

Joshua 07-06-29b

Let's resume our study here in the book of Joshua, chapter 10. In looking at the text of this passage, and thinking of it as an example of a passage that doesn't immediately have a biblical application, if you were reading through your Bible in a year and came to this passage and you read the account of the battle, you would say, well, God certainly intervenes on behalf of his people, the sun standing still, and the moon, and the Lord listening to a man and fighting on his side. Lots of application.

But you come to this next section, where the kings have been in the cave, and their rocks are put on them, and then the battle proceeds, and the rocks are taken out, the kings are brought out, they are slaughtered, they are hung on a tree, they are put back in the cave, they are covered back up with rocks again, and you say, well now, what am I supposed to make of this? All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable. For what? For doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, so that the man of God may become mature, complete, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Thoroughly furnished with a view toward Ace.

All good works. So, five kings in the cave. Hung up on a tree.

Foot on the neck. What is the application? You say, ah, not so fast, Sam. I know about that foot on the neck thing.

That's a sign of victory. Okay, that's pretty good, and that's great, but let's think in terms of our homiletical triangle there, our observation, interpretation, application. We had an example from the fellow out there in Colorado in the first section, and I began reading to you another commentary that is far more technical, far more interested in how the text arrived in its present shape, very much reflecting the source critical theories, that there was what they call JEPD, that the Old Testament, the first five books of Moses in particular, and many of the other books were patchworks and quilts put together from bits and pieces, and then some glue and some wood chips and some synthetic stuff was flowed into the gaps by the redactors who worked probably during the Babylonian captivity, if not later, to put the Old Testament into its final form, particularly these early historic books, to give Israel a glorious history punctuated with supernatural acts of God, and that it doesn't really have a foundation in fact.

You cannot look around at commentaries without encountering this view, and that's why I give you this Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East by Samun Kang as one example typical of literally scores and scores and scores. Most commentaries in my experience, and you ought to have a few commentaries, I would suggest at a bare minimum, the Bible Knowledge Commentary edited by Dr. Walvert out of Dallas Seminary. That is a good, quick, helpful commentary.

Two volumes set, one for the Old, one for the New. If you don't have that, and if you

have any interest at all in studying the Bible for yourself, as you should, that's a good commentary to have. If you don't have it, put it on your Christmas list or something.

But that's a good place to start. I like the old, old, vintage, early 1800s Adam Clark commentary. Adam Clark was a Methodist.

But what an erudite, well-read scholar. What a great enthusiast for the Word of God. Some of his notions may be quaint, but they're always worth reading.

And Adam Clark, if I had a choice, and Matthew Henry is ubiquitous. Everybody includes it in Bible software. You can find it practically pasted up on the wall at the subway or whatever.

It's just everywhere. But given the choice between Matthew Henry and Adam Clark, I find Adam Clark probably eight to ten times more helpful than Matthew Henry on any given passage. And he's just, at least to me, hugely interesting.

That's Clark with an E, I believe. Adam Clark commentary. I have a set that was given to me by Anne Griswold that was actually published in 1834.

It's got the foxing and the old leather binding, and it's all worn and raggedy. It's got quill pen writing in it, and I love that thing. Even though I've got it digitally, I prefer to look it up in these old books.

It just gives me the sense of reaching into the past. And here's the thoughts of a godly scholar who meditated, who researched, who read extensively. And you kind of get one step closer by grabbing the old book.

But there are lots of good commentaries, but you've got to be able to judge them. You have to be able to discern. You need to be able to have some perspicacity, ability to weigh the value of a source, pick and choose.

It's like my father has told me ever since I was a little boy, even an old cow can nose through and push past the twigs and the straw and get to the good hay. And that's what we want to do. There may be some straw, there may be some unhelpful things scattered through, but keep pushing and nosing through and you'll find helpful insights, helpful information.

Now, I read this thing by Samun Khang, and he was going on about all the Deuteronomical redactors. And let me give you just a little bit more of this, because there's a nugget in here. If you're willing to wade through, he was talking about the other five kings of the southern hill country are productions of the Deuteronomical redactors when the Battle of Gibeon and the story of Makeda are joined in Joshua 10.

