

# Sermon Outline

## “AND THE LORD GAVE THEM REST”: A CHRISTIAN READING OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

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### GROWING OPPOSITION (JOSHUA 10:1-5)

#### I. Introduction

#### II. The Gibeonites Have Joined the People of God

- A. The Gibeonites have joined themselves to the Church of the Lord.
  - 1. The Gibeonites came into a treaty with Israel by a lie.
  - 2. Since Israel had made a promise to them, the Gibeonites are now protected by Israel (Josh 9:26, 27).
  - 3. The Gibeonites do end up becoming faithful allies to Israel.
  - 4. Because of the work of the Lord Jesus, the Gibeonites and all other Gentiles may now become full-fledged members of his holy Church (Eph 3:6).
- B. For now, God has set Israel apart from the nations of the world.
- C. By allying with Israel, the Gibeonites have become the enemies of their Canaanite cousins.

**\*Question for reflection:** (1) What did we see the Gibeonites do in chapter 9? (2) How has the Gibeonites relationship to the other Canaanite nations changed?

#### III. The King of Jerusalem Fears Greatly (Joshua 10:1, 2)

- A. Our attention is turned to an enemy king, Adoni-zedek of Jerusalem (10:1).
- B. A few points:
  - 1. *Adoni-zedek* is means, ironically, “the lord is righteousness.”
    - a. This goes to show that just because someone has an Israelite or Christian sounding name does not make him truly Israelite or Christian at all.
    - b. Adoni-zedek was a Canaanite (or Amorite) king and under the judgment of God.
  - 2. Adoni-zedek is the king of Jerusalem, which was at this time a Canaanite (or more precisely, Amorite) city.  
—Only when Israel captures the city does it become the holy city of the Lord.

- C. What was it that caused Adoni-zedek to fear?
1. Adoni-zedek had heard of “how Joshua had captured Ai and had devoted it to destruction.”
  2. He had also heard of “how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them.”
  3. But the main reason Scripture cites is this: “because Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were warriors” (v 2).
- D. We understand the Gibeonites more fully now.
1. The Gibeonites were actually a warrior culture.
  2. The fact that the Gibeonites, a warrior people, were so willing to lay down their swords without a fight goes to show that they took the Lord very seriously!
  3. They knew that they could never stand up to the power of the Lord God of Israel.
  4. By surrendering so quickly, it seems that the Gibeonites were truly in fear of the Lord.
- E. The fact that the Gibeonites were warriors makes their alliance with Israel such a threat to the other Canaanite cities around.
1. The Gibeonites could very well fight on the side of the Israelites!
  2. Adoni-zedek is afraid because there is now a potential of an Israelite-Gibeonite alliance that would threaten the other nations in the land.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) Who is Adoni-zedek? (2) What had Adoni-zedek heard? (3) What made Adoni-zedek afraid? (4) How does the Gibeonite warrior culture affect our view of their surrender to Israel?

#### **IV. Adoni-zedek Forms a Confederation (Joshua 10:3, 4)**

- A. Adoni-zedek forms a military alliance (10:3).
1. He sent to...
    - a. Hoham king of Hebron
    - b. Piram king of Jarmuth
    - c. Japhia king of Lachish
    - d. Debir king of Eglon
  2. His request: “Come up to me and help me, and let us strike Gibeon. For it has made peace with Joshua and with the people of Israel.”
- B. The arrival of God’s prophet and God’s people has brought about a division within the civilizations of Canaan.  
—Since the Gibeonites have become friends with Joshua and Israel, they are no longer considered family.
- C. We see this theme in the words of our Lord Jesus:

<sup>34</sup>Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup>For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. <sup>36</sup>And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. <sup>37</sup>Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. <sup>38</sup>And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. (Mt 10:34-38)

1. The Lord Jesus is not counselling believers to disobey the Fifth Commandment.
  2. But he was teaching us that our earthly relationships, important as they may be, can never be greater than our allegiance to him.
  3. Our loyalty to the Lord Jesus must control everything that we do, even the relationships that we have.
  4. A result of radical loyalty to Christ may be tension and friction between us and our unbelieving family members and friends.
  5. Yet, it is better to be accepted by God and rejected by family; than to be accepted by family and rejected by God.
- D. That dynamic—being opposed for our allegiance to God—is now playing out here.
1. The Gibeonites have befriended Joshua and the Lord God of Israel.
  2. For that, they are now considered enemies by their own countrymen.
- E. If you are not yet a believer in the Lord Jesus, what is keeping you from believing in Jesus today?
1. Our Lord Jesus calls us to receive him as Lord and Savior because he alone is where life, mercy, and glory are to be found.
  2. Outside of Christ, there can be no salvation and no mercy.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) Who are the kings Adoni-zedek forms an alliance with? (2) What does the Lord Jesus teach us in Mt 10:34-38? (3) How does Mt 10:34-38 relate to what we are now seeing in Joshua 10? (4) What is keeping you from believing in the Lord Jesus?

## V. The War on Gibeon (Joshua 10:5)

- A. The five Amorite kings—Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon—move against Gibeon.
- B. Like the Gibeonites, the Amorites were descendants of Canaan, which would make them a cousin race to the Gibeonites.
- C. But in the eyes of the Amorites, the Gibeonites no longer belong.—They are now the enemy, because they are now the people of the Lord God of Israel.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What do the five kings do in 10:5? (2) How are the Amorites related to the Gibeonites? How has that relationship changed at this point?

