THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

Finding the Father of Jesus in the Conquest of Canaan

ADRIAN EBENS

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Adrian Ebens, 2026
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CHAPTER 1

1. FLYING BY YOUR INSTRUMENTS

The Florida humidity was already thick at 1:30 PM on February 12, 1963, as Northwest Orient Flight 705[1] taxied toward the runway at Miami International Airport. Inside the cabin of the Boeing 720B—a sleek, four-engine silver needle—43 passengers settled into their seats, clicking their heavy metal buckles.

In the cockpit, Captain Roy Almquist looked out at the horizon. A wall of bruised purple and charcoal clouds was marching across the Everglades. This was no ordinary storm for within its garments was concealed a massive updraft of chaotic energy.

"Thunderstorms reported on the departure path," the radio crackled. Almquist and his co-pilot, Robert Feller, exchanged a glance. They were veterans. They had the latest tech: a glowing green circular radar scope in the centre of the panel. They decided to thread the needle, looking for a "soft spot" in the radar's green glow.

As the jet climbed through 10,000 feet, the world outside the reinforced cockpit windows vanished into a blinding, rhythmic grey. Then, the

[1] https://aviation-safety.net/asndb/333147

turbulence began—not the jittery "cobblestone" bumps travellers hate, but massive, sickening surges that made the 100-ton aircraft feel like a paper plane in a gale.

At 17,000 feet, they hit the updraft. Imagine a giant hand reaching out of the earth and shoving the plane toward space. The vertical speed indicator spun wildly. The jet wasn't just climbing; it was surging upward at 9,000 feet per minute. The engines roared, but the air was moving faster than the thrust.

To stop the climb, Almquist and Feller did what every instinct screamed to do: they shoved the control yokes forward and began rolling the stabilizer trim—the massive mechanical screw in the tail—to force the nose of the jet toward the horizon.

For a few heart-stopping seconds, the instruments seemed to stabilize. But it was a deadly trick of physics. The plane was pitched nose-down, yet the massive updraft was still carrying them higher. They were "climbing on their belly," fighting against nature.

The updraft vanished as quickly as it had appeared, replaced by a downdraft of equal and opposite fury. The "giant hand" that had been pushing them up now slammed them down.

Because the pilots had trimmed the aircraft to point down to fight the climb, the transition was catastrophic. The nose didn't just drop; it tucked under.

The cockpit underwent a terrifying transformation. Dust, clipboards, and unfastened flight bags flew toward the ceiling. The pilots were thrown upward, straining against their five-point seatbelts.

At negative 2.8G, blood rushed to the pilots' heads. Their vision blurred. The instrument panel, vibrating violently from the airspeed, became a smear of lights and needles.

The pilots yanked back on the yolks with everything they had. But they had a "trim-stall." Because they had mechanically rolled the tail's stabilizer to the "nose-down" position, the air rushing over the wings at

nearly 500 miles per hour acted like a physical lock. The elevators—the flaps they controlled with their hands—were too small to fight the massive force of the stabilizer.

The Boeing 720B was screaming toward the Everglades in a near-vertical dive. The airframe, built of high-strength aluminium, began to moan. The speed surged past the Red Line.

In the final seconds, the stress became too much. The horizontal stabilizer—the very part they had used to fight the storm—snapped under the immense pressure. Without a tail, the jet pitched forward even harder. The wings, flexed to their breaking point, surrendered next.

At 10,000 feet, Flight 705 disintegrated. The wreckage fell into the tall sawgrass and tea-coloured water of the Everglades, 37 miles west of Miami. No one survived, but the "black box" (the Flight Data Recorder) did.

When investigators plotted the data, they realised the tragedy wasn't a mechanical failure—it was a psychological one. The pilots had fought the storm's movement rather than maintaining the "Attitude" of the plane.

Today, every pilot who flies you through a storm is a student of Flight 705. They are taught that when the world turns upside down and the wind tries to throw you into the stars, you don't fight for altitude. You don't "chase the needles." You level the wings, set the power, and ride the wave, trusting the small, glowing artificial horizon more than your own racing heart. Pilots are taught that in the fury of a storm, human instinct can be fatally deceptive, and survival depends entirely on fixing your eyes on a true point of reference.

When it comes to reading the Old Testament, many Christians suffer from this exact same spatial disorientation. This volume aims to navigate the stories of Israel’s conquest of Canaan

Entering these texts is like entering a hurricane. The sheer violence of the stories creates a tremendous updraft, pushing us to believe that our

Father in heaven orchestrated the wholesale slaughter of innocent men, women, and children in Israel's path. For the Bible says it was not simply enemy soldiers but "all who breathed" in the cities of Israel's enemies.

Caught in this tempest, most readers react with panic. They allow the turbulence to dictate their theology, arriving at the catastrophic conclusion that the God of heaven is a violent, merciless destroyer.

To survive this, we must trust our dashboard. In the previous volume of this series, we presented several principles – a set of instruments – by which to safely navigate the Scriptures. Without them, readers give in to human instinct. Those who follow their natural impulse to force the "nose" of their thoughts downwards to make sense of these violent stories find themselves caught in a fatal dive when they are presented the truth of God's character as reflected in the gentle life of Jesus Christ.

Once that theological death-spiral begins, it is incredibly difficult to stop. Even when Bible students try to pull out of the dive to avoid being obliterated by their wrong understanding of our Father's character, their flawed approach to the text often makes recovery impossible. Trapped by their own momentum, they are smashed to pieces by circumstances of their own design.

Before we commence this journey into Canaan with the Israelites, I would advise all who have not read Volume One of this series to read *Mirror Principle* which lays out in detail the instruments by which we shall head into this storm of conflict in the books of Joshua and Judges. We shall refer to Volume One a number of times to be reminded of key stories and the principles gleaned in those stories. Below is a summary of our key instruments. Here is the list.

1. The tenderness of God as revealed in family relationships. Our Father never changes in His character towards us. He is the same forever.

2. The complete revelation of the Father's character in the life of Jesus Christ as revealed on earth and written in the four Gospels of the New Testament.
3. The hostility of the human heart against God which causes wilful misrepresentation of His character.
4. The Two Mirrors. Christ as the mirror of the Father's character vs the mirror of ourselves when we seek to look directly upon God outside of Christ.
5. Human sinfulness curses the earth resulting in the earth vomiting out its inhabitants.
6. Angel Hedge. Holy angels surround or leave us based on whether we want them there or push them away.
7. The human trait of projecting evil within oneself onto others and especially onto God.
8. The use of the Two Mirrors within the Two Covenants which are called the ministration of death and the ministration of righteousness.
9. Christ is afflicted in all the sufferings of the human family. He has borne our sorrows and carried our pain. He is touched by the feelings of our infirmities
10. God permits the inherent consequences of human actions to punish those who oppose and reject Him. God permits destruction, He does not initiate it by His own hand.

We have summarised these instruments with the following labels:

1. Same Father[2]
2. Gospel Character

[2] In the previous volume we labelled this as *Family* to speak of God's tenderness as Father. We update this principle in this volume to emphasise the thought that God, as a Father, never changes from a position of His tender love for us. He is always loving and merciful towards us.

3. Enmity
4. Two Mirrors
5. Earth Curse
6. Angel Hedge
7. Projection
8. Two Covenant Framework
9. True Cross
10. God's Permissive Judgment.

As we continue this journey, we will refine and expand our instruments as the principles of God's character become clearer.

As readers of the Bible we are reminded of the key principle of the mirror as expressed in the book of James:

> For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. James 1:23-24

To hear the word of God, as James is describing here, is simply to read it without true comprehension. We hear the words as we read them, but obedience only comes through the Spirit of Christ. To read the Bible through the character of Jesus is the only way to obey the Word of God; His character removes the veil over our eyes as we read the Old Testament (2 Corinthians 3:14).

When men first come to the Scriptures in their natural mind, they imagine our heavenly Father to be like them (Psalm 50:21). Not like them in their sinfulness, but like them in how they deal with the sinfulness of others. The human family is caught in the updraft of thinking that God's justice is the same as their own. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:14) and therefore unwittingly projects his own character traits of judgment and justice onto God. Man uses the law of God unlawfully (1 Timothy 1:8).

No.	Instrument	Icon	Bible Evidence
1	Same Father		Prov 17:6, 30:19, Matt 3:17; Eph 5:22-24, Jer 9:2-24; Eph
2	Gospel Character		John 5:19,30,43; 14:69; 17:1-6, Heb 1:3-4, Col 1:15; 2 Cor 3:14
3	Enmity		Rom 3:10-18; Rom7; Isa 55:8-9
4	Two Mirrors		2 Cor 3:18 James 1:23
5	Earth Curse		Gen 6:4-15; Lev 18:25; Isa 24:4-6
6	Angel Hedge		Ps 34:7; Heb 1:14; Job 1:10
7	Projection		Ps 50:21
8	Two Covenant Framework		2 Cor 3:7–18
9	True Cross		Isa 63:5 ; Isa 53:4; Heb 4:15
10	God's Permissive Judgment		Gal 6:7; Ps 7:15

Men use the law as an instrument of punishment on those they deem guilty of breaking it, but as they do not know God's ways, they cannot truly discern the true righteousness in the law. In our natural sinful state we deceive ourselves in how we view the law, and therefore the judgment we render to others ultimately falls on ourselves. In this way we slay ourselves through our wrong understanding.

> For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. Romans 7:11

Adventist minister from the 19th century, Elder A.T. Jones, expressed it this way:

> Yet it is also true that the very righteousness of God is in the law; because the law is but the expression of the will of God, it is only the transcript of his character. And since this is so, it follows in the nature of the case that nobody can see in the law the righteousness of God, nobody can find in the law the righteousness of God, but God himself. **And this only emphasizes the mighty truth that all that anybody, whether God or man, can ever see or find in the law is HIS OWN righteousness**. On the part of man, this is sin; because it comes short of the righteousness of God. But on the part of God, it is righteousness; because it is the very righteousness of God in all perfection. Review and Herald, December 12, 1899.

To bring this principle into current events, we feel this updraft of condemning judgment when we look at the lives of Jeffrey Epstein and Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor. Their debauchery, preying on underage children, amongst a litany of other crimes, is creating a tremendous updraft of judgment in the populace. Yet which of us is without sin? What qualifies us to cast stones? Our sins may not be as heinous as theirs, but Jesus reminds us that pure innocence is the essential qualification for judgment, and that we should not pass judgment on others. We should leave this to the agencies that God has ordained and the appeals of those directly affected, while we pray for righteousness to prevail.

In many statements of the book of Joshua, our sinful minds seduce us into revealing our perceptions of justice in the condemnation and slaughter of the Canaanites. This process of how we judge the people of the Old Testament is the means by which God causes our sin of condemning others to abound. Jesus has told us clearly that we are not to judge others and this includes those we read about in the Old Testament. As Paul reminds us:

> **Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself**; for you who judge practice the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? Romans 2:1-4

We may not manifest the sins we see in others, but it isn't because we are inherently better than them, for we all have the same nature. We may not sin because we lack the opportunity or power to do so, or our lusts and selfishness manifest differently. If we judge others, we only judge our own human nature and condemn ourselves.

Let us now set the stage for the conquest of Canaan. First we must study the promises that God made to Abraham regarding the promised land. Secondly, as Israel was to establish a kingdom in the land of Canaan, we will study the principles of the Kingdom of Heaven and compare them with the kingdom of Israel. We will then revisit sections of Volume One and summarise the development of Israel's war philosophy. We will pause a moment to reflect on the death of Moses and the transition of power to Joshua and the new generation before stepping through most of the stories detailed in the books of Joshua.

CHAPTER 2

2. A BETTER COUNTRY

The central question regarding the conquest of Canaan is: What did God promise Abraham? The initial promise is found in Genesis 12:

> Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. **I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great;** and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; **and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**" Genesis 12:1-3

Abraham (then called Abram) was told he would become a great nation, meaning he would have numerous descendants. God adds that all the families of the earth—all nations—would be blessed through him. God later confirmed this by changing Abram's name to Abraham to reflect this very promise:

> As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and **thou shalt be a father of many nations.** Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; **for a father of many nations have I made thee**. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. **And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an Everlasting Covenant,**

> **to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.** Genesis 17:4-7 KJV.

Abraham was not only to become the father of many nations, but he was also to inherit "the land." When God first introduces this promise, it is expressed strictly as a gift to his seed:

> And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said**, Unto thy seed will I give this land:** and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him. Genesis 12:7 KJV

The vast majority of Bible readers deduce from these passages that Abraham's physical seed or descendants would be the favoured inheritors of these gifts.

> **Unto thy seed will I give this land** — God was dealing with Abram not in his private and personal capacity merely, but with a view to high and important interests in future ages. **That land his posterity was for centuries to inhabit as a peculiar people**; the seeds of divine knowledge were to be sown there for the benefit of all mankind; and considered in its geographical situation, it was chosen in divine wisdom as the fittest of all lands to serve as the cradle of a divine revelation designed for the whole world. *Jamieson, Fauset and Brown Bible Commentary.*

> **…and said, unto thy seed will I give this land**; the whole of it inhabited by Canaanites and others; and it was for this end chiefly that Abram was called out of Chaldea into Canaan, to be shown the land, and have the grant of it for his posterity: *John Gill Bible Commentary*

However, the apostle Paul clarifies that this promise was not to many descendants but to a single individual or Seed: Christ.

> Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "**And to your Seed," who is Christ**. Galatians 3:16

God's promises are secured only in Christ:

> For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us--by me, Silvanus, and Timothy--was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes. **For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.** 2 Corinthians 1:19-20

Therefore, the promise in Genesis 12:7 that the land would be given to Abraham's "Seed" was a direct declaration that Christ would inherit and rule this world. Abraham himself could only inherit it through faith in Christ the Redeemer. Abraham could access these promises no more than Mary could; just as her Son was her Saviour, He was also the Saviour of Abraham.

Scripture shows that the Heavenly Father granted Christ everlasting dominion over all nations:

> "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. **Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed**. Daniel 7:13-14

Every person who repents and receives Christ as their Lord and Saviour becomes an inheritor of the earth.

> Blessed *are* the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. Matthew 5:5

It is only in this context that Abraham was promised to become heir of the whole world, and it is only through faith, exactly the same as it is for everyone in this world who receives Christ.

> **For the promise that he would be the heir of the world** was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but **through the righteousness of faith**. Romans 4:13

This is why Paul indicates that the gospel was preached to Abraham, and also why Christ said that Abraham saw His day.

> And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, **preached the gospel to Abraham** beforehand**, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.** Galatians 3:8-9

> Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad." John 8:56

Paul shows that the words "In you all nations will be blessed" were the preaching of the gospel. Salvation was offered to Abraham through faith in the coming Messiah. The "great nation" that Abraham would become is actually the kingdom of all who believe in Jesus Christ; He is the father of all who have faith. (Romans 4:16).

What was offered to Abraham has been freely available to all humanity ever since the Fall. Abraham received the title "father of the faithful" because the Messiah would descend from his line, and because he stood alone in responding to the gospel during an era of universal apostasy. Adventist minister Elder E.J. Waggoner clarified this point:

> This is a fact that needs to be well fixed in the mind at the very beginning. **All the misunderstandings of the promises of God to Abraham and his seed have arisen through a failure to see the Gospel of the cross of Christ in them. If it be continually remembered that all the promises of God are in Christ, to be enjoyed only through His Cross, and that consequently they are spiritual and eternal in their nature**, there will be no difficulty, and the study of the promise to the fathers will be a delight and a blessing. E.J. Waggoner, *Everlasting Covenant*, p. 48 (1900).

The promises to Abraham are the promises of the gospel. Therefore, the promise of land is an eternal one, fulfilled when Christ receives His kingdom. The book of Hebrews supports this:

> By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and

> Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; **for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God**…. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. **But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country.** Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. Hebrews 11:8-10,14-16.

Abraham was not seeking earthly territory, for Christ's kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). He sought a better, heavenly country—the same inheritance promised to all the meek.

Some Bible scholars suggest that Israel's possession of Canaan was a temporary arrangement that typified this eternal inheritance. Martin Luther wrote:

> "This land was given to the descendants of Abraham, not that they should possess it forever as a physical home, but that it should be **a temporary shelter and a type of the eternal inheritance.** For the physical promise is a mask (*larva*) of the spiritual promise, and through this small piece of earth, God was showing them the Kingdom of Heaven." — **Martin Luther, *Luther's Works* 2:286**

The thought of the land being a temporal shelter is never expressed in Scripture. As we shall see in chapter 4, the land was originally planned for an eternal inheritance, but Israel's failure to hold it by faith made this impossible, requiring the promise to be fulfilled in the heavenly Canaan followed by a return to the earth after the 1000 years in heaven.

A major flaw in using a strict type/antitype framework for the land is that it inadvertently legitimizes the wholesale slaughter of Canaanite men, women, and children as a "type" of God's end-time destruction of the wicked. This framework is incorrect and misrepresents the promises made to Abraham and Christ. While we can draw parallels between the Exodus from Egypt and the Christian church's journey to heaven, these parallels do not fulfill the baseline promises made to Abraham through Christ.

Abraham did receive the promise of Canaan as an everlasting possession, but this promise has been severely delayed through Israel's rejection of Christ. Therefore, this promise will only to be delivered in the future when the Christ, the Seed, receives it at the end of time.

> And I will **give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger**, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. Genesis 17:8

Paul makes it clear that the receiving of the promise takes place at the coming of the seed, which is the Second Coming of Christ.

> **For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise**. Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions**, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made;** *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Galatians 3:18, 19

Elder A.T. Jones lays out the case for why this verse refers to the Second Coming of Christ rather than the first coming, as claimed by nearly all Christians.

> Look at the situation as it is in the text, with its context: "Till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." What promise?—The promise of the inheritance, unquestionably: as it is written: "For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." Thus it is fixed by the Word itself that the promise referred to is the promise of the inheritance. And whatever law it is that is here referred to, it is given, added, till He comes to whom the promise of the inheritance was made.
>
> **Now, at his first coming did he receive any of the inheritance?—No; no more than did Abraham, to whom with him, the promise was made. He "had not where to lay his head." And of him it was**

equally true, as with Abraham, that he received "none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on.

Notice, too, particularly, that the clause says, "Till the seed should come to whom,"—not concerning whom, but TO whom—"the promise was made." That is, the promise referred to was made to HIM, personally; and not simply to somebody, concerning him. But it is fixed by the text that the promise is the promise of the inheritance. This promise was made to Abraham and to his seed, which is Christ; and this was done when the promise was made to Abraham. But, further, it was also done TO the seed himself in person, which is Christ. Read it in the second psalm: "The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Verses 7, 8. Here is the promise of the inheritance made direct to the seed, which is Christ.

Now, when is this promise fulfilled? And when something should be done, make, or instituted, "till the seed should come TO whom" that promise was made, then which coming would be the true and the only logical one that could be considered?—Plainly, the coming that would be at the receiving of the inheritance REFERRED TO THE PROMISE; and with which alone the promise is concerned.

Therefore, considering what the promise is plainly in the scriptures declared to be,—the promise of the inheritance,—and considering that this promise relates and pertains particularly, and above all, to his second coming, it is evident that the second coming of Christ, rather than his first, is the one referred to in the clause "till the seed should come to whom the promise was made. *A.T. Jones, Review and Herald, March 13, 1900*

Elder Waggoner agreed:

It needs not many words now to determine what is meant by the phrase, "till the seed should come to whom the promise was made."

We know what the seed is,--all who are Christ's,--and we know that it has not yet come in its fullness. To be sure, Christ was once manifested on earth in the flesh, but He did not receive the promised inheritance, any more than Abraham did. Abraham had not so much as to put his foot on (Acts 7:5), and Christ had not where to lay His head. Moreover, Christ can not come into the inheritance until Abraham does also, for the promise was "to Abraham and to his seed." The Lord by the prophet Ezekiel spoke of the inheritance at the time when David ceased to have a representative on his throne on earth, and He foretold the overthrow of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, in these words: "Remove the diadem, and take off the crown; this shall not be the same; exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him." Eze.21:26,27.

So Christ sits on His Father's throne, "from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool." Soon will He come, but not until the last soul has accepted Him that can by any possibility be induced to accept salvation. Those who are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, so that Christ can not come into the inheritance before they do. The seed is one, not divided. When He comes to execute judgment, and to slay those who said, "We will not have this Man to reign over us," He comes "with ten thousands of His holy ones." Jude 14.

Then will the seed be complete, and the promise will be fulfilled. And until that time the law will faithfully perform its task of stirring up and pricking the consciences of sinners, giving them no rest until they become identified with Christ, or cast Him off altogether. Do you accept the terms? Will you cease your complaints against the law which would save you from sinking into a fatal sleep? And will you in Christ accept its righteousness? Then, as Abraham's seed, and an heir according to the promise, you can rejoice in your freedom from the bondage of sin, singing:

> "I'm the child of a King, The child of a King, With Jesus my Saviour, I'm the child of a King." E.J. Waggoner, The Glad Tidings, pp. 156-158 (1900).

The profound implication here is that no distinct promise was made to Abraham's physical descendants apart from faith. The inheritance of Canaan was simply a subset of the inheritance of the entire world by Christ and those who have expressed faith in Him. Scripture never promises any group a land as an everlasting possession outside of righteousness by faith, a principle Paul highlights in his definition of a true Jew:

> **For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;** but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God. Romans 2:28-29

While Abraham's physical descendants occupy a unique place in history, having first access to the blessed Torah, the terms of the covenant, and for the Messiah coming first to them—none of these privileges automatically qualify them as children of God. Only faith in Christ grants that status, as Paul forcefully writes:

> I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, **who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.** But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. **For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.** Romans 9:1-8

The promise of the land is inextricably bound to the promise of salvation in Christ. Neither Abraham nor Christ has yet taken possession of the earth as an eternal inheritance, therefore the conquest of Israel into Canaan during the time of Joshua could not be the final fulfilment of the promise to Abraham.

Israel also didn't enter the land of Canaan by faith, for Israel repeatedly refused to listen to the voice of God through Christ the Mediator:

> 'And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD.' So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; **but they did not heed Moses,** because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage. Exodus 6:8-9

> Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but **let not God speak with us, lest we die**." Exodus 20:19

> And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! **Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.**" Numbers 14:2-4

God intended for Israel to receive His Spirit and be a light to the Gentiles, drawing the world to the truth. Yet the physical nation rejected this destiny.

Further evidence that the land could only be possessed through faith in the Messiah is found in God's dealings with the Amorites:

> But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete. Genesis 15:16

Elder Waggoner commented on this delay:

> But we learn something more. In the fourth generation, or after the lapse of four hundred years, his seed was to come out of bondage,

> into the promised land. Why could they not possess the land at once?--Because the iniquity of the Amorites was not then full. That shows that God would give the Amorites time to repent, or, failing that, to fill up the measure of their iniquity, and thus demonstrate their unfitness to possess the land. Then, as now, the long-suffering of our God was salvation.
>
> And that teaches us further that the land which God promised to Abraham and his seed could be possessed only by righteous people. God would not cast out of the land those of whom there was any seeming prospect that they might become righteous. E.J. Waggoner, *Everlasting Covenant (1900) p. 72.4-5*

Not only did the Amorites fail to repent, but they got worse – and Israel eventually adopted many of their degrading practices:

> But they [the Israelites] mingled with the Gentiles and learned their works; they served their idols, which became a snare to them. They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons, and shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood. Thus they were defiled by their own works, and played the harlot by their own deeds. Psalms 106:35-39

The deacon Stephen summarises this tragic history of rebellion and rejection of the gospel:

> "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! **You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did**, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? **And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.**" Acts 7:51-53

Lest Gentiles feel superior, the last two millennia of Christian history reveal the same spirit of rebellion against Christ and the gospel. Just as physical lineage provides no guarantee of receiving Abraham's promises, neither does church membership. It is purely through

repentance and acceptance of the gospel that anyone inherits these blessings.

Furthermore, Christ does nothing through carnal effort to secure His kingdom. When we read of Israel hacking their way through Canaan, killing men, women, and children, we must ask: does this truly represent the kingdom of God? How could anyone inherit the land outside of a living connection to Christ, the true Seed?

CHAPTER 3

3. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

The kingdom of heaven/God was a key theme of Christ's earthly ministry, defined across several statements. This statement in Luke is particularly striking:

> Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17:20-21

In this single statement, Christ sweeps away all the kingdoms of the world as having any resemblance to the kingdom of God. In fact, when Jesus was seeking to explain what God's kingdom was like, He could find nothing from human society with which to compare it.

> Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it?" Mark 4:30

Jesus reveals the spiritual nature of His kingdom by stating, it is "within you." It is a kingdom of the Spirit and character. It is not a kingdom built on armies, force, compulsion, bricks, buildings or physical territory and assets.

The kingdom of heaven has territory, buildings and architecture, but is not based on these things. The value or power of the kingdom is in a peaceful and gentle character which manifests itself in beautiful things. The kingdoms of this world are built upon the acquisition of buildings, resources, and territories using armies, force, and might, but this is completely opposite to the kingdom of God. Jesus makes this abundantly clear when He told Pilate:

> Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." John 18:36

Once again, in a single statement Christ completely separates the kingdom of God from all human kingdoms. All the wars of human history are exposed by this simple expression to Pilate. All wars in the name of Christ are condemned by this statement, and take particular note that this includes all the wars of the Jews in ancient times. There are no qualifications in the words of Jesus, no exception clauses, no claims to executive justice requiring force and death in His kingdom. From one of Christ's most testing days comes the most sublime revelation of the kingdom of heaven. Elder Waggoner confirmed this truth when he said:

> The inheritance which the Lord has promised to His people, the seed of Abraham, is not to be obtained by fighting, except with spiritual weapons--the armour of Christ--against the hosts of Satan. They who seek the country which God has promised, declare that they are strangers and pilgrims on this earth. They cannot use the sword, even in self-defense, much less for conquest. The Lord is their defender. E.J. Waggoner, *Everlasting Covenant (1900) p. 127*

Elder Waggoner's premise for why Israel could not use the sword comes down to a universal principle: the Gospel is everlasting because God's

covenant is everlasting.[3] The words that Jesus speaks in the New Testament have just as much force in the Old Testament.

> When Christ commands His followers not to fight, and warns them that if they do they shall perish, **He is not introducing a new order of things, but simply leading His people back to first principles.** Ancient Israel affords an illustration of the fact that they who use the sword shall perish with the sword; and, although the Lord bore long with them, and made many concessions to their weakness, and has borne still longer with us, He wishes us to avoid their errors. All the things concerning them "are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." E.J. Waggoner, *Everlasting Covenant (1900) p.* 420.2

The majority of Christians that hold to the teaching that the New Covenant did not operate from the fall of man are seduced into thinking that Christ's teachings and methods are different from God's dealings with Ancient Israel before Christ was born a man. In the correct framework of the two covenants, this is completely false.

But opposition to this principle often takes a more rudimentary approach. The natural response to the command to avoid the sword is an appeal to practicality in human eyes. How would a Christian nation defend itself against an evil, hostile force? Jesus makes plain the matter to Peter.