They think there were two different battles that got conflated. With the summary of the

southern conquest under the leadership of Joshua, P. Weimar has suggested that the first redactional works can be ascribed to, and then there's a bunch of gobbledygook in here, which are organized from the original battle story of Gibeon, so that the operation of the Israelites against the Gibeonites became that of the Israelite help to Gibeon who was threatened by the coalition of the five Amorite kings. It is supported by similar actions that the king of Jerusalem, Adonai Zenek, requested the help of the four neighboring kings, and that the men of Gibeon were supported by Joshua, but what really happened was an encounter between the Canaanites and the Israelites with Joshua at the head of the tribe of Joseph, or perhaps at Ephraim alone, at a later time is the implication.

However, the battle sites mentioned in the passages which are cited from the book of Yashar were Gibeon and Aijalon, while in the prose narrative it was Beth-Horon. Verse 10 states clearly that Gadolah Maka, and this is in Hebrew here, took place at Gibeon, not Beth-Horon. It may be considered, and this is the great fear by the way, this Gadolah Maka, this is the terror of the Lord that gets put on the enemies.

You'd have to be able to read Hebrew to get that here. It may be considered that the war episodes of Gibeon are related to the other war stories which took place in the same region. Now, here's the nugget.

Incidentally, Gibeon is not mentioned in the early history of Israel from the time of Joshua to Saul, but only during the reign of David. Of course, excluding this mention here. Nevertheless, the victory of Samuel against the Philistines in 1 Samuel 7 took place at Mizpah, near Gibeon.

Blankensop identifies El-Jib with Mizpah as the place of Samuel's victory. The retreat had passed through Bet-Kar, verse 11, which is amended as Bet-Horon, Valley of Eijalon. Again, they're just stating conjectures and suppositions as fact.

The account of Jonathan's surprise attack on the Philistines in 1 Samuel 14 also took place near Michmash and Geba. That is about 5 miles from Gibeon. The retreat is down the Valley of Eijalon, which must have taken the Philistines past Gibeon, especially if we read Bet-Horon in verse 23.

The second of two victories of David over the Philistines in 2 Samuel 5 is also described as taking place near Gibeon, on the basis of the original reading, Ma-Gibeah, in verse 25. Again, that's Hebrew. All three battle descriptions above contain the similar holy war elements, divine oracle, panic, and miraculous intervention of Yahweh, etc.

Thus it is considered that the Battle of Gibeon was composed as a reflection of the battle descriptions above, especially that of David, if Joshua 9 reflects the policy of David on Gibeon. And it goes on in this vein. On and on and on.

But, they mention some helpful similar battles. 1 Samuel 4.5, in the story of Samuel,

reflects the victory over the Philistines in chapter 7. Yahweh threw the Philistines into panic before the Israelites with thunder. In the prose narrative of the campaign of Deborah and Barak, Judges 4.5, Yahweh threw Sisera into panic.

It resulted from the vanguard motif of Yahweh, who went out before the army in Exodus 14. Yahweh also threw the Egyptian army into panic. The idea of Hamam is due mainly to a theoretical schematization of military ideology of Deuteronomy 1 and 2. But originally this idea does not belong to the Deuteronomic, etc.

This is the kind of stuff I have to wade through, on your behalf, every week, every day. I just waded through slathers and piles and mounds of such text. Originally this idea does not belong to the Deuteronomical school.

Some scholars believe the idea of Hamam, Ham, comes from a pre-Deuteronomical idiom, in the battles between David, etc., etc., etc. It's just mountains of strawy text looking for those little nuggets. But, when you go to a commentary, or go to a website, or put a thing in a search engine and come up with some stuff, do not be quick to dismiss it out of hand.

Have a little patience. This is my advice, this is my encouragement to you. Have a little patience, read past the first few paragraphs, stick with it a little bit, and think positive.

Think, there's something in here. It's kind of like those, when I was a little kid, they had these things, can you find the frog in the picture? Can you find the churn? Can you find the bicycle? And at first you look at the picture and you don't see anything. But you study it a little bit, and pretty soon you begin to notice these little hidden prizes in the picture.

