with them?
3. What is the one main truth from this story you want them to remember?

**Report-back next meeting: Who did you share with, and what happened?**

## **Mission Engagement**

Consider how you will witness this story to unbelievers. Design a way to share this story and engage them in what it teaches about Christianity and the gospel.

**Witness Preparation:** Take time to consider how you will witness this narrative to unbelievers. What context, relationship, or opportunity will you use? Record your ideas below.

**Witness Implementation:** Share this story with an unbeliever. Use the information in this study to help develop a natural conversation or teaching. Record your plan below.

**Witness Reflection:** Think about what you learned from sharing this story with unbelievers. What did they respond to? What questions did they ask? Reflect on your experience below.