> And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. But Jesus said to him, "**Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?** Matthew 26:51-53

Jesus relied upon the angelic protection provided by His Father in answer to prayer. A practical example of this is found in 2 Kings 19,

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[3] See the book *Everlasting Covenant* by E.J. Waggoner available at maranathamedia.com

where King Hezekiah faces certain destruction from the King of Assyria. Hezekiah prayed earnestly to the Lord for help, and the Lord delivered the king and the nation without any requirement to arise and kill anyone. As the angel explained to Zechariah:

> … "This *is* the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might (*In Hebrew, a force or army*) nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts. Zechariah 4:6

It is the Spirit dwelling in the hearts of men by faith that provides the shield and protection required to live in this wicked world. The Spirit of Jesus in men pour forth as rivers of living water, providing peace to the soul and a barrier against wickedness. When the king of righteousness dwells in our hearts by the Spirit, this is the result:

> **Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule with justice. A man will be as a hiding place from the wind, and a cover from the tempest,** as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Isaiah 32:1-2
>
> Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. **The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places,…** Isaiah 32:16-18

The princes of the King of Righteousness will rule with justice, and become shelters from the torrents of evil in this world. The effect of the Spirit in the heart is peace, not war; it brings quietness, not yelling, grunting, screaming in agony, and death. Neither will they use cunning deception, trickery, lies and deceit to overcome their foes. The dwellings of those resting in this Spirit will be secure from harm in quiet resting places.

Few people are willing to enter this kingdom. The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:14), thus making the path narrow so that few can find entrance. (Matthew 7:14). Jesus tells us that only those who are poor in (their own) spirit will possess

the kingdom (Matthew 5:3). It is the peacemakers that are called sons of God (Matthew 5:9), not the war makers. And Jesus tells us that only those who have the attitude of a small child can enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 18:3,4). Small children have no concept of war; or using weapons to kill other people. They have no consciousness of such things.

Jesus taught the people how the development of God's kingdom takes place. Not through the use of force, conquering territory, killing enemies and enforcing its laws on the populace, but rather through the quiet and gentle mechanism of a seed that grows quietly, gently and steadily as it receives water and sunlight.

> Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;…" Matthew 13:24

> Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened." Matthew 13:33

> Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." Matthew 13:31-32

The kingdom of heaven responds to the warm sunlight of God's love and the cool water and gentle breeze representing the breath or Spirit of God.

But some may question, didn't Jesus speak of taking the kingdom of heaven by force?

> And from the days of John the Baptist until now **the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.** For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come. Matthew 11:12-14

Here is one Bible commentary explanation of this verse:

> The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence - The tax-gatherers and heathens, whom the scribes and Pharisees think have no right to the kingdom of the Messiah**, filled with holy zeal and earnestness, seize at once on the proffered mercy of the Gospel, and so take the kingdom as by force** from those learned doctors who claimed for themselves the chiefest places in that kingdom. Christ himself said, The tax-gatherers and harlots go before you into the kingdom of God. – *Adam Clarke Commentary*

But we need to read the context of what Jesus said about John the Baptist in the preceding verse.

> Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; **but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.** Matthew 11:11

How can Jesus say that there is no one greater than John the Baptist and at the same time say that he that is the least in the kingdom is greater than him? The answer lies in the stark reality that at this point John was not actually in the kingdom; he did not understand its core principles of peace and non-violence. This misunderstanding is what led John to question the mission of Jesus and whether He was truly the Messiah:

> And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" Matthew 11:2-3

John the Baptist had a crisis of faith because he believed Christ would forcibly take the leadership of Israel and cut down those false leaders who were corrupting the people.

> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. **And even now the ax is**

> **laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.** Matthew 3:7-10

In this context, Jesus is actually telling us that the kingdom of heaven became subject to the principles of violence through the teachings of the prophets who taught the law of force. If John was the greatest of the prophets, then all the prophets could not have escaped being influenced by principles of violence.

> And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. Matthew 11:12-13

The most common New Testament usages of the words "take it by force" are as follows:

> And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. [G726 G846] Matthew 11:12
>
> When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, **then the wicked one comes and snatches** [G726] away what was sown in his [G846] heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. Matthew 13:19
>
> Therefore when Jesus perceived that **they were about to come and take Him by force** [G726 G846] to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone. John 6:15
>
> But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; **and the wolf catches** [G726] [G846] **the sheep** and scatters them. John 10:12
>
> And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; **neither shall anyone snatch** [G726] **them** [G846] out of My hand. John 10:28
>
> Now when there arose a great dissension, the commander, fearing lest Paul might be pulled to pieces by them, commanded **the**

> **soldiers to go down and take him by force** [G726 G846] from among them, and bring him into the barracks. Acts 23:10

The word usage is negative in all these contexts. The preaching of the prophets was mixed with the principles of force. They seized hold of the kingdom to the best of their knowledge but most people did not actually enter into the kingdom. For this reason, as we mentioned earlier, when Christ taught the people, he could not use anything within human society structures with which to compare the kingdom of heaven.

Why did he not say that the kingdom of heaven was revealed in the nation of Israel from the Old Testament? Why did He not point to Solomon's kingdom as the best and highest example of the kingdom of God? Simply because it did not represent it.

The children of Israel put a veil over their eyes; they didn't wish to behold the glory of God's character in the face of Moses and so all through the Old Testament, the eyes of the people were blinded to the complete truth of God's kingdom.

> …unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. But their minds were blinded. **For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.** But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. **Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away**. 2 Corinthians 3:13-16

This is why the nation of Israel rejected Christ. He was not the Messiah they believed in or wanted. He was gentle, kind, humble, compassionate. He lacked the force that most thought was needed to throw off the Romans. He never threatened to kill any person, and never put anyone to death, or called for the death of any person. This was intolerable to the leaders and most of the nation of Israel.

But what has Christianity learned? Do her teachers preach the truth of Christ's character? Are the principles of non-violence held up before the people without compromise?

Not at all. The Christian churches are linked to the armies of the world and have assisted in the great wars of the last few hundred years. They have taught that submission to existing governments means serving in their Army, Navy and Air Force. All of these things continue to cause people to seize the kingdom by force. They seize it and hold it captive to the principles of violence but like John the Baptist at that moment, they are not in the kingdom of Heaven.

Thankfully, when John received the report about Jesus while he was in prison, he realised the truth of the kingdom of heaven. Rather than seizing it, he chose to enter into it and thereby finally receiving the seal of heaven's kingdom.

So it will be in the last days. There are many who stand bravely for the truth of the Father and the Son and present the truth of the law of God, and His Sabbath. And yet, they have failed to discern the true nature of the kingdom of heaven. They continue to teach that God is a destroyer, who will forcefully burn up the wicked as chaff. In the final crisis of earth's history, some of them will have a personal crisis of faith being tempted to believe that all is lost. But the Spirit of truth will encourage them to take hold of the truth of the Father of Love, and enter into the kingdom of heaven and be sealed and saved.

In the light of Christ's teaching about the kingdom of heaven, it should be evident that the kingdom of Israel in the Old Testament did not enter into the kingdom of heaven because of unbelief (Hebrews 4:6). They had the law, the covenants, and the promises of God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but they chose to seize hold of this kingdom and hold it in the context of violence, war and death.

Let it remain forever in our minds that Christ taught that His servants do not fight with weapons or force to advance the kingdom of heaven. It is done through the seed of a still small voice in the conscience. Are you willing to enter this gentle kingdom?

CHAPTER 4

4. FAILURE OF PLAN A

With a better understanding of the kingdom of heaven, let us briefly retrace our steps to examine the promises made to Abraham once more. We must examine the seeds that influenced the literal children of Abraham to fall away from those promises and refuse to enter the rest of God through unbelief.

Let us consider several texts that could support the idea that the literal children of Israel were to inherit the land of Canaan.

> I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. **And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD.** Exodus 6:7-8
>
> See, I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers--to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob--to give to them and their descendants after them.' Deuteronomy 1:8
>
> Moses My servant is dead. **Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them--the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River**

> **Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory.** No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Joshua 1:2-6

The promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are restated to Moses and Joshua. In the first chapter of Joshua, the Lord specifies the territory that was given to be given to Israel. Yet it is the following verses at the end of Joshua that appear to provide the clearest evidence that the territory of Canaan was given as a possession to the literal descendants of Abraham.

> **So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers:** and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass. Joshua 21:43-45

The key point here is to remember that Abraham received the promises that God made by faith, and only those who exercise the faith that Abraham exercised will become inheritors of those promises.

> **For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect**, because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, **not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith** of Abraham, who is the father of us all. Romans 4:13-16

Paul makes it abundantly clear that the inheritance of becoming heir of the world is only by faith. After stating this fact, he opens a door to a theoretical possibility that those who keep the law could also receive the promise, but in human flesh, we know this is impossible. Paul made it clear that Abraham received it by faith and therefore his spiritual children will also receive it by faith alone.

In this context, we return to the book of Joshua and the scene at the close of Joshua's life. Things have changed from the glowing statement of Joshua 21, that all had been accomplished and all the promises fulfilled.

> And it came to pass a long time after that the LORD had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age. And Joshua called for all Israel, and for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them, "I am old and stricken in age: And ye have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the LORD your God is he that hath fought for you**. Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes,** from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward. **And the LORD your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the LORD your God hath promised unto you.**" Joshua 23:1-5

Here we see that not all of the land had been inherited. There was still land to be conquered. Then Joshua begins to warn them of the consequences of failing to maintain faith in the promises of God and keeping His covenant:

> Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God. **Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you:** Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; …. And, behold,

> this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof. **Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods,** and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, **and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.** Joshua 23:11-16

Joshua makes it clear that if Israel, as a nation, went into idolatry and mixed with the remaining nations around them, they would perish and the land would cease to be theirs. It makes sense that if you reject the God who made the promises to you, that you are by default rejecting those promises also, even if you wish to retain those promises. But lest we fall into the trap of considering God as double-minded in taking away that which He has promised, we must consider that it is the worship of the true character of God that inherently brings all of the promises with it. It is not something arbitrary given and taken on a whim, but in the worship of the true God comes the Spirit of that God which fills the soul and land with all the ingredients necessary for prosperity and growth.

Elder Waggoner, affirms the nature of the promises made to Israel:

> In this portion of Scripture we have further evidence that the inheritance is the promised rest. We are plainly told that God had given Israel rest, and that this talk [Joshua 23] occurred a long time after that; [Joshua 21] **yet in that very talk they were told the conditions upon which they might surely have the rest, and upon which the enemies that were still in the land would be driven out. It all depended on Israel's faithfulness to God.** If they should go back from serving the Lord, and go after other gods, then they were

> to know for a certainty that God would no more drive out the remaining nations from before them, but those nations should continually harass them, and the Lord would utterly destroy them from off the face of the land which He had given them. E.J. Waggoner, *Everlasting Covenant. (1900) p. 414.1*

God had intended that Israel would learn to rest in His promises and love Him with all their hearts. Being full of the Spirit, they would expand little by little until they had taken possession of all of the land of Canaan.

> **I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you.** And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you. **I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land.** And I will set your bounds from the Red Sea to the sea, Philistia, and from the desert to the River. For I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you. Exodus 23:27-31

As Israel continued to prosper, the foreign nations around them would be drawn to learn more of the God of Israel. Israel would have become a shining light to the world.

> Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; **But the LORD will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.** Lift up your eyes all around, and see: They all gather together, they come to you; Your sons shall come from afar, And your daughters shall be nursed at your side. **Then you shall see and become radiant, And your heart shall swell with joy; Because the abundance of the sea**

> **shall be turned to you, The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.** Isaiah 60:1-5

Then the Seed of Abraham, which is also the Seed of David, would come, and the whole world would be taught by His gentle ways, and all the inhabitants would glorify God for His goodness.

> There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight is in the fear of the LORD, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. Isaiah 11:1-9

How different would have been the coming of the Messiah! Christ need not have been born into a world that continually misunderstood, rejected, and hated Him. His great sacrifice would be understood in the context of taking our fallen nature upon Him and slaying the remaining enmity that was in our hearts. (Ephesians 2:13-15). In obtaining the blessing of the Father at His baptism, He would have secured for them the assurance of sonship and daughtership to God. Defeating Satan in the wilderness of temptation, He would have sealed their identities as children of God. As a Priest after the order of Melchizedek, He would have ministered to them the blood of the new covenant found in the

wine, and blessed them with the bread of His presence, to which they would daily eat and be filled. The institution of the sacrifices would have been understood as a diagnosis of their enmity against God for which they would have wept for sorrow, and repented with a repentance full and complete. Christ's miracles of mercy and kindness would have been understood in a completely different light, and all the world would have come to learn the truth of God's gentle, gracious, and merciful character.

Oh what might have been! The horrific and traumatic events of the past 2500 years need not have occurred in the way they did. There would have been no devouring from the Lion, Bear, Leopard, and Ten-horned Beast as described in Daniel 7. No Papal power would have arisen to blaspheme God and slaughter the saints. Our Father's suffering through Christ would have ended a long time ago and peace would have returned to the earth again.

These realities teach us that our Father did not want humanity to suffer for six thousand years; He wanted to end it as soon as possible. But humanity clung with a strange and mysterious infatuation to Satan's lies about justice and its supposed requirement of death.

> Shall the throne of iniquity, which devises evil by law, have fellowship with You? Psalms 94:20

Elder Waggoner explained the problem with clarity when he said:

> Of course the idea of a propitiation or sacrifice is that there is wrath to be appeased. But **take particular notice that it is we who require the sacrifice, and not God**. E.J. Waggoner, *The Justice of Mercy, Present Truth UK Aug 30, 1894*

We covered this point of man's hidden enmity towards God extensively in *Mirror Principle*, especially chapter 30. I have also addressed this in the book *At-One-Ment*. We might also deduce this from two of our instruments or tools: 3. Enmity and 7. Projection.

Satan convinced men that violations of the law should be punished with death. Man then projected this justice system onto God. This principle

formed the basis of war, for when one nation does wrong to another, human justice demands punishment and death to make atonement. This principle was present in Abraham when he rescued his nephew Lot. It was present with Moses and Joshua when faced with the Amalekites[4] and a number of other encounters with other nations.

When Israel left Egypt, it might have occurred to them that they had not been required to kill one person in making their escape. But as we discovered in Mirror Principle, Israel sang, danced, and praised a God of war. Again, when Israel walked around Jericho in strict obedience to God's commands, the walls of Jericho came down flat without them having to lay one finger on them. But it is from the point of the slaughter of the inhabitants of Jericho that Israel enthroned in their hearts the god of death, and from where their failure to receive the promises of Abraham started to become firm. Elder Waggoner pinpoints this issue clearly when he stated:

> Their victory was to be had only by faith, and, as we have already seen**, if they had been truly faithful, there would have been no more need of their using the sword to drive out the Canaanites than there was to use it for the overthrow of Pharaoh and his hosts. <u>Indeed, the reason why they did not gain full possession of the land was because of that unbelief which made the sword necessary</u>;** for it is absolutely impossible that the heavenly country which God promised Abraham can ever be gained by men with swords or guns in their hands. The first experience of Moses demonstrated this. **There was no more need for Israel to fight in the days of old than there is for us;** for "when a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" and we are absolutely forbidden to fight. The possessions that men gain by fighting are not the possessions that God gives. Indeed, they are really not possessions at all, since they cannot possibly be held, as the history of the world proves. Alexander and Napoleon long since

[4] See chapter 26 of Mirror Principle – Amalekite Defeat, Defeats Israel

> lost all that they seemed to have gained by war. The latter, like many others, lost his seeming possessions even before he died.
>
> **When Christ commands His followers not to fight, and warns them that if they do they shall perish, He is not introducing a new order of things, but simply leading His people back to first principles. Ancient Israel affords an illustration of the fact that they who use the sword shall perish with the sword; and, although the Lord bore long with them, and made many concessions to their weakness, and has borne still longer with us, He wishes us to avoid their errors.** All the things concerning them "are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." E.J. Waggoner, *Everlasting Covenant (1900) pp. 420.1-2*

Here is the crux of the entire Canaan conquest. Anyone who takes Jesus seriously, who accepts His definition of His kingdom not being of this world and His servants not fighting as a universal principle, then it immediately becomes evident that Israel failed to receive the promises made to Abraham in their completion. Why? Because they refused to give up the sword and maintained the doctrine of death, and therefore maintained the worship of the God of justice through arbitrary death. And this fact is what ensured that Israel would continually slide into idolatry no matter how hard they tried to be faithful.

Layered on top of this is the reason why when Christ came unto His own, they did not receive Him, because He did not speak in the language of justice demanding death. He is the author of life, and everything He touched responded to the principle of life and was restored.

Having laid out some core framework principles, let us now address exactly what God said to Moses about how the inhabitants of Canaan were to be dealt with.

CHAPTER 5

5. DRIVING OUT THE INHABITANTS

Here is the passage where God outlines to Israel exactly how they would take possession of the land.

> Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him. But **if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. For My Angel will go before you and bring you in to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off.**
>
> You shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their works; but you shall utterly overthrow them and completely break down their sacred pillars. So you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you. No one shall suffer miscarriage or be barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days.

> **I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you. I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land.** And I will set your bounds from the Red Sea to the sea, Philistia, and from the desert to the River.
>
> **For I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you.** You shall make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against Me. For if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you." Exodus 23:20-33

The Angel of the Lord was none other than Christ Himself, as Paul tells us:

> …and all [Israel] drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:4

If Israel would listen to the voice of Christ, then He would be an enemy to their enemies. He would go before them, prepare the way for them. His presence would bring fear to these heathen nations and they would flee in confusion; they would turn their backs to Israel and they would be driven out of the land. God then tells the people that He would deliver the heathen into the hand of Israel, and they, being filled with the Spirit of Christ, would cause the heathen to flee for their lives.

We need to examine this word *drive out* because it is central to understanding the manner of the conquest of Canaan. The word translated as *drive out* occurs in Exodus 23:28-31 and is identified as Strong's number H1644.

> H1644 gaŝrash A primitive root; to *drive* out from a possession; especially to *expatriate* or *divorce:* - cast up (out), divorced (woman), drive away (forth, out), expel, X surely put away, trouble, thrust out.

When we examine the word usage in the Old Testament, we get a clearer picture of its meaning.

> …therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out [H1644] the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life. Genesis 3:23-24

> And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! Surely You have driven me out [H1644] this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me." Genesis 4:13-14

> Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out [H1644] this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac." Genesis 21:10

> Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. And they came and drew water, and they filled the troughs to water their father's flock. Then the shepherds came and drove them away; [H1644] but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. Exodus 2:16-17

> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out [H1644] of his land." Exodus 6:1

> They shall not take a wife who is a harlot or a defiled woman, nor shall they take a woman divorced [H1644] from her husband; for the priest is holy to his God. Leviticus 21:7

In all the cases I have cited, the meaning is to remove a person from the current environment, but it does not mean to kill. This word for *drive out* is mentioned 45 times in the Old Testament. There are a few places where this word is connected to killing or destroying such as in Deuteronomy 33:27, where God appears to issue a command to destroy after casting out and Numbers 22:6 where King Balak desires to smite and drive out the Israelites. But what God spoke in Exodus 23 has no mention of killing anyone. The only place where force is mentioned is when they are to break down the idols of the nations before them.

We remember that Jesus was the One who was leading them, and if they had faithfully listened to His voice, then the presence of Christ would have caused the wicked to flee in terror even as the demons tried desperately to escape His presence.

> And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. So the devils besought him, saying, "If thou cast us out, [G1544] suffer us to go away into the herd of swine." Matthew 8:28-31

The words the demons use for *cast out* is the same word that is used for when Jesus cleansed the temple.

> When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out [G1544] of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. John 2:15

Jesus did not strike anyone with the whip, it was a symbol of authority. It was His holy presence that struck terror into the hearts of the people. This scene is wonderfully depicted in a volume on the life of Christ called *The Desire of Ages*. It captures perfectly the sense of how the driving out takes place when Christ is in command.

With searching glance, Christ takes in the scene before Him as He stands upon the steps of the temple court. With prophetic eye He looks into futurity, and sees not only years, but centuries and ages. He sees how priests and rulers will turn the needy from their right, and forbid that the gospel shall be preached to the poor. He sees how the love of God will be concealed from sinners, and men will make merchandise of His grace. As He beholds the scene, indignation, authority, and power are expressed in His countenance. The attention of the people is attracted to Him. The eyes of those engaged in their unholy traffic are riveted upon His face. **They cannot withdraw their gaze. They feel that this Man reads their inmost thoughts, and discovers their hidden motives. Some attempt to conceal their faces, as if their evil deeds were written upon their countenances, to be scanned by those searching eyes.**

The confusion is hushed. The sound of traffic and bargaining has ceased. The silence becomes painful. **A sense of awe overpowers the assembly. It is as if they were arraigned before the tribunal of God to answer for their deeds. Looking upon Christ, they behold divinity flash through the garb of humanity. The Majesty of heaven stands as the Judge will stand at the last day**,—not now encircled with the glory that will then attend Him, but with the same power to read the soul. His eye sweeps over the multitude, taking in every individual. His form seems to rise above them in commanding dignity, and a divine light illuminates His countenance. **He speaks, and His clear, ringing voice—the same that upon Mount Sinai proclaimed the law that priests and rulers are transgressing—is heard echoing through the arches of the temple: "Take these things hence; make not My Father's house an house of merchandise."**

Slowly descending the steps, and raising the scourge of cords gathered up on entering the enclosure, He bids the bargaining company depart from the precincts of the temple. With a zeal and severity He has never before manifested, He overthrows the tables

> of the money-changers. The coin falls, ringing sharply upon the marble pavement. None presume to question His authority. **None dare stop to gather up their ill-gotten gain. Jesus does not smite them with the whip of cords, but in His hand that simple scourge seems terrible as a flaming sword. Officers of the temple, speculating priests, brokers and cattle traders, with their sheep and oxen, rush from the place, with the one thought of escaping from the condemnation of His presence.** *Desire of Ages* 157-158.

When we read Exodus 23:28-31 of how God cast out the nations before Israel in the Greek Old Testament, the exact same word used to cleanse the temple is used to describe the process. "He drove them all out [G1544] of the temple;" now compare that to this:

> And I will send hornets before thee, and thou shalt cast out [G1544] the Amorites and the Evites, and the Chananites and the Chettites from thee. I will not cast them out [G1544] in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee. By little and little I will cast them out [G1544] from before thee, until thou shalt be increased and inherit the earth. And I will set thy borders from the Red Sea, to the sea of the Phylistines, and from the wilderness to the great river Euphrates; and I will give into your hand those that dwell in the land, and will cast them out [G1544] from thee. Exodus 23:28-31

There is a direct connection in word usage between God's statement that He would drive out the inhabitants and Jesus cleansing the temple. And as Christ was leading Israel, this is the manner in which the land of Canaan would have been cleansed. Yes, like Jesus overturning the tables, the Israelites would have destroyed the wood and stone idols of the nations, but no whip or sword would have been employed to strike any person.

We add to this that Israel had a clear understanding of the meaning of the word for *drive out* because God told Moses that this is what Pharaoh would do to Israel.

> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out [H1644] of his land." Exodus 6:1

It is evident that Pharaoh did not kill all the Israelites, but that he thrust or drove them out and told them to leave. But in order for Christ to lead Israel and provide His abiding presence to them, Israel needed to listen to Christ and follow His instructions, but as the Bible records:

> How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. Numbers 14:27

> I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts… Isaiah 65:2

Israel refused to fully submit themselves to Christ and so He was forced to walk beside them and help them as best He could as they did things their own way. And as they did not listen, they did not have His full presence that would bring terror to the heathen. They could not drive out the inhabitants as God intended them to do.

It was true that the events related to Israel leaving Egypt caused the nations of Canaan to tremble. The events of the plagues, and the crossing of the Red Sea, had struck terror into the nations as Rahab related to the Israelite spies:

> And she said unto the men, “I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.” Joshua 2:9

God did deliver the nations into the hands of Israel as He said in Exodus, but he had never commanded them to kill the people that fell into their hands. They were to be free to flee for their lives and be driven out, or, like Rahab, to repent and learn of the God of Israel. It is in this context that Joshua could write at the close of his life:

> And the LORD drove out from before us all the people, including the Amorites who dwelt in the land. We also will serve the LORD, for He *is* our God." Joshua 24:18

How different the conquest of Canaan might have been. With the presence of Jesus leading them, the enemies of Israel would have been the enemies of God; they would have fled in terror and confusion before them. As they fled many would have perished, while a remnant would have clung to Israel and desired to join with them and worship the God of heaven. How sad that Israel chose to understand the word *drive out* as *kill and destroy.*

Truly, our thoughts are not God's thoughts, and His ways are not our ways.

CHAPTER 6

6. THE SONG OF MOSES

The phrase *Song of Moses* is commonly understood to refer to Israel's victory over Egypt when they passed through the Red Sea. It is referenced in the book of Revelation and connected to the victory of the Lamb; a reference to Christ.

> They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!" Revelation 15:3

But Moses wrote another song at the end of his life evoking a very different feel from the first. God instructed Moses to write out this song, so the lyrics are not simply the mournful indulgence of a deeply disappointed prophet, but a testimony to the rebellion of Israel against God and their refusal to serve Him, and walk in His ways.

The song begins with a description of the teachings given to Israel. Some translations present this in the future tense but the literal Hebrew presents this in the present tense.

> `Give ear, O heavens, and I speak; and thou dost hear, O earth, sayings of my mouth! **Drop as rain doth My doctrine**; **flow as dew doth My sayings; as storms on the tender grass**, and as showers on the herb, **For the Name of Jehovah I proclaim, ascribe ye greatness to our God! The Rock! --perfect is His work, For all His ways are just;** God of stedfastness, and without iniquity: Righteous and upright is He. Deuteronomy 32:1-4

Israel had the opportunity to hear the most sublime truths about our Heavenly Father. The shining of the face of Moses was a reflection of the resplendent glory in the character of God which they might have embraced, but they told Moses to put a veil over his face, revealing an apt symbol of their rejection of God's true character. Soon after, God revealed to Moses the beauty of His character when He stated:

> Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation." Exodus 34:5-7

But the people refused to enter into the rest; into the bosom of this wonderful Father. As the Psalmist declared:

> I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt; open your mouth wide, and I will fill it. But My people would not heed My voice, and Israel would have none of Me. Psalms 81:10-11

What could the heavenly Father do but to let them do what they wished?

> So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, to walk in their own counsels. "Oh, that My people would listen to Me, that Israel

> would walk in My ways! I would soon subdue their enemies, and turn My hand against their adversaries. Psalms 81:12-14

If Israel had received the truth of God's character, the nations around them would have been subdued through the Spirit of peace, as we laid out in the previous chapter. But in grief, God allowed Israel to follow their own ways in slaughtering the people around them. The consequences of these actions made their failure certain, as the song of Moses explains:

> "They have corrupted themselves; they are not His children, because of their blemish: a perverse and crooked generation. Do you thus deal with the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is He not your Father, who bought you? Has He not made you and established you?" Deuteronomy 32:5-6

The song protests against Israel for all that was done for them. The heavenly Father carried them on wings as eagles; He fed them in the desert and cared for all their needs but to no avail:

> "But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; you grew fat, you grew thick, you are obese! Then he forsook God who made him, and scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation. They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign gods; with abominations they provoked Him to anger. They sacrificed to demons, not to God, to gods they did not know, to new gods, new arrivals that your fathers did not fear. Of the Rock who begot you, you are unmindful, and have forgotten the God who fathered you." Deuteronomy 32:15-18

All of this is described before they entered the land of Canaan. Not only did the people bow before the golden calf at Sinai, but they made vows to offer up, and slaughter the nations to the God of death, which they vainly thought was the God of heaven.