And the more you study, the more of them you find, and it becomes sort of a treasure hunt. Look at your excursions into commentary-type material as a treasure hunt. This person has taken the time and the trouble to look at the Word of God and write about it.

And if they have any positive enthusiasm for the Word of God, God the Holy Spirit will try to illuminate the truth. This is what I pray for that he does for me and for anyone who studies the Word of God. And there will be something in there that's helpful.

Keep looking until you find it. Don't be judgmental. And this skill, by the way, is very helpful to practice and to cultivate as you watch pastors or teachers on TV, as you listen to pastors or teachers on the radio, as you wade through commentators and annotators and opinionators in various places that you read on the web or in books or wherever, because... Why is this helpful? One of these days, you're going to have the chance to talk to a fellow believer, maybe in your family, maybe one of your friends, maybe a fellow employee, maybe someone you come in contact with, and they're going to be from a completely different perspective and a completely different camp.

And by virtue of having practiced this patience and this positive outlook, there's going to be something in here that's good. It will transfer to the application of the injunction to love one another. It's not an academic exercise for its own sake.

It produces patience. Let patience have its perfect work, the scripture says. This is a way to cultivate patience.

Don't be so quick to turn off the Christian network channel. Don't be so quick to flip the station away when you hear some wild things on the radio. Now granted, sometimes you listen and after five or ten minutes, it truly is a barren wasteland and you can turn away.

But think positive. This is my encouragement. I cannot tell you how many great things I have learned, how many little threads I have picked up, and I start following that thread in my own library.

Somebody sparks an idea. Somebody makes a casual comment. Somebody makes an offhand observation.

And I think, well, now that's interesting. And you start pursuing that and following it and meditating on it and praying about it and thinking about scriptures that might bear upon it. And God opens a whole new avenue of insight and investigation and inspiration and application.

And so I guess what struck me about looking at this section about Joshua and the kings is it's a classic case of a passage that, other than the foot on the neck thing like God will give you victory, I mean, you can do that in a minute and you're done. But where is the traction? Where is the correction and rebuke and instruction that comes from that passage? You've got to dig a little. You have to persist.

You have to be willing to look past the first few comments and the first few ideas that somebody might offer on it if your own well is run dry and you're looking around for help. Now, my own well is not run dry and I've already organized my thoughts on this passage, but it's helpful to check. Maybe you missed something.

Maybe somebody's got an idea. You check and see, am I just completely out in the weeds? Has anybody else had this thought? Where does this lead me? Where does this take me? And the Word of God becomes a, to me, the Star Trek franchise had this movie, one of the last ones, called The Undiscovered Country. So much in the Word of God.

People have been studying this in the church age for 2,000 years and the Jews studied it for 2,000 years before that. Well, 1,000 years before that. 1,400 years before that.

And the Word of God is still. There's great stretches of it. It's like Lewis and Clark.

It's undiscovered country. There are places where the virgin snow lies undisturbed and

there's not a footprint in it. And there you find revelation of the character of God.

So I encourage you. I plead with you. Pursue your own study of the Word of God.

Do it with enthusiasm. Do it with expectation. Do it with optimism.

And do not fear to read anything you can find, good, bad, or ugly. I think sometimes Christians are a little bit timid. Well, I might read something that would shake my faith.

No, you won't. If your faith is so shaky that something you read can tip it over, your faith is a hollow shell anyway. Your faith has got to be.

Your understanding has got to be. Your knowledge has got to be strong enough to stand up to whatever Satan in the world throws against it or what's the use of having it. If it can't stand up to scrutiny, why are you clinging to it? We have a robust, we have a strong, vital, living, fruitful faith and a fruitful understanding of God's Word.

Sally forth. Get in there and dig. Get your hands dirty.

Collect a little bit of Greek. Collect a little bit of Hebrew. I know some of you have done that already, and I know you've been rewarded for your efforts.

I cannot tell you the joy of firsthand contact with God's Word, and most of you, I'm preaching to the choir, you know this already. But I just encourage you, don't let that flag, don't let events and timetables and task lists and things get in the way of it. It's the most valuable time you will spend in this life.

