

Revelation 9:13–21

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[0:00] chapter 10, verses 1 through 28, and that can be found on page 176 of your Pew Bible. Again, we're in chapter 10 of Joshua, verses 1 through 28, and that's on page 176 of your Pew Bible.

Please stand for the reading of God's Word. As soon as Adonai Zedek, king of Jerusalem, heard now how Joshua had captured Ai and had devoted it to destruction, doing to Ai and its king as he had done to Jericho and its king, and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them, he feared greatly because Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities, because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were warriors.

So Adonai Zedek, king of Jerusalem, sent to Hoham, king of Hebron, and Param, king of Jarmuth, to Japhia, king of Lachish, and to Bir, king of Eglon, saying, Come up to me and help me, and let us strike down Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and with the people of Israel.

Then the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered their forces and went up with all their armies and encamped against Gibeon and made war against it.

And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp of Gilgal, saying, Do not relax your hand from your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell on the hill country are gathered against us.

[1:53] So Joshua went up from Gilgal, and he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor. And the Lord said to Joshua, Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands.

Not a man of them shall stand before you. So Joshua came upon them suddenly, having marched up all night from Gilgal, and the Lord threw them into a panic before Israel, who struck them down with a great blow at Gibeon, and chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth-haran, and struck them as far as Asakah and Machedah.

As they fled before Israel, while they were going the ascent of Beth-haran, the Lord threw down large stones from heaven on them as far as Asakah, and they died.

There were more who died because of the hailstones than the sons of Israel killed with the sword. At that time, Joshua spoke to the Lord, and the day when the Lord gave the Amorites over to the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand still at Gibeon, and moon in the valley of Ahilan.

And the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation took vengeance on their enemies. Is this not written in the book of Jazar? And the sun stopped in the midst of heaven, and did not hurry to set for about a whole day.

[3:22] There has been no day like it before or since, when the Lord obeyed the voice of a man. For the Lord fought for Israel, so Joshua was returned, and all Israel with him to the camp at Gilgal.

These five kings fled and hid themselves in the cave at Machedah, and was told to Joshua, The five kings have been found hidden in the cave at Machedah. And Joshua said, Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and set men by it, and guard them.

But do not stay there yourselves. Pursue your enemies. Attack their rear guard. Do not let them enter their cities. For the Lord your God has given them into your hand. When Joshua and the sons of Israel had finished striking them with a great blow, until they were wiped out, and when the remnant that remained of them had entered into the fortified cities, then all the people returned safe to Joshua in the camp of Machedah.

Not a man moved his tongue against any of the people of Israel. Then Joshua said, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings out to me from the cave.

And they did so, and brought those five kings out 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.

[4 : 44] And when they brought those kings out to Joshua, Joshua summoned all the men of Israel, and said to the chiefs of the men of war who had gone with him, Come near. Put your feet on the necks of these kings.

And they came near, and put their feet on the necks. And Joshua said to them, Do not be afraid or dismayed. Be strong and courageous, for the Lord will do to all your enemies against whom you fight.

And afterward Joshua struck them, and put them to death, and hanged them on five trees. And they hung on the trees until evening. But at the time of the going down of the sun, Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees, and threw them into the cave, where they had hidden themselves.

And they set large stones against the mouth of the cave, which remained to this very day. As for Machedah, Joshua captured it on the day he struck it.

And its king with the edge of the sword. He devoted it to destruction, every person in it. He left none remaining, and he did to the king of Machedah, just as he had done to the king of Jericho.

[5 : 56] This is the word of the Lord. Thank you, Jesus. I began thinking that when we draw near to church, we are used to the preacher expounding the Bible, but we don't often do much to explain to you how to read the Bible.

And reading the Bible, and understanding the Bible, and applying the Bible, is not simple, and not such an easy task.

Especially if you are here today, and you are only recently familiar with the Bible. And I suppose that the degree of difficulty in reading it, and understanding it, and applying it, somehow accounts for the reductionistic way in which we often come to it.

Take our own text. What do you do with a reading like this? Well, it wouldn't take much to reduce it to some moral lesson to be learned.