> So Israel made a vow to the LORD, and said, "If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities." Numbers 21:2

Satan is the author and controller of death (Hebrews 2:14). The act of slaughter is a recognition and worship of the god of death, Satan. It is a sacrifice to demons, not to God. If the people had responded to the teachings of Moses, then the truths revealed to Moses would have expanded; Moses would have grown more in the principles revealed to him, and Israel would have come to this point:

> They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. Isaiah 11:9

But they limited God, and therefore limited Moses in the process:

> How often they provoked Him in the wilderness, and grieved Him in the desert! Yes, again and again they tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. They did not remember His power: The day when He redeemed them from the enemy… Psalms 78:40-42

As a result, the end of Israel as a chosen nation is forecast in the song.

> And when the LORD saw it, He spurned them, because of the provocation of His sons and His daughters. And He said:
>
> "I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end will be, for they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faith. They have provoked Me to jealousy by what is not God; they have moved Me to anger by their foolish idols. But I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation; I will move them to anger by a foolish nation. For a fire is kindled in My anger, and shall burn to the lowest hell; It shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. 'I will heap disasters on them; I will spend My arrows on them. They shall be wasted with hunger, devoured by pestilence and bitter destruction; I will also send against them the teeth of beasts, with the poison of serpents of the dust." Deuteronomy 32:19-24

In the words of the song we can sense the sorrow that Moses must have endured. He had given his life to serve of these people. He might have become king of Egypt, but instead he cast in his lot with this collection

of slaves. How many times had they complained to him; how many times did they threaten to stone him in their anger? In the midst of all these sorrows, it is easy to understand why Moses stumbled under this load of grief.

The death of Miriam was a signal of much worse to come. While Moses was in grief due to the loss of his sister who had saved his life as a baby, Moses heard the complaints of Israel that he had heard forty years earlier in the same place.

> Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron. And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying: "If only we had died when our brethren died before the LORD! Why have you brought up the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here? And why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates; nor is there any water to drink." So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and they fell on their faces. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them. Numbers 20:2-6

The people knew the history of the past, and how God had provided for them. The people's repeated rebellions and refusals had accumulated in their minds until their actions openly manifested their self-destructive behaviour. How could they be relieved of their unrealised guilt of the past 40 years? What would help them to believe that God did not condemn them, never wanted to kill them, but rather bless them?

There was only one way to save the nation. Because they believed that guilt required a death, only a death would release them. It became expedient that one man die, that the whole nation perish not. These were the words of Caiaphas, spoken from within that very belief system.

> Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. John 11:50

The Lord knew the sorrow Moses was experiencing because He was carrying it Himself. Last time Israel was here, Moses was commanded to strike the rock, but this time they were to speak to the rock. No symbol of punishment through striking, simply the still small voice of speaking in the language of confident appeal.

The remnants of the false justice system in Moses surfaced. Forty years earlier Moses had pled for the life of Israel, but his perception of God's character caused him to pause in his prayer:

> "Yet now, if You will forgive their sin--but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written." Exodus 32:32

As Moses thought Israel's sin, he wavered as to whether they could actually be forgiven. They had shown such ingratitude and rebellion in their actions; he struggled to believe they could be forgiven. So in an act of supreme love, he offered himself as an atonement for the sin of the people. A wonderful, wonderful gesture, but God does not require sacrifice for sin. Moses was still influenced by the universal human misunderstanding of God's character, believing that sin can be atoned for through death.

This misunderstanding combined with all the sorrow of the certainty of Israel's failure to take hold of the promises of God now revealed the spirit of impatience in Moses and he struck the rock twice.

> And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank. Numbers 20:10-11

The children of Israel had repeatedly claimed that Moses had led them out of Egypt as if it was through his own power he had done this. By claiming to be the one who gave them the water, Moses unwittingly gave power to their false charge that he had done all these miracles.

It was a no-win situation. If Moses were simply forgiven and allowed to continue leading Israel, the people would be confirmed in their

falsehood that Moses had done all these things by his own power. Our loving, merciful Father of course wanted to forgive Moses, but the false accusations of the people made that impossible. Moses had to be sacrificed/given up in order to make clear to the people that God was the one who had delivered them. The language Moses uses gives us a clue to what unfolded.

> The LORD was also angry with me for your sakes, saying, 'Even you shall not go in there. Deuteronomy 1:37

The anger of God is to hide his face as recorded in the song of Moses.

> And He said: '**I will hide My face from them**, I will see what their end will be, for they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faith. They have provoked Me to jealousy by what is not God; **They have moved Me to anger** by their foolish idols….' Deuteronomy 32:20-21

God might have preserved Moses to endure the provocation of the Israelites. He also might not have worked the miracle to bring forth the water, thus clearly showing that Moses was not the one working the miracles. But the only thing which would release the people from their deception was the death of Moses; he had to be given up to their rebellion to give them a possible chance of redemption. Therefore, as Moses wrote, it was for their sakes that God stood back from Moses and allowed events to play out, even as He stepped back from His Son in the garden of Gethsemane.

Christ committed no sin, obviously, so the parallel is not perfect, but the process of atonement for the people was the same: it was "expedient that one man die that the whole nation perish not." The Bible reveals how the people's iniquity came to rest on Moses and, secondly, Aaron. The Lord had called the Israelites rebellious (Numbers 17:10, Isaiah 30:9). Moses spoke what was obvious in calling them rebels (Numbers 20:10). But when God speaks to Moses and Aaron, He places the charge of rebellion on them:

> Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, **because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah.** Numbers 20:24

God uses the same word for *rebel* for Moses and Aaron as they used for the Israelites. Here we see the punishment for the rebellion is laid upon Aaron and Moses. They are made to pay the price for the rebellion of the Israelites.

The outcome could easily have been different. The Israelites might have been stung by remorse and repented of what they did to Moses and Aaron. They might have pleaded with the Lord to spare these men, and if any punishment should fall, that it fall on them and not the leaders. But there is silence on this. While some felt bad for what happened, there is no record of anyone interceding for Moses and Aaron. No one stood in the gap for them and pled with the Lord, and this condemned them to certain death.

There are several parallels between the cross of Christ and the death of Moses.

Christ	Moses
Prince of Heaven	Prince of Egypt
Left His heavenly home to save His earthly children	Left his position next to the throne to save his people
Taught the people the truth about His Father and His Law	Taught the people the truth about the Father and His Law
Interceded to the Father for the people	Interceded to God for the people.

Alone in the garden of Gethsemane, faced Pilate alone, and felt completely rejected and isolated on the cross	Walked alone up the mountain to his death. No one was there to comfort or support him.
Crucified on a cross, a symbol of the sun god.	Died on Mt Nebo. Nebo was a Babylonian god. (Isa 46:1)
Raised from the dead and went to heaven shortly after	Raised from the dead and went to heaven shortly after (Jude 9 and Matt 17:3)
Those taught by Jesus went forth in great faith preaching the gospel but within one or two generations the church fell away	Those taught by Moses went forth expanding their territory in great faith (even though lacking full knowledge of God's character) but within one generation Israel fell away.

I have often thought about Moses making his final journey alone up Mt Nebo, after all that he did for the nation of Israel and how mightily God used him. I have wept at the thought that there was no one there to support Moses in his final earthly hours. It is easy to imagine that, as he was such a holy man, such issues are trivial to a spiritual giant, but as we see in the life of Jesus when he was sweating drops of blood in Gethsemane, He greatly desired earthly sympathy and support.

A true understanding of the cross helps explain this story. God appears stern, strict, and severe through the lens that Moses must be punished for his sin and die. It is true that more is required of leaders than those who follow, but the events have a melancholy ring to it that raises questions.

When we see Moses walking in the steps of His Saviour towards his own Calvary for the sake of the children of Israel, this shines a bright

light upon this story and provides the correct context to discern the heart of God.

Moses was not innocent like Christ, yet he was the meekest man who ever lived until Christ came to earth. Our sympathy reaches out to Moses as he contemplated the entire destruction of his efforts for Israel, and the reality that almost none of them would enter into the rest of God. Let none be so foolish as to raise a stone against Moses and imagine themselves wiser or superior to him.

In conclusion, we observe that the second song of Moses at the end of his earthly life is very different to the first. It is full of sorrow and foreboding for Israel's future, and it speaks to the reality of Israel walking according to their own thoughts and ways. This is important for the context of the conquest of Canaan. It presents things in a completely different light. Here again is the context:

> I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. **But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels**. **Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries**. The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever. He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee. Psalms 81:10-16

It is evident that Israel walked in their own counsels and therefore God was not able to subdue their enemies *in the manner* which He planned. The entire history of the conquest of Canaan was according to the counsels of Israel – their own wisdom – and thus God was limited in how He could help them. He tried various ways to inspire their faith, even within their wrong framework for taking the land. He did not give up on them. But within one generation everything was lost, and the

majority of Israel worshipped the very false gods of the nations they had destroyed.

I give thanks to God for revealing the principles of the cross in the life of Moses. He had offered himself as an atonement in Exodus 32 when he wondered if God could forgive their sins, and ultimately he ended up becoming an atonement, not by being blotted out of the book of life, but wonderfully, by going directly to heaven after laying down his life for his friends. Such love.

CHAPTER 7

7. FORTY YEARS OF UNBELIEF

We have covered the stories of Israel's apostasy at Baal Peor along with the revenge taken on the Midianites in chapters 45 and 46 of the book *Mirror Principle*. Immediately after this Moses records these words:

> So the LORD's anger was aroused against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the LORD was gone. Numbers 32:13

The reader will be well acquainted with the principle of God's anger being an expression of God's permission to allow consequences to be visited for rebellion and allowing a person or group to have what they want, from reading chapters 21 and 22 of *Mirror Principle.*

The apostle Luke records these forty years thus:

> Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. Acts 13:18

The Greek meaning of the text conveys the thought of enduring someone's bad habits. It doesn't take much reading of the Torah to see how the Israelites treated God, Moses and Aaron: continual

murmuring, rebellion, and resistance. The reason for these bad habits is summarised by the Psalmist when he says:

> Because they did not believe in God, and did not trust in His salvation. Psalm 78:22

The consequent effect of not trusting in God's salvation is to exclude oneself from salvation. Paul records the reality of this in Hebrews:

> "So I was angry with them, and I said, 'Their hearts always turn away from Me. They refuse to do what I tell them.' So in My anger I took an oath: 'They will never enter My place of rest.'" Hebrews 3:10-11

Elder Waggoner makes an important point here about the nature of the inheritance.

> "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." (Hebrews 3:19). What does that teach us as to the nature of the inheritance to which God was leading His people**? Simply this, that it was an inheritance that could be possessed only by those who had faith--that faith alone could win it.** Worldly, temporal possessions may be, and are, gained and held by men who disbelieve, and who even despise and blaspheme God. Indeed, unbelieving men have the most of this world's goods. Many besides the writer of the seventy-third Psalm have been envious at the prosperity of the wicked; but such feeling of envy arises only when one looks at the things that are temporal, instead of at the things that are eternal. "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them." E.J. Waggoner, *Everlasting Covenant*, p. 370.2

The startling reality of this is that nearly all of that generation of Israel are lost forever, for without faith, you cannot enter the kingdom of God. The entering of Israel into the land of Canaan was intended to be the fulfilment of the eternal promise made to Abraham and His Seed, Christ. Israel were to be the light of the world and all nations would have been drawn to her light and all the world would have received the gospel through them. God never intended that the possession of

Canaan by Israel was to simply be a type of possession of the heavenly Canaan. It must be clearly evident that possession of the land was by faith: faith in the gospel. But this never happened because they did not have faith and Moses provides a melancholy clue to what would happen to the next generation:

> And look! You have risen in your fathers' place, a brood of sinful men, to increase still more the fierce anger of the LORD against Israel. Numbers 32:14

And as Moses predicted, it came to pass within one generation.

> When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel. Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. Judges 2:10-12

Moses' reference to Israel as a "brood of sinful men" would have been discouraging to hear. The apostasy of Israel at the Jordan would have rocked the national confidence, and the urgent appeals of Moses to them about the path they were headed must have had some impact on Israel, for we see the commencement of the conquest of Canaan is marked by a high level of faith. Once again God was able to do mighty things for them, like in Egypt, but as we shall see, this did not last long.

CHAPTER 8

8. CONQUEST OF JERICHO

> After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them--the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. Joshua 1:1-3

Despite all that Israel had done, our loving heavenly Father continued to reach out to Israel promising to give them the land of Canaan, stating it as an already done fact.

Human nature has a way of rewriting history to make itself look good. After God promises Joshua that He will be with Joshua and help him, the nation of Israel makes this statement.

> **Just as we** [Israel] **heeded Moses in all things**, so we will heed you [Joshua]. Only the LORD your God be with you, as He was with Moses. Joshua 1:17

Heeded Moses in all things? The falsity of this statement manifests itself in what they say next:

> **"Whoever rebels against your command and does not heed your words, in all that you command him, shall be put to death.** Only be strong and of good courage." Joshua 1:18

This is one of the death decrees Israel placed on themselves, proving true that they still did not understand the gospel even though it was offered to them. They motivated themselves to obedience by the threat of death. Such is the fruit of all false religion. In these statements we see clues of what is to come. In binding themselves to obedience by an oath of death, it is evident that they will bind the pagan nations around them with the oath of death in like manner.

In this context, we remember God's command concerning seven specific nations in the land of Canaan.

> "When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the **Canaanites** and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, **you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.** Deuteronomy 7:1-2

While this statement sounds like God is commanding Israel to kill all the people of these nations, our flight instruments tell us this cannot be

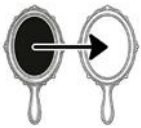
the case. The life of Jesus makes this impossible and as Jesus said, His servants do not fight or use the sword. With a little simple Hebrew grammar, it is easy to decode this statement. The phrase "you shall conquer them", or "smite them" in the KJV is stated in the Hiphil perfect form. It is stated as a completed action. This is reflected in the Young's literal translation.

> Jehovah thy God hath given them before thee, **and thou hast smitten them--thou dost utterly devote them**--thou dost not make with them a covenant, nor dost thou favour them. Deuteronomy 7:2

Here is an important principle we shall come back to in later stories.

When a future event is described in a "perfect" verb form, God is predicting what Israel will do, rather than commanding them to do it. It is connected to God's permissive will. Here is what one E-sword lexicon says of the perfect tense in Hebrew regarding future events.

> Sometimes in Hebrew, future events are conceived so vividly and so realistically that they are regarded as Having virtually taken place and are described by the perfect.
>
> Prophetic language my people "is gone into captivity" (i.e. shall assuredly go). *E-sword Tense Voice and Mood (TVM).*



God prophesied to Israel what they would do, which Israel turned into something God commanded. God prophesies to Israel as part of the process of causing sin to abound that grace might much more abound. He knew what they would do, and spoke it to them. It connects to our two-covenant framework tool.

The enmity in the human heart interprets God's words as a confirmation of their desire to kill. This connects to our enmity tool. Men project their desire onto God, and they turn His words into a command. The same process takes place for most translators of the Bible. It makes sense to the human heart that those deemed wicked need to be punished. So the translators project their enmity onto God to legitimise it and quell the guilt that would normally come to the soul. This connects to our projection tool.

The same logic that caused Israel to say they had faithfully obeyed Moses when they had not, leads them to turn God's warnings into commands that they believe God wanted.

But even then, the people do not adhere perfectly to their principles. We see that Israel determined not to make covenants with any of these

seven nations. But the two spies did make a covenant with Rahab to save her and her family if she helped them.

> [Rahab speaking] "And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token, and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death." So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the LORD has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you." Joshua 2:11-14

If God had commanded them not to make a covenant with anyone of these nations, why are they making a covenant with this woman? This leads us to the next question: if this woman and her family could be successfully integrated into Israel and the worship of God, might this not be possible for others in the city? When the walls of Jericho came down, if Israel had offered the residents the chance to repent, destroy their idols and begin to learn the ways of God, might there have been some who would have been willing to do this?

The likelihood of this happening was extremely low; most would have fled, some might have feigned conversion but in any case, we see the providence of God providing a way for Rahab and her family to be saved. The only way therefore to harmonise this covenant made with Rahab with the statement in Deuteronomy 7:2 apparently forbidding covenants, is that God didn't command this but predicted it.

Our heavenly Father is not willing that any should perish, and it was His desire that all should come into the Everlasting Covenant. The complete slaughter of Jericho without even one attempt to offer the gospel to these people speaks badly of the character of God.

It might be argued that Jericho was well aware of Israel's history and what God had done for them, so their hearts melted in fear. This should have caused them to repent long before the time of the conquest of Canaan. This is true, but we also consider the fact that the Gibeonites, who were actually Hivites, one of the seven nations to be cast out, pretended to come from a far country to make a covenant with Israel. This suggests it might have been widely known that Israel intended to wipe out the seven nations listed in Deuteronomy 7:1, which were closer to where Israel began its campaign; if the Gibeonites came as one of those nations, Israel would never make a covenant with them. Therefore, it might have seemed pointless to one of the listed nations to attempt repentance. How different things might have been without the covenant of death constantly shadowing them.

Chapter three of Joshua records the crossing of the Jordan. We see here quite a display of faith on the part of Israel. The Bible records that the Jordan River was in flood during this time of the year. To walk forward into a swollen river moving at a fast current meant risking life and limb.

Israel's crossing of the Jordan on dry ground was a direct reminder of the crossing of the Red Sea forty years earlier.

> So it was, when the people set out from their camp to cross over the Jordan, with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), that the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho. Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan. Joshua 3:14-17

Elder Waggoner makes an important point here about the Red Sea crossing which applies also to the crossing of the Jordan.

> 1. **The power by which the Red Sea was divided, and the people passed over in safety, was the power by which their enemies were to be kept from attacking them.** (Compare Ex. xv. 14-16 and Joshua ii. 9-11.) If they had gone forward in the faith that they had at the moment of their deliverance, there would have been no need of their fighting. No enemy would have dared to attack them. Now we can see why the Lord led them the way He did. By one final act of deliverance He designed to teach them never to be afraid of man.
>
> 2. In this same power they were to make known the name of the Lord--to preach the Gospel of the kingdom--in all the earth, as a preparation for the end. That was a work which they had to do before the promise could be completely fulfilled. If they had kept the faith, it would not have taken long to complete the work. E.J. Waggoner, *Everlasting Covenant*, p.214.3

Should it not be evident that if God could open a swollen, fast-flowing river for 2 million people to pass over, He could stop a flood of Canaanite soldiers from overwhelming them?

This fact is evident from what Scripture records next.

> So it was, when all the kings of the Amorites who were on the west side of the Jordan, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel until we had crossed over, **that their heart melted; and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the children of Israel.** Joshua 5:1

All the kings of the Canaanites were deeply afraid of Israel. If Israel had walked in this faith, one man could have put 100 to flight, and 100 could have repel 10,000 (Leviticus 26:8).

The second reminder of God's blessing came by the fact that the conquest of Canaan took place during the feast of Passover.

> Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. Joshua 5:10

The historian Josephus makes this interesting point about this event.

> 4. So the Hebrews went on farther fifty furlongs, and pitched their camp at the distance of ten furlongs from Jericho; but Joshua built an altar of those stones which all the heads of the tribes, at the command of the prophets, had taken out of the deep, to be afterwards a memorial of the division of the stream of this river, and upon it offered sacrifice to God; **and in that place celebrated the passover, and had great plenty of all the things which they wanted hitherto;** for they reaped the corn of the Canaanites, which was now ripe, and took other things as prey; for then it was that their former food, which was manna, and of which they had eaten forty years, failed them.
>
> 5. Now while the Israelites did this, and the Canaanites did not attack them, but kept themselves quiet within their own walls, Joshua resolved to besiege them; so on the first day of the feast [of the passover], the priests carried the ark round about, with some part of the armed men to be a guard to it. Josephus, Antiquities book 5, chapter 1, paragraph 5

The march around Jericho for seven days took place during the feast of the Passover. The significance of this is manifold Firstly, Israel's faith would have been strengthened during this feast time, and it would have reminded them of God's care and provision. As God had protected Israel from the destroyer of the firstborn in Egypt, would He not now protect them and cause their enemies to Passover them so they would be safe?

Secondly, a study of the festivals shows that this time provides a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit as symbolised in the unleavened bread and grape juice. Such a gift of the Spirit might have incredibly blessed the Israelites with evangelistic power to win some of the inhabitants of

Jericho or conversely, driven them away in fear from that location, as Jesus cleansed the temple.

Thirdly as Israel did not have any need to kill anyone during the Passover in Egypt or the crossing of the Red Sea, can we not see that the same might have occurred here in Jericho? In the power of the Spirit, the inhabitants of the city would have either been stung by the hornet conviction of their sins and fled or fallen to their knees and accepted Jehovah as their God.

Another point of interest is the meeting between Joshua and the Commander of the Lord's Host. When Joshua addresses the Commander, who is Christ Himself, he asks Him whether He is supportive of the Israelites or of their enemies. The answer is telling, *for Christ says no to both options.*

> And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" So He said, "**No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.**" And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" Joshua 5:13-14

The command to take off his shoes tells us the identity of the commander. Why did Christ not say to Joshua that He was fully behind Joshua and was ready to go into battle with him? Christ was not supportive of Joshua or Jericho because both of them used methods of warfare that Christ did not use.

It is true that Christ is depicted as having a sword drawn in his hand, but this is a symbol of the sword of the Spirit. What need does Christ have for a sword of steel? Do we reduce the capabilities of Christ to that of a mere man?

Another reason Christ appears with a drawn sword is because of the mirror principle.

> With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; with a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless; with the pure You will show Yourself pure; and with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd. Psalms 18:25-26

We might add: with the warrior, He will show Himself a warrior. But why does He do this? It is evident that when Joshua first saw Christ, he did not know who it was. The presence of a man in a Commander's costume immediately told Joshua that this was a leader, a commander, someone of high rank. Christ is also conveying to Joshua His ability to protect Israel in a frame Joshua understood. But Christ made it clear to Joshua that He did not support his method of warfare. Christ has the ability to protect Israel without them needing to resort to violence.

Christ does not give Joshua a strategy for how to kill all the inhabitants of Jericho. He simply tells him to take off his shoes, to acknowledge divinity, and trust himself into His hands.

Each day of Passover, the army marched around the city of Jericho in silence. This would have taken great faith once again for Israel. On the last day, Israel marched seven times. That is a lot of marching!

So we see a pattern of seven and within the final count of the seven is another seven. Seven priests bore seven trumpets, each time Israel went around the city they blew the trumpet.

> You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. Joshua 6:3-4

There is a parallel here to events played out in the book of Revelation. Revelation 8-11 depict a series of seven terrible punishments that are called trumpets. The events described here cover a period of history from the time of Christ until His second coming. But just before Christ

comes again, during the time of the seventh trumpet, there is a sequence of 7 plagues, which are also seven punishments. The list of punishments in the Trumpets and Plagues is very similar, showing a connection between them. So we see seven punishments, and within the time of the seventh we see another seven punishments.

Each time Israel circled Jericho it was a warning of coming destruction. So too, the Trumpets and Plagues, they are warnings of coming final destruction.

During this time a great shout is also described that comes from the Angel in Revelation 18, declaring that Babylon is fallen.

> After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. **And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen,** and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! Revelation 18:1-2

So we see the parallel in the story of Joshua:

> So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. Joshua 6:20

We make this critical point that the entrance of Israel into Canaan should have signalled the end of the current world order. If Israel had been faithful, Christ's kingdom would have commenced to fill the whole earth with the glory or character of the Lord. But Israel's rejection of the Everlasting Covenant means that these events must be repeated. Another seven within the seventh of a previous seven must be given and this time, Christ's kingdom will be established, for all of God's children will have taken the promised land by faith.

No.	Target Domain	Seven Trumpets (Rev 8-11)	Seven Bowls/Plagues (Rev 15-16)
1	Earth	Hail, fire, and blood burn 1/3 of the trees and all green grass.	Foul and malignant sores break out on those with the mark of the beast.
2	Sea	A burning mountain hits the sea; 1/3 of the sea turns to blood; 1/3 of sea life dies.	The entire sea turns to blood like a dead man; **every** living creature in it dies.
3	Fresh Water	A star named Wormwood falls on 1/3 of the rivers and springs, making them bitter.	**All** rivers and springs turn completely into blood.
4	Sun, Moon,	1/3 of the sun, moon, and stars are darkened, cutting off a third of the day/night.	The sun is given power to scorch people with fierce, blinding heat.
5	Abyss	Locusts from the bottomless pit torment unbellevers for 5 months.	The throne of the beast is struck with absolute darkness, people gnaw their tongues in pain.
6	Euphrates	Four angels are released at the Euphrates to kill 1/3 of mankind with a massive army.	The Euphrates dries up to prepare the way for the kings of the East for Armageddon.
7	Consum-mation	Flashes of lightning, thunder, aquare, a earthquake, a great hailstorm, Christ's kingdom proclaimed.	A voice ories "Its is done!" followed by the greatest earthquake in human history and 100-lb hailstones.

The Trumpets and Plagues affect the same locations in both, but the intensity increases in the plagues from 1/3 to complete coverage. Notice the table of the 7 trumpets, and then the 7 plagues which happen in the time of the last/7th trumpet.

But sadly Israel did not have this faith, and we read with sorrow:

> **And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city**, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword. Joshua 6:21

The Bible says that Joshua killed all the inhabitants of the city. Men, women, children, and babies, and old people: all of them were slaughtered in cold blood. The words of Jesus cry out to us.

> Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." John 18:36

Our heavenly Father is not willing that any should perish but rather come to repentance. Jesus shows us what he wanted for the Canaanites when He healed the daughter of the Canaanite woman, (Matthew 15:22-28). Elder Waggoner also points this out:

> When Christ came, He declared that He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and even while He said that, He showed who were the lost sheep of the house of Israel, by sending healing to a believing heathen woman. **What Christ did for that Canaanitish woman, He was equally ready and anxious to do for every believing inhabitant of Canaan and of the whole world, in the days of Joshua.** All who did not stubbornly cling to their idols, were to be gathered into the fold of Israel, till there should be but one fold, under the One Shepherd.*Everlasting Covenant*, p. 396

We know this is just as true in the days of Joshua as in the days Jesus walked the earth because our Father does not change. He is the same forever in His character, and that is what makes the gospel everlasting.

There are some who take the view that when the walls of the city collapsed, both people living in the walls and soldiers on the walls were killed in this action, but such is an argument from silence. The Bible makes clear that Joshua and his army killed all that were in the city. Let

us avoid speculation in an effort to prove that Jesus does things which He stated He does not do. Christ does not fight nor use swords.