Not just hearing what I say or hearing what somebody else says, but getting in, because when you're digging for yourself, you have to interact. You have to meditate. You have to apply.

You have to think. You have to reason. And God, the Holy Spirit, is right by your side.

Remember in the kingdom, God says, you won't have need for any man to teach you. And He's talking to Israel. Israel did have a need for someone to teach them.

But He says, you won't have that need in the kingdom because you'll have the Spirit of God. Hey, we've already got the Spirit of God. So it's a wonderful, wonderful opportunity.

Well, enough on commentaries. Let's talk a little bit about this passage in terms of what we can observe, interpret, and apply. Now, first of all, I think I step back.

And I'm offering you this just by way of approach, by way of suggestion. If you're going to come to a passage and say, well, I'm just going to tackle this and see if I can follow that wonderful free advice. So the first thing I do is I look at the flow.

Why is this story presented this way? Why does God cause this to be written down in

such a way that we have the conflict, the Gibeonites are the new allies. Here come the five kings. They come up.

Joshua comes. And then there's this supernatural intervention by God. Well, that's first.

And that's really important. God saturates this story with His presence. He's there.

He didn't speak up when they allied themselves with the Gibeonites under false pretenses. But He does speak up when Joshua goes to defend the Gibeonites. God does not seem to be opposed to this treaty at all.

In fact, God says, you go. God turns it. He works it together for good.

It's the fruit of deception. It was gained under false pretenses. The people are grouching about it, complaining about their leaders.

But God turns it into an opportunity to draw these kings out of their fortified cities throughout the south and mass their troops in the open where they can be slaughtered. They can't duck under the walls. They can't get behind their fortifications.

They can't resist a siege. They're out in the open. And they've done it voluntarily.

Because God used this Gibeonite treaty to draw them out of their strongholds and put them in a vulnerable position. He's going to slaughter most of them. The Israelites are going to bat cleanup.

God turns cursing to blessing. It's a wonderful application. That comes first.

We've talked about that. We've seen that. And we have that wrap up in verse 15.

It's an essential verse. It's supposed to be there. After that's all done, Joshua returned and all Israel with him to the camp at Gilgal.

They went back to their home. They went back to their bivouac. Now we're going to back up and get it from a different perspective.

These five kings had fled and hidden themselves in a cave at Makeda. Makeda basically comes from a Hebrew word. You heard the fellow, Bill, what's his name, saying earlier that it had something to do with shepherds and so on.

Indirectly, it does. This is actually from a Hebrew word that means to be speckled or spotted. This was the way that ancient herders of animals would identify their own.

They might put a little mark on them. They would daub them with some sort of berry juice or whitewash or something. They would speckle them.

They would spot them. Then they could keep track of them. Of course, every time it

rained or they went through the water, they'd have to redo it.

But any time they were going to be around other flocks and things, they would spot them. They would mark them. Even in a figurative sense, they would mark the ones that belonged to them.

They would get to know them well enough that they marked you well. What did I say? Mark you well, your own animals. They were the markers.

They were the spotters. This came to be a synonym for shepherd. It does ultimately come to mean that through kind of a roundabout way.

I thought about telling you about Penun verbs and so on, but we're not going to get into that. They are at Makeda. You can tell that this is actually from a word nakad.

It's a Penun. That means the first letter of the word is the letter N. That's a weak construction in Hebrew. When you start putting prefixes and things on and changing the form, the noon will drop out.

When you put a maim in front to turn a verb into a noun, this would normally be something like minkad or something like that, but the noon is weak and it drops out. You have makadah. That puts sort of a feminine ending on it.

You end up with makadah instead of nakad, which is what you started with. Why is it Makeda? There's also an ancient Semitic root very closely related to this. This is one of those little word plays that they love to do in the ancient world where there's a related word that has a G in the middle of it, kind of like magadah, so to speak, that has the idea of a cave, that megiddo, kind of a root thing.

So it's a play on words. It sort of means both things at once. It could be the cave of the shepherds or the shepherd's cave or the spotted cave or the cave where I spotted someone.

