

07.03.11 / Joshua 10:1-15

Passage Insight

In Joshua 9, Joshua and his men were deceived by the Gibeonites, who were hoping to avoid annihilation at the hand of the Israelites. Tricking the men into thinking they were from a far away land (though they were actually from a town only miles away), they gained the Israelites' covenantal protection by saying that they had come because of what the Israelite God had done in the land. Having entered into covenant with the Gibeonites, Joshua and his leaders told the people that the deceivers could not be harmed, despite their act of deception, because of the covenant, so when Gibeon was threatened by its former allies (as a result of the covenant, actually), Israel not only withheld attack, but actually brought assistance to Gibeon.

The Lord's plan to enter into the promised land and win it for His people was in full force, and the inhabitants of the land were systematically being destroyed. By this point, Jericho, Ai, and other cities had been razed and its people put to death. This was happening not by Joshua's will, or the will of the people of Israel, but rather by the will of the Lord and by His hand. In verse 8 of today's passage, the Lord says, "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands." Joshua's next steps, and the victory over those who were against them, were not a result of their efforts, but rather the Lord's sovereignty. The Lord's plan for each of us is simply that: HIS plan for each of us. As His creation, we are vessels given over to His glory and for His purposes.

Jesus claims this same authority to exercise His will over mankind in John 21 when He addresses Peter's questions about John's future and explains that not only must John respond to and obey the will of Jesus, but that Jesus' will for John's life is not necessarily any of Peter's business. What is our business, then? To sit before the Lord Jesus as our friend and authority, to heed His commands, and to be vessels intended for His glory.

In verse 13, Joshua commands the sun and moon to stand still (or at least to stay at the same point in the sky since the sun and moon are actually not in motion relative to the earth), and this happens. The command is not an address to the actual sun and moon, but rather a request that the Lord bring this to pass. Some have pondered how or why God would respond to Joshua's request and actually do what He asked. Was it because Joshua convinced God how things should go down? No. It was God's good pleasure to respond in the affirmative, as it was His will to make this happen. Ultimately the military victory and the manner in which it happened, with sun and moon in suspension, can be attributed to one thing, which we see in verse 14, where we read that "... the Lord fought for Israel." It was the Lord's will, and so it came to pass.

It's an interesting point to note that the sun and moon were principal deities among the Canaanites, and so any disruption in the natural way that the sun and moon behaved would certainly have sent shockwaves of awe into the Canaanite people, leading them to see that the God of Israel has all authority over their so-called gods. It would be interesting for us to notice how the Lord causes our own false Gods to fall flat or to move at His command and for His purposes, for in this we will see more clearly that our God is King of kings, Lord of lords, and Authority of authorities. Jesus has been given this authority in full and complete obedience to the Father. They are one, and it is to them alone that all glory must go.

Application and Prayer

Sun and Moon

- 1) What are your "sun and moon," your false gods?

- 2) How have you seen evidence that the Lord employs your false gods for His purposes, revealing to you that they are not gods at all, but idols?
- 3) How have you responded to His sovereignty in this?
- 4) PRAY
 - a. For the ability to see what you idolize (that you may repent, seek forgiveness, and turn to God)

Our Desires or God's Desires

- 1) James 1:14 tells us that "...each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire." God cannot be tempted with evil, because His desires are perfect, and He only desires what is good. Where are your desires not like God's?
- 2) What idolatry does this point to (how does this desire reveal where you're putting your hope in something other than God)?
- 3) PRAY
 - a. For an acceptance of your weakness in this, for in this weakness, God's power is made perfect (2 Corinthians 12:9)
 - b. That your desires would be in line with God's desires (this will lead you away from temptation)

Sources

- Prayer
- The Bible Knowledge Commentary