

03-11-18 Joshua's Long Day

Joshua 10

Covenant

The word "covenant," infrequently heard in conversation, is quite commonly used in legal, social (marriage), and religious and theological contexts.

The term "covenant" is of Latin origin (*con venire*), meaning a coming together. It presupposes two or more parties who come together to make a contract, agreeing on promises, stipulations, privileges, and responsibilities. In religious and theological circles there has not been agreement on precisely what is to be understood by the biblical term. In political situations, it can be translated treaty; in a social setting, it means a lifelong friendship agreement; or it can refer to a marriage. In case you don't realize it, your marriage agreement is a covenant – binding forever.

BACKGROUND:

As Mike preached a couple of weeks ago and Pastor John reinforced last week, the Gibeonites deceived Israel into thinking they were not from Canaan, but from a faraway land and had travelled a long distance. They begged Israel to make a covenant with them not to destroy them, since they heard of the devastation against the other cities by Israel. Israel didn't seek the Lord, but agreed to this covenant – a legal and binding promise. Israel made the Gibeonites servants, but spared them. Now when the other kings of the land of Canaan realize this, they wanted to wage war against Gibeon and destroy them for making peace with the enemy, Israel. They joined forces against Gibeon.

READ: Joshua 10:1-15 (NLT) - Pray

I read from the NLT because it is more story-like. As we go through the text one section at a time, I will be using the other versions for a little more literal accuracy.

"We have seen that Israel's conquest in Canaan – parallels the spiritual warfare that Christians have in spiritual battles against sin and Satan." (p. 70)

Joshua (Yahuwah, Heb.) is a type of Christ (Jesus, Gr.). Both names mean "Savior." Jesus can and will help with our problems against the flesh and Satan. More on this later.

We are to put sin out of our lives, but as Joshua and Israel failed on occasion, so do we. Yet, we are to wage war against evil and temptation in our lives.

Eph. 6:13 (NLT) - *Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.*

God never assigned armor to protect the back side of the soldier, only the front. We were never intended to run away from the enemy.

So, let's look at our text in more detail ...

Josh. 10:1-5 (ESV) - *As soon as Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem, heard how Joshua had captured Ai and had devoted it to destruction, doing to Ai and its king as he had done to Jericho and its king, and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them, ² he 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 warriors. ³ So Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, to Piram king of Jarmuth, to Japhia king of Lachish, and to Debir king of Eglon, saying, ⁴ "Come up to me and help me, and let us strike Gibeon. For it has made peace with Joshua and with the people of Israel." ⁵ Then 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 their forces and went up with all their armies and encamped against Gibeon and made war against it.*

Here, we have the first mention of Jerusalem in Scripture. It's interesting to me that the king of Jerusalem is the one who rallied all the other kings of the area to wage war against Gibeon and in essence, Israel, and would eventually be conquered and become the capital of Israel, the sacred city where God would dwell and meet with His people. God has a way of turning things around with a surprise ending.

So, these 5 kings joined forces to come against Gibeon and teach them a lesson. They defected and made a covenant with Israel, so they would conquer them and show other cities not to do the same thing. They flexed their muscles and came against them in the mountains of Canaan. Gibeon called to Joshua for help...

Josh. 10:6-9 (ESV) - *And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp in Gilgal, saying, "Do not relax your hand from your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the hill country are gathered against us." ⁷ So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor. ⁸ And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands. Not a man of them shall stand before you." ⁹ So Joshua came upon them suddenly, having marched up all night from Gilgal.*

Joshua and his army came immediately to their rescue. I would not have done this. I would have thought, we were supposed to destroy them back when and didn't. We mistakenly made a covenant with them. Here's our chance. We can leave them to their own demise at the hand of the other kings. Let's not even acknowledge that we heard their cry for help. It will all work out just as it was supposed to originally.

They marched up the mountains all night without sleep. They arrived at the battle scene tired, but ready to go to war. They were at a disadvantage, but it didn't stop them. The Lord helped them in victory.

God was with them and helped them to defeat the enemy armies. There was a great slaughter, but some got away. Here's a good part of the story...

Josh. 10:11 (ESV) - *And as they fled before Israel, while they were going down the ascent of Beth-horon, the LORD threw down large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died because of the hailstones than the sons of Israel killed with the sword.*

Israel didn't have to do anything to destroy their enemy, God did it all. These large hailstones took out the enemy without engaging in battle. Israel was victorious because God fought for them with natural means. God's hail stones killed more of the enemy than the Israelite swords. Let's look at the next natural means that God would miraculously invoke on Joshua's behalf.

Meanwhile – the Israelites were still engaged in battle with the enemy cities. The sun was going down and Joshua knew he could only withstand them and have victory if it stayed light out. He prayed out loud in the company of all Israel...