You don't know what was going on in their mind when they named these, but makadah. There is an area not far from Jerusalem, not far from archaeological Gibeon, where there is a sandstone exposed shelf and it's pocketed with lots of small caves. They think that this may be the area.

I personally do not think this particular cave has ever been discovered because the Israelites, you know how many Israelites there were, and they were still running on adrenaline. I think when Joshua said, stop up the mouth of the cave with rocks, I think there's a huge heap of rocks and over time dirt and sediment has gone in. I don't think anybody's ever found this cave.

But it's in the area. So, in the structure of the story, back to my point, you start out with

God's supernatural intervention. There's never been a day like it.

Now we're backing up and we're looking at it from a different angle. The battle is underway. It was told Joshua, saying the five kings have been found hidden in a cave.

The battle is going on, but as soon as the kings see that it's going badly and all their men are scattering, they all get together and say, I don't know about you, but I'm going to go hide. I think this is going to go badly and they're going to take us and secure us. So these guys went and hid in a cave, hoping to not be captured.

Well, they were spotted. Spotted. They were spotted.

Good shepherd keeps his eye on what's going on. And so Joshua's reconnaissance people, his intel people, came and said, hey, here's another development on the battlefield. The five generals, the five kings, are huddled up in a cave.

Now, this is early in the day. The sun is a long way from going down. So Joshua says, well now, what am I going to do here? I can cut the head off the snake here.

Here's the leadership. Strike the shepherd and the sheep will scatter. Strike the shepherd and the sheep will scatter.

Here's the chance to strike the leadership, strike the head, strike the shepherds of these military sheep here. What does Joshua say in verse 18? Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave and set men by it to guard them. Why would they need to do that? Why would they need to guard it? Because the battle is ongoing.

Some of these troops might try to rescue their kings, their contingent of bodyguards, their kerathites and pelathites, if you will, might try to come and rescue them. Their elite forces might say, well, mission number one is to get the kings out of the cave. Set trusty men there and make sure nobody gets out, nobody gets in.

And the battle goes on for the rest of the day. And do not stay here yourselves. Whoever came, these were leaders, these were guys who said, look, don't stick around the cave, don't focus on the kings, go pursue the battle, go follow the battle.

Pursue your enemies, attack their rear guard, do not allow them to enter their cities, for the Lord your God has delivered them into your hand. Notice, do not let them enter their cities. Joshua understood that God had used this giving night alliance to draw these troops out of their fortifications.

And now is the time to strike. This is why Joshua asked for a longer day. We want to strike them before they slip away under cover of darkness and get back in their fortifications.

Joshua says, Lord, I understand what you have done. You've put the enemy out where

we can get them. Please give us enough time to finish that job.

Track them down with daylight, so that they don't go back and then we've got to lay siege and it's going to be a long, drawn out starvation process instead of a quick, hack them up with the sword, smash them to a pulp with the hail type of thing. Joshua understands what God is up to. Joshua understands how God has worked things together for good.

Joshua isn't still sitting around in the tent, kicking himself, because how did I ever get into a battle with all these... Now there's five kings against me because of these silly giving nights. The people are right. I'm an idiot.

My men are idiots. My elders are idiots. What were we doing? What were we thinking? Woe is me.

I'm depraved. I'm fallen. I guess God didn't ordain that I would be smarter than this today.

Just on and on and on. Round and round and round and round. No.

Joshua says, we serve a God who works all things together for good. Where is the good in this situation? Well, it's kind of like Chesty Puller over in Korea. When he found himself surrounded, he said, men, this is great.

We can shoot in any direction. We can advance in any direction. The enemy has got us right where we want them.

This is his literal quote. The enemy has got us right where we want them. And he was happy.

He was just like, hey, it doesn't matter where we shoot now. We're going to kill the bad guys. It's great.

Look on the bright side. Look on the positive side. God turns cursing to blessing.

Now, secondly, think about this. It's a matter of priorities, isn't it? We've often characterized our human thought under three convenient headings. Goals, values, and priorities.

I don't know. I made that up. I don't know if it's in a book anywhere.

