

JESUS-OUR COMMANDER IN CHIEF

Joshua 10:1-14

"Now it came to pass when Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai and had utterly destroyed it—as he had done to Jericho and its king, so he had done to Ai and its king—and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them, that they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were mighty. Therefore Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon, saying, "Come up to me and help me, that we may attack Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel." Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon, gathered together and went up, they and all their armies, and camped before Gibeon and made war against it. And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp at Gilgal, saying, "Do not forsake your servants; come up to us quickly, save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the mountains have gathered together against us." So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor. And the Lord said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you." Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, having marched all night from Gilgal. So the Lord routed them before Israel, killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, chased them along the road that goes to Beth Horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah. And it happened, as they fled before Israel and were on the descent of Beth Horon, that the Lord cast down large hailstones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword. Then Joshua spoke to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel: "Sun, stand still over Gibeon; And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon." So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the people had revenge upon their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the Lord heeded the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel."

There has been only two amazing times in recorded history that God used the sun as a sign to the people of the earth by moving the sun backwards or by having it stand still. The first time was in our story today where God had the sun stand still for almost a whole day. The other time was a sign to King Hezekiah, where God moved back the sun so that the shadow of the sun on the sundials went backward ten

degrees. With our story today, what made it especially awesome in God keeping the sun from moving forward, which truly was incredible, was that it stood above Gibeon, the great city that had made peace with Israel. What a great way for God to show His approval and blessing on the people of Gibeon. Not only did Israel show up to defend Gibeon from the five kings but God made sure they knew who was behind their victory. For us today, we don't need the sun to stand still above us though to know that we are blessed by God. We can know that we are blessed by God by Him first revealing to us that His Son, Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the Living God", to all who will believe, and then also that His light continues to shine in us and through us. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name." (**John 1:12**)

The book of Joshua (as well as the rest of the Bible) has been considered by many Bible scholars, even Christian Bible scholars, to be a fanciful work of hyperbole, meaning that it is stories that aren't really true but are exaggerated to fit the narrative perpetuated by the Jewish nation of Israel, or that they are just for lessons and instruction, sort of like Aesop's Fables. After all, some of the stories are a bit far-fetched they will say, or that God is love, not war. God is merciful and longsuffering not vengeful and destructive. God is good not bad. Yet we find in the book of Joshua and in the character of Joshua a type of Christ who does battle for His people and ultimately brings defeat and destruction upon His enemies. Joshua is a type of Christ also as one who brings forth deliverance and salvation to God's people. As was with Moses but then moreso with Joshua, God used him as a type of Christ that was leading His people to the promised land, which to us is symbolic of being led to Zion, the city of God, the New Jerusalem which is God's future kingdom that is to come. It is representative of Jesus as leading us to God's eternal kingdom, God's eternal glory, that eternal life that we are promised in Christ Jesus our Lord. Through Joshua and God's people, the Israelites, God brings forth also His judgment to the enemies of God, that is, those who had chosen to serve other gods and refused to honor God as THE one and only true God. What really comes out in the book of Joshua is that "The earth IS the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and **those who dwell therein.**" (**Psalms 24:1**) So then, "what then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" (**Romans 8:31**)

What really comes out in reading through the book of Joshua is that not only is God in control of all things, including all the kings and kingdoms of the earth, but that it is up to Him and His perfect ways to judge all the nations of the earth and really all of the people of the earth. Nothing escapes His notice. God told His people, the Israelites, "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;

that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may **cling to Him**, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them." (**Deuteronomy 30:19-20**) With the many examples that we can read about in the Old Testament, we are told that, "...since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith**, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." And then similarly to what God said to the Israelites we have in Jesus' words, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" (**Matthew 22:37-39**) God has not changed. His methods of speaking to His people and judging His people have been revealed in different ways but God is still the same. For He is the "Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End."

