

Joshua 07-06-29a

This is Friday the 29th of June 2007. We continue tonight our study in the book of Joshua resuming in the latter part of chapter 10. We'll take a moment as is our custom to go to the Lord in prayer.

It is an opportunity to check and be sure that we're prepared for the study and fellowship together in God's word. Shall we pray? Father, we recognize the privilege that we enjoy because of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ to approach your throne to represent ourselves through his priesthood and through his intercession. We can stand before you and make our requests known.

We are grateful for the age in which we live, the opportunities that we have as body and bride of Christ in the church age. We know that it is essential for us to grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior. As we study your word this evening, we ask that you will bless us with insight, with understanding, with the ability to see not only the truth contained in your word, but its application in the day-to-day activities in which we engage.

We would live our lives in a way that is pleasing in your sight, and we trust that our study tonight will contribute toward that goal. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Joshua chapter 10, we have studied in some detail the story of the Gibeonites, the alliance made under sort of a false flag of moldy bread and worn out sandals, almost immediately challenged by the confederation of five kings who come up to attack Gibeon for their betrayal. It doesn't take long for your friends to become your enemies, and the Gibeonites become a target for those around them. We understand this.

You ally yourself with God's people. You take a stand that you think is based on truth and on what is right, and you will come under attack from those who don't value what is right and what is true, who have their own welfare and their own well-being. This is one of the reasons God wants to destroy and eliminate the people of the land.

They are evil. The iniquity of the Amorites is now full. These are an iniquitous people.

They will turn on their friends in a very short amount of time for a very slim pretext. So the attack takes place. Joshua goes to the aid of their new allies and defeats the armies with the supernatural intervention of God in extending the time and in destroying the large portions of these confederated armies with hail.

So the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Yarmouth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon are defeated. Now, this story is completed from the standpoint of geography and from the standpoint of astronomy, if you will. The sun and moon episode is concluded in verse 15, and this is where we concluded last time.

And it says, There has been no day like that in verse 14, before it or after it, that the Lord heeded the voice of a man, for the Lord fought for Israel. The Lord fought for Israel. That is the point of the perspective and the details and the account that concludes in verses 14 and 15.

That is the point. There has never been a day, and up to that point, you look at history, and even when Abraham went and fought the kings to rescue the people of Sodom and got his nephew Lot back and all of their goods, and went and broke bread with Melchizedek, that whole episode, it does not say anything about God intervening in a supernatural way, raining down hail from heaven to destroy the enemies. There has never been a day up to this point, like this, where God heeded the voice of a man and fought, as it were, under the generalship of Yeshua.

But He does it here. That is the point of that story. Now look at verse 15.

Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal. He chased all the people down. What the hail did not kill, they killed.

Then it says, Joshua returned to Gilgal. Now, as we continue the account, in verse 16 it says, But these five kings that were introduced back at the beginning, had fled and hidden themselves in a cave at Makeda. And it was told Joshua, saying, The five kings have been found hidden in the cave at Makeda.

So Joshua said, Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and set men by it to guard them. Do not stay there yourselves, but pursue your enemies, and attack their rear guard. Do not allow them to enter their cities, for the Lord your God has delivered them into your hand.

Then it happened, while Joshua and the children of Israel made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they had finished, that those who escaped entered fortified cities. And all the people returned to the camp, to Joshua at Makeda, in peace. Now, chronologically speaking, what has happened? Our previous account, looking at the sun and the moon and the whole course of the battle, ended with Joshua going back to Gilgal.

As is so often the case in Hebrew narrative, the author here, the storyteller, has backed up to give us another angle, another perspective. So people do this in movies, they do it in television shows all the time, where you'll see a thing from one perspective, and then they rewind and they show you the same thing from another character's perspective, or another point of view. Football plays, they've got five or six different cameras, and they'll show it from overhead, and they'll show it from ground level, and they'll show it from the one hanging on the wire, and all of these different angles.

Well, this is an ancient technique. I tell you this because of what we're going to look at

here in a moment, with regard to commentary. There are people who don't seem to understand that the narrator feels free to back up and start over from a different perspective, and that there's something wrong with the account, that this is a sign of something to matter.

All the people returned in verse 21 to the camp to Joshua at Makeda in peace. No one moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel. There wasn't even anyone left to yell at him.

Then Joshua said, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings to me from the cave. And they did so, and brought out those five kings to him from the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Yarmouth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon. So it was when they brought out those kings to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the captains of the men of war who went with him, Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings.

