

Joshua ch 10-

We kind of left off last week right in the middle of this account here in the book of Joshua concerning the Gibeonites and their deceiving of Israel into making a peace treaty with them. Because Ch's 9 and 10 really are in conjunction with each other, both of them pertaining to Israel's relationship with these Gibeonites and what happened and how it worked out. Because you recall that Israel had just defeated Ai and were right on the fringe of coming across these Gibeonites, (and God had told them not to make any covenants with the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, but rather to utterly destroy them all) but the Gibeonites, not wanting to be utterly destroyed and knowing (according to vs 24 of ch 9) that anyone within the land of Canaan that Israel came across was going to be wiped out. Took these men (had them pretend to be ambassadors) and dressed them up in all these rags for clothes, and they took old torn and tattered wineskins, moldy bread, and worn out shoes, and they sent them to Joshua saying, we're from a country that's real far off, but we want to make a peace treaty with you. And at 1st it seemed as though the men of Israel weren't going to fall for it, because you remember they were all, Perhaps you dwell among us, in other words, how do we know you're not just setting us up? As far as we know you just live right down the road (which was the fact) and you could be setting us up (which they were) and maybe we shouldn't make a covenant with you at all (which they shouldn't have). But the Gibeonites were all, hey, we're humbling ourselves before you here, we've heard all about what your God has done for you, how He delivered you from Egypt and provided for you in the wilderness and gave you victory over the great kings there on the other side of the Jordan. (Now in reality they were coming to them because of what had happened just this side of the Jordan, but they knew that that would sound awful suspicious for that type of news to travel so far in such a short time.) and So in one respect you have to hand it to the Gibeonites (not to condone deception, ever) but in that they really minded their P's and Q's as far as this whole charade went. And so the men of Israel took a good look at their stuff, but in vs 14 we read the crux of it all, "*they did not ask counsel of the Lord.*" What's the inference there? That had they asked counsel of the Lord, God would've exposed the whole thing to them and saved them a lot of grief, oh, what peace we often forfeit, oh what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry, everything to God in prayer. It doesn't matter what's going on in our life, how big something may seem or how minor of an issue it may appear to be, we need to be asking counsel of the Lord. Too many times we wait until after the fact and we're in the midst of the reaping cycle until we really seek the Lord on a certain issue, but had we just went to Him in the 1st place, we would never be in the circumstance we're in. And unfortunately sometimes the ramifications of those spur of the moment decisions can last for years if not a lifetime, we need the counsel of the Lord. Well anyway Joshua made peace with these people and then just 3 days later they found out that they'd been snowed, they had acted presumptuously, they had acted hastily and anxiously, yet the bible says what?

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.” Phil 4:6 But because the children of Israel didn't do that, they didn't make request of God concerning the legitimacy of these guys, they bought the lie and entered into a peace treaty with them to their own detriment, because once you've given your word, God expects that you and I keep it.

So once Joshua had realized what happened he went to them and asked them why they had deceived them and they basically said, because we were scared out of our minds, and we didn't want to die. And so Joshua said, fine, you may not die but you're going to be our slaves from now on and you're going to be our woodcutters and water carriers. And they said we don't care what you do with us as long as you keep your covenant with us not to kill us, so basically Israel grafted these people into their nation and what was meant to be a curse, would actually turn out to be a blessing for them, and what was a major blunder on Joshua's part God would turn for good and a more rapid sieging of the Promised Land. Let's look together at Ch 10 beginning here in vs 1.

Vs1-2

Notice that, Gibeon wasn't some weak and beggarly city that from a military point of view wouldn't have stood a chance against Israel anyway, they were a military stronghold, it was like a royal city, in other words again from a military point of view these were a people to be reckoned with, a people to think twice about before messing with. And when this King of Jerusalem (who's name ironically enough means Lord of Righteousness, though he was a far cry from that, if anything he stands to represent more of the Anti-Christ, who stands in opposition to, and in hopes of destroying Joshua which would typify Jesus Christ) Remember that Joshua is the Hebrew form of the Greek word, Jesus which means “Jehovah is salvation” and now this King over Jerusalem is basically freaking out over what he's heard concerning Israel, topped with the fact that this major military stronghold just right down the road had completely surrendered to them and were in their midst, because that means (in his mind, their next).

Vs 3-5

You see as far as he is concerned the Canaanites have just given up ground, and they needed to retake it in order to maintain some type of stronghold on the area, not to mention these traitors need wiped out. And so he pulls together and forms this confederation of nations to come against Gibeon and ultimately Israel. Which that (for you typology buffs) is an interesting fact in and of itself if in-fact this fellow does stand to typify the Anti-Christ because as you know, what is it that prophecy teaches us concerning the Anti-Christ, that he will form a confederation of nations, that the kings of the earth will give their authority to him and the will make war with Jesus Christ (Read Rev ch 17 sometime in correlation to that), and so here this king leads a 5 nation confederation to come against Gibeon and the purposes of Israel.