The death of the inhabitants of Jericho was predicted by God because He knew the hearts of the Israelites. Through their heathen practices, Jericho had long abandoned the protection of God. Jericho had made a breach in God's hedge of protection and He was no longer able to protect them or save them because of their wickedness and rebellion against Him. But did God command the death of the people of Jericho? There is no such command in Scripture.

> And the LORD said to Joshua: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor. Joshua 6:2

God only said that He had given the Canaanites into the hand of Israel. And God did this because the inhabitants of Jericho had given themselves completely to the service of Satan and self, and thus had no defence: God could not protect them.

When we consider the commentaries of different Bible scholars we read things like this:

> They utterly destroyed - both man, and woman, etc. - **As this act was ordered by God himself, who is the Maker and Judge of all men, it must be right:** for the Judge of all the earth cannot do wrong. Nothing that breathed was permitted to live; hence the oxen, sheep, and asses, were destroyed, as well as the inhabitants. Adam Clarke Commentary

The logic expressed is that if God commanded it, then it must be right. It must be right for God to command people to hack babies to death? Is there no appeal to reason, no query as to whether this is actually the case, especially when there is no direct command given in the story.

What this book presents is at variance with most Christian literature on this topic. Later chapters will examine the argumentation of reformers like Luther and how they framed the Old Testament to justify the use of

the sword. We will also consider the witness of the Anabaptists and their opposition to the sword's use.

But as we continue the journey into Canaan's conquest, we will see that the actions of slaughtering all the families in Jericho caused a breach in Israel's protection, leading to their failure in Ai and playing a part in the apostasy of Achan. Let us remember that when Joshua asked Jesus whether He supported them or their enemies, He said neither. The implications of that reply echo into eternity.

CHAPTER 9

9. ACHAN ATONEMENT

> Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth Aven, on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying, "Go up and spy out the country." So the men went up and spied out Ai. And they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. **Do not weary all the people there, for the people of Ai are few.**" So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; **therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water.** Joshua 7:2-5

Previously we read that all the hearts of the Canaanites had melted like water, but now the mighty nation of Israel, who had been undefeated in their warring against much greater nations than Ai, are turned on their heads by this small Canaanite town, and just like that, Israel's hearts are melting with fear. You can hear the fear in the words of Joshua:

> Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. And Joshua said, "Alas, Lord GOD, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all--to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan! Joshua 7:6-7

Now imagine you've just come into a foreign country. You're surrounded by people, all of which want to kill you, and you've just lost a battle to an insignificant group of people. We can understand Joshua's distress. It appears they could now be completely wiped off the face of the earth. This was serious. But nowhere do we read of Israel asking God for wisdom on what to do next. This suggests self-confidence had crept in.

> There can be no question but that the children of Israel did really and fully trust the Lord when they crossed the Jordan and marched round Jericho. God Himself witnessed that they had the righteousness of faith, and His word declares that they gained a glorious victory through faith. Nevertheless it was but a few days afterward that they suffered a serious defeat. **It was the beginning of apostasy.** Waggoner, *Everlasting Covenant*, p. 380

The action of killing is a violation of the Ten Commandments, and of the kingdom of Heaven. This creates a breach which allows Satan to blind spiritual perception, cause them to fear, and bring calamity. This principle is repeatedly played out in Scripture.

We see this in the life of Cain: after he killed Abel, he then became fearful of death. (Genesis 4:14).

We see it at Mt Sinai: after Israel had killed the Amalekites, they didn't want to hear God's voice speaking, for they feared they would die. Exodus 17:13; 20:19).

When Israel made a vow to kill King Arad and wiped out that town, Israel was overrun with snakes and many died (Numbers 21:1-9).

When Israel destroyed the two kings Sihon and Og, Israel was seduced by the Midianite women at Baal Peor; a plague came upon them and several leaders were executed (Numbers 21:21-35; 25).

We see the same with the Prophet Samuel: after he killed the king Agag, he then became afraid that Saul would kill him (1 Samuel 15:33, 16:2).

We see this in Elijah's experience after killing the prophets of Baal: Elijah feared Jezebel would kill him. (1 Kings 18:40; 19:2,3).

Now we see that after Joshua killed, he feared being killed.

Such fear entered the hearts of the Israelite soldiers, and made them afraid, and gave the smaller band of men in Ai the advantage. Does not putting old women and small babies to the sword haunt the soul? How does a soldier remove the image from his mind of cutting down a beautiful young girl in front of her parents and younger siblings? Even describing such scenes makes the heart shudder. What would it do to the hearts of men actually doing these things? You either become as hard as nails without feeling, or you go insane. And if you go as hard as nails, what would it do to the soldier's own family relationships? Would they change? Have men changed from their war experiences? Of course they do.

As Elder Waggoner said, this was the beginning of apostasy from within the land of Canaan. They had fallen out of the kingdom of God, for Christ's followers do not fight. It is the natural result of breaking the hedge with the natural spirit of enmity in man. As Joshua killed, now he fears to be killed. It is an extension of the enmity principle

And Joshua said, "Alas, Lord GOD, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all--**to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us?** Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan! Joshua 7:7

This is a major crisis. Joshua is suggesting that God delivered Israel into the hands of their enemies to destroy them. Then he suggests to God that it would have been better for them to stay outside of the promised

Consequence of Breaking the Sixth Commandment

The curse causeless shall not come. Proverbs 26:2

No.	Event	Consequence
1	Cain killed Abel (Gen 4:8)	Cain fears others will kill him. (Gen 4:14)
2	Moses kills an Egyptian (Ex 2:12)	Moses fears and flees (Ex 2:14)
3	Israel kills the Amalekites (Ex 17:13)	Israel fearful God will kill them and ask God not to speak to them. (Ex 20:19)
4	Israel kills city of Arad (Num 21:1-3)	Israel overrun by snakes, and many die. (Num. 21:4-9)
5	Israel destroy the two kings Sihon and Og with their people. (Num 21:21-35)	Israel seduced at Baal Peor by Midianites. Many killed in a plague while several leaders executed. (Num. 25)
6	Samuel executes king Agag. (1 Sam. 15:33)	Samuel then fears that Saul will kill him. (1 Sam 16:2)
7	Elijah kills prophets of Baal. (1 Kings 18:40)	Elijah fears Jezebel and runs for his life and then asks God to take away his life. (1 Kings 19:2,3)

land. That would suggest giving up on God's promises. In these words are recorded the words of faithlessness. We dare not condemn Joshua, for we are no better than he. But in looking at his story, we see our own natures, and what we are truly like.

It is true that Joshua was involved in killing previously, and a surface glance at these stories would lead some to the conclusion that they suffered no serious effects, but every time they did, they paid a price.

Rather than accept responsibility for the error that had occurred, Joshua put the blame onto God and essentially accuses Him of trying to kill them. We apply our tools with respect to enmity, and projection. The unrealised hatred towards God is realised in killing others. When calamity strikes, and consequences naturally come, humanity projects the fault back to God, just like Adam in the beginning.

It would appear Joshua did not come out of the wilderness unscathed by the murmuring of Israel against God. The SDA Bible Commentary supports this thought.

> *Would to God.* This expression indicates a profound feeling of despair and utter inability to understand the situation. Joshua's prayer (almost) takes on the spirit of murmuring and complaining, so characteristic of the children of Israel on numerous occasions. But even the best of men at times give way to discouragement and fear. (*SDA Bible Commentary*)

But at least Joshua wrestled with God in prayer and sought a solution.

The pain God felt through Joshua's unbelief echoes Abraham's words about the promise of the land.

> And he said unto him, "I *am* the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it." And he said, "Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" (Genesis 15:7-8)

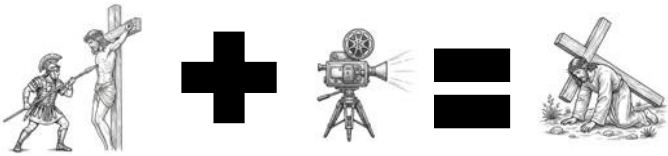
Abraham's question suggests doubt about God's promise. Anything not of faith is sin, and sin leads to death. Immediately after Abraham expresses his doubt, a sacrifice is introduced:

> And he [God] said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. Genesis 15:9

The sacrifice is a visible expression of the true cross, our 9th tool. Our Father does not want sacrifices, but Abraham's unbelief, fueled by unconscious enmity, means a sacrifice becomes necessary to help Abraham believe – though this process means God must suffer being misunderstood by the one human on earth at that time who thought He understood Him.

We see here that then that is built upon this equation:

Enmity (feelings of violence towards God)
+
Projection (thinking God has feelings of violence towards us)
=
the Present Cross of Christ (denying self to keep reaching us)



Notice that God doesn't have to tell Abraham what to do with the animals, meaning Abraham was familiar with this process of sacrificing and making a covenant. These were customs familiar to men, so they made sense to Abraham and reassured him.

> And he [Abraham] took unto him all these, [animals] and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. (Genesis 15:9-10)

After Abraham had killed all those men in the war with Chedorlaomer, and the kings with him, he suffered a breach in the hedge of protection. He was harassed with the scenes of killing he had witnessed and as a consequence he feared that revenge would be taken upon him in the future. This is why God seeks to comfort Abraham telling him not to be afraid.

> After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." Genesis 15:1

When the LORD promised Abraham a son, he accepted it by faith. No sacrifice is mentioned.

> Then He [God] brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." **And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness**. Genesis 15:5-6

But when God promised the land, Abraham doubted. The doubt is fuelled by a sense of unforgiveness from God. He can't accept God's promises when sin's dark shadow lies over his soul in the murder of his fellow man. Therefore, a sacrifice needed to be presented for Abraham to receive God's forgiveness for his error. This pattern is repeated in the life of Joshua.

Joshua knew there was a problem because of their defeat at Ai. He felt God disapproved, and therefore there must be sin in the camp. Human perceptions of justice demand death, which is projected onto God. Joshua and all Israel believed that God's favour could be restored only when sin was punished and atonement with God was made. All this leads us to the subject of Achan. The name Achan, or Achar, means "troublesome" in Hebrew. This suggests that his name is recorded to reflect this event.

> But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel. Joshua 7:1

In killing the inhabitants of Jericho, Israel created a breach in the protection of God. This invokes our 6th tool regarding the hedge. Satan is granted greater access to the Israelites through breaking the 6th commandment. When one commandment is broken, Satan exerts great pressure to break the others. Achan's character flaws were exposed in the breach, and he succumbed to the temptation of covetousness.

This sin of killing by Israel was an unknown sin stemming from their unknown enmity towards Christ. Israel was not truly aware of the implications of killing, although they were not immune from the consequences. In Achan's case, he knew he was doing wrong, and this significantly widened the breach.

Satan, now having greater access to Israel, seduced Israel through self-confidence, causing Joshua and the leaders of Israel to forget to ask God what to do next. This major error of judgment set Israel up for defeat. We summarise the sequence of the breach.

1. Israel killed the inhabitants of Jericho causing a breach. This was an unwitting sin by Israel due to a long history of such actions.
2. The breach allowed Satan greater access to Achan to tempt him to covet a Babylonian garment along with some gold and silver.
3. This widened the breach to cause Israel to swell with self-confidence in defeating Jericho, seducing them into trusting themselves to defeat Ai.

In this sequence we see all Israel had sinned. The sins of Israel were not clearly defined, but the sin of Achan was clear-cut, and therefore the projection of justice must fall upon him to bring Israel back into favour with God in their minds. All of this is reflected in the following verse.

God said that all Israel had sinned and transgressed His covenant. This was true, but then God zeros in on Achan's obvious sin.

> **Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them:** for they have **even** taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put *it* even among their own stuff. Joshua 7:11

The word *even* suggests something in addition to what was previously stated. The phrase "they have even taken of the accursed thing" is specifically addressing Achan. But before this, all Israel is charged with sin. Before we examine the punishment given to Achan, we need to examine some of his family history.

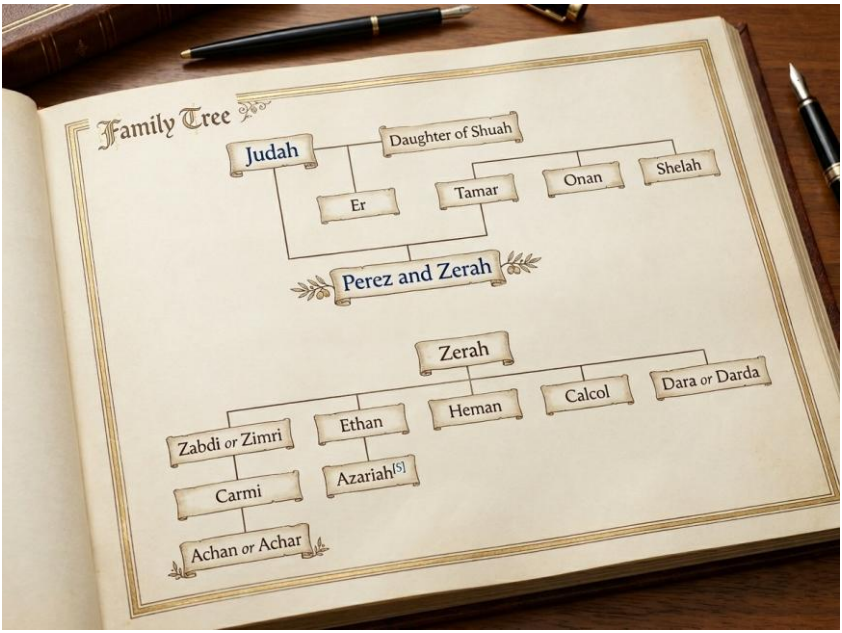
We see that Achan was in the family line of Judah and Tamar. She was originally Judah's daughter-in-law, but her husband died, and she expected to marry a younger relative from Judah's family, but this didn't happen. So Tamah played the part of a harlot, knowing that Judah was passing by. She obtained a child through him.

When Judah learned of what his daughter-in-law did, he said the following:

> And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she *is* with child by whoredom. And Judah said, **Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.** Genesis 38:24

But then Tamar produced the articles that Judah had left behind in her home to prove he was the one who had sinned with her. So of course, she was exonerated. But actions always have consequences. Achan is the fifth generation from Judah and Tamah, and the Scriptures tell us that overviews/visits the sin until the third and fourth generation.

> …keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, **visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation.**" Exodus 34:7



After four generations, it would appear that the sin was manifested. Tamar was not burnt with fire, but Achan and his family were.

> And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day." So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned [H8313] them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. Joshua 7:25

Judah had taken his daughter in-law unknowingly, but it was still an incest situation. Below we find the statute which relates to this:

> If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death; they have committed perversion; their blood guilt is upon them. Leviticus 20:12

So a breach created five generations earlier affected Achan. The covetousness of Judah in taking a woman that did not belong to him manifested in his descendant as covetousness for something that did not belong to him. Do we ever consider how far-reaching our actions are and what effect they will have on our posterity?

God spoke to Joshua about the obvious problem. He is informed that someone had taken an accursed thing.

> Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the **accursed things**, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the **accursed** [thing] from among you. Get up, sanctify the people, and say, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the LORD God of Israel: "There is an **accursed thing** in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the **accursed thing** from among you." Joshua 7:11-13

God was focused on the accursed object. It needed to be removed primarily because it had been the object of covetousness and therefore represented rebellion against God, creating a breach. The object needed to be removed, and the person needed to repent and confess their sin. But Israel had a statute that linked the accursed thing to the person.

> Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, **lest thou be a cursed thing like it:** *but* thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it *is* a cursed thing. Deuteronomy 7:26

God instructed Joshua to tell the people there was an accursed thing in the camp. Achan should have immediately confessed his crime, but he remained silent. He only confessed when he was singled out and thus cursed with the object in his possession.

Here we find another clue as to the human element in this process. Lots were cast to find out who committed the crime. This was a practice familiar to pagan nations, as seen in the story of Jonah when they were trying to decide who caused the storm to come on them. But we see that God condescends to work through human preconceived opinions.

The most critical verse in this chapter, and the one that proves the most interesting, is the following verse where God tells Joshua to essentially burn Achan to death.

> Then it shall be *that* he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel. Joshua 7:15

In order to understand this text, we need to think about the all the death decrees given in the Torah. In chapter 29 of *Mirror Principle* vol. 1. The summary of that chapter is that Israel had a the typical carnal mind to punish transgressors with death. When Israel told Moses that they didn't want God to speak to them, God was forced to give them commandments according to their own ideas, because they refused His ways.

Satan is the author of death, (Hebrews 2:14). God is a God of life as revealed in Jesus, who is the resurrection and the life. (John 11:25). Much later in Israel's history we are told of the commandments God gave that were *not* good.

> "I also, I have lifted up My hand to them in the wilderness, to scatter them among nations, and to spread them through lands. Because My judgments they have not done, and My statutes they have despised, and My sabbaths they have polluted, and after idols of their fathers have their eyes been. And I also, **I have given to them statutes not good, and judgments by which they do not live."** Ezekiel 20:23-25 (YLT)

The death decree was brought upon Achan because this was written into the law. It was written according to the desires of Israel because they had resisted listening to what God actually wanted.

We see how Jesus intended to use the laws of men to bring about salvation in the life of the woman caught in adultery. According to the law of Moses she should have been stoned, but the law brought her before Jesus for sentencing who gave her mercy. If Joshua and Israel had

known the gospel, then Achan might have been brought to the leadership under the sentence of death in order to offer him forgiveness on condition of repentance.

Another reason we know that the sentence carried out against Achan was not according to God's ways is the punishment of his wife and children. The Scripture does not say that his family knew of the crime. We also note that Josephus omits referring to their death.[5] Probably to avoid the sensibilities of his Roman readers. Achan's animals certainly knew nothing of the crime nor comprehended its meaning even if they saw the act of hiding the stuff. The Bible clearly states that a child is not to be punished for the sins of its parents.

> Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin. Deuteronomy 24:16

This text speaks to us of the contradiction of principles in the killing of Achan's children. We might also say that Israel intentionally chose to take God's words in a broader meaning than intended:

> Then it shall be that he who is taken with the accursed thing shall **be burned with fire, he and all that he has**, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel. Joshua 7:15

"All that he has," or in Hebrew, "the whole." To be consistent with Deuteronomy 24:16 and Deuteronomy 7:26, this could only apply to Achan and the things he stole which were accursed.

The killing of Achan's family reveals the deeper dimension of this story. It relates to the projection tool which causes men to put their own justice system onto God. I cover this in detail in chapter 9 of the book Atonement, and I mentioned it in passing in chapter 25 of Mirror Principle. Simply expressed, the atonement of men was established by Adam. Adam shifted the death penalty he understood God to be

[5] Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews Book 5, Chapter 1:14

applying to him onto his wife and Christ. Christ was the innocent party and Eve was the guilty party. Adam's atonement was complete in placing his sins on the innocent and the guilty. We see this in Christ hanging on the cross with two thieves. The thieves are guilty and Christ is innocent.

This is the conclusion of this whole story. In order for Israel to believe they were again in favour with God, there needed to be a sacrifice of the guilty and the innocent. Once this was completed, Israel could assure themselves that atonement was made and that God had forgiven Israel. We should add this principle as another tool, which we will call principle 11: "Man's Atonement". It is built upon the principles of man's enmity and also his projection of this enmity onto God. Therefore we see the following:

I created the icon of the crucifixion scene to reflect the death of the guilty and the innocent in order to satisfy human requirement for atonement. Without the death of Achan (the guilty) and his family, (the innocent), Israel would have remained under a cloud of doubt that God loved them and would still help them. In this we see the cross principle. Achan is one of the thieves, and possibly his wife may have been a collaborator with him. But the children most likely were innocent and represent the death of Christ for the salvation of Israel. And certainly we know that the animals were innocent. There was no justice in their slaughter. But God had to meet Israel in their false understanding of atonement in order to convince them that He forgave them and would still help them. How great is the love of God for His children.

Our dear Father in heaven did not want anyone to die. He simply wanted Achan to surrender his pagan objects and confess his sin. But Israel needed an atonement according to their way of thinking, therefore the whole family had to die for the salvation of Israel. Christ had to suffer on the cross of self-denial to save Israel.

To choose to believe God wanted to kill the children of Achan presents God as barbaric, unjust, and cruel. How Christ suffered when these children died. In all the affliction, He was afflicted. Christ felt all of their suffering, and he was pierced in what took place. But it was the only way to bring salvation to Israel.

What I present to you in this story is the story of the Cross. I determine to know nothing among you save Christ and Him crucified. How much God and His dear Son have suffered to meet us in our deceptions and wrong understandings. Yet they endure it for our sakes and for our salvation. Bless the Lord O my soul!

CHAPTER 10

10. DESTRUCTION OF AI

Having sacrificed Achan and his family for the “good” of the nation, Israel now turned their eyes back to the troublesome inhabitants of Ai. Let us remember the words of Jesus about His kingdom to set the story in its proper context.

> Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." John 18:36

Let us now examine the actual words of God to Joshua in order to harmonise the words of Jesus with this event.

> Now the LORD said to Joshua: "Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; take [Imperative] all the people of war with you, and arise, [Imperative] go up to Ai. See, I have given [Qal Perfect] into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land. And you shall do [Qal Perfect] to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king. Only its spoil and its cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves. Lay [Imperative] an ambush for the city behind it." Joshua 8:1-2

The imperative verb form is a command to do something. God commands Israel to take the army, go up to Ai, and lay an ambush behind the city. But when it comes to the phrase "You shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king" the Hebrew uses the Qal perfect verb form. The usage of this verb form indicates an action that is completed. The reason most translations present this as a command in the future tense is complex and something we will come back to later. In short, Hebrew is not a tense language based on time, but an aspect language that speaks in completed and incomplete actions. The vital point here is that the use of the perfect provides for the view that God did not command Joshua to slaughter the inhabitants of Ai, but rather predicts what they will do.

The Qal perfect verb form is sometimes used to indicate prophecy. Something in the future is so certain that it is spoken of as having happened in the past: "it is as good as done," as we say in English. As noted earlier, this is what the E-sword lexicon says of the *perfect*.

> Sometimes in Hebrew, future events are conceived so vividly and so realistically that they are regarded as Having virtually taken place and are described by the perfect.
>
> Prophetic language my people "is gone into captivity" (i.e. shall assuredly go).

God knew what Israel would do. He did not tell them to kill the inhabitants of Ai, but predicted what they would do. And Israel interpreted the words of God according to the enmity of their own heart.

> You give your mouth to evil, and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother's son. These things you have done, and I kept silent; **you thought that I was altogether like you;** but I will rebuke you, and set them in order before your eyes. Psalms 50:19-21

Many people find this thought hard to accept. They question, "Why didn't God just tell them what He wanted?" But He had already told

them several times that He would deliver them and drive out the inhabitants and do things for them, but the people kept twisting the words of God to their own understanding because of their unwitting enmity against Him, which started with Adam.

> And they, as Adam, transgressed a covenant, there they dealt treacherously against me. Hosea 6:7

> Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. Romans 8:7

This enmity causes all of us naturally to twist God's words against Him, and then make Him responsible for the outcome. This same enmity also causes translators to convey the text in a context that fits human thinking. It is not a conscious thing. It is an unrealised character trait. This is what we mentioned in volume 1:

Because our minds are naturally hostile to God, our default method of engaging Him is to twist everything He says against Him. This is why we can't read the Old Testament truthfully; we will always twist it to our destruction unless we have the Spirit of Christ in us to lighten the Old Testament so we can read it without the veil of darkness. Mirror Principle, p. 130

We see an overriding of standard Hebrew grammar in the following translations. They present the sentence as a direct command.

> **You are to do to Ai** and its king what you did to Jericho and its king,… Joshua 8:2 (GNB)

> **Do to Ai and its king** what you did to Jericho and its king… Joshua 8:2 (NET)

Now consider the difference between "You shall do" and "You will do." The use of the word *shall* is the expression of a command. The word *will* suggests future action Nearly all Bible translations use the word *shall* rather than *will,* which gives the impression of commanding rather than predicting.

(NKJV) And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king.

(NASB) "You shall do to Ai and its king just as you did to Jericho and its king

(NIV) You shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king.

Understanding "Shall" vs. "Will"

Usage and Meaning

Phrase	Meaning	Tone/Context
You shall do	Expresses a command or obligation	Formal, authoritative
You will do	Indicates a future intention or promise	Informal, less authoritative

Source: Wikipedia

But compare this with the Young's Literal Hebrew translation which correctly translates the Hebrew Qal perfect verb form.

> **and thou hast done to Ai** and to her king as thou hast done to Jericho and to her king; Joshua 8:2 (YLT)

The problem with the Young's literal translation here is that it strikes the English ear as non-sensical. How can something be said to be done which actually hasn't occurred? The Hebrew language does not simply speak to the visible action, but the invisible origin of intent to perform the action. Even though Israel had not slaughtered Ai, the intent to do it was already in process.

This principle is not so easily captured in Western languages which are time or tense based. The English language wishes to know when

something happens while the Hebrew prefers to know how something was formed. This is the core difference between English and Hebrew. Modern languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean are also aspect languages that function similarly to Hebrew. Russian, Polish and Czech do have tense or time elements, but they are dominated by aspect concerns over time concerns.

The reason translators decided the text should be a command rather than a completed action relates to a common grammarian principle called the *Waw (Vav) consecutive,* which turns grammatical sentences referring to the past into ones that refer to the future. We will come back to this subject later and explore it more fully. For now, we make the point that Robert Young, who produced the YLT translation, was a dissenting voice in how translators were interpreting Hebrew grammar to suit the minds of Western readers. His determination to follow the literal grammar adds unique depth of meaning and brings us into the ancient Hebrew worldview, where other translators have chosen to make things sound smoother to the English ear.

God knows the hearts of Israel. He knows what they are thinking and He tells them, "I know you will do the same to Ai as you have done to Jericho." This is literally what is being said. But nearly every Bible translation carries an unknown enmity against God by attributing to Him the genocidal malevolence of men. But this does not invalidate the Scriptures. The complexity of language and grammar allows Scripture to provide a mirror into the souls of all men: the actors in the story, the translators, and us the readers. So in summary, we see in Joshua 8 the following:

Joshua 8:1
Arise – Imperative
Go up – Imperative
See/Behold – Imperative

Joshua 8:2
Thou shalt do – Qal perfect – Thou has done.
Lay an ambush Imperative

There is no command from God to kill the inhabitants of Ai. I give thanks to God that the Word of God is so faithful. We are not required to believe that God ordered the death of defenceless children and old people. The Word of God asks us to be faithful in searching out the text and comparing it with the character of Jesus, and I find complete harmony here in this story.

The spirit of self-justification would protest, declaring that *God should have said plainly not to kill the people*, but this denies the truth of unrealised enmity that would twist whatever God said. God had already told them not to kill when He proclaimed the 10 Commandments, but they didn't want to hear His voice. The human heart resists and rebels against anything God says, regardless of what He has commanded or explained. As our poor Heavenly Father lamented later in Israel's history:

> Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward. Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; They have not been closed or bound up, or soothed with ointment. Isaiah 1:4-6

May we come humbly to Scripture with a recognition that our natural tendency is to twist what God says, and ask the Lord to help us, open our eyes, and show us the truth.

Next we note an apparent change in policy regarding the spoils of war compared to Jericho.