And they grew near, and they put their feet on their necks. Then Joshua said to them, Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed. Be strong and of good courage, for thus the Lord will do to all your enemies against whom you fight.

And afterward Joshua struck them and killed them, and hanged them on five trees, and they were hanging on the trees until evening. So it was, at the time of the going down of the sun, that Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees, cast them into the cave where they had been hidden, and laid large stones against the cave's mouth, which remained until this very day. On that day Joshua took Makeda, struck it and its king with the edge of the sword, he utterly destroyed them, all the people who were in it, he let none remain.

He did to the king of Makeda as he had done to the king of Jericho. And now we're going to get an account of several cities that are defeated by Joshua. And skip down to verse 40.

So Joshua conquered all the land, now this is the south land, this is the south half, they drove the wedge in from Jericho and Ai, and took the ridge there. Now this is important because a similar course was followed back in the early part of the last century, when the British went through and conquered Palestine, and took it back in the early part of the 20th century, the general involved did the very same thing. He took that ridge, split the land in half, and then defeated the south, and then defeated the north.

Followed virtually the very same strategy. If I look for a second I'll be able to find that fella's name. But when you get down to verse 40, all the south, the low land, the wilderness slopes, the kings he left unremaining, utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel had commanded.

And Joshua conquered them from Kadesh, Barnea, as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even as far as Gibeon. All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel. Now look at verse 43.

Looks an awful lot like our previous verse. Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal. So there are people who look at verse 15, and there are people who look at verse 43, and they say, well this is a silly statement that Joshua returned, he fought this battle at Gibeon, then he went back to Gilgal, then he came back and fought some different battle at Makeda, and see that the details don't match too well, and it's a conflation of two different accounts.

And I want to take this opportunity, I don't do this very often, I've done it once or twice in the past, but all of us want to learn and grow and feed ourselves from God's word to an increasing, ever more increasing extent. This should be your goal. You should not simply be passive and wait for a Friday night or a Sunday morning for someone to teach.

We are to grow, we are to mature, and you should, and I know all of you that I know of, do meditate on your own, and study on your own, and to an increasing, ever increasing extent, find that you can elucidate truth for yourself from God's word. There used to be a notion floating around in some circles that, well I've got to find my right pastor, and I will wait like a small bird in the nest with my beak open for him to drop the food in, and that will be my spiritual nourishment, and all I can do is wait for my quote unquote right pastor to drop in the nuggets of information. This is not biblical, it is not legitimate, it is not valid, read Ephesians chapter 4, we are all to grow to the standard of a mature man.

Certainly you can always benefit from the ministry of a pastor or a teacher, or someone who can go spend the time, do the research, has the tools, can bring out things from the language, especially when you get into some of the deeper waters, do more difficult passages, tougher theological nuts to crack, interpretive cruxes, and so on. But, do not be lazy, do not defer your responsibility to grow spiritually on anybody, not a pastor, not a teacher, not a radio personality, not somebody in a book. You and I, all of us together, have a responsibility to figure out what the Bible says, and what it means for us, and that ability and that perspicacity should develop over time.

So, it's important for you, just like it's important for me, to be able to discern the value of commentary and aid that you find floating around. Most of the time, you all are not going to have a command of Greek and a command of Hebrew to the extent that you can go in cold and unaided and elucidate deep truths from a given passage from the original language. You may not have the background in biblical theology, which is a technical term meaning the theology of the books of the Bible, to understand the thrust of an author, and so on.

This is why guys go to seminary. This is why you spend a lifetime absorbing scholarship. But, you should have a working familiarity.

Hear me now. You, as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, should have a good, working knowledge of the Word of God. You ought to know what's going on in any given biblical book.

You may not be able to do that right now, but that ought to be your goal. I couldn't even tell you right now the finer points of what's going on in Habakkuk or whatever. We haven't gone through that book yet, verse by verse.

But, you know what I'm saying. You should know that it's a minor prophet. You should know roughly which time period the thing takes place in, what the general message of the book is.

When you find yourself in a book, you ought to be able to quickly get yourself up to speed and have some theological framework for going in and reading and meditating on God's Word. It is like knowing about food. You know what's food and what isn't.

You know what's good for you and what's not. You know the difference, most of us now know the difference between a saturated and unsaturated fat. We know the difference between a diet soda and one that's got 39 grams of sugar in it.

We know the difference between something that's decaffeinated and something that's got caffeine to blow the top of your head off. We have a working knowledge of our physical nourishment, right? You should have a good working knowledge of spiritual nourishment. It's your responsibility, not mine, to ensure that you are fed.