Vs6-7

Again, Joshua could've easily let them be wiped out and considered that a loop hole in the contract, he could've said, yeah, we vowed not to kill you, but this is your own deal. But he didn't do that, he honored not only the letter of his word, but the spirit of it as well, the point was that they'd make sure that as far as they were concerned no harm would come to them. And that's the way we're to honor not only our own word, but the word of God as well, we're not to be looking for loop holes in the commands of God, because then where's the position of our hearts. "Well, the bible says that we shouldn't call someone a fool so I'll call you a stupid idiot." I think you've missed the point; the point is we're not to be slandering people and insulting from the heart the very one that's been made in the image of God.

And so Joshua honors his word, not even knowing for sure (at least at the moment that he started the forced march, up hill some 3-4000 feet in elevation over about an 8 hour period (give or take) overnight knowing that his troops would enter into a ferocious battle on little to no sleep.) How exactly things would turn out, I mean these would be some pretty magnanimous odds you were facing 2 armies against 5, but he honored his word and put feet to his faith. And I believe that that's an important lesson for you and me to learn, there is a time to pray and we should pray over everything, but there comes a time to move as well, we have to act upon that which we've been praying about unless God directs us other wise. That's why James said that faith with out works is dead. Because it's neat to believe in the Lord (even the demons do that and shutter) but if you don't act on it, or place your faith into action here and there, then what's the point of it? There are times when God will speak loud and clear to our hearts, but that's not always the case, in-fact it's more the exception than the rule, at least for me. Many times it's not until you step out and begin to act on your confidence, again not in your ability but in Gods, that you begin to see God honor it and do the work in it. Remember we talked a little bit about that Sunday morning, until you get out of the realm of your ability, be it in whatever the situation or circumstance, or anything else it's not really of faith. Because you don't need to trust God in, because you can handle it, but when we get out from under our comfort zone, it's then that we begin to move in faith, Joshua began to move, he took his troops in a forced march all night to come to the aid of these people whom he'd made peace with. They were in trouble and they sent a runner and they (as a people, represented by the informant) came running to Joshua in time of need for protection from the enemy. And in there lies yet another lesson that we can learn from these Gibeonites, they may've been a pagan people at the time, but you know what, when they realized that they were headed for destruction, they came to Joshua (remember "Jehovah is Savior"). and They received from him a promise of protection and salvation from the enemy. This is a lesson that the non-believer as well as the believer would do well to learn, to realize their predicament, and turn to Jesus Christ by faith and receive from Him the promise of salvation and protection from the enemy. They believed Joshua's promise and called on him for help, and again that's what we, as believers need to do as well.

When we're up against a battle, and it seems as though the enemy is going to overwhelm us, of course I don't recommend waiting till it gets to that point, just call on the Lord daily, many times daily, but we need to look to and call upon the Lord and trust Him to keep His word to us, and He'll do it. We read in Heb ch 13, for He Himself has said, *"I will never leave you nor forsake you."* In Isaiah ch 43 we read, *"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior."* and So we can cling to these promises and call on the Lord when confronted on the battle ground, and trust Him to come to our rescue, Joshua put feet to his faith and notice what happened in vs 8.

Vs8

He reaffirmed Joshua's faith, reassured him of the fact that He would deliver them into his hand, and again it's interesting to me how God can take our mistakes, and that which the enemy would intend for evil and view as a compromise, and yet turn them around to His glory and for the furthering of His purposes.

Remember God did the same thing concerning Joshua's failure at Ai; He took that failure and used it to give them victory over the city. He said they drove you back before, make as though they're driving you back again, only this time have an ambush waiting for them and when you've lured them out of the city give the signal and have the ambush take the city and then wipe them out, God is the ultimate military strategist. Well in this case God used Joshua's mistake in making a covenant with these people to bring about an even swifter conquering of the land, how, because as all of these kings and their armies gathered against this one city that Joshua had sworn to protect, now instead of Joshua having to fight all of these different battles all over the land, he gets to just wipe them all out at once and then just casually move in and take the cities. Rom 8:28 *"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."* God knows our hearts, and His wisdom is greater than our foolishness, and He can take our mistakes and by His grace turn them around to where He gets honor and glory and that's exactly what He's doing here.