"Yeah", you may say, "but God was more of a God of war in the Old Testament and now God is a God of love, from what we read in the New Testament. Yet "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." Before the Israelites were sent to march around the walls of Jericho, Joshua had an encounter. "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" Then the Commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so." Who was that Commander of the Lord's army? He is described further in **Revelation 19:11-16**, "Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." Joshua may have been a Christ-type but there is only one Christ or Messiah or Anointed One, or Commander of the Lord's army. Jesus!

In **Deuteronomy 29:23** it says God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, in the days of Lot and Abraham. In the days of Noah, God destroyed all living creatures on the earth except Noah and his family. In the time of Moses God brought forth His judgment upon Egypt which included the 10 plagues. With Moses and Joshua, God brought forth His justice upon the nations of Canaan land and some of the surrounding territories. In the time of the judges and kings and prophets, God brought forth His judgment on various people and kingdoms. In the times of the dispersion of the Jews God brought judgment first on Israel as they were led away into captivity to the Assyrians. Later God brought judgment on the nation of Judah when they were led captive into Babylon. God brought forth judgment upon the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and many other nations, and then the Medes and the Persians, the Greeks, and then the Romans. Since the time of Christ kingdoms have come and kingdoms have fallen. One thing has remained the same from the beginning until now and for all of eternity. **God is on the Throne!** As it says of the last of days, which we are in, in **Revelation 17:14**, "These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful."

In our story in Joshua, Adoni-Zedek, which ironically means lord of justice or righteousness, was the king of Jerusalem, and he had heard of how the Israelites had taken Ai (pronounced ay-eye) and then Jericho and had made a treaty with the people of Gibeon, so he rounded up support from 4 other kings to try and take out the Israelites. Funny how someone can think they can win against God Almighty, WHO IS THE LORD OF JUSTICE. Too bad for him and the 4 other kings that they didn't follow the example of the folks at Gibeon, even though they knew about it. The people of Gibeon had tricked Joshua into signing a treaty with them by acting like they were from a far away country when in reality they were next in line from Ai and Jericho. They were then made to be servants of Israel in being woodcutters and water carriers. As **Psalms 84:10** says, "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness." It's too bad they didn't hear of Rahab the harlot who helped the Israelites in hiding away their spies. Rahab the harlot not only was spared, and all of her family, but she ended up being part of the ancestral line that brought forth Jesus, the Son of God. Too bad that Adoni-Zedek didn't know or care that God always had a soft spot in His heart, so to speak, for the foreigners, the strangers to His people of Israel. Once again, "The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein." In fact, God had commanded the Israelites to "love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." (**Deuteronomy 10:19**) Sound familiar (love your neighbor as yourself)? Yet Adoni-Zedek and the 4 other kings' fatal flaw was they didn't respect the will of God nor the sovereignty of God. In other words, they just didn't honor God. Henceforth, judgment was coming. They could have either tried to make

peace with Israel or they could have fled from their cities and saved themselves and their families but instead they chose to fight against the Commander of the Lord's army and His people. A clear indicator that the battle truly did belong to the Lord was in the fact that it says, "there were more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword." It's interesting that the 7th and last bowl of wrath on the earth and mankind in Revelation 16 has hailstones-100 pound hailstones. Likewise, the 7th plague on Egypt was, hailstones. "what then shall we say to these things? **If God is for us**, who can be against us?" "Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (**Romans 8:37-38**) And then, to those who are in Christ Jesus, "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (**1 Corinthians 15:57**) WE WILL OVERCOME! No matter what the world throws at us, WE WILL OVERCOME!