I do my best to elucidate things and bring them out, but this is your responsibility. So, having said all that, having laid this rather laborious foundation, I want to talk for a moment about the kind of information that is available. You say, yes sir, absolutely, I understand what you're saying.

We need to get in there and spend some time on my own making some forays into the Word of God. If I get stuck, I'll go ask somebody who knows. You can always email me.

You can call me. You can ask me. Find somebody else.

Look for a trusted commentary, an authoritative source. But you want to get in and tackle some of these things. Read your Bible.

Study your Bible. Meditate on your Bible. You are a believer and you don't need to be spoon-fed every single thing all your life.

Anybody who implies that you do is in need of going to the Word of God and studying it a little more for themselves before they make a statement like that. You are not dependent on any one individual. That's a Catholic idea.

I need my priest. I need my cardinal. I need my bishop.

I need my pope. I need my rabbi. No, you don't.

You are a believer priest. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only intermediary between you and the Father and you have a responsibility, you have a command to get a grip on these things and be able to cope with them and to deal in them and to have some confidence in them for yourself. So, you say, all right, fine, I'm going to do that.

I'm going to look at this Joshua chapter 10. Lots of resources on the World Wide Web. You don't have to buy a theological library.

You don't even have to buy a copy of the old Isby. It's all online. Matthew Henry is online.

Adam Clark is online. A lot of great wonderful old commentaries are online. A lot of new stuff is online.

Guys, including our church, publish things all the time. So, you say, well, I'm going to go out there and I'm going to put this passage in. I did this.

I put our passage on Joshua and the five kings. What's going on here with the five kings? He sticks them in a cave, brings them out of the cave, kills them, puts them back in the cave. What's up with that? Well, so, suppose this is your task you set before yourself.

I'm going to see if I can figure out what is the deeper spiritual significance of the five kings at Makeda. So, you put it in to your Google. You Google forth to see what you can find on this.

Well, here's one of the first things I discovered when I put in Makeda and five kings. Three words into Google. I get a website called ft111.com and here a fellow named Bill Burns, Faith Tabernacle, Cremling, Colorado, has a little essay here called five kings.

Now, I'm going to give you most of this and I'm going to go fast. So, just consider this to be kind of like water skiing across the top of the waves. But listen carefully.

Listen to the main points. The church finds herself, this again Bill Burns, Cremling, Ohio, give him full credit. The church finds herself in a five month time of testing in which God is giving us many opportunities to overcome the flesh, the draw of the world, and the devil.

This time of testing, January through May, has been scheduled by the Lord to purge his church so that he can bring his people into the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Those who yield to this process will find themselves experiencing Pentecost around the end of May and first part of June. It is the Master's desire to bring his washed bride into a fuller measure of the Holy Spirit for such a time as this.

His purpose is to prepare his blood-bought church for a great victory over Satan's kingdom. King Jesus wants to lead his people into their inheritance whereby they have

victory over all of the works of the enemy. Satan desires to rule over the church and thereby keep them from receiving the blessings and promises of God.

This morning the Lord said, quote, Do not give up, my people, for victory is on the horizon. Even now you are overcoming the works of the flesh. Even now you are overcoming the world as you separate yourselves from its pull.

Now watch for the works of the enemy, for he is yet hidden. I am speaking to you of the rulers of darkness that will now try to influence your thinking and rule over your actions. This is all in quotes from God.

His purpose is to keep you from the promised land or your position of inheritance. These are the five kings that tried to keep Joshua and Israel from their inheritance. These are hidden kings of great power.

Study and learn so that you are not overcome by them. The story of Joshua and the five kings found in Joshua 10. The five kings formed an alliance against God's people after they heard how Joshua had taken Ai.

In verse 1, Israel's army was defeated at Ai the first time because of Achan's sin. Achan's name means trouble and his sin represents giving into the flesh and the world. Achan's flesh was put to death and then Israel went back and took Ai.

Joshua then attacked these five kings at Gibeon. By the way, I think that's a pretty neat point. Put to death the lust of the flesh and then he can go back and achieve victory.

That's kind of a nice little nugget there. You can imagine that some of the other things that have been said up to this point I might argue with here and there. But I'm giving you this as a sample and I'm not commending or condemning it.

I'm giving it to you as a sample. He goes on. Joshua attacked the five kings at Gibeon.

