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GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Peoples of the Bible – The Canaanites

TEACHING SUMMARY

The Scriptures focus primarily on the people of Israel, but many other nations are mentioned throughout the Bible. One of the most important of these nations was the Canaanites.

The Canaanites were descended from Canaan, a grandson of Noah. They occupied the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, the same land that God promised to Abraham and his descendants.

The Canaanites were well known throughout the ancient world as skilled merchants and sailors. They developed an extensive trading network across the Mediterranean Sea and founded many cities along its coasts and islands. Their most famous cities were Tyre and Sidon.

They were also known for producing valuable purple and blue dye from sea snails found along the Mediterranean coast. This dye was highly prized and traded throughout the ancient world.

Despite their success in trade and culture, the Canaanites practiced many forms of idolatry. They worshiped several gods, including Baal, Astarte, and Melqart. Their religious practices involved idols, sexual immorality, divination, and even the burning of children as sacrifices to their gods.

Because of these practices, God warned the Israelites not to follow the customs of the Canaanites. He commanded them not to intermarry with them and not to adopt their religious practices.

However, the Israelites did not fully obey God's command to drive out the Canaanites. As a result, many Israelites eventually adopted Canaanite religious practices and fell into idolatry.

The influence of the Canaanites can be seen throughout Israel's history. Kings such as Solomon and Ahab were influenced by Canaanite worship through foreign marriages.

Although the Canaanites were known for wickedness and idolatry, the Bible also records individuals from Canaan who demonstrated faith in God. Rahab of Jericho helped the Israelite spies and became part of Israel. A Canaanite woman in the Gospels showed great faith in Yeshua and received healing for her daughter.

The story of the Canaanites reminds us that corruption can influence God's people if they ignore His warnings. At the same time, it also demonstrates that God's salvation is available to anyone who turns to Him in faith.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The Canaanites descended from Canaan, the grandson of Noah.
 - They lived in the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River.
 - The Canaanites were famous merchants and sailors.
 - Their major cities included Tyre and Sidon.
 - They produced valuable purple and blue dye used throughout the ancient world.
 - Canaanite religion involved idols, sexual immorality, and child sacrifice.
 - God warned Israel not to adopt Canaanite practices.
 - Israel's disobedience led to idolatry and corruption.
 - Individuals such as Rahab showed that people from any nation can have faith in God.
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FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Basic

1. The Canaanites were descended from _____, a grandson of Noah.
2. The Canaanites lived in the land between the _____ Sea and the Jordan River.
3. Two of the most prominent Canaanite cities were _____ and _____.

4. The Canaanites were known as skilled _____ and sailors.
 5. They produced valuable purple dye from a _____ found in the sea.
 6. One of the major Canaanite gods was _____.
 7. God warned the Israelites not to _____ with the Canaanites.
 8. Rahab of _____ demonstrated faith in the God of Israel.
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Challenging

1. The Hebrew word for Canaanite can also mean _____.
 2. One Canaanite goddess mentioned in Scripture is _____.
 3. The Canaanites practiced _____ in an attempt to predict the future.
 4. Some Canaanite religious rituals involved burning _____ as sacrifices.
 5. King _____ was influenced by the worship of Ashtoreth.
 6. King _____ was influenced by the worship of Baal through Queen Jezebel.
 7. The Israelites fell into _____ because they did not remove the Canaanites from the land.
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GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think the Canaanites became such successful merchants and traders?
2. What made Canaanite religious practices so offensive to God?
3. Why did God warn the Israelites not to adopt Canaanite customs?
4. How did the Canaanites influence the spiritual life of Israel?
5. What lessons can we learn from the Israelites' failure to obey God's command regarding the Canaanites?
6. What do the stories of Rahab and the Canaanite woman teach us about faith?
7. How can believers today guard against cultural influences that lead away from God?

ANSWER KEY – GROUP GUIDE

Basic

1. Canaan
2. Mediterranean
3. Tyre / Sidon
4. Merchants
5. Sea snail
6. Baal
7. Intermarry
8. Jericho

Challenging

1. Merchant
2. Astarte
3. Divination
4. Children
5. Solomon
6. Ahab
7. Idolatry