So that when you left today, you might remember it. Let me give you an example. It would take a preacher three minutes to figure this out in his study. The Gibeonites, of course, which are the centerpiece of chapters 9 and 10, are in a pinch.

[7 : 41] And what do they do when they're in a pinch? Well, they pray. What happens when they pray? Well, God protects them.

As you go from these doors, you inevitably will find yourself in a pinch. Pray. You will be protected.

Well, those things might be true, but it's a rather reductionistic way of treating the biblical text. Let me give you another example of the difficulty in reading it and understanding it and applying it.

Just as you can make a mere moral lessons of the Bible, you can also turn the Bible into a document that from it emerged principles for practical living.

And this text wouldn't be hard to do that either. Let me give you an example. God stopped the sun for Joshua in order that he might have success in all his ways.

[8 : 51] So too, God will stop anything for you to grant you success. Now, smile though you may, these are really the two most prominent ways of approaching the Bible today, and particularly the Old Testament.

But when we do so, we reduce the reading of the Bible for you in your home and the preaching of the Bible when we hear it expounded at church to nothing more than something akin to Aesop's fables or to a how-to guide for self-advancement or successful living.

The Bible is so much more. There is, of course, a better way to read the Bible, and I want to spend a couple of minutes showing it to you since the Old Testament is most often so difficult.

Jesus Himself gave us a better way of reading texts like this. Luke, chapter 24, verses 25 to 27, when He finds Himself on the road to Emmaus trying to engage in conversation with these two that are walking along the way, says to them, verse 25, O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?

And, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Turn across the column, Luke 24, verses 44 to 47, and He said to them, These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about Me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.

[10 : 58] Then, He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. See, this is what it is. You don't just read the Scriptures. We need to understand the Scriptures. And He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures.

And He said to them, Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem.

So He spoke about the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms. and He gave us a better way of reading the Bible. Namely this, that in the Old Testament we are seeing in picture form through the history of Israel God's promises coming to fruition in bringing a Savior into the world.

Put simply, Jesus is the end. the climax of all that we are reading even in Joshua 9 and 10.

Pictures of redemption. Now, reading the Bible then and understanding the Bible and applying the Bible through this lens helps us.

[12 : 24] Think of last week in the wonderful message which we heard from Joshua 9. The Gibeonites. What does this have to do with the coming of Christ?

Well, what was the question the Gibeonites were asking at the opening part of the chapter? Namely this, is there any hope for us?

Is there any hope hope for someone who was born outside of the promises of God? Indeed, from what we have heard concerning the Word of God, we are born or marked for judgment.

In fact, they were to be expelled and destroyed. Is there hope for anyone born outside the promises of God?

And the answer that we saw last week, yes! There is hope through the making of a covenant that places you under the mercy of God and His protection.

[13 : 36] And what we saw in the Gibeonite redemption in Israel's history is played out on the scale of the world in Christ.

Is there any hope for you? Is there any hope for me? Those who were born in sin under God's wrath, under God's judgment according to His Word. The answer?

Yes! Through the making of a better covenant. The new covenant which is so far superior to the old covenant. for in the Gibeonite redemption we saw it was it was conjured up in their own deception that it was carried forward through Joshua's ignorance but nevertheless it held.

But in Christ you enter into a covenant that is by divine plan and through the mercy of the sending of His own Son this is the way we read the Bible.

Joshua 9 Any hope? For those marked out for judgment? Yes. Through the making of a covenant fulfilled in the person of Christ you will be delivered from death.

[15 : 05] Well that brings us to Joshua 10. How are we to read this chapter? How are we to understand this chapter? How are we to apply this chapter?

What should we be expecting to find from this chapter? Well what is the question really? The question crying out in this chapter is will there be any help for those who have now aligned themselves with God and His promises and His covenant?