## VI. The Opposition will Grow

- A. If we are loved by God and cherished by the Lord Jesus Christ, we can expect opposition from the spiritual world rulers, the world, and our own sinful nature.
- B. First, *the evil of the spiritual world rulers*.
1. The prevailing belief in the secular world is that all evil is either engineered or imagined by man—“We create our own demons.”
  2. The truth here is that people need to take responsibility for their own evils.
  3. But sometimes, Christians minimize the influence of the demonic not because of Scripture, but because they have become used to secularist thinking—and don’t even know it!
  4. While Scripture calls on people to take responsibility for their actions; Scripture also teaches the real influence of intelligent, personified evil—Satan and demons.
    - a. Two key passages:
      - i. First Peter 5:8: “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”
      - ii. Ephesians 6:12: “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”
    - b. Satan exercises his power by means of the other demonic powers—cosmic world powers—that serve him.
  5. The devil and his demons do encourage evil and sin in the world.
    - a. Through temptations and false teachings (1 Tim 4:1), they seek to influence the human race according to their designs.
    - b. The ultimate satanic design is always to steer people away from God, his Law, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
    - c. When we become believers in Christ, and seek to grow in love and obedience to our heavenly Father, we can be sure that they will seek to oppose us.
- C. The demonic world powers oppose us by using the *World*—the sinful, unbelieving human culture around us—to lure the Church away from Christ.
1. Our Lord taught us in John 15:18, 19: “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the

- world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”
2. The Lord was preparing his people for the trials that are to come—believers can expect opposition, we might even say *growing* opposition, because we are no longer part of the world, but of Christ. And that is exactly what we see happening to the Gibeonites in Joshua 10.
- D. How exactly does the World oppose us?
1. Two major ways:
    - a. The World opposes through persecution.
    - b. The Word opposes through appeal and seduction.
  2. Sometimes, the World opposes through persecution.
    - a. We see this very clearly in Joshua 10, when the Amorite nations gathered together to crush Gibeon.
    - b. We see this today in places where the Church undergoes persecution.
- E. How does the World attempt to appeal to us?
1. In at least two ways.
    - a. The world appeals to *our sense of perceived lack or need*.
      - i. It tries to tell us about what we lack and then proceeds to sell us its products—not that dissimilar from how advertising works!
      - ii. Of course, it is not necessarily wrong to seek to improve your life.
      - iii. The danger is more evident when we look at the cumulative effect of the appeals of the world.  
—Better yet: The danger becomes more apparent when we see the kind of *lifestyles* and *worldviews* that the world is selling to us.
      - iv. When the world tells us that we can only be truly happy, truly fulfilled if we had such and such, we have to be very careful, because this is where we may be hearing the whispers of the world powers.
      - v. When Christians see their own value as persons dependent on education, technology, and wealth instead of the grace of God, we are in trouble.  
—We may be buying into the lies of the world powers, allowing ourselves to be conformed to the world.
    - b. The World appeals to *our innate sinful desire for self-rule, autonomy from God*.
      - i. An example from sci-fi: *The War of the Worlds* (2005).
      - ii. The world powers would not have much ability to influence us *unless* there was something buried deep in us that they can already work with—our desire for self-rule.
      - iii. The moment we put our faith in Christ...  
(A) God declares us righteous.

- (B) God places his Holy Spirit in our hearts, so beginning the transformation of our lives.
- iv. But the ancient, deeply-rooted desire for self-rule will not be entirely erased until we come into the presence of God.
- v. Thus, we would continue to struggle daily to bring ourselves into subjection to God.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) Who are the enemies of the Church? (2) How does Satan and his powers oppose the Church? (3) How does the World seek to appeal to the Church? (4) In what ways do you see the World appealing to you, your family, your children, your colleagues?

## VII. Submit to God

How do we deal with the growing opposition of the rival forces?

- A. James 4:7, 8: “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”
  - 1. We need to choose the will of God.
  - 2. We need to choose the Word of God.
  - 3. We need to choose to trust in God.
  - 4. We need to draw near to God our Abba Father.
  - 5. Only then, will the devil flee from us.
- B. Romans 12:2: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”
  - 1. God requires us to transform our thinking by becoming more and more immersed in Scripture.
  - 2. As we allow Scripture to form our beliefs, our values, then our desires, we begin to develop a taste for “what is good and acceptable and perfect.”
  - 3. The only way we would be able to know the will of God in various situations is by allowing Scripture to form us.

*Do you hunger for the Word of God—or does it no longer affect you that the Word of God is the single, most important treasure in this life?*

*Do you allow the Word of God to rule in your heart?*

*Do you love the Word of God?*

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) How do we deal with the opposition of the rival forces? (2) What does James 4:7, 8 teach us about how to resist the devil? (2) What does Romans 12:2 teach us about how to resist the devil?

### **VIII. The Lord Will Give Us Rest—in Jesus Christ**

- A. While we need to be challenged to holy action, we should not be discouraged by the challenges before us—or our own slowness to change.
- B. But the battle does not ultimately belong to us, but to God (Prov 21:31).
- C. How does Joshua end?  
—“And the LORD gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the LORD had given all their enemies into their hands” (21:44).
- D. The ultimate Israelite to whom God has given perfect rest is the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.
- E. By obeying God perfectly and submitting to God entirely, Christ has defeated the powers of darkness once and for all—and earned rest for us.
- F. Even as we hear the call to resist the evil one, we also hear the call to believe in Christ, to rest in Christ.

**If we are loved by God and cherished by the Lord Jesus Christ, we can expect opposition from the powers of evil. But we must also take comfort and courage in this: In Christ, God gives his beloved people rest on every side. Christ Jesus is our protector, our defender, our security, our sufficiency. Let us take refuge in him.**

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What comfort does Joshua 21:44 give to battle-weary Christians? (2) Who is the perfect Israelite to whom God has given perfect rest? (3) How do we receive a share of the rest that we have in Christ?