The name of the five kings at Gibeon in Joshua 10. 3. Adonizidech, Hoham, Piram, Japhia, Debir. Joshua attacked them.

They hid in a cave. These five kings fled and hid in the cave at Makeda. Makeda means place of shepherds.

These five kings, rulers, desire to establish a place of rule over God's people. Their desire is to become the shepherds over the Lord's flock through their spiritual influence over God's people. They desire to replace the spiritual influence of our shepherd, Jesus Christ, and this is how they plan to do it.

Makeda is used in the sense of herding, meaning to drive by force to a designated place. So these kings intend to control and move God's people by force and spiritual pressure to a place away from the true shepherd where they can be slaughtered. 1. Adonizidech,

King of Jerusalem.

His name means my Lord is righteous. A lord is one who is ruler or master over. He wants to rule over our position of righteousness.

He is king of Jerusalem. He means possession of peace or teaching of peace. Jerusalem does.

Jesus has taught us to live in peace, maintain a position of peace. If we lose our peace, we are not trusting in the Lord. We can't operate in faith.

This king, Adonizidech, is after our peace and will try to instill worry and fear. Do not allow your circumstances, your places of testing, to steal your peace. Trust in the Lord.

Be anxious for nothing. 2. Hoham, King of Hebron. His name means whom Jehovah impels.

By the way, you need to take these meanings with a grain of salt. Hoham does not mean Jehovah impels. As a god over his people, Hoham impels drive by exertion or strong moral pressure.

In other words, he will drive people into religious performance to perfect themselves. The result will be legalism. This driving force will pressure people to try to make themselves better by behavior modification rather than resting in and leaning on God's spirit by which they can overcome the works of the flesh.

This will result in a person having a spirit of religion rather than walking in the spirit of God. Hebron, the king, Hoham is king of Hebron. Hebron means association.

This spirit will try to bring you into relationships with religious people who are legalistic. So set a watch. 3. Piram, King of Yarmouth.

His name means like a wild ass, which represents stubbornness. It refuses to be associated with any body of believers. This spirit wants to make you wild or unbridled, keep you from the place God would have you to be.

Yarmouth means heights, which represents pride that will keep you from your place of destiny because you don't want to submit to anyone else. Don't allow this spirit to keep you isolated. 4. Yafia, King of Lachish.

His name means shining or show thyself. This spirit will try to get you to shine the light on yourself, call attention to yourself, to man your eyes. You get the pattern here.

I'm not going to go through the rest of the kings, but he does the same thing with all of them. This is what Joshua did to gain victory over these five kings. He rolled a large stone over the mouth of the cave, bind these powers and seal them up so they will not

influence your attitudes and actions.

Set a guard so they don't break out against you and take you captive. Then he cites the scripture that talks about Joshua bringing them out and having the leaders in Israel put their feet on their necks, hung them on the trees. Do not fear these spirits, but use the sword, the word of God, to strike them and slay them.

Then he quotes Ephesians, take the helm of salvation, sword of the spirit, and so forth. Then he quotes a few other scriptures about fighting the good fight of faith. 2 Timothy, the Lord will deliver me from every evil work.

2 Corinthians, thanks be to God who leads us in triumph in Christ. The Lord is faithful who will establish you and guard you from the evil one. That's the end of his essay.

This is at one end of what I would call, and this actually has a long tradition, this is sort of an allegorical interpretation. It's very much in the realm of what we were told at seminary is called sort of a springboard. You'll take the meaning of a word and kind of launch into something.

A lot of the application is good, perfectly fine. You do want to set a guard, you want to avoid legalism, you don't want to be controlled by lusts and so on. There are many good applications there.

The question you have to ask yourself is, do they come from the passage? Is the mention of the king's names, is the mention of the king's cities, does it warrant going that far? This is a judgment call. We've often looked at the meaning of names and the meaning of places. If they're mentioned, does it have a significance? Well, it becomes a question of balance.

How far do you go? Is that what the passage is there to teach? Do you have to know those meanings, in other words, to get what's in the passage? So I offer you this as food for thought. There's a lot of good things in this essay. As I say, I really do not want to come across as being critical of it.

I'm sure heard things that we would never make by way of observation, interpretation, or application. But lots of different people have taken lots of different approaches. I give you this as an example.

This is very common when you go to looking around for resources to see commentary. All of us need to have the wisdom and the perception to discern. Don't throw out the baby with the bathwater.

Don't read somebody saying there's a spirit of oppression and throw the thing out. There's some good ideas in here. There's some good observations.