They put their hope in Him but will they receive ongoing help from Him in life? In other words we read the Bible through these two lenses one they are pictures of the redemptive plan promised of old but fulfilled in Christ and two they provide a pattern for the redeemed a picture of redemption Joshua 9 a pattern for the life of the redeemed Joshua 10 the gospel in Joshua 9 what it means for God's people going on from that point Joshua 10 and so we arrive at our text and we are not merely ready to expound it we are trying as a congregation to learn how to read it and to read it well and understand it and this too this idea that we are to read these Old

Testament passages as somehow as if they are a pattern for us as God's people has been manifested in the scriptures Romans 15 4 for whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction that through endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope whatever was written is for our instruction this is why Peter in his first letter in verses chapter 1 verses 10 to 12 actually says that the prophets realized they were serving a coming generation namely you in these pews today and they were longing to know when the things they were writing about would be fulfilled to the service of your faith think of what Paul says in first Corinthians 10 and verse 6 now these things things of the Old

Testament took place as examples for us a pattern for us or what he says in the same chapter verse 11 now these things happened to them as an example but they were written down for our instruction on whom the end of the ages has come so when we come to Joshua chapter 10 we don't need to merely look for some moral lesson to go home with or some principle of self-advancement to latch ourselves on to we are reading the word of God and we are understanding that in this chapter we have a pattern for the life of the redeemed is there help for you who are overwhelmed in need this chapter puts forward an answer and the answer is yes there is help ongoing help all through your life if you have put your hope in Christ and his promise for salvation let me put it to you three different ways from this chapter there is help is really the theme of this text supports it take a look at chapter 10 and verse 14 this wonderful summation of this event on this day there has been no day like it before or since when the

[19:40] Lord obeyed the voice of a man here is the phrase for the Lord fought for Israel that is the theme is there help yes why in what because the Lord will fight for his own that theme is carried all the way over to the end of chapter 10 even beyond what was the reading of our text today look at verse 42 and Joshua captured all these kings in their land at one time because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel is there help for you in your need this day and this week yes for the Lord will fight for you that's certainly the theme you can see the Lord's activity and his initiative and his work on your behalf in chapter 10 and verse 10 and 11 and 25 and 30 and 32 it's so often stated as the theme we don't need to spend any more time in it is there help for you today yes the Lord will fight for you the theme supports it the structure reaffirms it now this is a fascinating thing about

Joshua if you read through it it's not an easy book to get a handle sometimes on its structure but I think this chapter 10 the structure is actually meant to reinforce the notion that help comes from the Lord I don't know if you like watching the news I particularly like watching news around the political seasons I like all the commentary I like the big breaking stories I've noticed something whether it be the news at 9 or 10 or watching nightline newscasters have a way of structuring their story in ways that reinforce the main idea let me give you an example often a big news story will go like this you will be sitting at home the newscaster will appear on the screen they will give you the summary of the main event and they will tell you we are going out into the field to speak to three reporters who have been covering this event all day long and from their own vantage point and so first we're going to go to so and so and the screen breaks and you hear the story a part of the story from their vantage point supporting all the while the summary comes back to the main anchor person and now we go to so and so who's over at such and such a place and they give you another part of the story and then there's a third person that somehow has been embedded in the story and they tell you from their vantage point what it was like and then you come back to the main anchor and they reestablish it structurally that's the way news works structurally reinforcing the main idea so too in Joshua 10 it is almost like it's almost like nightline borrows from the

Bible and how they structure their stories let me show you first of all we have the situation of the day the great need of the Gibeonites and their appeal for help and you're wondering what's going to happen break to the anchor there he is speaking for you in verses 7 through 10 this is the summary of the day so Joshua went up from Gilgal he and all the people of war with him and the mighty men of valor and the Lord said to Joshua do not fear them for I have given them into your hands not a man of them shall stand before you so Joshua came upon them suddenly he marched up all night from Gilgal and the Lord threw them into a panic before Israel who struck them with a great blow at Gibeon and chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon and struck them as far as Azekah and Machedah that's a summary of the whole day and then he takes you into the field reporter number one what have you seen

I saw the soldiers of the enemy fleeing and they ran in verses 11 through 15 and I saw the hand of the Lord throwing down hail from heaven and I saw this great command for the sun to stand still and the moon to likewise stay in its place and I saw vengeance taken out on the armies of the enemy is there help for the Gibeonites who have put their hope in the promises of God yes says the summary and it's reinforced through the reporter's lens of the soldiers in flight well let's go in the field to so and so what have you seen today well I've been stationed here at the cave of Machedah indeed the five kings all found their way here and from verses 16 through 27 we hear the report not of the whole day over again but of that day as it relates to the five kings and their capture and their death is there hope help for those who have put their hope in God yes for God himself will overthrow not only the soldiers but the rulers themselves he will put his foot on their neck think of