But to me, logically thinking, this is how your mind works. You've got goals. What is it that I'm trying to accomplish? What am I aiming for? What do I want to check off of my list? That's my goal.

We've got goals in all kinds of areas. Values. What am I willing to do and what will I not

do to attain that goal? Where is my integrity? What is my character? What are my morals and my ethics and my values? Do I sacrifice family on the altar of career? Do I sacrifice career on the altar of family? Do I find a happy balance? How much time is spiritual time? How much time is secular time? How much time for entertainment? How much time for meditation? How much time for this? How much time for that? Values.

What's important to me? And priorities. I've got 16 things to get done. Which ones do I do first? Which ones depend on the others? You know they've got software to help you do this now.

It's called project management software. They've had it for years. But one of the things it does is you set milestones and you put things in and you say, well, this task can't be done until this task is done.

I can't put the finish on the table until I strip it. I can't stain it until I strip it. So the natural order of events would be strip the table, stain the table, put a new finish on the table.

Those are my priorities. That's the order in which I'm going to do things. And right now, since I'm at the early stage, my priority is to get the table stripped.

My priority is not to agonize over the finish. I'm not even going to agonize over the stain. The first thing I've got to do is get to the point of not even worrying about that.

If I can't get it stripped or if I strip it and ruin the table, then all that other time is going to be wasted anyway. Priorities. What's most important? What are you going to do? Everybody understands this.

Goals, values, priorities. Look at Joshua. He's fighting this battle.

He's trying to chase these people down and kill them before they get back into their cities. And somebody says, look, the leadership, the gold, the brass, the guys with the eagles and stars on their collars, insignia, are all in this cave. Now think about it.

What Joshua does seems so logical. You don't really think what his options were. Joshua could have said, assemble the elders.

Let's march to the cave and with great fanfare, we will bring them out and we will make a spectacle of them. Meanwhile, the bulk of the enemy is fleeing back to the city, getting the king's son or his grandson or his nephew or his brother to instantly replace this king. Joshua is smart enough to realize that the king is flashy.

The king is attention-getting. This is where the press is going to go. Are the press going to be following Joe Bob down the road while he's trying to kill some fleeing Amorite? Or are they going to head for the cave and look for the big news? Joshua doesn't go to the big news.

And he says, don't you stick around the big news either. You pursue the enemy. Just leave some men to guard those guys.

We'll get to that later. Priorities. The priority is because Joshua understands God's plan and purpose in this whole scenario, Joshua knows what the priority is.

What is the interpretation and application of that? To the extent that we understand what God is up to, what He wants believers to accomplish in this unseen spiritual warfare in which we are all engaged, to that extent we're going to make smart decisions, priority-wise. There might be a real flashy goal here. There might be something very attractive, very alluring.

Boy, I can really make a name for myself with this. Or I can impress somebody with that. But the hard work of just going out and finding the stragglers and slaughtering them, that's not glamorous.

It's not glorious. If you go to testimony night at some big mainstream church, does somebody stand up and say, well, I just want to tell you that I've been listening to a tape series from Revelation and I made it all the way to tape 135 and just finished chapter 14 and it's been a wonderful study for me and I'm learning a lot of things. What do people want to have a glorious testimony about? Here's the impact I had on somebody.

Here's the impact somebody had on me. It's the flashy stuff where inheritance and possession, which is what Joshua and these people are fighting for, what's it based on? If you want spiritual possession, if you want heavenly inheritance, what's it based on? What does Scripture say? You have need of faith. You have need of patience.

Joshua's patient. Put a stopper in the bottle there. Put a cork in those kings.

We'll get to them later. I can deal with them later. They're not going anywhere.

Put a couple of guys to guard the rocks and let's do what's important, what God has called us to do. Rather than pushing for the flashy stuff, how many scalps on your belt? How many of you evangelized? How many did you witness to? Did you do some overtly visible thing for the kingdom? It's the daily grind. It's this kind of meditation and investigation and perusal and concentration on God's Word.

So Joshua stops them up. The Lord your God has delivered them into your hand. This is the priority.