I really like that thing about Aiken. I never said that by destroying the flesh, now you can win the victory. I think that's a great thought.

I'm glad I found it here. So be charitable would be my suggestion. Look for what is good.

You can skim over things that maybe you don't find helpful or you don't necessarily find valid. I think overall, this is not a bad job with the passage, in my judgment. Not that he cares what I think, but I hope you understand what I'm saying.

I think it is a mistake for us to say, well, we've got all of these tools and we've got somebody that's got all these years in the language and so we're going to wait for the definitive word from the mountain and all else is really not that helpful. Listen, there is insight. God the Holy Spirit is at work in anybody who has an enthusiasm and a desire and any sort of susceptibility to his teaching ministry.

You can read almost any commentary and come away with something good. I cite this not to denigrate it, but as an encouragement to you to look for that which is good. We've got a memory verse to that effect, don't we? Whatsoever things are good, think on these things.

If you find a source like this and you say, well, I'm not sure I would really take that approach or agree with those points, don't cast it aside so quickly. I learn a lot, as I've told you many times, from commentaries that I don't really classify as helpful. There are some helpful things in here, a couple of things I didn't think of, a couple of things I didn't think to check that are good.

Now let me give you another example. This is another end of the spectrum. This is more of a technical type of commentary.

This is what I have a lot of on my shelves. I want to give you this as an example. This is from a commentary called Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East.

Very pertinent to this passage. Never has there been a day when the Lord fought for Israel and heeded the voice of a man like this day. So, Samun Kang, S-A-Moon, is his first name, Kang, K-A-N-G is his last name, Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East.

There's an excerpt of this book available on the web and this particular section is available. Now, just try to follow this. According to the biblical tradition, the Gibeonites were attacked by a coalition of five Canaanite kings who had been threatened by them for having made peace with the Israelites, Joshua chapter 9. I'm going to skip a little bit.

Joshua 10, 1-15, the enemy of the Gibeonites and Israelites was a coalition of five Canaanite kings led by the king of Jerusalem, Adonai Zedek. According to the next part of the chapter, the five kings of the southern coalition, after Joshua and his men returned

to Gilgal camp, following the victory, were killed and hung on the trees and their corpses were thrown into the cave and the great stones against the mouth of the caves were set. Notice, this guy takes the chronology as it's given in the passage without any notion of there being a backup.

He says, Joshua, the sons stood still, they fought the battle, they went back to Gilgal, then they came back and killed the kings at Makeda. So, according to Joshua 10, 16-27, the five kings after Joshua and his men returned to Gilgal were killed and hung on the trees. This story used to be interpreted by the Alt school, Alt is a commentator, as an etiology which explains the existence of five trees and of large stones which are still there today.

Etiology is a source story, where did this come from? Thus, the enemy of the Gibeonites and the Israelites with Joshua, as Knoth thinks, another commentator, was not the same southern coalition of kings who were killed at the cave at Makeda. If not, Joshua's return to Gilgal between the battle of Gibeon and the affair of the five kings at Makeda seems highly unlikely. Against the theory of Knoth, only G.E. Wright has claimed that on the grounds of the omission of verse 15, Joshua's return to Gilgal and the Septuagint, the battle of Gibeon, and the Makeda story are a unit of the same event.

On this point, Devoe has suggested that verse 15 in the Septuagint must exist, but with verse 43 it was suppressed because of the difficulty that it causes. In other versions, Syrian, Targum, Vulgate, and some manuscripts of the Septuagint, verse 15 is found. As far as the textual evidence is concerned, either verse 15 or verse 14 might be authentic.

Both verses are an indicator of the Deuteronomical redactor. Moreover, the connection between Joshua and the southern coalition is far removed from the conquest of the southern region which was taken by Judah and Caleb in Judges 1. It is possible that the enemies of the Israelites in verses 1-15 were the Amorite kings in verse 6, or the minor kings who had come up from the lowlands. Now, this goes on for pages and pages and pages like this, dissecting whether or not the text, how it was pasted together, what it might actually say.

And you have to wade through this endlessly to get any sort of nugget of information. You will find this sort of resource as well. Well, we're going to pause here a little bit early since we started late and take our break.

When we come back, I'm going to go back to Joshua and the five kings at Makeda, and we'll see if we can steer an intermediate course between sort of fanciful and allegorical interpretation and literal, scholarly, endless commentary comparison application. And I will try as we do so to give you some thoughts on what I would suggest when you go to the Word of God to figure out what it says. But let's pause here and take our break.