Psalm 110 where God says to his own future anointed king the day will come when I will make your enemies your footstool and in Christ God has given all authority and all rulers are now subjected to him although we do not yet see it as such because you are yet living out the pattern in your own life of the Gibeonites and you are in need of help but the day will come when he will vanquish the foe all rulers all enemies death being the last ruler of them all is there help for you yes amidst all your opposing forces they will one day fall even their rulers then he takes you the remaining part in verses 29 to the end with a third reporter who's been embedded on this advance of the armies that have gone into all the towns save Jerusalem of those who came to fight against Israel and the

[27:14] Lord strikes down all the cities so that you come to the end of the text and there's a reaffirmation of it summary is there help the summary says yes soldiers have been in flight rulers have been overthrown cities have been sacked you go to bed at night comforted having read the news worthy events of Joshua 10 and applied them to your life by way of a pattern for indeed they have been written for your instruction the theme supports it the structure reaffirms it the particular aspects all uphold it I want to spend a few moments a few moments that remain in just these opening verses so that you can see some of the particulars of this event and how it applies to your life once you and I know some of you it's been a very short time where you've begun following

Christ you need to know this once you have put your hope in Christ help will come but you need to know the implication is you're going to need help what put my hope in Christ and still need help yes what happens to the Gibeonites as soon as they put their hope in God's promises and are delivered from death chapter 10 verses 1 to 5 they are opposed all who put their hope in God will be opposed they're opposed by five rulers the kings of the Amorites they're gathering they're making war against them now you're not going to have any king or earthly ruler come down on you probably in fact the New Testament says that you your pattern for living in distinction from the Gibeonites you're not going to fight against flesh and blood no you're going to fight against principalities and powers of darkness but all who put their hope in

Christ for salvation will need help because war has you why because you for the first time in your life have made an alliance with the living God and all hell will break loose the patterns here it's been clear it was the way even of our savior wasn't it think of first Peter 4 4 he says now paraphrasing now that you have taken up with the Lord don't be surprised don't be surprised at the fiery ordeal going on in your life no don't they will be surprised that you are no longer living as a non Christian and they will malign you they will attack you you will need the help of the living God you will be opposed the particulars show that to be the case not only that you will feel overwhelmed verses six and following the men of

Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp in Gilgal saying do not relax your hand from your servants come up to us quickly save us and help us they're overwhelmed I love the balance here the mirroring image of the king of Jerusalem and his action in the world and the Gibeonites who are overwhelmed and their request of Joshua look at the king in verse three he sent to these kings and he says come up to me verse four and help me so that we can strike them the Gibeonites sent to Joshua and said come up quickly save us help us for all the kings of the Ammonites have gathered against us you will be opposed you will be overwhelmed and that is when you begin to pray that is the pattern for the redeemed in this room who are wondering

God's direction in their life life is falling apart it is fraying at the edges it is no longer month to month it is day to day Joshua come up quickly save me help me for the world is gathered against me have you done that have you demonstrated the pattern of prayer that seeks the Lord to deliver you and to set you back in your right way the third particular although we don't have much time for it not only will you be opposed not only will you feel overwhelmed and therefore learn your need of prayer but you will be helped by the outstretched arm of the

[33:05] Lord read the chapter again when you get home this evening and see how many times the Lord intervenes on behalf of the Gibeonites who have made their life with God the Lord threw them into a panic the Lord threw down large stones the Lord obeyed the voice of a man for the Lord fought for Israel in this instance he performed a miracle he suspends the very laws of nature that those who have made an alliance with him might receive help well I don't pretend to know what your needs are today but I want you to know how to begin reading the Bible understanding the

Bible and applying the Bible through the lens that Christ has given us herein we have a picture of redemption the gospel hope and a pattern for the redeemed God's people seek his face call upon his name and he will deliver you let's pray our heavenly father we commit our way to you so many in this auditorium itself needing your hand your outstretched hand to intervene and so we commit ourselves to you and thank you for your word in Christ's name amen let's stand together Ž Ž

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