Vs9-14

Now here we have something very interesting, they've got the enemy on the run, but remember there are 5 armies and so even though there's been a great slaughter, there are still a lot of people still alive. And so God causes a hailstorm to begin pummeling the enemies army. And yet not one hailstone hits any of the nation of Israel, now that sounds familiar, where have I heard the likes of that before? You remember when Moses was dealing with the Pharaoh in Egypt concerning the fact that God said to let the people of Israel go, what was one of those plagues that He sent upon the land of Egypt? Ex 9:18-19

The Lord said, *“Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause very heavy hail to rain down, such as has not been in Egypt since its founding until now. Therefore send now and gather your livestock and all that you have in the field, for the hail shall come down on every man and every animal which is found in the field and is not brought home; and they shall die.”* and Then we read in Ex 9:25-26 *“And the hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail.”* So once again we’re entering into the miraculous, and as if that weren’t radical enough, when Joshua begins to realize what’s going on and how these huge hailstones are raining down but oddly enough only on their enemies, he thinks hey, this is the Lord! and So with his faith strengthened even more, seeing God fighting for them, realizing that they’ve got them on the run, but that they need more time to end the slaughter because as soon as it reaches dark many of the troops could disappear in the night and make it back to fortify their cities. (So they’ve been fighting all day, remember they marched all night, and when you’re fighting for your life, you don’t generally break for lunch, they’ve been fighting hard and heavy with odds that way out numbered them, so more than likely fighting off more than one man coming against them with everything they have at a time. But let me tell you something, God can multiply your efforts and your energies as you fight the good fight of faith, we serve the same God that we’re reading of here, and He can do the same thing for you. Sometimes you can just feel so exhausted, but God can multiply your energy so as to keep you going, you may not realize it at the time, it could just be that God wants you to know you’re at the end of you so that you realize that it’s not by might nor by power but by His Spirit, but He will strengthen you with His might by His Spirit in the inner man, that you might be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

But Joshua realizing what’s going on just yells out, “Sun, stand still!” Now either he was going to look like a fool or terror was about to be struck in the hearts of these their enemies when the very gods they worshipped, had to heed the words of this man. And that’s exactly what happened, and this account has received much criticism simply due to the nature of it and some of the language that’s used. And normally I might take a little bit of time to go into the fact that in other ancient societies found all over the world there are recordings of long nights, or long mornings or evenings, depending on where they were at on the globe, that date back to the time of Joshua. But seeing as how Sunday morning we just went over the fact that God is able to do exceedingly and abundantly above all we could ask or even think, it would seem as though this qualifies as one of those things. And again it reverts back to the fact of how big is your God, Jer 32:17 *“Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You.”* Ps 74 says that the day and night belong to God, so He can do whatever He wants with them, if He created it all then He can surely manipulate it whenever He feels the need.

And as far as the critics that say, well actually the sun doesn't move, the earth rotates, although I read somewhere that modern astronomers will tell you that the sun is in motion, as far as to what degree I have no idea. But, these critics that speak out against the fact that he said sun stand still, when it's the earth that rotates, don't make that type of an issue out of the way that we speak today. When you read the paper or watch the news you can read where they say that the sunrise was and such and such a time and it will set and such and such a time. What are they, morons, don't they know that the sun doesn't rise or set, it's the earth that rotates, you see, people who nitpick often do so to their own shame, we speak the same way today. Well, they say the earth rotates at nearly 1,000 miles an hour, so if the earth suddenly stood still, then everyone would just go flying off the earth, because they're still spinning at 1,000 miles an hour. But do you read anywhere here that the earth stopped suddenly, as if it hit a brick wall. If the earth stopped in a period of say 6 hours, that would be equivalent to going 60mph in your car and bringing your car to 0mph in 20 minutes as far as the force that would be exerted against you. If you were doing 60 and took 20 minutes to stop, you wouldn't even feel it, if God stopped the earth in only 8 minutes, that would be equal to stopping a car going 60 in 30 seconds, there's no need for even a seat belt at that rate. So there's no reason to believe that it just jerked to a stand still, God could've just put on the brakes and brought the earth to a halt in as little as 8 or 10 minutes and you'd never even realize what was happening. So there's really no problem with this account if you serve a big enough God, and if you don't serve a big enough God, then you need to reconsider the God you serve, because the God of the bible can do anything, He's not limited to our ability, nothing is too hard for Him.

Vs15-17

Again considering the interesting parallels to the book of Rev we read in Rev 6:15
“And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains.”

Vs18-25

So Joshua having been strengthened and encouraged, takes the time to strengthen and encourage the people with the same words that the Lord had encouraged him with back in ch 1 and again in ch 8, do not be afraid, nor dismayed, why, because God is with you and will grant you victory over your enemies.

Vs26-43

So All these cities that came out to fight against them that were left pretty much defenseless, Joshua and his men just went around and took them and the areas that were near to them or surrounded them minus Jerusalem for whatever reason and it wasn't taken until the time of David.

