

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Joshua: God's Faithful Giving Of The Promised Land To Israel

Part II: God's Giving Israel Victory Over The Canaanites, Joshua 5:13-12:24

F. Gaining God's Emboldening Help With Humanly Intimidating Issues (Joshua 10:1-43)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We believers in Christ often need God's emboldening help with humanly intimidating matters we can face:

(1) Last Sunday, a concerned Church member loaned me a Hillsdale College publication that had a speech by David French, a writer for National Review. The speech, entitled, "The Battle of Indiana and the Promise of Battles to Come" (Imprimis, April 2015, vol. 44, num. 4), predicted a "long war" will occur between "leftists" who promote "the sexual revolution" and "Christianity." Mr. French recalled recent conflicts involving Chick-fil-A, Hobby Lobby, Phil Robertson of "Duck Dynasty," Houston's "leftist" officials versus area pastors over the contents of their sermons and Memories Pizza, adding, "These battles will stop only if Christians abandon their historic faith on a truly national scale or if the Left decides that it is content to 'live and let live,'" but that "neither side looks ready to yield." (Ibid.)

This publication was loaned to me in our Fellowship Hall following last Sunday's morning worship service, and God has often signaled the application of the following Sunday morning sermon in such events in Fellowship Hall, so when I saw the connection between this publication and today's passage, I knew I had to address it today!

(2) However, believers often face humanly intimidating trials on a wide range of issues at the local level, too.

Need: *Accordingly, we ask, "How can we gain God's emboldening help to handle humanly intimidating issues?!"*

- I. After the Gibeonites had made peace with Israel, the nearby Canaanite king of Jerusalem called on four other Canaanite kings of the nearby southern Canaanite cities of Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon to join him in waging war against the city of Gibeon, Joshua 10:1-4.
- II. When these five Canaanite kings with their armies arrived to besiege Gibeon, the Gibeonites sent a message to Joshua, asking that Israel quickly come to their rescue, Joshua 10:5-6.
- III. Israel's treaty with Gibeon was NOT a MUTUAL DEFENSE pact, but a PEACE treaty (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 350), so Joshua was not actually required to honor the Gibeonites' request. However, from the human perspective, Joshua faced EITHER a GREAT THREAT OR a GREAT OPPORTUNITY:
 - A. Joshua knew that fighting so many city states in open country was a huge risk for Israel's army!
 - B. However, he also knew that winning such a conflict would be a huge advantage: if they could defeat all these Canaanite warriors in the open country, Israel's men would not need to carry out prolonged battles in besieging each southern Canaanite city separately, but quickly defeat them as they no longer had enough soldiers, Ibid.
- IV. Significantly, in making this decision, Joshua had been READING God's SCRIPTURES and recalled that in Exodus 23:20-24, God had PROMISED to send His DIVINE ANGEL of the LORD to WAR against such Canaanites, HIMSELF "CUTTING THEM OFF" (Ex. 20:23) when Israel HEEDED God.
- V. Well, Israel was upright with God, and Joshua had consulted Him to gain His pledge to deliver all of the enemy into his hand so that Joshua was not to fear them (Jos. 10:8), so Joshua acted in BOLD FAITH in SCRIPTURE and so gained EMBOLDENING DIVINE HELP for a GREAT VICTORY, Jos. 10:7, 8-43:
 - A. First, Joshua led Israel's army all night up from Gilgal to Gibeon, a 25-mile, 4,000-foot climb up "steep, difficult terrain," what would normally exhaust foot soldiers, Jos. 10:7, 9; Ibid. However, in faith in Scripture and in God's recent verbal promise of assured victory, Joshua believed that God would equip Israel to win, so he marched his men in faith that God would give them the strength to fight once they arrived at Gibeon!
 - B. Second, when they reached Gibeon, Joshua then led Israel on a surprise attack on the Canaanite coalition, and God helped him by not only giving Israel's men the strength to fight after their difficult trek, He also caused the Canaanites to become mentally confused so that Israel could easily slay many of them, Joshua 10:10 NIV.
 - C. Third, as surviving Canaanites fled west down the Beth-horon descent with Israel in hot pursuit, the Lord rained hailstones down on the Canaanites to kill more by the hail than Israel slew by the sword, Joshua 10:11.
 - D. Fourth, this hailstorm led Joshua to apply the Exodus 23:23 context due to what great miracle next occurred:
 1. Immediately after God's Exodus 23:20-23 promise of the Angel of the Lord's help in fighting Canaanites, Exodus 23:24 adds God's command through Moses that Israel was to destroy the Canaanite false gods.
 2. Joshua knew that a key god the Canaanites worshiped was Baal, the storm god (Z. P. E. B., vol. One, p. 432), so in using hailstones to kill Canaanites, God was using a tool of Baal's on them, demoralizing them!