This then is truly a message of assurance and hope to those who are in Christ Jesus. But to the enemies of God? Judgment comes! For God is the Lord of Justice and Righteousness! God is no longer leading the nation of Israel into the promised land, that was initially promised to Abraham, but He is still leading His people to that glorious promised land that is perfect and eternal. God is still a God of mercy and love, longsuffering and goodness, but He is also a God of justice and wrath. We can look to many examples of God's longsuffering and mercy throughout the Old Testament. God waited until "all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth (**Genesis 6:12**) before He brought forth the flood. God sent Jonah to Nineveh to preach repentance to them. After Jonah himself repented, being swallowed by a giant fish, he told the folks of Nineveh to repent or judgment from God was coming. They repented and God's judgment didn't come until after that generation had passed. God was forbearing in His judgment on His people, of the nations of Judah and Israel, but then He finally said enough is enough. And yes, we can find examples of God's judgment in the New Testament too, and not just in the book of Revelation. In **Acts 12:21-23** we read, " So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. And the people kept shouting, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died." In Acts 5 we can read about Ananias and Sapphira who sold their land and held back a part of the money and presented the rest to the church. They basically were lying that they were giving all of the money to the church. What happened to them. Boom, struck dead. First Ananias and then Sapphira. The Apostle Paul, who at the time was called Saul, was also met with judgment from God. Jesus confronted him on the road

to Damascus, and Jesus said to Saul, "**Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?**" Saul was temporarily blinded by the encounter but eventually was restored when another man named Ananias laid hands on him and he received his sight back and was then filled with the Holy Spirit. (**Acts 9**) One more example was a man named Elymas, who was not only arguing against Paul and Barnabas but was influencing others against them, Paul said to him, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, **not seeing the sun for a time.**" All of this isn't to put fear in the children of God who are doing their best to walk in God's ways. Hey, none of us are perfect, right? But, just as God would not allow any hinderance to God's people taking possession of the promised land in the Old Testament, God IS going to make sure His people make it to His promised land that awaits us on the other side of this lifetime. Jesus said, "**For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.**" (**John 3:16-17**) **Ephesians 2:8-9** says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

Yes we are in the grace of God, to all those who are in Christ Jesus. So what does all that mean to us, in this time of grace? "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God." (**Romans 8:1-8**) There is NO CONDEMNATION to those who are in Christ Jesus! Jesus said, "**And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.**"

We are given the stories in the Old Testament and the New Testament to guide us in the understanding of God and His ways. He has not changed, from the beginning of creation until now, nor will He ever change. But we must be changed. We must be born-again, that is be born of the Spirit. Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." God reveals to us that He sent His Son Jesus to die on a cross for us, taking the punishment that was due us for sinning against God-"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"(Romans 3:23)-and that sin separated us from God and then "the wages of sin is death---but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus"! (Romans 6:23) Then when we have believed on Christ, the Holy Spirit gives us a heart of repentance to not longer follow after the lusts of the flesh but to be led by His Spirit in His Wisdom, His Righteousness, Sanctification (setting us apart from the ways of the world in His Holiness) and then His Redemption. "So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Hebrews 13:5) We can learn from God's people in the Old Testament, the nations of Israel and Judah and know that God is to be our God, for He is God, and He desires to lead us, protect us, provide for us, and to help us but if we stray away from God then at some point in time we are going to meet up with His judgment. "And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons." (Hebrews 12:5-6)

2 Corinthians 5:17-19 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation." That is where we need to remain, in Christ. We are heading to God's glorious promise of life eternal in His kingdom. The days may sometimes seem long but they aren't anything compared to the glory that will be revealed in us. So, meanwhile we keep sharing the love and the gospel of Jesus Christ-the ministry of reconciliation, and that in Christ we will escape the judgment and wrath of God. (Romans 8:18) We have the same message before us as did the Israelites of blessings and curses. "Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance [yes we all have need for endurance], so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not

tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." (**Hebrews 10:35-39**)

The folks at Gibeon had a confirmation of sorts, that if God is for you who can be against you. As the sun stood still over Gibeon, they knew that He is God, shining His light to victory. For us today, the sun needn't stand still for us to know He is God. Now we are called to be still for His Son is shining! "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" (**Psalms 46:10**) God has now given us His Son to shine His light to us and through us all the way to victory as He is the author and finisher of our faith. Victory in Jesus! For in Christ Jesus we will overcome!