> And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king. **Only its spoil and its cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves.** Lay an ambush for the city behind it." Joshua 8:2

Compared with:

> And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD." Joshua 6:18-19

Bible scholars such as John Calvin and Adam Clarke suggest that as Jericho was the first city of conquest, it was a sacrificial first fruits given to God. This thought reinforces the principle that Jericho was a sacrifice to God by Israel. They offered Him the dead bodies of the inhabitants of the city as a perceived appeasement to His wrath.

A similar principle was the driving force behind French King Louis XIV and his war on the Protestants:

> The history of King Louis XIV of France (the "Sun King") and his war on Protestants—known as the Huguenots—is an intersection of absolute political power, intense religious devotion, and deep personal guilt.
>
> **The idea that Louis XIV could achieve divine forgiveness for his sins by crushing Protestantism was a driving narrative at his court.** It was pushed heavily by his spiritual advisors, his strictly devout second wife, and his own conscience as his health and youth began to fade. (See heritage-history.com)

The song of Moses was ringing in the souls of the Israelites. Their complaining, their murmuring, their apostasy at the Jordan, their guilt in the death of Moses and Aaron were all part of a driving force to appease God in the sacrifice of the Canaanites.

The sad irony of the destruction of Ai is that if Achan had waited for this event, he would not have needed to die, and he might have taken all the spoils he could lay his hands on.

Yet there is something dark about Israel taking the spoils of war through the slaughter of a town. It clouds the motivation for why these people were killed. How does Israel clear themselves of the charge of

plundering for personal gain? By saying God commanded it, and they were simply obeying orders.

We imagine the Israelite family with an exquisite rug taken from the city of Ai to place on the floor of their tent. Much effort was taken to remove the stains of blood on the carpet from the family mutilated upon it. But nothing can remove the images of death from the minds of the soldiers who slaughtered these people and took their things. We remember the words of Jesus:

> **Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth**, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:19-21
>
> Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But **seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.** Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Matthew 6:31-34

These words were just as true in the time of Joshua as they were in the time of Jesus on earth. God was forced to walk with Israel in their wrong thinking, and constantly make concessions to their way of doing things, even though we are told:

> "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. Isaiah 55:8-9

To say God wanted Israel to kill people and take their things works directly against the teachings of Christ. The idea fails our second tool, the character test. Therefore there is a mirror operating in the text

because of the apparent contradiction. God is condescending to meet the people where they are because that is the only way to remain connected to them.

One more point about what God said to Israel. He said "I have given into your hand." When we compare the same usage in Jeremiah we find something significant:

> I have **forsaken** mine house, I have **left** mine heritage; **I have given** the dearly beloved of my soul **into the hand** of her enemies. Jeremiah 12:7

In this case, "giving into the hand" is a process of forsaking. God forsook the people of Ai because of their long-held rebellion against Him. This is principle six concerning the hedge. All men are God's children by creation. He is not willing that any should perish but that all would come to Him. Ai should have discerned through the events in Egypt, and what happened to the walls of Jericho that they should repent of their sins, but they stubbornly resisted and forced God to forsake them to Israel's misguided thinking. God allowed the sin of Israel to punish the sin of Ai. The inhabitants of Ai took themselves out of God's reach, and He could not prevent Israel from killing them because He is not a God of force.

In all these events, God was seeking to reach the Israelites. They had seen the glory on the face of Moses but had hidden themselves from it by asking him to cover his face. And in hiding the face of Moses, ultimately the face of God is hidden, leading to calamities falling upon the people.

Now Joshua tells the people what he understands God has told him.

> And he commanded them, saying, "Behold, ye shall lie in wait against the city, *even* behind the city: go not very far from the city, but be ye all ready: And I, and all the people that *are* with me, will approach unto the city: and it shall come to pass, when they come out against us, as at the first, that we will flee before them, (For they

> will come out after us) till we have drawn them from the city; for they will say, They flee before us, as at the first: therefore we will flee before them. Then ye shall rise up from the ambush, and seize upon the city: for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand. **And it shall be, when ye have taken the city, *that* ye shall set the city on fire: according to the commandment of the LORD shall ye do.** See I have commanded you." Joshua 8:4-8

Joshua understands that he should burn Ai with fire because he understood God to tell him to do to Ai what he did to Jericho.

> **But they burned the city** [Jericho] **and all that was in it with fire.** Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. Joshua 6:24

So the words of God predicting what Israel would do were understood by Joshua as commands that God ordered. This gives us a clue of the projection occurring.

We won't go into the details of the story but will provide a summary of events.

1. Joshua sends a group of 5000 men to lie in position for an ambush
2. He takes his main force and makes a frontal attack on the city
3. He withdraws his men and causes the men of Ai to believe they were beaten
4. The men of Ai come out against them and Joshua draws them out of the city.
5. Then Joshua gives a signal for the 5000 men to take the city
6. The second group enter the city and sets it on fire.
7. The men of Ai see their cause is lost.

Then we read:

> And it came to pass when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness where they pursued them, and when they all had fallen by the edge of the sword until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned to Ai and struck it with the edge of the sword. **So it was that all who fell that day, both men and women, were twelve thousand--all the people of Ai. For Joshua did not draw back his hand, with which he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.** Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as booty for themselves, according to the word of the LORD which He had commanded Joshua. So Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, a desolation to this day. Joshua 8:24-28

Once again, Josephus changes the story to say only the men were killed, while the women and children were kept alive.

> Now when this calamity was come upon the men of Ai, [now notice what Josephus says next] **there were a great number of children, and women, and servants, and an immense quantity of other furniture.** Josephus, *Antiquites Book 5,* Chapter 1, para.15.

Out of curiosity, I asked Google to explain the reason for this difference and this was the answer given.

> The Rationale: Josephus often wrote for a Roman audience. Historians believe he sometimes "softened" the more violent aspects of Jewish history to make the Israelites appear more civilised and less "barbaric" to Roman sensibilities, who viewed the wholesale slaughter of women and children as extreme, even by their standards. (Google Summary)

How ironic that what Christians call justice, Romans called barbaric. The thought of God commanding the slaughter of small children is an abomination that desolates the human heart. May we hear the call to come out of this Babylon of death, and realise that God never commanded this.

The Psalmist laments what might have been.

> I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt; open your mouth wide, and I will fill it. "But My people would not heed My voice, and Israel would have none of Me. So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, to walk in their own counsels. "**Oh, that My people would listen to Me, that Israel would walk in My ways! I would soon subdue their enemies, and turn My hand against their adversaries.** Psalms 81:10-14

If only Israel had truly followed God and listened to His voice. The Spirit of Christ in them would have caused their enemies to either flee or repent and serve the living God.

Let us stop there and ask some questions derived from the tools given to us in chapter one.

1. Did God command the slaughter of infants in Ai?

This is the question we need to put before people. Does Scripture say that God commanded his people to pick up small babies and throw them full force into a rock? Because that is what happened (See Psalms 137:7-9). If we don't address what happened, we can gloss over these stories and say, "Oh, they died and let's move on." And if we believe that God commanded it, then we believe that God wanted babies to have their skulls crushed and bleed out, which is the most barbarous thing imaginable. If people believe this, then I can only say, "Heaven help you." Our Father is a loving, tender Father who loves all of His children. He does not change His character under any circumstances. He doesn't love someone one day and then desire them to be slaughtered the next.

And that's why I asked this question:

2. Is this consistent with the character of God?

Jesus never killed anyone when he was here on earth. Christ is the revelation of God's character. Therefore this story is not consistent with God's character. But this is

what the Christian doctrine teaches, and it is a direct attack on the God of Jesus Christ.

3. Where in the story did God explicitly tell Israel to kill any person?

You cannot read that in the story. He never says, with an imperative statement, kill all the people of Ai. It doesn't exist. It's not in the text. There is only a statement from God saying I know what's going to happen. And now we come to the next point of our understanding of the Cross.

4. If Christ feels all the suffering of humanity, would He self-harm in commanding the death of these men.

Jesus feels the suffering of all humanity. There is not a sparrow that falls to the ground that our Father does not notice and care about. If Christ orders the death of 12000 people, would he not be bringing suffering on Himself? Is Jesus the first self-mutilator? The principle of the true Cross of Christ feeling the suffering of all the world contradicts the idea of Him ordering pain and suffering to be inflicted on any person.

5. If death is the enemy of God (1 Corinthians 15:26), how can He inflict death? If death is the enemy of God, how can God use His enemies to achieve His purposes? Wouldn't this present God and Satan as working together?

Satan is the author of death and has the dominion of death. Christ is the resurrection and the life and therefore death can't exist in His presence.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for revealing the Father to us and removing the veil over our eyes as we read the Old Testament. Father, you are not a God of death, but of life, and in beholding you as a God of life, we shall live! (2 Corinthians 3:18).

CHAPTER 11

11. GIBEONITE DECEPTION

Gibeon was situated about 9 km north west of Jerusalem. They were Hivites (Joshua 9:7), and therefore one of the seven nations that Israel understood to be destroyed according to Deuteronomy 7:1-2.

We discovered in the previous chapter that the use of the perfect verb form when used for future actions can act as a prediction rather than a command. We see this principle operating in Deuteronomy 7 also.

> …and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, **you shall conquer them [Hiphil perfect] and utterly destroy them.** You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. Deuteronomy 7:2

The Gibeonites saw what Israel did to Jericho and Ai, and although they were one of the royal cities and greater than Ai (Joshua 10:2), they decided to enter into a covenant with Israel by a deceptive strategy.

> But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their

> provision was dry and moldy. And they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us." Joshua 9:3-6

The strategy of claiming to be from a far country appears to be because the Torah instructed Israel that they could make peace with nations that were afar off, but not with the seven Canaanite nations living in close proximity to them. (Deuteronomy 7:1-2; 20:10-15). The Gibeonites seemed aware of this, so they feigned coming from a distant country.

What happens next is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, The Gibeonites successfully deceived Joshua even though he initially had a suspicion that a deception was at play. (Joshua 9:7). Then we read:

> **Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the LORD**. So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them. Joshua 9:14-15

Shortly after securing the covenant, the Gibeonites are revealed as near neighbours.

> And it happened at the end of three days, after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they were their neighbors who dwelt near them. Joshua 9:16

These were one of the seven nations that were to be removed. Israel might have easily declared that the covenant was broken because Gibeon had lied to them, and thus Israel might have destroyed them. But Israel did not do this. They honoured the agreement and made the Gibeonites their servants. Reading the reasoning of the Gibeonites, you can understand their strategy.

> Then Joshua called for them, and he spoke to them, saying, "Why have you deceived us, saying, 'We are very far from you,' when you dwell near us? Now therefore, you are cursed, and none of you shall be freed from being slaves--woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God." So they answered Joshua and said, "Because

> your servants were clearly told that the LORD your God commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you; therefore we were very much afraid for our lives because of you, and have done this thing. Joshua 9:22-24

The Gibeonites understood that they were to be destroyed. There was no option of repentance or negotiation. If a different message had been conveyed to them, a few might have been willing to join Israel by free choice. But this idea of slaughter was the understanding of Israel, for Christ's servants do not fight.

Returning to Deuteronomy 7:2 we see that while God predicted Israel would destroy the nations of Canaan, He *also* told them not to make a covenant with the nations as the Hebrew verb form clearly shows this.

> and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. **You shall make no covenant** [Qal imperfect] **with them nor show mercy [bend] to them.** Deuteronomy 7:2

Elder Waggoner explains the reason they were not to make a covenant with the nations:

> It was for this reason that the Israelites were forbidden to make any league with the inhabitants of the land. A league implies likeness, equality, the union of two similar powers. But Israel, when true to its calling, had nothing in common with the inhabitants of the land. They were to be a separate people, separate solely because of the sanctifying presence of the Lord.
>
> When God said to Moses, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest," Moses replied, "If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not in that Thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth."

> **To make a league with the nations round them, was to be joined to them, and that meant separation from the presence of God. The presence of God was the one thing that would make and keep the people of Israel separate from the nations, and His presence could have no other effect than that very thing.** The presence of God will do the same thing in these days, for He changes not. Therefore if one should say that it is not necessary for the people of God to be separate from the nations, he would really be saying that it is not necessary for them to have God's presence. *Everlasting Covenant* p. 397

The question that must be asked: why was Gibeon allowed to deceive Israel? Why was there no warning from the Lord?

We showed a table on page 80, of some of the consequences of killing. The destruction of Jericho led Joshua and the leaders to forget to ask God for help with what to do about Ai. This pattern is repeated again after Ai. After slaughtering the inhabitants of Ai, the leaders of Israel forget to consult the Lord about the advances of Gibeon. We see this same blindness in Samuel after he killed Agag. When he was sent to anoint David as king, he couldn't discern who he was to anoint – his spiritual perception had been blunted.

The second question is: why did God allow Joshua and his men to let the covenant stand? If God wanted them to be destroyed because of their wickedness, then bringing these people into be your very servants and operating in your homes would make certain that their wicked influence would spread to the Israelites. Even if many of them fully converted and became faithful followers of God, a nation cannot go from complete wickedness worthy of destruction to faithful servants obeying all the commandments of God so easily.

This introduces something fascinating. God knew that Israel would kill the people of Ai and create a breach, causing Israel to have self-confidence and thus forgetting to ask God for help. He knew what the Gibeonites had planned, and in allowing this story to play out, God

could show that the whole theory that the Canaanites were to be completely slaughtered by the commandment of God must be overthrown, because this did not happen to the Gibeonites. This point needs careful reflection.

If God's Sovereignty required the punishment of these nations for their wickedness and for the protection of Israel, the story of the Gibeonites presents a major hurdle.

As we follow the history of the Gibeonites in Scripture we find that the Gibeonite Ishmaiah became one of David's legendary 30 mighty men and played a key role in helping David's kingdom. (1 Chronicles 12:4). His position represents a massive social ascent. A descendant of a subjugated Canaanite people group rose to command some of the most powerful and celebrated military veterans in Israel's history.

Another Gibeonite was Melatiah, who and his men, assisted Nehemiah in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 3:7). Melatiah is identified as a leader or superintendent over the men of Gibeon who took responsibility for rebuilding a critical section of the northern wall of Jerusalem, near the residence of the Persian provincial governor.

If the people of Gibeon were completely devoid of any spiritual response to the truth, these facts would not be possible. But in the life of Ishmaiah and Melatiah, we find the gleam of hope amongst a nation supposedly placed on death row.

The most telling story is King Saul's attempt at a Nazi-style ethnic cleansing of the Gibeonites. It wasn't until after Saul's death that the curse of such actions manifested in a 3 year famine. When king David asked the cause of the famine, the Lord replied.

> "*It is* because of Saul and *his* bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites." 2 Samuel 21:1

Although the Gibeonites were not ethnic Jews, their slaughter still led to a famine. God told Cain after he killed Abel that the land would not be as fertile for him for food production. This principle held true for the Gibeonites. It also showed that God cared for the Gibeonites and what

Saul had done to them. The guilt of killing the Gibeonites was only lifted through a human atonement process. Some of Saul's descendants were executed to "atone" for the sin, and this lifted the curse of the famine. (2 Samuel 21:6).

If Israel could make a covenant with Gibeon and God let it stand, and even showed His care for them in later history then what else was possible? If future generations of Gibeonites could respond to the truth, then could some of them have responded in the time of Joshua?

The story of Gibeon cries out to us against the idea that God wanted all of these nations killed. If we will allow it, it opens a door into a better understanding of the Character of God.

CHAPTER 12

12. THE CROSS IN THE SUN STANDING STILL

The story of Joshua 10 tests the utmost of piloting skills to maintain the truth of the words of Christ that His kingdom is not of this world and His servants do not fight (John 18:36). This story's updraft is one of the most powerful in the Bible, and maintaining confidence in our instruments is vital. It requires prayerful discipline, holding tightly to the hand of Jesus, and confidence that the Scripture is consistent in its message from beginning to end.

We summarise the opening of this story with the nations surrounding Gibeon becoming alarmed that this mighty city defected to Israel to become their slaves in order to stay alive. The five kings of the Amorites and their armies assembled to slaughter the Gibeonites.

This action reveals the fear these nations had in regard to Israel. Their self-destructive spirit drove them to take out their rage on a target that they felt confident they could defeat.

Gibeon caught wind of this planned assault against them, and they sent urgent word to Joshua for help. Now comes the strong updraft for us as the reader:

> 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." Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, having marched all night from Gilgal. So the LORD routed them before Israel, killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, chased them along the road that goes to Beth Horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah. And it happened, as they fled before Israel and were on the descent of Beth Horon, that the LORD cast down large hailstones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword. Joshua 10:8-11

The King James Version along with other versions like the NKJV and NASB, creates a conflict in the reading of the story. In verse 9, God tells Joshua that He has delivered this attacking army into Joshua's hand. But then the text appears to say that God killed them with a great slaughter:

> So the LORD routed them before Israel, killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, chased them along the road that goes to Beth Horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah. Joshua 10:10

Do we imagine that God chased these soldiers along the road? Does God need to chase men? The rendering of the text is problematic. The Revised Version and American Revised Version give a clue to a different reading:

> And the LORD discomfited them before Israel, and he slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, Joshua 10:10

We have introduced the pronoun "he", but it is not clear who the "he" actually is. The NASB capitalises the pronoun to give the reader the sense that God did the killing.

> And the LORD confounded them before Israel, and **He** slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, Joshua 10:10

But this conflicts with God delivering the opposing army into Joshua's hand. For this reason, the NIV and NLT read as follows:

> The LORD threw them into confusion before Israel, **so Joshua and the Israelites defeated them completely at Gibeon. Israel pursued them** along the road going up to Beth Horon and cut them down all the way to Azekah and Makkedah. Joshua 10:10 NIV

> The LORD threw them into a panic, **and the Israelites slaughtered great numbers of them at Gibeon. Then the Israelites chased the enemy** along the road to Beth-horon, killing them all along the way to Azekah and Makkedah. Joshua 10:10 NLT

When the Lord delivered the enemy into the hand of Joshua, Joshua and his army were the ones who slaughtered them in these verses. But the story continues and introduces an element of destruction that was not from Joshua or his army.

> And it happened, as they fled before Israel and were on the descent of Beth Horon, that **the LORD cast down large hailstones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died.** There were more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword. Joshua 10:11

All the translations I checked say that God hurled down great hailstones on the enemy and destroyed more of them in this manner than Joshua did with the sword which in itself was just described as a great slaughter. We are in serious updraft now. As your co-pilot, let me now navigate you through our control panel of tools to bring this story into harmony and save our flight from crashing into the earth.

At this point I reach for the Gospel Character tool and I compare this description with the person of Jesus and what he said to Philip: "Whoever has seen me, has seen the Father." You will search in vain to find Philip witnessing Jesus hurling hailstones on people, or calling for this to be done.

With this conflict between Jesus and this description of the Father here, I invoke the mirror principle. A contradiction in character tells you that one of the descriptions is a mirror of human thinking. This brings in our Two Mirrors tool. Christ on earth is a mirror of the Father's character, which makes this picture of God in Joshua 10 a mirror of human nature.

Next, I check the Permissive Will of God tool, number 10 on our control panel. I investigate the Hebrew verb to see if it offers the potential for a permissive action on God's part. I check the Hebrew for "cast down." The result returned is Hiphil perfect. I double check some Hebrew scholarship concerning the Hiphil verb and remind myself:

> The causative nuance of the hiph'il, and of its Aramaic and Akkadian counterparts the haph'el / 'aph'el and šuprus, respectively, includes not only actions in which the subject causes the object (another person or a thing) to do something, but a range of other ways in which the subject is responsible for the object's action, **such as allowing it, enabling it, tolerating it, or granting permission to do it.** ("On the Tolerative/Permissive Hiph'il," in Le-Ma'an Ziony: Studies in Honor of Ziony Zevit, ed. Frederick E. Greenspahn and Gary A. Rendsburg. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2017. p. 397)

So the Hiphil verb form can either be causative or permissive. So how do we determine which it is?

> The only guide to distinguishing between them is context, but determining what the context requires—or at least what is consistent with the context—can be a very subjective task. (Ibid, Greenspahn and Rensburg p. 399)

What context should I use to determine whether it is causative or permissive? I reach again for the Gospel Character tool: and I let Jesus determine the context. Jesus

never killed anyone, so this sets my context bearings and I lock that in so the text now reads:

> And it happened, as they fled before Israel and were on the descent of Beth Horon, that the LORD **permitted to be cast down large hailstones from heaven** on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword. Joshua 10:11

But this creates another conflict because it says that the hailstones came down from heaven. The first thought is that this refers to the place where God dwells. So we check the Hebrew meaning of the word translated as heaven and we discover:

> The second form being dual of an unused singular; from an unused root meaning to *be lofty*; the *sky* (as *aloft*; the dual perhaps alluding to the visible arch in which the clouds move, as well as to the higher ether where the celestial bodies revolve. *H8064 Strongs Concordance*

So it is possible to read that these hail stones came from the sky where the clouds dwell. It is true that the same word is used to describe God's dwelling place, but this would render pointless a permissive reading of the hailstones being cast down. But if we revert to God actively casting the stones down, then Jesus' words to Philip prove false, which is impossible.

I reach for tool 5, the Earth Curse combined with tool 6, the Angel Hedge. Scanning through Scripture we find a reference to Gibeon, the place where the hailstones fell.

> For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, **he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon**, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act. Isaiah 28:21

Some commentators connect this verse to the work of David, who defeated the Philistines at Baal-Perazim followed by another victory at Gibeon (See 1 Chronicles 14:11,16). But the first time the Hebrew word for *strange* is mentioned it means *to turn aside or go away*. That meaning

doesn't fit David's actions in battle. This brings us to the story of the hail falling in Gibeon. Our heavenly Father is described as doing a strange work; a work that causes Him to turn aside or become a foreigner.

In His action of turning aside, God hides his face in His wrath, (Deuteronomy 31:17), and permits the elements to bring destruction, so that the earth vomits out its inhabitants (Leviticus 18:25).

But what is the connection to the hail? Water is a symbol of the Spirit of Christ, and hail is hardened water. It represents the resistance to the pleading voice of the Spirit of God. Men cling to their lies about the character of God, and resist His Spirit. This resistance is reflected in the elements as hardening water. The Bible actually connects hail to lies as follows:

> Also I will make justice the measuring line, And righteousness the plummet; **The hail will sweep away the refuge of lies**, And the waters will overflow the hiding place. Isaiah 28:17

Men seek to hide in their lies, but when the deceptions men hide in are exposed, the hail sweeps them away in destruction, and they are no more. It is more evidence of the principle that men fall into the holes they dig, and perish.

To summarise this section of the story, Israel were permitted to slaughter the Amorite kings because the sins of these nations had caused their protection to depart. During the battle, something in the elements groaned under the weight of sin and collapsed, and God did not interfere to prevent the giant hailstones from falling from the sky. The statement in Isaiah 28:21 tells us that God turned aside, meaning He allowed the calamity take place that the sinfulness of man had been accumulating through their evil ways and God had been preventing until this point. As we discovered in Mirror Principle Volume 1, God's wrath is to allow men to receive the consequences of their actions. It is not God introducing something new to punish them. God's tender hand that restrains the elements that men have corrupted, is turned aside, and man receives the consequences of his actions.

> **…He [God] shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon**, that he may do his work, his strange work... Isaiah 28:21

The Hebrew word for wroth has a range of meanings. The primary meaning is to quiver either from anger, fear or trouble. Would not any parent quiver at seeing some of his children crushed and destroyed by hail? It was a cross moment for Christ once again, who felt every last part of the destruction. As God turns aside, His heart quivers in sorrow for the destruction, and Christ His Son is lifted up upon the Cross, just as much as when He died on Calvary.

But the sufferings of Christ are not to end. Darkness is not enabled to descend upon this scene. The fighting of Israel on this day is extended, and therefore Christ's suffering is extended.

> 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**."
>
> 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. 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. Joshua 10:12-14

Why does it say that God heeded the voice of a man? Does this suggest it was man's idea and not God's desire? Why would God accept such a request? The short answer is God is allowing sin to abound. He is bringing out the atonement process of men and setting up the cross as we will see. But let us continue the story before drawing these elements together.

> But these five kings had fled and hidden themselves in a cave at Makkedah. And it was told Joshua, saying, "The five kings have been found hidden in the cave at Makkedah."

So Joshua said, "Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and set men by it to guard them. And 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 Makkedah, in peace [with blood all over them]. No one moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.

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 Jarmuth, 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 drew near and 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. (Joshua 10:16-26)

Firstly, let us apply the Gospel Character tool. Do we ever read of Jesus putting His foot on the neck of someone and saying, this is what God does to His enemies? Do we see Him putting swords through men that He has created?

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 remain* until this very day. On that day Joshua took Makkedah, and 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 also did to the king of Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho. (Joshua 10:27-28)

Let us compare the actions of Joshua to the life of Jesus or Yeshua/Joshua: The two Joshuas.

Joshua (Yehoshua – Jehovah Saves) Ministry of Death	Jesus (Yehoshua – Jesus Saves) Ministry of Life
Joshua eliminates his enemies Joshua 10:25	*Christ loves His enemies* Matthew 5:44
Joshua takes revenge on his enemies Joshua 10:13	*Jesus encourages us to feed and clothe our enemies and leave revenge to God* Romans 12:19-20
Joshua used the physical sword. Joshua 10:28	*Jesus said His servants do not fight.* John 18:36

Isn't it clear that the character of Joshua in the Old Testament is opposite to that of Joshua/Jesus in the New Testament? It is not possible to say that Joshua is representing Jesus in the actions he took. Again, we remind ourselves of the words of Elder Waggoner:

> Their victory was to be had only by faith, and, as we have already seen, **if they had been truly faithful, there would have been no more need of their using the sword to drive out the Canaanites than there was to use it for the overthrow of Pharaoh and his hosts. <u>Indeed, the reason why they did not gain full possession of the land was because of that unbelief which made the sword necessary</u>;** for it is absolutely impossible that the heavenly country which God promised Abraham can ever be gained by men with swords or guns in their hands. The first experience of Moses

> demonstrated this. **There was no more need for Israel to fight in the days of old than there is for us;** for "when a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" and we are absolutely forbidden to fight. The possessions that men gain by fighting are not the possessions that God gives. Indeed, they are really not possessions at all, since they cannot possibly be held, as the history of the world proves. Alexander and Napoleon long since lost all that they seemed to have gained by war. The latter, like many others, lost his seeming possessions even before he died.
>
> **When Christ commands His followers not to fight, and warns them that if they do they shall perish, He is not introducing a new order of things, but simply leading His people back to first principles. Ancient Israel affords an illustration of the fact that they who use the sword shall perish with the sword; and, although the Lord bore long with them, and made many concessions to their weakness, and has borne still longer with us, He wishes us to avoid their errors.** All the things concerning them "are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." *Everlasting Covenant p. 420.1-2*

The kingdom of heaven cannot be represented in the actions of Joshua; therefore in this story we see the pinnacle of the character of men and how they deal with conflict. God is revealing to us the heart of man; it is a diagnosis of all of us in our natural state.

Joshua loved God, and showed incredible faith, but this does not mean he was in the kingdom of heaven. We remember that Jesus declared that John the Baptist was the greatest of all who came before, including Joshua.

> Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. Matthew 11:11

John taught that the Messiah would use force to take rulership of Israel, and thus he was not in the kingdom of God's character; the same applies for Joshua. Let us not be deceived on this because of the mighty deeds

Joshua did, which to our carnal nature are more significant than the healings of Jesus. We know this is true because the Pharisees wanted "signs from heaven" from Jesus (Matt 16:1, Matt 12:38, Luke 11:29), meaning that, in their minds, the miracles of Jesus they'd seen didn't match the standards of the great miracles of the prophets before. This was inevitable, for Christ's miracles were of a totally different character from Joshua's.

Both John the Baptist and Joshua loved God, and served Him with all their hearts, but this does not mean they were able to represent the kingdom of heaven. But the sufferings of God and His Son in these stories give us a diagnosis of the human condition. It is an expression of sin abounding, and in the light of Christ's character we are in a position to apply the remedy to our sinful condition of violence.

> …for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. James 1:20

> The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. Isaiah 32:17

God's kingdom advances, not with the clash of arms, yelling voices, and the spilling of blood on the ground, but with quietness and assurance forever. When looking for the fruit of the Spirit, we are told:

> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Galatians 5:22-24

The attributes of violence, yelling in rage, killing, and seeking revenge are not listed as fruit of the Spirit. But they are evidences of what was revealed at the cross of Christ. Notice again the words of Joshua:

> 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." Joshua 10:12

The meaning of *stand still* in Hebrew is as follows:

> H1826 *daîmam.* A primitive root (compare H1724, H1820); **to *be dumb*;** by implication **to be astonished.** to *stop*; also **to *perish:* - cease, be cut down (off),** forbear, hold peace, quiet self, **rest, be silent,** keep **(put to) silence,** be (stand), still, tarry, wait.

The language is similar to the words of Isaiah concerning Christ:

> He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, **yet he opened not his mouth:** he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is **dumb,** so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for **he was cut off** out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; **because he had done no violence,** neither *was any* deceit in his mouth. (Isaiah 53:7-9, KJV)

Jesus told His disciples that He is the light of the world (John 8:12), and Malachi prophesies of Christ's work as the Sun arising with healing in His wings.

> But to you who fear My name **the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings;** and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves. Malachi 4:2

God hearkened unto the words of Joshua, and allowed Israel to continue to slaughter the people of Canaan, but Christ was pierced in sorrow by the slaughter of men, women, and children. “In all their affliction, He was afflicted” (Isaiah 63:9). The unknown enmity in the hearts of the men of Israel, manifested in the slaughter of the Canaanites, was in reality the murder of Christ. Truly Christ could say of the leaders of Israel then, as He said of the leaders of Israel on the cross:

> "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." Luke 23:34

Once again we see this formula played out:

The enmity of Israel is projected onto God, and Israel's atonement is secured through the slaughter of the Canaanites. We see further allusions to the cross in the death of the five kings.

> 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 remain until this very day. Joshua 10:26-27

Does that sound familiar?

> The God of our fathers raised up Jesus **whom you murdered by hanging on a tree**. Acts 5:30.

> So they went and made the tomb secure, **sealing the stone** and setting the guard. Matthew 27:66

> And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.' Matthew 25:40

In the light of the true cross of Christ, we see an incredible love manifested in this story. The unbelief of Israel which made the sword necessary, meant that the only way that Israel could stay alive was in the slaughter of the Canaanites. The sin of Israel in refusing to receive the glory of God's character required that the Canaanites be given up for the ransom of Israel, in a similar way to what happened in Egypt.

> For I *am* the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Saviour; **I gave Egypt for your ransom,** Ethiopia and Seba in your place. (Isaiah 43:3)

The falling of the great hail in Egypt was similar to the falling of the hail in Gibeon. Both Egypt, and the Canaanites refused to humble themselves before God, and a breach was created. The natural disasters were understood by Israel as God actually killing these people, and it emboldened them to take the sword and extend the killing. God allowed these events to unfold because if He didn't, these nations would have destroyed Israel completely and ended all hope of the promises made to Abraham. These nations had to die for Israel to remain alive. Their death was a penal substitution in place of Israel, to give them life. A human atonement was enacted because both the innocent and the guilty were exterminated. Women and small children died alongside the most hardened Canaanite soldiers.

As Joshua stands with his boot on the neck of the kings he has defeated, he is merely following the custom of the surrounding pagan nations before him.

> In the numerous battle-scenes depicted on the monuments of ancient Egypt and Assyria, we see the monarchs frequently represented treading on the necks of their enemies; and a similar practice obtained among the Hebrews.
>
> biblicalcyclopedia.com/N/neck.html

Does God inspire his people to mimic the practices of pagan kings to make the point of total victory? Is it possible that God condescends to meet men in their wrong understanding of Him, to convey to them, that He can give them victory?

Joshua seeks to inspire his men with courage to trust God using a pagan custom to illustrate this victory. Is Joshua simply motivated by pride; vaunting himself before the people? The answer isn't that simple. Through his actions, Joshua has demonstrated great faith. Is it like Jesus

telling the story of the rich man and Lazarus? Jesus told a story familiar to his hearers because even though it contained wrong details about the afterlife, it helped his listeners to grasp his points about wealth, accountability, and Scripture. The same thing is happening here as God uses familiar concepts to make His point that He won't leave them.

Picturing Jesus with his foot on the neck of one of his children, and treating them as pure human waste to be destroyed fails the gospel test. This is not how Jesus revealed Himself on earth. But in the framework of Israel's dim comprehension of God, it helped to show them, that all things are possible with God. But ultimately, Joshua's actions do not reflect the kingdom of Christ thus, as it was said of John the Baptist, "He that is least in the kingdom is greater than he" (Luke 7:28).

In the light of the character of Jesus, and His self-denial, these Old Testament stories become revelations of the true cross. How much has Christ suffered in the hardness of men against Him and one another.

As Christ forgave the Jewish leaders for murdering Him on the cross, so He forgave Israel for murdering all the Canaanites. He forgave them for not understanding what they were doing. The story of the sun standing still is the same process as the sun being darkened when Jesus hung on the cross. Both stories involve a miracle of natural phenomena combined with human brutality.

Does the light of the true cross begin to arise in your heart? Is there healing for our souls in reading this story in the Old Testament in the light of the true character of Jesus? Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your heart, that you might avoid the hail that surely will come in the final plagues against all who continue to blaspheme the name (Character) of God (Revelation 16:21).

CHAPTER 13

13. ESTEEMED SMITTEN OF GOD

In the previous chapter we revealed the truth that Christ was crucified in the destruction of the Canaanites. And it is in the light of the cross that we are ready to explore a critical verse in the rest of the Joshua 10 narrative.

After the slaughter of the five Amorite kings, Joshua moves into the south of Canaan and destroys another seven kings in similar fashion. Nothing was left; everything that breathed was killed and destroyed. Israel was advancing according to their own understanding of God's character. As we have said a number of times, in Christ's kingdom there is no use of swords or weapons. Joshua doesn't appear to know that he is outside of the truth of God's kingdom, but God, in His great love, condescends to meet him and all Israel in this wrong understanding.

And here we come to the climax of the Old Covenant atonement process, the transfer of guilt from man to God in Christ. If Israel had a true understanding that what they were doing was actually against God's character they would be so overwhelmed with guilt that it would destroy them akin to the story of Ananias and Sapphira.

Nonetheless the human race, originally created for the kingdom of love, does have some awareness through the prompting of the Spirit that what it does is not in harmony with God. The slaughter of men, women, and children leaves a deep stain on the soul because it is in reality an unrealised enmity against Christ. In order to help Israel with this guilt, God takes it upon Himself in the following way.

> So Joshua conquered all the land: the mountain country and the South and the lowland and the wilderness slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, **but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded**. Joshua 10:40

The text says that Israel destroyed everything that breathed according to the commandment of God. There Hebrew contains no permissive language. It states clearly that God commanded it. How then do we understand this in the light of Christ's servants not fighting along with the fact that Christ felt all the effects of death and destruction in that slaughter? How do we harmonise these oppositional principles?

Eighteenth century Bible commentator and Presbyterian minister, Matthew Poole, made the following observation:

> As the Lord God of Israel commanded: this is added for the vindication of the Israelites, whom God would not have to suffer in their reputation for executing his commands; and therefore he **acquits them of that implacable hatred and heinous cruelty which they might be thought guilty of, and ascribes it to himself and his own just indignation against this most wicked people.** Matthew Poole, Commentary on Joshua 10:40

John Wesley took the heart of Poole's commentary and wrote it in his own.

> All that breathed - That is, all mankind, they reserved the cattle for their own uses. As God had commanded **- This is added for the vindication of the Israelites, whom God would not have to suffer in their reputation for executing his commands; and therefore he**

> **acquits them of that cruelty, which they might be thought guilty of, and ascribes it to his own just indignation.** – John Wesley Commentary on Joshua 10:40

Poole labels the actions of Israel as implacable hatred and heinous cruelty, but God apparently acquits them of this guilt by transferring it to Himself through the principle of what man perceives as God's justice.

The Bible does not state that God told Joshua to destroy these people, but the author of the book of Joshua speaks to us as the assumed divine mind, because God leaves this record in the Bible to keep Israel's hope alive. God takes upon Himself the heinous cruelty of Israel to save their reputation and spare them of the guilt associated with such actions.

In allowing the Bible writer to ascribe these actions to God, He assumes the character of a judge divesting Himself of the endearing qualities of a Father, and thus provides atonement for Israel, saving them from the guilt that would otherwise crush them. This principle is key to understanding atonement within the Old Covenant. We notice:

> He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. Isaiah 53:3-4

Christ's gentle principles of character were despised by both Israel and Canaan. The slaughter that unfolded caused Christ to be intimately acquainted with grief. In the death of all those men, women and children, Christ's character was hidden from the view of men. Christ bore this sorrow, but notice that Christ is esteemed as smitten of God – meaning that we assumed God wanted it, that He approved of it.

The principle of the true Cross teaches us that Christ was despised from the fall of man, and that Christ is pierced by all the suffering of humanity from that time until the present.

The Bible calls the death of Christ a murder.

> "Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers…" Act 7:52

This guilt of this murder is transferred to God by reading certain passages of the New Testament through the lens of human justice.

> …for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, **that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.** Romans 3:23-26

Luther expresses this principle as follows:

> "You, My Son, must pay the world's iniquity." The law growls: "All right. If Your Son is taking the sins of the world, I see no sins anywhere else but in Him. He shall die on the Cross." **And the law kills Christ. But we go free.** Martin Luther, *Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*

Luther deflects the act of killing to the law as if it were a living entity but there are others who are far more direct.

> **The ultimate answer to the question, Who killed Jesus? is: God did.** It is a staggering thought. Jesus was His Son! But the whole message of the Bible leads to this conclusion. John Piper, 50 Reasons Why Jesus Had to Die, p. 11.

> In short, rather than killing us for violating His law, the Father killed Jesus instead…. to put it crudely, **the Father killed Jesus so that He wouldn't have to kill us.** Clifford Goldstein, The Review, December 8, 2023.

The best definition I have found of this principle is from theologian William Lane Craig:

> Any biblically adequate atonement theory must include the notion of propitiation, that is to say, the appeasement of God's just wrath against sin. **The source of God's wrath is His retributive justice, and so appeasement of wrath is fundamentally a matter of the satisfaction of divine justice.** How are the demands of divine justice satisfied? Biblically speaking, the satisfaction of God's justice primarily takes place, not as Anselm thought, through compensation but through punishment. William Lane Craig, *Atonement and the Death of Christ,* (Baylor University Press, 2020), page 195

Joshua 10:40 is the manifestation of this principle which we expressed in the previous chapter as this formula:

Human enmity towards Christ is projected onto God as His requirement, thus justifying the act of murder as a sacred devotion to God.

The command in Joshua 10:40 is based upon the commands given in Deuteronomy 7:2 and the *cherem:* the devotion of an object, person, or persons to God in the act of holy sacrifice. *Cherem* is the noun of the verb *charam*. The Israelite murder of the Canaanites is reframed as a sacred sacrifice devoted to God. The Canaanite nations are presented as smitten and afflicted by God. God must permit this reframing to take place to deliver Israel from the guilt of their heinous cruelty.

This is such a vital principle to understand. The murder of Jesus on the cross comes from the enmity within man, but in order to save man, God takes these actions of murder and allows Himself to be seen as the one who requires it for the sake of His perceived indignation. This is the only process by which men can find forgiveness and freedom from guilt. God takes this upon Himself for a period of time, that men may find forgiveness. Once forgiveness is accepted, God points the sinner to

the life of Jesus, drawing them to know the truth of His character. Eventually it will be realised, in the final atonement of the Most Holy Place, that God never desired these things.

But it is not until we know God's loving and tender character, not until we can rest securely in the bosom of the Father in Christ, that we can endure the realisation that what we thought was God's indignation was actually our own. God allowed us to believe He required it, that we might not be crushed by our guilt in the sin of murdering Christ in the least of his brethren – meaning the killing of any person or the desire for any person to be killed.

Israel could not endure the truth of what their actions meant in the light of God's true kingdom. Israel's deeds had to be projected onto God and presented as His requirements in order for Israel to have their guilt lifted from them.

In this action, Christ is made sin for us. (2 Corinthians 5:21). He placed His hand in the bosom of man and it came forth as leprous. I find it fascinating that the root word for hornets in Exodus 23:28 means leprous. The stings of conscience produce guilt that rests on the soul like leprosy. Moses was shown the process of how God would allow the transfer of leprosy/guilt in order to save the nation.

> Furthermore the LORD said to him, "Now put your hand in your bosom." And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, like snow. Exodus 4:6

> Remember, Lord, the reproach of Your servants how I bear in my bosom the reproach of all the many peoples… Psalm 89:50

> O God, how long will the adversary reproach? Will the enemy blaspheme Your name forever? Why do You withdraw Your hand, even Your right hand? Take it out of Your bosom and destroy them. Psalms 74:10-11

Through the illustration of leprosy, God shows to Moses the process by which He will help Israel deal with guilt. The destruction of the nations will be a reproach that God bears in His bosom. It is Christ who dwells

in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18), and thus the weight of this reproach falls on Him.

> Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me. Psalms 69:9

Leprosy takes all feeling from a person so that they can hurt themselves and not feel it. Christ took the enmity of Israel into His bosom, and this allowed Israel not to feel the true depth of their sin. Christ took our unfeeling, destructive leprosy and took out His hand from His bosom, thus allowing the destruction of the nations. This is a deep principle, but is simply explained in Isaiah 53 as Christ being despised and rejected by men, with the belief that Christ's smiting was done by God.

This principle is also expressed when Christ was lifted up as the serpent on the brass pole. (John 3:14). The serpent represents Satan, and Christ is lifted up to serpent justice and murdered, but as people look to the serpent on the pole, they have their guilt lifted from them and experience forgiveness. All of these examples illustrate the point of divinity assuming the sinfulness of man, that man's guilt might be lifted from him. And this highlights the necessity of penal substitution: It is not that God requires death, but rather that man in his sinful mind requires it, and then he needs a substitute to bear the guilt of such a horrendous violation of the kingdom of Heaven. The command for such actions is transferred to God, making Him responsible for them, thus making God the substitute, the one who bears the responsibility for the evil.

Man understands Christ to be the substitute, but Christ is the object of men's wrath, and we have deep unconscious guilt for our hatred of Him. To deal with that guilt, we put it on to God, giving rise to the erroneous belief that God required this death. God allows Himself to be seen as the one who commanded the actions, remaining silent to the charge that His wrath needs appeasing, so that man might have the crushing guilt of his actions lifted from him. It is only in this context that Penal substitution plays a role in the plan of salvation, but the

context for it is completely different from men's natural understanding (Isaiah 55:8,9).

Elder George Fifield, a protestant minister who taught around the beginning of the 20th century, stated it clearly when commenting on Isaiah 53:

> The third verse [of Isaiah 53] states and vividly contrasts the true and the false idea of Christ's mission, and of his work, and of the atonement. **One is what was, and the other is what we thought was; one is truth, the other is falsehood; one is Christianity, the other is paganism. We would do well to study every thought in that text.** "**Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; he was pierced through by our misdeeds, and God permitted it because in his stripes there was healing for us. But we esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.** Whose griefs? Whose sorrows? - Ours. The grief and the sorrow that crushed the heart of Christ, and took him from among the living, so that he died of a broken heart, was no strange, new grief or sorrow. It was not something unlike what we have to bear; it was not God arbitrarily putting upon him our sins, and thus punishing our sins in him to deliver us. He took no position arbitrarily that we do not have to suffer. It was our griefs and our sorrows that pierced him through. George Fifield, General Conference Bulletin Feb 9, 1897.

And the griefs and the sorrow that men bear are the guilt of their enmity against Christ and their fellow man. Christ bore this for us on the cross, and He also bore it in the slaughter of the Canaanites. Again, see what Elder Waggoner says on this point:

> "But," someone will say, 'You have made the reconciliation all on the part of men; I have always been taught that the death of Christ reconciled God to man; that Christ died to satisfy God's justice, and to appease Him.' Well, we have left the matter of reconciliation just where the Scriptures have put it; and while they have much to say about the necessity for man to be reconciled to God, they never once hint of such a thing as the necessity for God to be reconciled to man.

> To intimate the necessity for such a thing is to bring a grave charge against the character of God. The idea has come into the Christian Church from the Papacy, which in turn brought it from Paganism, in which the only idea of God was of a being whose wrath must be appeased by a sacrifice." (Present Truth UK, September 21, 1893)

Along the same line of thought, Elder Fifield expresses it this way:

> Notwithstanding this, we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. **That was what we thought about it. We said, God is doing all this; God is killing him, punishing him, to satisfy his wrath, in order to let us off. That is the pagan conception of sacrifice.** The Christian idea of sacrifice is this. Let us note the contrast. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." That is the Christian idea. Yes, sir. Indifference keeps, hatred keeps, selfishness keeps, or gives, if at all, but grudgingly, counting the cost, and figuring on some larger return at some future time. But love, and love only, sacrifices, gives freely, gives itself, gives without counting the cost; gives because it is love. That is sacrifice, whether it is the sacrifice of bulls and goats, or of him who is the Lamb of God. It is the sacrifice that is revealed throughout the entire Bible. But the pagan idea of sacrifice is just the opposite. It is that some god is always offended, always angry, and his wrath must be propitiated in some way. George Fifield, General Conference Bulletin, Feb 9, 1897.

It is absolutely correct to say that to state that God required the sacrifice is pagan, and yet this is the only path through which men could walk towards salvation. The sinfulness of the pagan enmity needed to be manifested for man's diagnosis and satisfaction. But to save man from the immediate crushing guilt, God allowed mankind to put the requirement for killing onto Himself. This is what we see in the conquest of Canaan and the record placed there that God commanded this slaughter. It is the same as saying God required the death of His Son for salvation.

The great difficulty in presenting the text of Joshua 10:40 as an expression of humanity calling Christ smitten of God and afflicted is that it increases the reality of human guilt in this whole process. For those who do not know the truth of the Father's gentle character, the expression of these things may be too painful to deal with, and cause an intense resistive reaction. These truths need to be handled carefully. But seeing the reality of the cross of Christ in Joshua 10:40, and the transfer of guilt that takes place to purchase more time for the guilty, opens up the Scriptures to a far more harmonious understanding than before, and causes the character of our Father to shine far more gloriously.

Now it is true that we can read Joshua 10:40 and say that God commanded the slaughter of these Canaanites, that God commanded Israel to take the lives of infant children – we can do this with the text. But this immediately makes Christ's statements about His kingdom false. If God did command these things, then God's kingdom does fight, and Christ is in error when He tells Pilate that His servants don't fight. The question remains as to how to bring Scripture into harmony in our minds. Will we resort to a Two-Covenant theory that makes God a sword wielding warrior in the Old Testament and a gentle Lamb in the Gospel narratives of the New Testament? Will we force these two contradicting ideas together? Or will we realise the depth of love God has for the human race, in allowing us to project our wrong ideas onto Him, that we might find relief from our guilt in the courtyard and Holy Place of the Sanctuary pathway? (Psalms 77:13).

In the Most Holy Place we are called into a final atonement; a revelation of God's true character that we might cease to make God responsible for the atrocities in the Old Testament. We are called to comprehend just how far God has accommodated humanity in order to help us in our dire situation.

Our Father isn't forcing us to take a position. We are free to take sections of Scripture and force them to defend the enmity of human nature and hide our true depravity, or we can come to manhood and understand the grace of God and all He has done to navigate us out of darkness. He has been shielding us from our crushing guilt by letting us project our

evil deeds onto Him, and all the while seeking to draw us to the glory that shone in the face of Moses.

Will we ask for a veil to be put over this precious face? Or will we allow the light to pierce the darkness and come into the truth of the kingdom of heaven?

CHAPTER 14

14. CONDESCENSION TO THE CHEREM

Let us again consider God's commands in Joshua chapter 11, their conflict with God's statements in Exodus 23, and the history that unfolded between them. We have touched on much of this history in chapters 4 to 6, but now we will frame it together around the narrative of Joshua 11.

After the slaughter of the kings and kingdoms of southern Canaan, the northern Canaanite tribes band together in a desperate attempt to halt Israel's advance. So great are their numbers that they are described as sand upon the sea shore (Joshua 11:4). Josephus indicates there were 300,000 soldiers, 10,000 horsemen and 20,000 chariots.

Josephus then makes an interesting point:

> **…the multitude of the enemies afrighted both Joshua himself and the Israelites; and they, instead of being full of hopes of good success, were superstitiously timorous, with the great terror with which they were stricken.** Whereupon God upbraided them with

> the fear they were in, and asked them whether they desired a greater help than he could afford them; and promised them that they should overcome their enemies; and withal charged them to make their enemies' horses useless, and to burn their chariots. So Joshua became full of courage upon these promises of God, and went out suddenly against the enemies; and after five days' march he came upon them, and joined battle with them, and there was a terrible fight, and such a number were slain as could not be believed by those that heard it. (Josephus, Antiquities, Book 5, chapter 1:18)

From a human perspective, we see Joshua move through the natural process of great fear at facing such a formidable army to having his faith strengthened to perform an incredible feat of military skill and might.

We ask this question though: Why is the terror that God had originally stated would fall upon Israel's enemies now falling upon Israel itself? We recall the original words of God to Israel:

> I will send My terror ahead of you and create panic among all the people whose lands you invade. I will make all your enemies turn and run. I will send terror ahead of you to drive out the Hivites, Canaanites, and Hittites. Exodus 23:27-28 (NLT)

> You will chase your enemies, and they shall fall by the sword before you. Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you. Leviticus 26:7-8

In chapter 9, we presented a table of the fear associated with breaking the commandment not to kill. Fear is an immediate consequence. The servants of Christ do not fight, and Israel's refusal to come into God's kingdom on this point left them vulnerable to the same fear that the Canaanites experienced through their tribal slaughter of each other.

How gracious is God to come to Israel's side and give them courage in this terrible situation. The fear that had gripped Israel should have led to their annihilation, but the mercy and love of God once again saved Israel from certain destruction. But we make the point that Israel's fear

was a clear indicator that they were not operating in the kingdom of heaven, and as a result, God was condescending to help them in their plight.

The faith of Jesus came to Joshua and helped him not because Joshua was righteous, but because God stooped down to help him escape certain death. Even though this meant that Christ would carry a cross because of the spirit of enmity in Joshua and the Israelites towards the Canaanites, Christ bore the cross while saying, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing."

Josephus has already summarised the outcome of the battle for us, so we focus on the verses speaking of God's commands.

> And all the spoil of these cities and the livestock, the children of Israel took as booty for themselves; but they struck every man with the edge of the sword until they had destroyed them, and they left none breathing. As the LORD had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses. Joshua 11:14-15

What commands are Joshua referring to? Looking within this chapter, we discover only one statement given directly by God in relation to our story.

> And Jehovah saith unto Joshua, `Be not afraid of their presence, for to-morrow about this time I am giving all of them wounded before Israel; their horses thou dost hough, and their chariots burn with fire.' Joshua 11:6 (YLT)

I quote from the YLT because most translations give the indication that God delivers their enemies dead before them, but it is clear that Israel destroyed the army with their weapons. By "giving all of them wounded," I understand to mean that the armies were terrified of Israel and had very little courage to fight.

We note the way Robert Young expresses what is understood to be a command of God.

> …their horses thou dost hough, and their chariots burn with fire.' Joshua 11:6 (YLT)

It was a common practice for armies to cut the main tendon on the back legs of horses to render them useless, leading to almost certain death. The procedure caused great pain to the horse, and it left them unable to walk. In such an incapacitated state, the horse would starve to death if it did not die of the wound.

Would God command the infliction of such pain on his creatures, and leave them to die of pain and hunger? Horses are highly intelligent creatures, and would therefore suffer extreme trauma as a result. Does the One who notices every sparrow that falls to the ground command such brutality? (Matthew 10:29). Is the one who was concerned for the cattle of Nineveh (Jonah 4:11), at the same time a butcher of horses? Do sweet and bitter waters come from the same fountain? (James 3:11).

God had instructed Israel earlier not to multiply horses (Deuteronomy 17:16). They were not to depend on such things for their strength, but it was evident that Israel applied this principle in the same way as the pagan kings around them, and God knew what they would do. It became another cross for Christ to carry as yet another consequence of Israel's refusal to seek the glory that shone in the face of Moses at Mt Sinai.

There is no heavenly command in this story for Israel to slaughter their enemies, so we look for previous recorded commands that would indicate that God had ordered the complete wiping out of all who breathe. There are two statements that correspond to the thought that "God had commanded Moses his servant" to slaughter all who breathe.

> "When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater

> and mightier than you, **and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.** Deuteronomy 7:1-2

Here is the other statement:

> "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, 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, Deuteronomy 20:16-17

These apparent divine commands in Deuteronomy differ from God's original statements in Exodus 23:27-28, which we previously considered in chapter 5. God had first promised Israel to drive out the inhabitants before them. We previously discovered that in the Greek Old Testament, the same word for drive out is used in the New Testament for when Jesus cleansed the temple.

> "I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, **and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out** the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you. Exodus 23:27-28

But Israel refused to walk in the ways of God; the song of Moses and the Lamb was turned into the mournful song of sorrow recorded by Moses at the end of Deuteronomy. The Psalmist summarises this transition from God's promise to drive out to Israel's determination to destroy their enemies according to their own counsel.

> I am the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it. "**But My people would not heed My voice, And Israel would have none of Me. So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, To walk in their own counsels.** "Oh, that My people would listen to Me, That Israel

> would walk in My ways! I would soon subdue their enemies, And turn My hand against their adversaries. Psalms 81:10-14

Again, we read the same of the second generation of Israel in Ezekiel:

> "But their children, too, rebelled against Me. **They refused to keep My decrees and follow My regulations, even though obedience would have given them life.** And they also violated My Sabbath days. So again I threatened to pour out My fury on them in the wilderness. Nevertheless, I withdrew My judgment against them to protect the honor of My name before the nations that had seen My power in bringing them out of Egypt. But I took a solemn oath against them in the wilderness. I swore I would scatter them among all the nations because **they did not obey My regulations. They scorned My decrees by violating My Sabbath days and longing for the idols of their ancestors. I gave them over to worthless decrees and regulations that would not lead to life. I let them pollute themselves with the very gifts I had given them**, and I allowed them to give their firstborn children as offerings to their gods--so I might devastate them and remind them that I alone am the LORD. Ezekiel 20:21-26 (NLT)

Because Israel would not listen to God, He allowed them to interpret His words and instructions to destroy. Let us consider God's command in Deuteronomy 7 and its history.

