

The Bible From 20,000 Feet Part 25 - Joshua 8:1 –10:27

Tuesday Night Bible Study, May 19, 2009

--OUTLINE:

- INTRO/RECAP
- ISRAEL'S SECOND BATTLE WITH AI
- OVERVIEW OF THE PURPOSE OF ISRAEL CONQUERING THE LAND OF CANAAN
- SATAN'S TACTIC OF DECEIT
- THE DAY THE SUN STOOD STILL

--INTRO/RECAP:

--the underlying theme as Israel conquers Canaan is their total dependence on God...

--throughout the Old Testament we see glimpses of the reality of angelic armies fighting along side Israel in the spiritual dimension (refer to part 24) .

--on the Eve of Israel's campaign to conquer Canaan, Jesus meets Joshua in a preincarnate appearance and presents Himself as "the Commander of the army of the Lord" (Joshua 5:13-15)

--without the help of the angelic army Israel wouldn't stand a chance.

--Joshua 10:40-42 sums up the reason for their victory – "So Joshua [*with Israel*] conquered all the land... **because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel...**"

--Israel's real enemy was sin...

--when Israel fell into sin they effectively cut themselves off from the help of the angelic army, which resulted in lost battles.

--Israel was reminded of the consequence of sin after their defeat at Ai where God said, "Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things [from Jericho], and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff. 12 **Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies...** Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you. 13 Get up, sanctify the people... **O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you.**"

--and so it is in our lives...the quickest path to defeat in all areas of our lives is the path of sin!

--what matters far more than getting a promotion at work, being the best at this skill or that skill – what matters far more than any worldly achievement in God's book is having victory over sin!

(ch. 8)

--ISRAEL'S SECOND BATTLE WITH AI:

--after Israel cleansed themselves of the sin that led to their defeat at Ai, the Lord tells Joshua, "Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; take all the people of war with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land... Lay an ambush for the city behind it." (Joshua 8:1-2)

--God gave Joshua specific instructions ("lay an ambush for the city behind it"), so we again see God working through natural means to reach a supernatural outcome. (He could have just sent a plague while Israel waited on the sidelines, but instead God wanted Israel to take steps of faith and march into battle dependent on Him.)

--part of Israel's army snuck behind the city at night and then attacked the city the next day after the Ai army left the city and went after the rest of Israel's army that approached from the front of the city.

--the portion of Israel's army that approached from the front turned around and pretended to flee which caused the Ai army to pursue them, thus leaving the city defenseless.

--after the rest of Israel's army attacked the city, we read, "And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and behold, the smoke of the city ascended to heaven. So they had no power to flee this way or that way, and the people [Israel's army] who had fled to the wilderness turned back on the pursuers... 25 When Israel had finished killing all the men of Ai in the fields and in the desert where they had chased them, and when every one of them had been put to the sword, all the Israelites returned to Ai and killed those who were in it. 25 Twelve thousand men and women fell that day--all the people of Ai. 26 For Joshua did not draw back the hand that held out his javelin until he had destroyed all who lived in Ai. 27 But Israel did carry off for themselves the livestock and plunder of this city, as the LORD had instructed Joshua. 28 So Joshua burned Ai and made it a permanent heap of ruins, a desolate place to this day." (Joshua 8:20-28)

--OVERVIEW OF THE PURPOSE OF ISRAEL CONQUERING THE LAND OF CANAAN:

--as you read the account of Israel's annihilation of all the nations in the land of Canaan one logical question that arises is how could that be part of a loving God's plan? Isn't God supposed to bring peace?

--the answer is that in order to bring peace God has to first deal with sin which prevents peace.

--throughout history there have been isolated instances of God strategically executing judgement on sin in the world...

--at the time of Noah God executed judgement on the entire human population except one family.

--Israel was simply an instrument in God's hand to execute judgement on sin at a strategic point in history.

--if Israel didn't conquer the land of Canaan then Israel would have been corrupted by the sinful culture of Canaan...

--Deuteronomy 20:16-18: "But of the cities of these peoples which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, 17 but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the LORD your God has commanded you, 18 lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the LORD your God."

--if Israel was corrupted by the sinful culture of Canaan (more than they were corrupted by their own sinful nature) then they would have never developed as a nation in order to reflect God's holy character and lay the groundwork for Christ to be born through Israel...

--the physical destruction in Canaan was the path to bringing spiritual salvation to the entire world! Thus fulfilling God's promise to Abraham 500 years earlier... "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you... and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Gen. 12:2-3)

--one example of the groundwork for the ministry of Christ is the annual Passover festival in Israel... for 1500 years before Christ was born the meaning of His death was memorialized every year in the heart of Israel's culture so that after His death nobody could dispute the purpose of His death!