Our goal is to exterminate the fleeing troops, not to make a big production out of the kings. Then it happened, verse 20, while Joshua and the children of Israel made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter. That's the command.

That's the goal. That's what they do. Till they had finished.

And I personally think there's a little bit of a... There are some problems in the Hebrew text of Joshua. I'm not going to go into it all. But I don't think this says in English what it originally said in Hebrew.

I think it says it happened that Joshua and the children of Israel made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter till they had finished, lest those who escaped enter the fortified cities. I think the intent of the passage is to say Joshua pursued them, got them all, and he didn't get back to the fortified cities. Either that or, if this is actually closer to what it was trying to say, very few of them got to the fortified cities and they stopped.

Joshua had commanded his troops, don't go into siege mode. We're here to get the ones that are out in the open. But I really think that originally, and I won't go into the details why, but I really think this originally said that Joshua and the children of Israel made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter until they had finished, so that those who escaped did not enter the fortified cities.

Then all the people returned to the camp, to Joshua at Makeda in peace. And notice, he's back at Makeda. No one moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.

You have a little text note in your New King James here that says literally, no one sharpened his tongue. And what this basically does is, this is another move into the future. We saw the first time up in verse 15, where the move into the future, Joshua and all the Israelites returned to Gilgal.

Now we've backed up and we've looked at the episode of the kings and how Joshua handled it. And the end of this episode is right here. The end of this run through the story is right here.

No one dared to threaten. No one made sharp remarks. Remember how the Canaanites were saying, well, these people, their God must not be the God of the plains.

Their God is the God of rivers. Their God is the God of... He did a river thing in Egypt. He did a river thing at the Jordan.

He can knock down walls. But we don't think he's a God of the open fields. Now, no one has anything left to say about let's get together and attack the Israelites.

In other words, the spirit of the entire southern half of the land has been broken. Nobody has the ability to speak up and talk against Israel. They're all in depression.

They're all in dismay. They're in fear. God has fulfilled His command, fulfilled His promise, when He gave them the command to enter the land, that He would go before them and instill this kind of terror into their hearts.

So, that's the end of that run-through. Now we're back in verse 22. Joshua says, after the

day is over, after all of the fleeing enemies have been slain, and all of the troops have made their way back to camp on this long, long day.

Remember, this is probably 12 to 18 hours after noon, when Joshua first prayed. Everybody has finally come back, and it's still daylight. It's important.

It's still daylight. Now, Joshua says, open the cave's mouth and bring out the five kings to me. They did as ordered.

They brought the five kings out of the cave to Joshua, the king of Jerusalem, Hebron, Yarmouth, Lachish, and Eglon. When they brought the kings out, notice how it takes time belaboring this point. He said, bring out the kings.

They did as ordered, and they brought out the kings. When they brought out the kings, anytime you see this kind of repetition, this is another clue. When you're reading the Bible, when you're studying it, when you're trying to figure out what's important, when you see something repeated three times, what conclusion would you draw? It's not idle repetition.

It's there for a reason. They did as ordered. Joshua said, bring out the kings.

They brought out the kings. When they brought out the kings, he summoned all the men of Israel and said to the commanders of the troops who accompanied him, come here and put your feet on the necks of these kings. Why is there a threefold emphasis on bringing out the kings? There are certain things, like these kings, this issue of the kings being found to Joshua, that you can't deal with right now.

It's not the time. You've got to put that problem on hold. You say, you know what? I have more pressing things to attend to.

This is not the time. This is not the place. Trying to deal with this now is going to screw up my priorities.

Dealing with this now will mess up my priorities. I have a higher, more important task now. This can wait.

And God says it three times here. This can wait. It will be there when you come back to it.

When Joshua has accomplished his first priority, then he says, now let's bring out that other problem. When they heard him say it, they brought out that other problem. And when they had brought out that other problem, Joshua summoned all the men of Israel to look at that problem.

If he had dealt with these kings earlier, there would have been a handful of men to see what's about to take place. Now, the entire assemblage of the army of Israel, evidently

without a casualty, is there to see it. Joshua says, now is the time.