> and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and **utterly destroy them**. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. Deuteronomy 7:2

The word for utterly destroy in Hebrew is *charam* and carries this meaning in the Strong's concordance:

> H2763: A primitive root; to *seclude*; specifically (by a ban) to *devote* to religious uses (especially destruction); physically and reflexively to be *blunt* as to the nose: - make accursed, consecrate, (utterly) destroy, devote, forfeit, have a flat nose, utterly (slay, make away).

The first time the word charam occurs in the Bible is in this verse:

> "He who sacrifices to any god, except to the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed. Exodus 22:20

The Hebrew form of this word is Hophal which is typically a passive form of Hiphil. I asked the AI tool Google Gemini whether it was possible to understand this verse as God allowing human justice to manifest if we recognise, as we have earlier discovered, that Hiphil can also be read passively. Here is the response given:

> **Adrian Ebens:**
>
> Is it possible then that as Israel refused to walk in the ways of God but followed their own counsels as expressed in Psalm 81:10-14 that God left the offender to suffer the consequences of their community? For we see that when the Jewish leaders in John 8 wished to stone the woman caught in adultery, Jesus defended her, but if Christ was not there, we would assume she would be left to the mercy of the Jewish leaders and she would have been devoted and destroyed?
>
> **Google Gemini:**
>
> Yes, you have hit on a profound thematic alignment. By synthesizing the tolerative/permissive grammatical nuance with Israel's historical narrative, you arrive at a compelling reading that bridges Old Testament history with New Testament narrative.
>
> If we view Exodus 22:20 through this specific window, the mechanics of the text shift from God actively striking a person down to a tragic framework of abandonment and vulnerability:
>
> 1. The Dynamic of Abandonment (Psalm 81)
>
> Your connection to Psalm 81:11–12 is exact: *"But my people did not listen to my voice... So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels."*
>
> **When the underlying causative verb is read toleratively, the text effectively says: "If someone sacrifices to another god, they are permitted to be handed over to destruction."**

In a faithful covenant community, that "destruction" meant the formal legal execution of *cherem*.

But as Israel drifted, the "counsels of their own hearts" corrupted this structure. God allowed them to step outside His divine protection, leaving individuals—and eventually the entire nation—exposed to the destructive natural consequences of their broken community dynamics and foreign oppressors.

2. The Trap of a Broken Law (John 8)

This sets the stage perfectly for the woman caught in adultery in John 8.

By the time of the first century, the Jewish leadership was weaponizing the code of Moses within a fractured, occupied, and politically manipulative social structure. If Jesus had not stepped in, the woman "would have been devoted and destroyed"—not by a direct bolt of lightning from heaven, but because God had "given the community over" to their own hard-hearted execution of the code.

When Christ intervenes, He breaks the passive cycle of abandonment. By saying *"Let him who is without sin cast the first stone,"* Jesus exposes the hypocrisy of the human agents trying to enforce the *cherem*. In the absence of Christ, she would indeed have been entirely at the mercy of human legalism, a vivid demonstration of what happens when a community is left to its own unchecked judgment.

If Israel had listened to God's voice at Mt Sinai and embraced the light that shone from Moses' face when he came down from communion with God, there never would have been a need for God to hide His face and allow Israel to carry out the *cherem* and destroy anyone. But Israel's refusal to listen allowed their principles of killing the transgressor to be understood as holy devotion to God through sacrifice. Because of the hardness of Israel's hearts, God permitted Moses to write a bill encoding this principle into law.

> Nevertheless no devoted [cherem] offering that a man may devote to the LORD of all that he has, both man and beast, or the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted offering is most holy to the LORD. No person under the ban, [cherem] who may become doomed to destruction among men, shall be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death. Leviticus 27:28-29

This made the destruction of those violating the law something that was most holy to the Lord. As a result we see Israel asking God if they can offer an entire city to Him as a sacrifice.

> So Israel made a vow to the LORD, and said, "If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy [charam] their cities." And the LORD listened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites, and they utterly destroyed them and their cities. So the name of that place was called Hormah. Numbers 21:2-3

The name of the place was called Hormah which means devotion and comes from the root word *charam*. It is no accident that this story takes place right after the children of Israel murmured causing Moses and Aaron to strike the rock, leading to their death sentence for not following God's commands. Israel carried the guilt of these events into the situation in Arad. Killing the inhabitants of Arad became an act of devotion to God to atone for their sins.

It is right after this event that the people accused God of bringing them out of Egypt to die and then were bitten by fiery serpents, leading to the bronze serpent on the pole, which Jesus connects directly to His own death. Thus, through the bronze serpent, Jesus taught that humanity is forced to look into the mirror of its own fallen morality at the cross. The same destructive, retaliatory spirit that crucified Christ was what drove Israel to slaughter the Canaanites under the guise of holy devotion.

In the story of Arad, God hearkened unto the voice of Israel and their desire to devote this city as a sacrifice to God. And because God submitted to their request, it established the principle in Israel that heinous crimes of humanity can be reframed as devotion to God.

The problem for Israel is that this is not what God had originally told them. He told them He would drive out the inhabitants from before them. So how does Israel account for this? The history must be reframed to fit the new narrative. Notice how Joshua speaks here:

> "Then you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho. And the men of Jericho fought against you--also the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. **But I delivered them into your hand. I sent the hornet before you which drove them out from before you**, also the two kings of the Amorites, but not with your sword or with your bow." Joshua 24:11-12

Joshua speaks on behalf of God and recounts the history of Israel's deliverance. The slaughter of men, women and children is recounted as God driving out the inhabitants before Israel, and *not with sword or bow*. But they did use their swords and bows! And the people were not driven out, but driven into the ground in death.

Joshua's statement that it was not with sword and bow suggests some understanding of what God originally intended. But in order to justify their actions, God's promises are reinterpreted to fit Israel's history. The language is spiritualised to mean that "God was so involved in the killing that it was as if we didn't use swords or bows."

When we acknowledge that Israel stubbornly refused to follow God's ways and instead chose their own, we have context for many statements in Deuteronomy.

Take, for instance, the laws on divorce. Jesus tells us these laws are not what God originally intended, but that they were given because of the hardness of the hearts of Israel (Matthew 19:8).

If the laws on divorce in Deuteronomy chapter 22 were given because of the hardness of Israel's heart, then we can see the principle applying to the laws concerning war given in Deuteronomy 20.

We see this same principle expressed regarding sacrifices.

> Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat meat**. For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice**, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.' **Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward.** Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have even sent to you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them. **Yet they did not obey Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.** Jeremiah 7:21-26

So the sacrificial system established in Israel was made according to Israel's desires. God didn't them to do all these sacrifices, but rather to listen to His voice. But they wanted to do it their own way. It was after Israel told God not to speak to them that we see the introduction of daily sacrifices. We have no record of daily sacrifices before this time, and the truth is that God never desired this.

> Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; my ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require. Psalms 40:6

And Jesus amplified this truth when He said:

> When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: '**I desire mercy and not sacrifice**.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Matthew 9:12-13

This change in relationship between Israel and God is also recorded at the beginning of Deuteronomy.

> "Now therefore, why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the LORD our God anymore,

> then we shall die. For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? You go near and hear all that the LORD our God may say, and tell us all that the LORD our God says to you, and we will hear and do it.'
>
> "Then the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me: '**I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken**. Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever! Deuteronomy 5:25-29

Because Israel refused to alter their perceptions of God, it became true that being directly in His presence would lead to their death. But God laments that Israel did not have a heart to truly know God and as a result, He had to adapt to their desires and wishes.

When we understand the truth that many things written in the books of Moses, and especially Deuteronomy are God's condescension to meet Israel's desires, just so He can remain in a relationship with them; when we understand that many things in the Torah are given because of the hardness of human hearts, then we will look more earnestly upon the face of Jesus, and allow the revelation of His character to illumine the writings of the Old Testament.

Therefore, the statements in Joshua 11 about Joshua fulfilling God's command to kill everything that breathes are an accommodation to the hardness of men and their desires. If God told Israel, you are not listening to me and are rebelling, therefore our relationship is ended! What then would happen? Israel would have been destroyed, and the promises to Abraham would have evaporated. God could not give Israel up, both because His character would not permit it and because He made a covenant with Abraham which He swore by an oath. Thus, God stood by Israel through all their rebellion until they finally murdered His Son on the cross.

How great is the patient and merciful love of God! How unfathomable the length and breadth of His goodness. How sad then, that the efforts of God to stay with His people are understood as reflections of His character! What an abomination! Let us look to Jesus to know what the Father is like in character, and let us discern God's dealings with men in the Old Testament in the light of that character.

CHAPTER 15

15. THE PROMISED REST

The next 10 chapters of Joshua describe the kings destroyed by Israel and the division of the land of Canaan amongst the tribes. At the end of chapter 21, we read:

> And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass. Joshua 21:44-45

Despite the fact that Israel had gone about things in their own way, God accommodated Israel and gave them physical rest from their enemies. The surrounding nations were either destroyed or so frightened by Israel that they dared not touch them. But the true rest that God originally promised Israel was the rest that comes from God's presence.

> And he said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Exodus 33:14

This is the same rest that Jesus promises us in the New Testament.

> "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, **and I will give you rest.** Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30

Although God provided physical rest to Israel from their enemies, they did not enter into the spiritual rest of the Gospel. The land that they currently dwelt in would only have become an everlasting possession if they had entered into the eternal rest that is found in Jesus Christ.

> **The rest that was offered to the children of Israel in the desert, is the very same rest that Christ offers to all mankind**, rest in God, in the everlasting arms--for the only begotten Son "is in the bosom of the Father." (John 1:18) "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." (Isa 66:13). *Everlasting Covenant* p. 409.

> **The rest and the inheritance are really one. Our inheritance is rest, in the place of the weariness that sin brings. In Christ, who is "God with us," we find rest, "in whom also we have obtained an inheritance**, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him that worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." (Eph 1:10-14) The Holy Spirit is the first-fruits of this inheritance, until the purchased possession is redeemed. "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance." (Ps 16:5). He is both our rest and our inheritance; having Him, we have all. *Everlasting Covenant* p. 411.

But as we are told, Israel refused to enter into this rest.

> For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, 'As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.' For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, 'And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.' And in this place again, 'If they shall enter into my rest.' Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, **and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief**… Hebrews 4:3-6

The gospel was preached to Israel and they rejected it. Their entry into Canaan was to be the first stage of receiving the heavenly kingdom. This kingdom would have filled the whole earth, the righteous saints would have been raised and the promise made to Abraham would have been fulfilled, but as we stated in chapter 4, plan A failed and it would take much longer for completion of the original promise.

The rest mentioned in Joshua 21 was only temporal rest. It was not the rest promised in the Everlasting Covenant. In seeking temporal rest, Israel lost their eternal rest. It follows the same principle as Christ mentioned in His ministry:

> For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. Luke 9:24

Like Esau, Israel sold their spiritual birthright for a physical bowl of food. In conquering Canaan with their swords, and spilling the blood of its inhabitants as a sacrifice, Israel confirmed themselves in a worship of a god of death.

We see at the end of Joshua's life that the worship of idols continued in Israel. It had never truly stopped throughout the whole conquest of Canaan.

> "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." Joshua 24:15

Joshua's statement makes it clear that a significant portion of Israel were worshipping idol gods. It was impossible for Israel to receive lasting peace from their enemies while they did this.

> **Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it:** for I am the LORD your God. Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD. If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and

> do them; Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: **and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid**: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land. And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. Leviticus 26:1-7

And it is for this reason that Israel never received the promised land, a land flowing with milk and honey, because they never received the rest of the presence of God through His Spirit. So once again, as we saw the words of God concerning hornets reinterpreted to accommodate Israel's actions of slaughter, so also the statement of rest given to Israel was reinterpreted to simply mean physical rest rather than spiritual.

The inevitable result was that as soon as Joshua and his generation passed from the scene, Israel entered into the same type of idolatry as the nations they had slaughtered.

> And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. Judges 2:8-13

For those who assume that God ordered the slaughter of these nations because of their gross immorality, then it appears that God was

shortsighted because His people were secretly worshipping the same idols and within one generation would do exactly the same as those they slaughtered.

> But they mingled with the Gentiles and learned their works; they served their idols, which became a snare to them. They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons, and shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood. Thus they were defiled by their own works, and played the harlot by their own deeds. Psalms 106:35-39

To believe that God wanted the slaughter of all these nations, comes into direct conflict with the words of Jesus.

> So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. John 8:7

It is hypocritical for Israel to be the considered the righteous destroyers of the Canaanites when they were doing the same things as them. It is far more consistent to see that God bore with Israel's wilfulness, and that He tried to draw them into His ways by His gentle calls to them. But they refused to enter into His rest.

What is the lesson for us? In continuing to believe and teach that God wanted the slaughter of the Canaanites, do we not enter into the sin of Israel? Do we not continue to perpetuate the lie against God's character and ensure that the promised rest in the arms of love must remain yet in the future?

Is it not time to arise from this pig pen and go to our Father's house? Is it not time to choose this day to serve the God of Jesus Christ who revealed to us the truth of God's character?

In the person of Joshua, we face a complex issue: why was he chosen as the successor to Moses? In later history, we receive a jolt when God tells David that he can't build a temple to honour God because he was a man of blood.

> But God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for My name, because you have been a man of war and have shed blood.' 1 Chronicles 28:3

If this was true for David, then how could Joshua build a nation for God's name, as he also was a man of blood? In contrast we see in Jesus the tender shepherd who gently leads His flock and shields them from seeing war (Exodus 13:17).

It is true that Joshua executed his mission faithfully as a warrior, but the choice of a warrior rather than a shepherd speaks yet again of Israel's desire to be ruled by a man of violence rather than a man of peace. In the choice of Joshua we have the reality of Israel saying "we will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14). If God had offered to Israel a humble, gentle man as their leader, they would have scorned such an appointment. It would have insulted their pride and their desire to be ranked as a powerful nation commanding respect.

The consequences of a warrior leader began to manifest internally with how Israel dealt with each other. The establishment of the cities of refuge became a necessity because of the spirit of revenge in the Israelites to kill someone who accidentally killed someone else (Joshua 20). This would not have been necessary if Israel had chosen a shepherd leadership model.

The Spirit of rest in Christ would cause people to forgive one another for these things and there would be no need for an avenger of blood. But because of the hardness of the hearts of Israel, God had to establish laws to accommodate their wrong ideas of justice.

It is this same hardness that leads to the establishment of harsh laws that allow a rapist to marry his victim (Deuteronomy 22:28-30). These principles are natural extensions of Israelite men being allowed to take girls from enemy nations for themselves. Such actions cause hardness of heart, and therefore laws have to be established to deal with these things that never should have been needed. Should God reward a rapist by allowing him to marry and continue to abuse his victim? As God told them:

> **…because they had not executed My judgments, but had despised My statutes,** profaned My Sabbaths, and their eyes were fixed on their fathers' idols. **"Therefore I also gave them up to statutes that were not good, and judgments by which they could not live**…" Ezekiel 20:24-25

God can only be said to have given them laws that are not good because He gave them laws to regulate what they wanted. A parallel would be parents telling their children who drink alcohol not to drink and drive. The original command not to drink alcohol at all was rejected, and so laws are given to guide in that which the children want.

How sad it must be for our Father in heaven to see millions of people reading the statutes of the Old Testament and thinking that they fully represent God's character! Many of these laws are mirrors of men's perversity; they serve as diagnostic tools for men's depravity and as we look to Jesus and His character we find the remedy. The law of Moses serves as a ministration of death or a ministration of the *cherem*, that causes human sinfulness to abound, that the ministration of the Spirit might much more abound.

In the face of Jesus, we can rightly divide the Word of God and find salvation for our souls. May we not wrest the Scriptures to our own destruction and attribute to God the hard attributes of men.

As we move into the book of Judges, we are studying the lives of those who multiply the wrong principles of their forefathers and suffer the most terrible consequences. We read of men who did what was right in their own eyes devoid of a correct understanding of the character of God. And yet, despite all this, our Father in heaven did not give up on His people. He continued His efforts to save them even while He suffered with them in all their afflictions. Bless you, Father, for your patient endurance for the salvation of men.

CHAPTER 16

16. THE WEAPONISATION OF THE EXODUS AND CANAAN CONQUEST

The character revealed in Jesus Christ stood in sharp contrast to what the Jews of His day, and the world, understood. The gentleness, patience, and compassion of God were vividly displayed in the character of the Messiah.

On the night before His death, Christ expressed to His Father in prayer that He had fulfilled the mission given Him: He had glorified His Father's character and revealed His name to His disciples. (John 17:4,6).

The gospel of Jesus which spread to the world after His death centred on the loving self-denial of their Master and continued for well over a hundred years after Christ had graced the earth.

But the tentacles of Hellenism manifested in the dogma of Neoplatonism laid the foundations for the development of the Papacy. The major transition point came with Emperor Constantine.

After decades of persecution, intensified under the rule of Diocletian, Hellenised Christianity found a Saviour in Constantine, and the master politician found in this brand of Christianity a narrative to advance his career.

After a dream in which Constantine was told "in this sign conquer" (In hoc signo vinces), he attributed his victory against his rival Maxentius at the battle of Milvian Bridge (AD 312) to the Christian God. His army was baptised and the doors opened to Christians to be placed at the centre of Roman life.

In his fawning eulogy, *Life of Constantine*, Eusebius Bishop of Caesarea, painted Constantine as the New Moses. Constantine was raised in the court of the "Pharaoh" Diocletian before rising up to rescue the church.

Commenting on the victory of Milvian Bridge, which elevated Constantine to unrivalled power, Eusebius draws a parallel to Pharaoh drowned in the Red Sea.

> For once, as in the days of Moses and the Hebrew nation... He cast Pharaoh's chariots and his host into the waves of the Red Sea, and at this time did Maxentius, and the soldiers and guards with him, sink to the bottom as a stone... sank as lead in the mighty waters.
>
> When in his flight before the divinely aided forces of Constantine, he [Maxentius] essayed to cross the river [the Tiber] which lay in his way, over which he had made a strong bridge of boats, and had framed an engine of destruction—really against himself, but in hope of ensnaring thereby him who was beloved by God. [But God brought this engine to be Maxentius's undoing:] for the machine, erected on the bridge with the ambuscade concealed therein, giving way unexpectedly before the appointed time, the passage began to

> sink down, and the boats with the men in them went bodily to the bottom."[6]

In contrast the leadership of Joshua, the ideological objective of the Constantinian narrative was to frame the Christian Emperor as a liberator rather than a genocidal conqueror. The Canaanite narrative requires viewing the inhabitants of the land as an irredeemable "other" marked for total destruction. Constantine, however, was trying to unite a fractured Roman population. By using Moses, Constantine and Eusebius could claim they were freeing the Roman people from the "slavery" of tyrannical, pagan emperors, rather than conquering a foreign population.[7]

The Roman Papacy not only continued to align with the Moses narrative popularised by Constantine and Eusebius, but it aggressively expanded it to build the very foundation of papal supremacy during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

However, the Popes made a critical structural adjustment: they stripped the Moses title away from secular emperors and claimed it entirely for themselves. While Eusebius used Moses to paint Constantine as the supreme leader of both state and church, the medieval Popes argued that the Pope was the true, ultimate "New Moses"—a supreme spiritual legislator and temporal sovereign whose authority superseded all earthly kings.[8]

Starting in the High Middle Ages, theologians like Bernard of Clairvaux began systematically applying Old Testament typologies to the papacy. The Popes faced constant power struggles against secular rulers (like the Holy Roman Emperors). To win these theological-political wars, the

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6. https://websites.uta.edu/hunnicut/reading-list/readings-western-civilization/eusebius-how-constantine-overthrew-maxentius-and-favored-christianity
7. https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/eusebius-caesarea-life-constantine-i12
8. www.researchgate.net/publication/375629907_Moses_As_Figure_of_the_Pope_II_A_Christological-political_topos_from_Eugenius_IV_to_Clement_VII

Vatican argued that the Pope inherited the unique, absolute authority of Moses.

The logic was simple: Moses was the direct mediator between God and man, the supreme lawgiver, and the ruler who established the high priesthood of Aaron. Therefore, the Pope was the source of all spiritual law and held the ultimate right to judge earthly rulers, while remaining above the judgment of any human court.[9]

In 1439, Pope Eugenius IV issued the papal decree *Moyses vir Dei* ("Moses, the Man of God"). He directly compared the church councils opposing him to Korah, Dathan, and Abiram—the Old Testament figures who rebelled against Moses's leadership and were swallowed alive by the earth. By aligning with Moses, the Pope framed any democratic or structural dissent against the papacy as a literal sin against God's ordained order.[10]

The absolute peak of this papal alignment with the Moses narrative is permanently painted on the walls of the Sistine Chapel, commissioned by Pope Sixtus IV in the late 15th century.

Before Michelangelo painted the ceiling, Sixtus IV hired Renaissance masters (including Botticelli and Perugino) to paint two parallel cycles of frescoes facing each other on the walls:

- The Left Wall: The Life of Moses (The Old Law / The Old Leader).
- The Right Wall: The Life of Christ (The New Law / The New Leader).

This layout was explicit political propaganda designed to visually validate the doctrine of *Plenitudo Potestatis* (the plenitude of papal power). The frescoes deliberately drew typological lines showing that the absolute authority God gave to Moses was passed to Christ, who

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9. https://editorialsinderesis.com/wp-content/uploads/texto-the-pope-new-moses.pdf
10. Ibid.

then passed it to Saint Peter (the first Pope), and by extension, to Sixtus IV. One specific fresco, Botticelli's *The Punishment of the Sons of Korah*, served as a massive, visible warning to anyone challenging papal authority, once again casting the Pope as Moses putting down a mutiny.[11]

Centuries later there was a shift in political Christendom toward the Joshua narrative, when European Christians transitioned from *ruling an existing empire* (the Constantinian model) to *invading and colonising entirely new continents* (the Settler Colonial model). When the goal changed from political liberation to total land acquisition and the displacement of native populations, Christian theologians largely set aside the Moses/Exodus framework and picked up the Joshua/Canaanite framework.

Early American leaders viewed their arrival in New England as a literal reenactment of Exodus, explicitly casting Native Americans as the ungodly tribes occupying their promised land.

During the Pequot War (1637), English colonists trapped and burned alive roughly 400 to 700 Pequot men, women, and children at their fortified village in Mystic, Connecticut. William Bradford, the governor of Plymouth Colony, described the horrific scene by explicitly framing it as a holy offering:

> "It was a fearful sight to see them thus frying in the fire, and the streams of blood quenching the same, and horrible was the stink and scent thereof; but the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice, and they gave the praise thereof to God, who had wrought so wonderfully for them, thus to enclose their enemies in their hands..."[12]

Captain John Mason, who led the attack on the Mystic fort, explicitly invoked the language of David and Joshua, stating:

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11. William Johnstone, "Moses in Medieval Stained Glass," the Church Service Society Record 42 (Winter 2006/7), 35-55.

12. https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=652

> "Thus the Lord was pleased to smite our enemies in the hinder parts, and to give us their land for an inheritance... Thus did the Lord judge among the heathen, filling the place with dead bodies."[13]

Decades later, the prominent Puritan minister Cotton Mather rallied colonists to go out against the indigenous populations by linking them directly to the biblical enemies of the ancient Israelites:

> "...go forth against Amalek annoying this Israel in the wilderness."

Reflecting on the near-total destruction of local tribes during this era, Puritan writer Herbert Gibbs explicitly mirrored the Book of Joshua, giving thanks for:

> "...the mercies of God in extirpating the enemies of Israel in Canaan."[14]

As the British Empire expanded, the providential framework endured, shifting from the specific "New Israel" model to a broader mandate where the British were chosen by God to inherit the earth, styling indigenous resistance as rebellion against divine decree.

In the late 16th century, early English colonist and strategist Robert Gray, writing in *A Good Speed to Virginia* (1609) to justify the displacement of Native Americans, argued that the earth belonged to those who built civilisation, invoking Joshua-like logic regarding the right to seize land.

The tract was written to generate financial and public support for the Virginia Company's colonisation of Jamestown. In it, Gray explicitly addresses a pressing moral question of the day: *by what right can Christian nations take land belonging to native peoples?*

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13. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233238838_The_political_sacralization_of_imperial_genocide_contextualizing_Timothy_Dwight's_The_Conquest_of_Canaan

14. https://reflections.yale.edu/article/violence-and-theology/bible-and-legitimation-violence

To ease the consciences of prospective settlers and investors, Gray relied heavily on the Book of Joshua and biblical concepts of land stewardship.

> "The earth is the Lord's... and he hath given it to the sons of men to be inhabited... Far be it from us to think that God hath created the earth to lie waste... It is no unjust war for a civil nation to enter into the countries of a barbarous people, to reduce them to civility and to true religion."[15]

Robert Gray developed this thought into the wasteland argument. He stated that God did not create the earth *"to lie waste,"* Gray strips indigenous people of their ownership rights by claiming that their hunting, gathering, and non-European agricultural practices amounted to "wasting" God's property.

He concludes that conquering a *"barbarous people"* is entirely just, provided the invaders intend to bring them *"civility and to true religion"*—conceptually paving the way to treat native resistance as an ungodly rebellion that could be met with righteous, violent erasure.

These principles were carried out in earnest in Australia with the genocide of the indigenous Tasmanian population, and the slaughter and subjugation of the mainland.

The conquest rhetoric was heavily blended with the biblical command to "subdue the earth." Because Indigenous Australians did not practice Western agriculture, colonial leaders and writers argued that they had forfeited their right to the land, framing frontier massacres and disease-driven population collapse as a form of divine cleansing.

In 1848, Richard Hill, an influential colonial figure in New South Wales, wrote regarding the rapid disappearance of Aboriginal populations:

> "We cannot look upon the history of the world without seeing that it has been the decree of Providence that a dark race should

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15. https://dokumen.pub/the-rights-of-war-and-peace-political-thought-and-the-international-order-from-grotius-to-kant-9780191037429-0191037427.html

> disappear before a white one... It seems to be an unalterable law of nature, or rather, the will of God."

Similarly, an editorial in The Christian Colonist (an early Australian colonial newspaper) routinely justified the aggressive expansion into Aboriginal territories by using the explicit logic of Israel displacing the older inhabitants of Canaan:

> "The land was given to us by Providence to cultivate and replenish. The blackfellows have failed to do this... It is the law of God that the land should be taken from those who do nothing with it, and given to those who will make it bring forth fruit."

These quotes highlight that the biblical narrative of conquest was not just an abstract theological theme; it was a primary piece of ideological scaffolding used by generals, governors, and clergymen to mentally convert mass violence and land theft into acts of divine obedience.