3. Joshua also knew the Canaanites worshiped the sun and the moon (Ibid., B. K. C., O. T., p. 351), and he needed more daylight to slay fleeing Canaanites before they reached their cities, so he boldly called God Who had countered the false Canaanite god Baal in using hailstones on the enemy to override the false sun and moon gods to make them stop in the heavens in order to give Israel extra daylight, Joshua 10:12; Ibid.
 4. Joshua may also have recalled Genesis 1:15 in the written Scriptures that he also then had that taught that a major reason God had created the sun and moon was to provide light for man on the earth!
 5. Well, from Joshua's viewpoint, the sun was directly overhead at Gibeon and the moon was to his west over the Valley of Aijalon (The Macmillan Bible Atlas, 1968, p. 44, map 56), so in faith in front of all Israel's fighting men, Joshua boldly told the sun and the moon to stand still, and God heard him and gave Israel about another day's worth of daylight so they might complete their battle victory, Joshua 10:13a.
- E. This great miracle was recorded in the book of Jasher, a record of great national events, Joshua 10:13b-14.
- F. Fifth, the Joshua 10:15 claim that Israel's men returned to their camp in Gilgal is part of the Joshua 10:12-15 quotation from the book of Jasher that was not a record of all of this military campaign's events (cf. Guthrie & Motyer, eds., The New Bible Com.: Rev., 1970, p. 243-244; Ibid., B. K. C., O. T.), so, *before* they returned to Gilgal as Joshua 10:15 reports, Joshua and Israel's army in Joshua 10:16-27 took advantage of the long day:
1. Joshua learned that the five Canaanite kings had fled to hide in a cave at Makkedah, 35 miles southwest of Gibeon (Ibid.; Ibid., B. K. C., O. T., p. 351) so he ordered Israel's men to block the cave's mouth with large stones and to set a guard there, but to pursue the enemy that was still fleeing in the country, Jos. 10:16-19.
 2. After Israel had slain all but a few of the fleeing Canaanite warriors who managed to reach their cities, no one was left to threaten Israel militarily, so Israel's men returned to Makkedah where Joshua had stopped, likely ending their long day by camping there, Joshua 10:20-21; The Wycliffe Bible Com., 1971, p. 218.
- G. Sixth, likely the next day (Ibid.), Joshua brought out the five Canaanite kings from the cave, Joshua 10:21-22. He had Israel's military leaders put their feet on the necks of these kings and he told Israel's leaders that God would similarly give them victory over all their Canaanite foes, that they were not to fear or be dismayed (Jos. 10:23-24). Joshua then slew these kings and hung their bodies on trees as a divine curse until sunset before removing them for burial in the cave where they had hidden themselves, Joshua 10:25-27 with Deut. 21:23.
- H. Seventh, thus further emboldened, Joshua led Israel's men with God's help quickly to rout the rest of the now-weak cities of southern Canaan before they returned to Gilgal, Jos. 10:28-43; Ibid., B. K. C., O. T., p. 351-352.

Lesson: *When Joshua and Israel boldly obeyed God and believed the Scriptures, they saw God boldly and abundantly help them, and that in turn only emboldened their faith and effort the more, producing great victory.*

Application: *(1) May we believe on Christ to have eternal life, John 3:16. (2) As believers, (a) may we check with God's Word to see if we are upright and make any adjustments needed to be such (1 John 1:9) (b) BEFORE venturing boldly to heed Scripture in ministry. (3) In doing so, we will see God boldly and abundantly provide all we need to accomplish His assigned tasks, (4) blessings that will only increase our faith and productivity!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

In our introduction, we noted that David French, a writer for National Review, had recently predicted a "long war" will occur between "leftists" who promote the "sexual revolution" and "Christianity," Ibid., French.

(1) Yet, to apply this sermon's lesson, we should not be intimidated over this matter, for Christ has promised us in Scripture that He will build His Church so that the "gates of hell shall not prevail against it," Matthew 16:18.

(2) Besides, much as God began to help Israel's men by causing the Canaanite enemy soldiers to be confused and demoralized at Gibeon, evidence that God may already be at work to help us here can be seen even from the "left" itself: in his May 13, 2015 blog, Fredrik DeBoer, himself a progressive academic in rhetoric and composition, complained about "today's progressives," that "(w)e can't articulate why our vision of the future is better than the other side's, and in fact many of us will tell you that it's offensive to think that we have an obligation to educate others on that vision at all . . . We're a mess." ("Notable & Quotable," The Wall Street Journal, May 18, 2015, p. A13)

So, the spiritual bankruptcy of the darkness we face is starting to alarm even those in the world itself!

(3) Then, as God gave Israel's men the energy to fight following their difficult trek uphill from Gilgal to Gibeon, this past week, I received an encouraging letter with a sizeable check enclosed for our Church ministry from a relative on the West Coast. Each time this kind of event has occurred, the Lord has signaled His encouragement.

May we like Joshua believe in God and Christ. Then, may we walk uprightly before the Lord and boldly trust His Word and so act upon it, expecting God abundantly to help us and so further to embolden us!