Now is the place. Now is the way to deal with this problem. But he had to have judgment.

He had to have discernment to put that thing in a bottle and save it for later. Not get distracted. Not be deflected.

Not let his priorities get upset. Now, he brings the commanders of the troops who accompanied him. Come here.

Put your feet on the necks of these kings. So they came up and put their feet on their necks. This is a posture of complete and total unconditional victory.

These kings are abased. They are humiliated. They are defeated.

They are without any shred of dignity, power. They can do nothing but lay there with the feet of these Israelite generals on their necks. Now, there's a lot of ways you can secure somebody to the ground.

But if you're laying on the ground and someone puts their foot on your neck, you're done. Because at the first twitch, they crush your breathing apparatus and you are truly done. It is completely helpless, defenseless posture.

And Joshua says to these generals, do not be afraid. Do not panic. Remember all of the remarks that were made in that commentary about how the panic of the Lord had been mentioned with Deborah and Barak, with David, with all of these different places where they cited those things.

This is the real application. It isn't a matter of figuring out where is the Hamam of the Lord in all of these different places. It is the command that the general gave to Joshua, the commander of the armies of the Lord.

Be strong and have a good courage. Be not afraid. Joshua has learned that lesson.

He can think clearly. He can prioritize. He can pursue his primary mission.

And now he is passing this on to his generals. You be strong. You be of a good courage.

You be not afraid. Be strong and brave. The Lord will do the same thing to all the enemies you fight.

This is an important demonstration of the power of God. Joshua doesn't take credit. Joshua doesn't say, this is what we will accomplish under my administration.

Like we're going to hear the candidates saying for the next year and a half. Joshua is not even a part of that. He says, this is what the Lord will do.

Now, Joshua executed them. Okay, fine. God said execute them.

Then he hung them on five trees. Why? Is this not literally overkill? Is this not kind of gruesome and gory? I mean, they're dead. He's killed them.

They've been humiliated. Now they've been executed. Isn't this sort of an Abu Ghraib kind of a thing where now it's just humiliation for its own sake? Why does Joshua hang these men on five trees? What time of day is it? What's our illumination situation? They hang on the trees until evening, which means they are there for many hours until the sun, the long delayed sun, finally goes down.

Remember earlier in the last chapter, how did they know to come and make this treaty? There had been a public billboard made of the law of God, and they read it. These five kings hanging on five trees are visible from all around. Any living Canaanite who looks in that direction is going to see five trees with five bodies.

They know all about the confederation. They know all about the battle. They were expecting a great Canaanite victory, expecting that the Amorites would all be celebrating and they would have big business at the brothels and the pubs and so on.

And instead, here are the five most powerful men in southern Palestine hanging from trees. This is another billboard. What does the law say about every man who hangs on a tree? This communicates to Israel.

These people are cursed. It communicates to the people on the land. Your days are numbered.

This is your best and brightest. Here they are. Take a look.

Take a good long look. In case you want to sharpen your tongue. In case you want to speak out against Israel.

Here's what happened to the last five guys that tried that. Now, this is prophetic. Yeshua is going to lead captivity captive.

He is going to take the commander of the unseen forces of darkness and pop him in the cave of the bottomless pit for 999.9 years. And a very similar event is going to take place at the end of that time. He will be released.

He will be humiliated. He will be defeated. And then he will be destroyed and buried to return no more.

That's what I think we can see in a pretty straightforward way in this passage. And the stones over the mouth of the cave are what remain to this very day. The lake of fire and the smoke that ascends from it is what's going to remain as a memorial to the defeat of the enemies of God.

The destruction of that which does not glorify God. And to the grace of God that delivered us from it. And made us sons and heirs with Christ.

Well, we'll look at this survey of the victories. There's a lot to talk about archaeology-wise and city-wise next time when we pick up in chapter 10 verse 28. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for the clear way that it communicates to us as we look for the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit to lead us into truth. To help us find that application that will enable us to live in a way that is pleasing in your sight. We pray that that goal will be accomplished for each one of us.

Both individually and collectively as a church and as a group. As families, as Christians who are to shine as a light in the world. We pray all these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.