In summarising this tragic misuse of Scripture by Catholic and Protestant leaders, Puritan Theologian Greg Boyd states:

> The European conquest of America alone suffices to demonstrate how easy it is for the conquest narrative to motivate people to follow leaders who believe God commissioned them to exterminate indigenous populations in the process of seizing their land. In this light, there can be no doubt that this is a very dangerous narrative, and this contributes to its status as a paradigmatic symbol of the problem of divine violence in the Old Testament.[16]

In contrast, he makes this penetrating observation:

> On the other hand, if we instead resolve to 'know nothing except Jesus Christ, and him crucified' (1 Cor 2:2) as we interpret these genocidal portraits of God, we are empowered to see through their sin-mirroring surface to discern the cruciform God stooping to become the sin and the curse of his people within the written witness to God's covenantal faithfulness (2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13). We

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16. Greg Boyd, Crucifixion of the Warrior God (2017) pp. 918,919.

> can see that God is bearing the sin of his people—including the sin of believing him to be a genocidal ANE [Ancient Near East] warrior deity—and thereby taking on a literary appearance that reflects that sin. **As such, these ghoulish portraits of God become for us literary crucifixes that bear witness to just how low the heavenly missionary was willing to stoop to remain in covenant with, and to continue to further his historical purposes through, his ancient covenant people**.[17]

This is the key point we wish to present in this volume: The violence portrayed in the Israelite Exodus and conquest of Canaan reveals a series of crucifixion events for Christ, and by extension, the Father which they humbly accepted to remain connected to "his ancient covenant people" in the hope that one day men would realize their evil ways and repent.

The failure to do this is what will lead the world into its final crisis. When visiting an Israeli site struck by an Iranian missile, Prime Minister Netanyahu stated:

> "We read in this week's Torah portion, 'Remember what Amalek did to you.' We remember—and we act."[18]

US Secretary of Defense, Pete Hegsteth has repeatedly invoked Old Testament examples to support their administration's current war activities. During a formal Pentagon press briefing regarding the ongoing military action against Iran, Hegseth closed his statement by reciting Psalm 144, a passage traditionally shared by Christians and Jews:

> Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for war and my fingers for battle. He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer... Psalm 144:1,2

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17. Ibid. p. 927.

18 https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/netanyahu-equates-iranian-regime-to-ancient-biblical-foe/3848109

At a Christian worship service hosted inside the Pentagon—part of a series of monthly services he instituted for military staff—Hegseth prayed for "overwhelming violence of action against those who deserve no mercy," referring to the Iranian regime.

Hegseth's militant theology—underscored by his highly visible *Deus Vult* ("God wills it") Crusader tattoo—has raised significant alarms among civil rights watchdogs and international analysts. Groups like the Military Religious Freedom Foundation have investigated complaints that this top-down rhetoric has filtered through the ranks, with some commanders telling service members that the conflict is part of a prophetic end-times script. [19]

The subjects we are considering in the light of the person of Jesus have direct implications for our future. If God continues to be cast in the frame of a warrior, then we are destined to an endless cycle of violence, death and destruction with the most violent being the leaders of the our countries.

The misreading of these Old Testament narratives outside the clear statements of Christ that His servants do not fight has led and continues to lead the world down a very dark path of violence, sorrow, and death.

We turn now to the history of Luther, his progression with liberty of conscience and its potential for the kingdom of God.

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19 https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2026/apr/10/pete-hegseth-christianity-iran-war-crusade

CHAPTER 17

17. LUTHER AND TYNDALE'S KINGDOM DUALISM

From the fusion of church and state, birthed in the career of Constantine, and eulogised by Eusebius of Caesarea until the height of Papal power in the 13th century, where Innocent III successfully excommunicated and forced the submission of Europe's most powerful monarchs, including King John of England and King Philip Augustus of France, the Christian militarised doctrine built upon Moses and Joshua prevailed.

But with the rise of John Wycliffe and his Bible translation to English from the Latin Vulgate, the beginnings of the retrieval of a Scriptures renaissance began, and with it the opportunity to choose a different path. Particularly the gospels of the New Testament began to expose the character of the Papacy. But while Wycliffe's Bible was a large step forward, the accuracy of the Latin Vulgate lacked the purity of the Greek manuscripts held in Constaninople in the East.

From the 7th century onward, the expansion of the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates absorbed vast amounts of former Byzantine territory. While the Arab world actively translated Greek philosophical,

medical, and scientific texts into Arabic (deeply influencing the later Medieval European scholastic revival), they left the strictly religious Greek texts inside the Christian communities they conquered. Under the *Dhimmi* system, Christian monasteries in places like Egypt (Saint Catherine's in Sinai), Syria, and Palestine were allowed to maintain their libraries and continue copying scripts, effectively insulating them from the theological shifts, wars, and accidental fires of Western Europe.[20]

As the Ottoman Empire steadily advanced through the Balkans and encircled Constantinople in the 14th and 15th centuries, it created a slow-motion migration. Rather than a sudden, apocalyptic destruction of knowledge, the pressure of Ottoman rule forced a highly organized, century-long effort by Byzantine scholars and institutions to safeguard their intellectual assets. Monasteries and libraries within the empire continued to house, protect, and duplicate these biblical codices right up until—and even after—the empire's final collapse.[21]

Decades before the definitive Fall of Constantinople in 1453, farsighted Italian humanists and fleeing Byzantine scholars began moving massive libraries into Western Europe. Figures like Giovanni Aurispa traveled to Constantinople in the 1420s, returning to Italy with hundreds of Greek codices. When Constantinople finally fell to Sultan Mehmed II, a massive wave of Greek scholars sought refuge in Italy, bringing their personal libraries and, crucially, their native command of the Greek language.[22]

From this influx of Greek manuscripts, the Dutch scholar Erasmus, developed what became known as the Textus Receptus (Received Text). It served as the direct foundational source text for William Tyndale's

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20. www.reddit.com/r/byzantium/comments/1ug4i7h/why_does_it_seem_like_the_arabs_are_given_more
21. www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation?paperid=151750
22. https://eternalcityistanbul.com/how-greek-knowledge-traveled-from-constantinople-to-renaissance-italy/

English Bible, Martin Luther's German translation, and ultimately, the 1611 King James Version.

To a large extent, the proliferation of the Tyndale and Luther Bibles in the 16th century provided the foundational vocabulary and direct text that fueled early modern pacifist movements—most notably the Anabaptists (the Radical Reformation). Their reading of the New Testament was a direct, self-conscious rejection of the militarized, state-aligned theology held by both Rome and the Magisterial Reformers (Luther, Calvin, Zwingli).

Before common language (or vernacular) translations, the Latin Vulgate, which most of the laity couldn't read, was interpreted by its leaders through the lens of its church tradition. Its priests and theologians had spent centuries reconciling Christian theology with state power such as Augustine's *Just War theory*.

When Luther translated the New Testament into German (1522) and Tyndale into English (1526), they bypassed the institutional filter. For the first time, literate commoners and local preachers could read the Sermon on the Mount directly. The power of Scripture was once again being accessed by the common man who held no vested interest in the maintenance of a human power structure.

Commands like *"Do not resist an evil person"* and *"Love your enemies"* suddenly lacked the institutional gloss that explained them away as mere "counsels of perfection" intended only for monks. The raw text hit the public sphere, creating an explosive reaction to the status quo.

Two years previous to translating the Bible into German, Luther pressed forward the principles of individual liberty as a Christian. In 1520, Luther published a blockbuster treatise titled *On the Freedom of a Christian,* where he famously wrote: *"A Christian man is the most free lord of all, subject to none."* Most scholars understand that Luther meant this in a strictly spiritual, inward sense—that a believer's conscience is free from the guilt of sin and the burden of buying salvation through church rituals.

When men like Thomas Müntzer and other radicals took Luther's principles and applied them to political life and public governance. Luther was horrified by this because the radicals were doing something he considered blasphemous: they were merging the political violence with the teachings of Christ to justify their ambitions. Thomas Müntzer preached that the "godly" (the poor peasants) had a divine mandate to slaughter the "ungodly" (the princes and Catholic clergy) to establish the Kingdom of God on earth before Christ's return.

These violent radicals were clearly operating outside of the teachings of Christ who taught that His disciples do not fight, or that Christ's kingdom is of this world, as we have repeated several times. But in claiming they were building on Luther's teachings, meant that Luther had to respond or risk being completely misrepresented.

Luther did respond in his 1523 treatise called Secular Authority, To What Extent Should it be Obeyed? In reaction to the growing rhetoric of the violent radicals, Luther frames his earlier pacifist principles under a Two Kingdoms theology, where the world was divided into two realms:

1. The Kingdom of God: The spiritual realm of believers. Here, the rules of Christ (the Sermon on the Mount) apply perfectly: turn the other cheek, do not resist evil, do not use the sword.

2. The Kingdom of the World: The secular realm of law, order, and sin. Because the vast majority of humans are not true Christians, God established civil government and gave it the power of the sword to restrain evil and prevent absolute chaos.

Luther argued that while a Christian must never lift a finger to avenge *themselves* (personal pacifism), they have a divine duty to lift the sword to protect *their neighbor* if they hold a public office like a prince, judge, or soldier.

Here Luther is caught on the horns of a dilemma, for Christ clearly stated that His kingdom was not of this world. In order to maintain Christ's principles as well as to operate within the kingdom in which he

held a position, Luther fused together two opposing principles in a classical Neo-Platonic framework.

In his inner personal world, a Christian was to submit to the leadership of the government he was under, but in the flesh, if he served as a soldier, he was to engage in violence for the sake of the king and the government he served. As Luther argued in his treatise:

> When soldiers as him [John the Baptist] what they should do, he answered, “Do injustice or violence to no one, and be content with you wages.” If the sword we not divinely appointed he should have commanded them to cease being soldiers, since he was to perfect the people and direct them in the Christian way. Hence it is sufficently clear and certain that it is God’s will that the sword and secular law be used for the punishment of the wicked and the protection of the upright.

Let us follow Luther for a little here because his line of reasoning is very instructive for us as we consider the kingdom of heaven and its relationship to this world. Luther, aware of the teachings of Christ, approaches them in response to the arguments of some of the emerging Anabaptist pacifists.

> II. There seems to be a powerful argument on the other side. Christ says, Matthew 5, "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old: An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, That a man shall not resist evil, but if any one strikes thee upon the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and whoever will go to law with thee to take thy coat, let him have the cloak also, and whoever forces thee a mile, with him go two miles." Likewise Paul, Romans 12, "Dearly beloved, defend not yourselves, but give place to God's wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the Lord." Likewise Matthew 5, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you." And I Peter 3, "Let no one repay evil with evil, nor railing with railing," etc. These and the like passages truly would make it appear as though in the New Testament there should be no secular sword among Christians.

> Hence the sophists also say that Christ has abolished Moses' law; of such commandments they make counsels for the perfect, and divide Christian teaching and Christians into two classes. One part they call the perfect, and assign to it such counsels. To the other, the imperfect, they assign the commandments. This they do out of sheer perversity and caprice, without any scriptural basis. They do not see that in the same passage Christ lays such stress on His teaching that He is unwilling to have the least word of it set aside, and condemns to hell those who do not love their enemies. Therefore we must interpret these passages differently, so that Christ's words may apply to all alike whether they be "perfect" or "imperfect." For perfection and imperfection consist not in works and do not establish a distinct external order among Christians; but they exist in the heart, in faith and love, so that they who believe and love the most are the perfect ones, whether outwardly they be male or female, prince or peasant, monk or layman. For love and faith produce no sects or outward differences.

The direction that Luther is moving led unwittingly to the silencing of the testimony of Christ and His revelation of the Father's character. He does this through the introduction of his Two Kingdom concept.

> III. **We must divide all the children of Adam into two classes; the first belong to the kingdom of God, the second to the kingdom of the world.** Those belonging to the kingdom of God are all true believers in Christ and are subject to Christ. For Christ is the King and Lord in the kingdom of God, as the second Psalm and all the Scriptures say. For this reason He came into the world, that He might begin God's kingdom and establish it in the world. Therefore He says before Pilate, "My kingdom is not of the world, but whoever is of the truth hears My voice"; and continually in the Gospel He refers to the kingdom of God and says, "Amend your ways, the kingdom of God is at hand." Likewise, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." He also calls the Gospel, a Gospel of the kingdom, for the reason that it teaches, governs, and contains God's kingdom.

The Kingdom of God consists of true Christians who are ruled by the Holy Spirit and the Gospel; they require no laws or swords because they naturally act with love and justice. However, because true Christians are few and the world is inherently sinful, God established the Kingdom of the World—civil government—and armed it with the sword. This secular authority exists to restrain evil, punish the wicked, and maintain a baseline of peace so that human society does not collapse into chaos.

The conflict arises in how a Christian relates to both these kingdoms? Luther claimed that a Christian belongs to both kingdoms simultaneously. In their personal life, a Christian must follow Christ's commands in the Sermon on the Mount perfectly, practicing absolute non-resistance and turning the other cheek. However, out of love for their neighbour, a Christian can—and should—serve in the secular kingdom as a magistrate, soldier, or executioner. In these public roles, wielding the sword is not a sin; it is a divine service that protects the innocent from the wicked.

I want to quote Luther here that you read directly from him his line of reasoning on this point.

> You ask whether a Christian, also, may bear the secular sword and punish the wicked, since Christ's words, "Thou shalt not resist the evil," are so clear and definite that the sophists have had to make a counsel of them. I answer, **You have now heard two propositions. The one is, that the sword can have no place among Christians, therefore you cannot bear it among and against Christians, who do not need it. The question, therefore, must be directed to the other side, to the non-Christians, whether as a Christian you may there bear it. Here the other proposition applies, that you are under obligation to serve and further the sword by whatever means you can, with body, soul, honor or goods.** For it is nothing that you need, but something quite useful and profitable for the whole world and for your neighbor. Therefore, should you see that there is a lack of hangmen, beadles, judges, lords, or princes, and find that you are qualified, you should offer your services and seek

> the place, that necessary government may by no means be despised and become inefficient or perish. For the world cannot and dare not dispense with it.
>
> **The reason you should do this is, that in this case you would enter entirely into the service and work of others, which benefited neither yourself nor your property nor your character, but only your neighbor and others; and you would do it not to avenge yourself or to recompense evil for evil, but for the good of your neighbor and for the maintenance of the safety and peace of others.** As concerns yourself, you would abide by the Gospel and govern yourself according to Christ's word, gladly turning the other cheek and letting the mantle go with the coat, when the matter concerned you and your cause. In this way, then, things are well balanced, and you satisfy at the same time God's kingdom inwardly and the kingdom of the world outwardly, at the same time suffer evil and injustice and yet punish evil and injustice, at the same time do not resist evil and yet resist it.

The logic of suffering evil and injustice on the one hand while at the same time punishing evil and injustice sounds clever, but is completely flawed unless the Christian desires to live in both the Old and New Covenant at the same time and believe God wills it. The first of many problems that arises with this dualism is that Christ never conducted Himself in the manner Luther describes. But notice the justification Luther offers shortly after in his treatise in regard to considering the Old Testament:

> In this way all the saints wielded the sword from the beginning of the world: Adam and his descendants; **Abraham when he rescued Lot, his brother's son, and smote the four kings, though he was a thoroughly evangelical man; Samuel, the holy prophet, slew King Agag, and Elijah the prophets of Baal. So did Moses, Joshua, the children of Israel, Samson, David, and all the kings and princes in the Old Testament.** In the same way did Daniel and his associates, Ananias, Azarias and Misael, in Babylon; in the same manner did Joseph in Egypt, and so on.

> Should any one advance the argument, that the Old Testament is abolished and avails no more, and that therefore such examples cannot be set before Christians, I answer, That is not correct. For St. Paul says in I Corinthians 10, "They did all eat the same spiritual meat as we, and did drink the same spiritual drink from the rock, which is Christ"; that is, they have had the same spirit and faith in Christ as we and were Christians as well as we are. **Therefore, wherein they did right, all Christians do right, from the beginning of the world unto the end.**

Luther takes the Old Testament stories relating to the sword and brings them directly into the New Testament for Christians, serving in a worldly government, must do.

Repeatedly we have explained Israel's use of the sword as a lack of faith on their part to trust God to drive out the inhabitants of the land for His people. And while Luther takes the sword from the Old Testament, he denies bringing in the Sabbath or the festivals given in that era. Regretfully he takes the bad and leaves the good. The apostle James, to which Luther referred to as a gospel of straw, tells us:

> A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. James 1:8

By saying that a Christian must refrain from the sword in his personal life but wield the sword in his public life, demolishes the teachings of Christ in any practical sense. To present the conquest of Canaan by Joshua as being of equal validity as the teachings of Jesus destroys Christ's witness to the Character of God. It is true that God has a left and a right hand, but they do not represent oppositional principles as Luther asserts. God is not divided nor schizophrenic for the Lord our God is One Lord. Sweet and bitter water do not issue from His fountain and our Father is not a mixture of light and darkness but light only. (1 John 1:5).

To Luther's credit, he wrote three years later in his treatise *Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved*, he argues that soldiers must refuse to fight for kings who are engaged in unjust wars that are not for the protection of the society. Luther argued that while it is a citizen's duty to obey

secular rulers, it is no one's duty to commit a sin. Slaughtering neighbors in a war of pure aggression, greed, or vanity is murder. If a king commands a soldier to murder, the soldier must refuse the order.[23]

But as to Luther's Neo-platonic framework I would respond with the principles of the Divine Pattern which I have detailed in a number of places in other books which teaches us that the invisible is expanded into the visible. God's kingdom is not one of oppositional principles fused together but is an internal principle openly manifested and expressed. The very person of Jesus Christ reveals this for He is the express visible image of the invisible God. But this principle only follows in the teaching that Christ is actually the begotten Son.

For those who believe in the Trinity doctrine, as Luther did, where the Son of God is presented as a co-equal, then the mind is forced to entertain the principles of dualism where two persons (three in actuality) are in fact One being. The two ideas cannot find logical harmony in the mind, but once accepted, it can rapidly spread to any area it is needed to resolve conflicts of the mind without yielding up invested power structures outside of God's kingdom.

To digress slightly, we see the same dualism in Luther's expression of the atonement.

> Being the unspotted Lamb of God, Christ was personally innocent. But because He took the sins of the world His sinlessness was defiled with the sinfulness of the world. Whatever sins I, you, all of us have committed or shall commit, they are to be Christ's sins or we shall perish forever… Our merciful Father in heaven… therefore sent His only Son into the world and said to Him: "You are now Peter, the liar; Paul, the persecutor; David, the adulterer; Adam, the disobedient; the thief on the cross, You, My Son, must pay the world's iniquity." The law growls: "All right. If Your Son is taking

23 https://wp.cune.edu/matthewphillips/2016/05/17/dr-luther-on-the-soldiers-obedience-and-just-war

> the sins of the world, I see no sins anywhere else but in Him. He shall die on the Cross." **And the law kills Christ. But we go free.**[24]

God is presented through the personification of the law, as the one who killed Christ as an act of love towards us. This is directly parallel to Luther's expression that a Christian must serve in the government and kill the unrighteous in love to God and man.

I make these points for the express purpose of showing the reader that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and the Atonement are the underpinning apparatus of Catholic and Protestant doctrine relating to war. It must be seen that the sacrifice of an enemy soldier is at the same time a step towards the temporal salvation of God's perceived righteous ones, and therefore an extension of the doctrine of Caiaphas that it is expedient that one man die that the whole nation doesn't perish. Every soldier that dies in battle either for or against a Christian led nation, is a re-enactment of the Cross, and indeed it must be, for Christ feels all their suffering in death and is pierced by their sorrow and carries it in Himself.

William Tyndale faced similar pressures to Luther, concerning the charge that new Protestant ideas were fuelling social rebellion. He built upon Luther's two kingdom theology and introduced the foundations for the development of the divine right of kings in his 1528 book called the Obedience of the Christian Man.

At the heart of the book is Tyndale's passionate defense of vernacular Scripture. He argues that the Catholic hierarchy intentionally keeps the Bible in Latin to maintain absolute control over the populace and shield their own corruptions from public scrutiny. Tyndale insists that every Christian must have direct access to the Bible in their native tongue. By reading God's word directly, individuals can experience justification by

[24] Martin Luther, *Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*

faith alone and learn their moral duties without the corrupting influence of papal laws and traditions.[25]

Politically, Tyndale outlines a strict hierarchy of obedience based on Biblical commands. He instructs wives to submit to husbands, children to parents, servants to masters, and—most importantly—subjects to their kings. Tyndale introduces a concept that would lay the groundwork for the "divine right of kings," arguing that secular rulers are appointed directly by God and are accountable *only* to God, not to the Pope. He demands that even bad or tyrannical rulers must be obeyed passively, as God uses them to discipline sinful nations; open rebellion is strictly forbidden, as it usurps God's role as the ultimate judge.[26]

There is an alluring argument that both Tyndale and Luther make on this point as to why a Christian must be willing to suffer under an unjust leader. They both insisted that when a tyrant rules unjustly, they argue that the ruler functions as a "scourge" or a rod of discipline sent by God to punish a sinful nation or to test the faith of the godly. To violently rebel against that tyrant is to rebel against God's own disciplinary hand. Instead, the Reformers argue that the Holy Spirit works within a believer to look at the suffering of Christ as the ultimate blueprint. Just as Christ possessed the divine power to destroy His captors but willingly submitted to an unjust execution out of obedience to the Father, the Christian is called to submit to tyrannical authorities, trusting that God will bring ultimate justice.[27]

Tyndale's political stance in the book Obedience of the Christian Man, had massive historical ramifications. A copy of the book was famously given to King Henry VIII by Anne Boleyn. Henry reportedly delighted in Tyndale's arguments, famously declaring, *"This book is for me and all*

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25. https://banneroftruth.org/us/resources/articles/2003/william-tyndale-and-the-obedience-of-a-christian-man
26. tyndale.org/the-obedience-of-a-christian-man
27 https://americanmind.org/features/what-is-christian-nationalism/taking-christian-nationalism-seriously/

kings to read." The assertion that the monarchy held supreme authority over both the state and the local church provided Henry with the perfect theological justification to eventually break away from Rome and establish the Church of England.[28]

Tyndale argues that every Christian simultaneously occupies two distinct identities, each governed by different rules:

- The Private Person (The Regiment of Christ): As individuals, neighbors, and spiritual brothers, Christians are governed by the law of love and Christ's commands in the Sermon on the Mount. In their personal lives, if a Christian is insulted, defrauded, or struck, they must completely forgo personal retaliation, "turn the other cheek," and leave all vengeance to God. Private revenge is strictly forbidden.[29]
- The Public Person (The Secular Regiment): When a Christian holds a public office—such as a magistrate, a judge, or a soldier fighting for the king—they are no longer acting as a private individual. They are acting as a "mask of God" and an instrument of the state's justice.[30]

Tyndale explains that when a Christian wields the sword in an official capacity, they are not acting out of personal malice or seeking private revenge. Instead, they are fulfilling a divinely appointed duty to punish evil, protect the innocent, and maintain order. Therefore, a Christian can—and should—lawfully execute criminals or go to war at the king's command, because the "sword" belongs to God's secular authority, not to the individual.

By drawing this sharp line between private virtue (mercy and non-resistance) and public duty (justice and the sword), Tyndale

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28. https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/historical-journal/article/abs/william-tyndale-henry-viii-and-the-obedience-of-a-christian-man
29. https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1010
30 https://digitalcommons.luthersem.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1287

successfully defended Protestants against the charge of being anarchists, assuring Henry VIII that a devout Bible-reader would make the most loyal soldier and servant in the kingdom. [31]

It would be extremely unwise to judge Luther and Tyndale from our present standpoint. The amount of good done by these two men in bringing humanity out of the darkness of abusive medieval Catholicism cannot be fully estimated.

We must also consider the pressures they were facing from the governments they lived under that questioned as to whether their teachings were an attempt to overthrow their kingdoms and the emergence of radicals like Thomas Müntzer who commanded it as duty to slay and destroy all leadership and authority not under their control.

But we must compare the teachings of all men against the Scriptures. And it is for the very reason that Luther and Tyndale have had so much influence on our current world that we must think upon the things they have written which conflict with the gentle character of Christ, and His revelation of our Father as one who does not destroy.

If Joshua could know the influence his conquest of Canaan would have on medieval Europe how differently things might have unfolded, and this gives us pause for thought as to how much we consider our actions affect future generations?

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31. https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1010

CHAPTER 18

18. AS LITTLE CHILDREN

This book's scope does not allow us to investigate further the sad unfolding of events and how Luther, under immense pressure, grouped all Anabaptists into one category. The pacifists were considered to be of the same stock as the violent ones, and once again the true principles of Christ's kingdom were wrapped up in a false framework; the truth was made to serve error and used to keep alive the principles of sacrifice, violence and war in the human heart. Christ was forced to carry His cross another 500 years beyond what was necessary.

The Great Controversy playing out in the human theatre can't end until the true character of God is both understood and demonstrated by the 144,000 described in Revelation.

> And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. Revelation 14:1

The Father's name is His character, which Christ revealed to us when He came to earth.

> And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. "**I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world.** They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word." John 17:5-6

The entire principle of eternal life is anchored in a character that does not use violent force to take the life of another. As long as we continue to worship a God in the manner Joshua and the Israelites did, the more certain it will be that we will continue the cycle of war, violence, and death. Until a generation of God's people takes hold of the truth of God's non-violent character and allows Christ to demonstrate it in them, the world will never be brought to a final decision as to whether they will worship God's character or Satan's.

In this context it is vital for us to be able to read the book of Joshua, not as a vindication of the Jewish people in the destruction of their enemies, but as the longsuffering of God towards His people for the sake of the promises made to Abraham. Our Heavenly Father was required to wade through torrents of blood in order to keep alive in the hearts of His children the promise of a Messiah who would save them from their sins.

Jesus told us plainly:

> Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18:2,3 .

Little children have no concept of the violence of war. They are absorbed in the affections of their parents who provide a loving environment for them to grow and flourish.

It should be evident to us in light of all we have considered that to be in the kingdom of heaven, is to enter into the bosom of our gentle Father through His Son and study war no more.

Will you decide to enter this beautiful kingdom of light and peace? Will you leave behind the principles of war that have plagued our race for the past 6000 years?

Jesus invites you to receive the kingdom of heaven and dwell with Him and His Father forever.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

In Ridley Scott's 2005 film called the Kingdom of Heaven, the crusader hero of the story, Balian of Ibelin, is engulfed in violence in his defense of the city of Jerusalem. Such portrayals reveal how far removed from Christ's kingdom is the understanding of men. The great pivot point of this misunderstanding is how we understand the conquest of Canaan by Joshua and the Israelites. How do the words of Jesus "My kingdom is not of this world, if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight" harmonise with Joshua's violent slaughter of men, women, and children on such a large scale? As we look into the character of God in the book of Joshua, what do we see? Do we see Jesus and His gentle, loving, healing ministry or do we see a God who advances the interests of His people by the slaughter of the infants of His enemies?

This book challenges Millennia of understanding in pursuit of the God of Jesus whose kingdom was not of this world, but of the peaceful world to come.