

Joshua 10:15-27– Justice: God’s, not Yours!

TSK, HebrewLexicon, Bezuyen, Gill, Poole, Geneva, Trapp, Henry, INT,

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The desire for revenge runs deep and long. Some Muslims use their young people, even young women, to become homicide bombers and target even Jewish children going to school. These Muslims’ goal is to wipe out the Jewish nation because they believe the Jews have taken over land that belonged to them. As well, the desire for revenge, not justice, causes the US to drop bombs from drones, on innocent people, in order to kill those who bombed the World Trade Center. Revenge can take over one’s heart and make man resort to ungodly means. But not so with God! He is just. You will hear today of God’s justice as it is displayed in Joshua.

Our headings are:

The Postponement of Justice

The Performance of Justice

Our goals are:

1. That you will learn to wait, work and pray for God’s justice.

2. That you will wait, work and pray that those who see God’s justice might run and plead for refuge in Jesus Christ.

The Postponement of Justice

1. The armies of the 5 Canaanite nations who attacked Gibeon, with whom Israel had a covenant, were soundly defeated by Joshua. How? God **strengthened the Israelites’ faith** so they were not afraid to go into battle. **God gave them strength to march all day** and night to get to the enemy. **God lengthened the day** so they could complete the destruction with the sword. Then as the 5 nations scattered, God **directly rained down hail and killed** more with his hail than all Israel with their weapons. **While these 5 nations were wicked, Israel showed they were honourable** by keeping the vows they made to the Gibeonites and honoring God’s name among the nations. We pick up with what happened after this sound defeat of those 5 nations.

15 Then **Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.**¹⁶ But these five kings had fled and hidden themselves in a cave at Makkedah. 17 And it was told Joshua, saying, "The five kings have been found hidden in the cave at Makkedah."¹⁸ So Joshua said, "**Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave,** and set men by it to guard them.

2. Joshua returned to base camp at Gilgal, probably exhausted from 2+ days without any sleep and exhausted from war. But Joshua could not stop! Even though he found out that the 5 kings who had attacked Gibeon ran away and were hiding in a cave, he had to keep moving. Not dealing with the wicked kings might have angered his soldiers. They might have wanted to enjoy the victory and execute revenge, but Joshua had to finish the battle. It seems that God wanted to use these kings as **examples of his justice** to the nations and he wanted to use them as **examples of his grace** to his people. The time for that lesson wasn’t ripe yet.

Isn’t this a constant struggle when you see wicked people who butcher Christians...or who take away our freedoms? Don’t you sometimes wonder where God’s justice is when they chop the

heads off of Christian babies? Don't you long for it? Yet, the Lord doesn't want you to get worked up about that. Wait for his timing.

Job 21:30 For the wicked are reserved for the day of doom...

Exodus 9:16 "But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.

3. So instead of judgment on the 5 kings, Joshua ordered the soldiers to roll large stones over the mouth of the cave and imprisoned the 5 wicked kings until he was ready to execute justice. (Temporarily holding accused criminals was a part of God's law.) How humiliating for these formerly arrogant kings. Imagine what their reputation was like later! Everyone would have known that they ran away from battle humiliated. They were leaders from behind!

19 "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."

4. And Joshua ordered his men to continue to fight, with the assurance that God was going to make them win. God would be with them even as they traveled through the valley of the shadow of death. Justice would come at the appointed time. You see, revenge belongs to God. So instead of resting of their laurels of conquering and executing 5 kings, Joshua wanted his soldiers to move on in battle.

While we have made advances in the world with the Gospel, and while we have had a Christian heritage in North America, don't rest in that. To merely defend is to lose. You have to advance the cause of Christ throughout the world by preaching and supporting the preaching of the Word of God.

Notice how Joshua here has no ego. His will was to do the will of his Father. Six days you shall labor, not loiter.

John 9:4 "I must work the works of Him who sent Me **while it is day**; the night is coming when no one can work.

And didn't your Joshua, who came as a servant, say that he came to do the will of his Father?

20 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. 21 And all the people **returned to the camp, to Joshua at Makkedah**, in peace. No one **moved his tongue against** any of the **children of Israel**.

5. Israel, who in faith had obeyed God's call to continue to fight, and who had been assured of victory, then finished-off the enemies with a great slaughter. Upon seeing the great victory of Israel over the nations, no one dared to speak against God's people. God's people did not fear even a dog. This was the work of God. Faith removed fear. Israel knew that God love them (he was willing) and he was the true God (he was able) so he would save them.

Exodus 11:7 `But against **none of the children of Israel shall a dog move its tongue**, against man or beast, that you may know that the LORD does make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.'

Isn't it good that they did not go back to destroy the 5 kings right away? That might have given the escaping enemy time to regroup.