--after defeating Ai, Israel builds an altar to the Lord on nearby Mt. Ebal, which God previously commanded through Moses, for Israel to renew their covenant with the Lord to follow His law and reflect His character...

--Joshua 8:30: "Now Joshua built an altar to the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded [*in Deuteronomy 11:29*]... And they offered on it burnt offerings to the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings. And there, in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses..."

--Israel then went on to follow the ceremony that Moses prescribed of pronouncing the blessings that result from following the law and the curses that result from forsaking the law.

--so Israel is formally declaring the new law of the land - a new way of life in Canaan that reflects God's character rather than Satan's character!

--another question that one might ask is why didn't God give the Canaanite nations a chance to follow God's law?

--the Canaanite nations didn't have a chance because God knew their hearts...He knew that they would be unable to change and follow His law...just like Israel ultimately proved that they were unable to follow His law...which eventually led to Israel suffering the same fate that the Canaanite nations suffered when they were conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians!

--but in spite of Israel's failure to follow God's law, they did fulfill their purpose of bringing Christ into the world through whom anybody anywhere in the world can enter a relationship with God and change by the power of His Spirit!

--SATAN'S TACTIC OF DECEIT:

(ch. 9)

--after Israel's victory at Ai groups of nations started banding together to fight against Israel, but the Gibeonites took a different approach and tricked Israel into making a peace treaty with them... (Joshua 9:1-15)

--once again Israel rushes to action without first seeking the Lord's guidance... **"but they did not ask counsel of the Lord."** (9:14)

--after making a peace treaty with the Gibeonites Israel felt that they couldn't break that treaty and therefore rather than destroying them as God had originally commanded they let them live as servants in Israel.

--2 Samuel indicates that the Lord took this oath seriously also... "Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, "It is because of Saul and his bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites." 2 So the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them. Now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; the children of Israel had sworn protection to them, but Saul had sought to kill them in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah." (2 Sam 21:1-2)

--as a side note, it is worth mentioning again that deception is one of Satan's chief tactics against the church today...

--Jesus said that Satan is the "father of lies" (John 8:44)

--one of the hallmarks of temptations is deception...temptations are never what they appear to be...they promise one thing but deliver another!

--just like Satan told Adam and Eve they would be like God if they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but what the exact opposite happened – rather than going higher they fell further than they could imagine!

--knowing that Satan and his system in the world works around the clock to trick us into sin may we always maintain a prayerful attitude and seek counsel from the Lord rather than rushing into things as Israel rushed into the peace treaty with the Gibeonites!

--and may we not only engage in prayer but wear the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6) to combat the deceptive schemes of Satan.

--Ephesians 6:11-12: **"Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.** 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

--THE DAY THE SUN STOOD STILL:

(ch.10)

--after Israel made a peace treaty with the Gibeonites, word of Israel's advancement spread further and the king of Jerusalem (pre-Israel Jerusalem), banned together with four other kings and attacked Gibeon...

--Israel was then obligated to come to Gibeon's rescue, which God providentially used to further their conquest of Canaan.

--Joshua 10:7: "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.'"

--it appears that Israel did not have enough daylight to secure victory in this battle (perhaps because they were fighting against 5 kingdoms banned together as a result of their peace treaty with the Gibeonites) and Joshua prayed that God would cause the sun to stand still to give them more time...

--Joshua 10:12-14: "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.'" 13 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. 14 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."

--the passage speaks of the event from a human perspective; what probably happened was the earth stopped spinning so it looked like the sun stood still.

--skeptics may be quick to write off this account as fiction, but a secular historian, Immanuel Velikovsky, researched this and found stories around the world of a long day, long morning, and long night that corresponded with the long day in Joshua, according to his conclusions.

--he published his findings in a book, *World's In Collision*, which explores a theory that the planet Venus was pulled into our solar system after being ejected from Jupiter as a comet which resulted in a polar shift on the earth that created the long day.

--by the end of the battle against the 5 Amorite kingdoms, Israel reached a milestone in their conquest of Canaan as the land of Canaan was effectively cut in half.

--in a sense, this battle could be seen around the world as the sun stopped moving across the sky...foreshadowing Israel's victory that would eventually affect the entire world!

--the future arrival of Christ (through Israel) would bring salvation to the entire world!

--or, in the words of Joshua 8:14, the sun standing still simply made it as clear as day that "surely the LORD was fighting for Israel!"