Josh. 10:12-14 (ESV) - *At that time Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD gave the Amorites over to the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel,*

***“Sun, stand still at Gibeon,
and moon, in the Valley of Aijalon.”
¹³ And the sun stood still, and the moon stopped,
until the nation took vengeance on their enemies.***

Is this not written in the Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in the midst of heaven and did not hurry to set for about a whole day. ¹⁴ There has been no day like it before or since, when the LORD heeded the voice of a man, for the LORD fought for Israel.

God performed a miracle in their midst to be recorded for all time. He prolonged daylight so Israel could stay engaged and win the battle.

“Harry Rimmer, in 1936, published his book... Harmony of Science and Scripture. In it, he wrote about Joshua's long day. This is what he wrote...

Sir Edwin Ball, a British astronomer, found that 24 hours had been lost out of our solar time. Where did that go? How did it happen? There is a place the answer is found, which is tested by scientists of standing.

A book by Prof. C. A. Totton of Yale University, written in 1890, establishes the case beyond a shadow of doubt. He wrote of a fellow professor and accomplished astronomer who made the strange discovery that the earth was 24 hours off schedule. That is, 24 hours had been lost out of time. In discussing this point with astronomy professors, Professor Totton challenged them to investigate the inspiration of the Bible and said, 'You do not believe the Bible to be the word of God, and I do. Here is an opportunity to prove whether or not the Bible is inspired. Just read as far as need be, and see if the Bible can account for your missing time.'

One astronomer accepted the challenge and began to read. Some time later when the two met on campus, Totton asked if he had proved the question to his satisfaction. His colleague replied, 'I believe I have definitely proved that the Bible is not the word of God. In Josh 10, I found the missing 24 hours accounted for, then I went back and checked up on the figures and found that in the time of Joshua there was only 23 hours and 20 minutes lost. If the Bible made a mistake of 40 minutes, it is not the Book of God.'

Totton said, 'You are right, in part, but does the Bible say that a whole day was lost at the time of Joshua?' They looked, and the text said **about** a whole day. The word "about" changed the situation.

The astronomer read again till he came to Is. 38 about King Hezekiah who was sick to death. In response to Hezekiah's prayer, God promised to add 15 years to his life and confirmed His promise with a sign. God told Hezekiah to go out in the court and look at the sun dial of Ahaz, and said I will make the shadow of the sun dial back up 10 degrees. The king looked, and while he looked, the shadow turned backward 10 degrees, of which 10 degrees had already gone down.

This settled the case, for 10 degrees on the sun dial is 40 minutes on the face of the clock. The accuracy of Scripture was established to the satisfaction of this exacting critic. When the astronomer found a day of missing time accounted for, he laid down the Bible and worshipped saying, 'Lord, I believe!'" (Conquering the Battles of Life, p. 73-75)

All that to say this, God will go to great lengths, even miraculous lengths, to bring victory for His people. That is true today and includes all of us. God always puts His omnipotence behind His commands. We are on the winning team. We may lose a small battle with sin here or there, but ultimately God will win the big war between good and evil.

There were three fantastic miracles that helped Joshua conquer the land...

The Jordan divided, Jericho's fall, and the extending of daylight for the war of today's text.

The story ends like this... The 5 kings fled to a cave to hide. Joshua walled them in with stones. Then later on, he brought them out and executed them. Israel experienced total and complete victory against the enemy.

Application:

It was God's will and plan that Joshua would honor the covenant with Gibeon. God fought for Israel and the Gibeonites. They were victorious because God honors his covenant with Joshua.

Joshua is a type of Christ Jesus. When we come to Jesus, we enter a covenant relationship with God. Jesus called it, a new covenant in His blood. It is an everlasting covenant. Once we make this covenant with God, He will never fail it or us. We may fumble along the way, but God is faithful to His covenant and will fight with and for us to bring about the victory in our life.

The enemy may join forces against us (like the 5 kings of the Canaanite cities), but God will do whatever it takes to help us defeat the enemies. He can make time stand still or drop large hailstones out of nowhere to fight for us. We are not in the battle alone – ever. He is with us; he will never leave us or forsake us once we are in this covenant relationship with our Father.

As the 5 kings tried to hide in the cave, we are not to allow sin to hide in our lives. As Christians, we are to bring sin out and destroy it by the power of God. The Holy Spirit within you is capable of uncovering sin and making it known to you. Then it's up to each of us to deal with it with the help of God. God commands us to be Holy because He is Holy. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit.

It is no accident or coincidence that today's text parallels the Christian life. I believe God intended it to show us this covenant life we can have with Him. When we honor the covenant, God is with us to bring us victory to live for Him.

Joshua ends this story today by encouraging his men with the same words God used to encourage Joshua in the beginning... Do not fear but be strong and very courageous! God will bring the victory in all future battles. They continued to pursue and conquer all the cities in Canaan as God directed and promised. He will do the same for us today.

"Fear not: for I am with thee." Is. 43:5 (KJV)