And didn't the delay in justice give these 5 kings time to repent and beg for mercy? What a merciful God!

The Performance of Justice

22 Then Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings to me from the cave." 23 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. 24 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. 25 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."

1. Joshua then brought out the 5 kings who were going to attack the Gibeonites, and he told the military leaders to put their foot on the necks of the 5 wicked kings.

Joshua did this to encourage God's people of their future victories. Joshua was reminding Israel that their victory was from the Lord and that their enemies were weak. This was the same encouragement that God had given to Joshua, and it was like Jesus told his disciples that they too would do greater work than he if they trusted in God.

Psalm 118:9 It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in princes.

Joshua did this to put terror on the Canaanites so they might surrender more readily.

And did not Jesus himself say that demons would be subject to you? Luke 10:17.

And do you not see how this was a picture of the fulfillment of the **Woman's Seed crushing** the head of the serpent?

26 And afterward Joshua **struck them and killed them,** and **hanged them on five trees;** and they were hanging on the trees **until evening.** 27 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.

2. Joshua then executed the 5 kings. These wicked men made no confession of their sins before the Lord even in death. They rejected the possibility of their salvation. **Can you imagine the terror this brought to their wives and children?** Would it not have been good if the relatives repented and served God? This is one of the purposes of execution – to cause those who witness it to think of life beyond death!

Psalm 76:12 **He shall cut off the spirit of princes;** *He is awesome to the kings of the earth.*

Psalm 149:8 To bind their kings with chains, And their nobles with fetters of iron; **9 To execute on them the written judgment--**This honor have all His saints.
Praise the LORD!

Joshua executed these kings under God's direction because these men were wicked and led their nations into trouble. Surely leaders are judged more severely by God. But this was not human revenge. This was justice. Joshua's severe judgment confirmed the power God had given to Israel. It was now their land.

Aren't you too called to capture the world under Christ – your Joshua – and to do so with confidence? Jesus Christ himself is going to rule until all his enemies become his footstool.

This must encourage you and this will put fear into the hearts of the wicked.

Luke 20:42 "Now David himself said in the Book of Psalms: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, 43 Till I **make Your enemies Your footstool.**"

Hebrews 10:12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, 13 from that time **waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.**

Psalm 18:40 You have also **given me the necks of my enemies,** So that I destroyed those who hated me.

Psalm 2:2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, *saying...*⁵ Then **He shall speak to them in His wrath,** And distress them in His deep displeasure: ⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel."

As rulers under Jesus Christ, aren't you too given the same responsibility and assurances?

Romans 16:20 And the God of peace will **crush Satan under your feet shortly.** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

Romans 8:37 Yet in all these things we **are more than conquerors** through Him who loved us.

Deuteronomy 33:29 Happy *are* you, O Israel! Who *is* like you, a people saved by the LORD, The shield of your help And the sword of your majesty! **Your enemies shall submit to you,** And you shall tread down their high places."

Psalm 91:13 You shall **tread upon the lion and the cobra,** The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.

Luke 10:17 Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the **demons are subject to us** in Your name."

3. Joshua then hanged these 5 kings on 5 living trees. Through the hanging of these transgressors the land was purified and Israel was saved to enjoy their inheritance from Abraham.

Wasn't this pointing to the Savior as well? Did he have to be cursed and hanged on a "green" tree to purify you?

4. Joshua then removed the 5 bodies at sundown, according to God's law. He did not leave their bodies up on the tree overnight. This prevented the body from being attacked or eaten by wild animals. The body was made in the image of God and treated respectfully. So Joshua buried the bodies in the cave.

Deuteronomy 21:23 "his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged *is* accursed of God.

5. Joshua then placed a pile of stones in front of the cave. Piles of stones were often reminders of God's faithfulness. Every time a child would pass by he could ask his father: "Why is there a pile of stones there?" And the father could explain of God's mercy to his people and his judgment on the wicked people of the land.

Conclusion:

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: Joshua was doing much more than conquering Canaan. **Joshua was preparing the way for Jesus to come.** By conquering Canaan, he made sure Israel had a permanent home to which Jesus Christ would come. **Joshua was picturing Jesus Christ also.** He was reminding Israel that God would bring all the nations in submission to him – through the Sword of the Spirit and the work of the saints.

Now being led by Jesus Christ, God will bring the world under his submission at his time and he will destroy the wicked at his time. Don't get anxious about widespread evil. Manfully use the Sword of the Spirit to advance truth – **offer grace**, and **remind the world God's justice**. As you do, remember Paul in 1 Cor 16:13 Watch, stand fast in the faith, **be brave, be strong**.

Finally, if you are not a Christian, and have lived your life without ever confessing that Jesus is the Savior of sinners, do so today and face him as Savior so that you will not face him as Judge. If you ask him for pardon through Jesus' work for sinners, he will forgive you.