

Five Kings In A Cave.
Joshua 10:16-27.
Sunday evening, April 11, 2010.

I. Understanding the flow of Chapter 10.

- A. There is some confusion over the timing of Verses 16-27.
Vs. 15 ends with Joshua, and all Israel with him, returning to Gilgal.
- B. It is best to understand vss. 12-15 as being inserted in this chapter as a quotation from the book of Jasher (which has not been preserved for us.)
- C. To understand the flow of the story, and of the timing of the story jump from the end of vs. 11 to vs. 16, and regard Vss. 12-15 as a parenthetical explanation.
- D. As such we are in vss. 16-27 still in the same long day created by the sun and the moon standing still in the sky for about a whole day.

II. Five kings in a cave.

- A. Who were these five kings?
These were the five kings spoken of in the beginning of the chapter. The kings of Jerusalem; of Hebron; of Jarmuth; of Lachish, and of Eglon.
- B. They had formed an alliance to fight against Gibeon as the Gibeonites had made a treaty with Joshua.
- C. The alliance had hastily been organized while Joshua and his men were back with their families at the base camp at Gilgal, where they first had crossed the Jordan.
- D. Why were these five kings together in a cave?
 1. As kings and leaders of their people they were particularly responsible and worthy of greater punishment than their people. So they hide rather than try to outrun the enemy out in the open fields.
 2. They turn aside from the main body of their troops in hopes that the Israelites will pursue the fleeing troops, and that they would not notice that their kings had turned aside. After the Israelites had passed by in pursuit of the enemy, the five kings would have had opportunity to escape.
 3. Joshua's troops were alert to the scheme however and they blocked the mouth of the cave with large stones and put a guard by it while they continued the pursuit of their enemies until such a time that the last of them had escaped into fortified cities.

III. A remarkable victory.

We have already seen some of the remarkable provisions the Lord made for Israel as they did battle with the Lord's enemies.

1. How the Lord cast down large hailstones on the retreating enemies, killing more of them with the hailstones than Israel would kill with the sword that day.
2. How the Lord lengthened that day, causing the sun and the moon to stand still lest the enemy should escape.
3. How the Lord gave strength to the Israelites to be able to finish the task the Lord had given to them. First they had marched all night to Gibeon, and then they fought over the course of a whole day that lasted twice as long as an ordinary day.

Now our text adds a few more remarkable provisions which the Lord made for His people on that day:

1. All the people returned at the end of that day in peace to Joshua's camp at Makkedah. In other words, it had been a bloodless victory on the part of Israel. No lives were lost on the part of Israel.
2. Perhaps even more remarkable is the statement that no one "moved his tongue" against any of the children of Israel. The reference is believed to belong to the insults which were customarily exchanged between warring factions. The reference may belong to non-combatants who may have been working in the fields as Joshua's troops returned. It speaks of a remarkable restraining work of the Spirit of God.

IV. The five kings executed.

Before this long day comes to a close, Joshua tends to one more matter of business. He brings the five kings out of their cave, and calls for the captains of his troops to come and put their feet on the necks of these kings.

- A. This was not done to further humiliate these kings, nor as an exercise in cruelty.
- B. This was done as an object lesson to further encourage the hearts of his troops: "Thus the Lord will do to all your enemies against whom you fight." Vs. 25.
- C. Their bodies were hung on five trees as a public display of their judgment and their end, but they were taken down before sunset in accordance with the directions the Lord had given to Moses.
- D. So also the Lord Jesus was hung on a tree as a public display of the judgment and "end" He received when He took our place. His body too was taken down before the sun set, and it was buried, thus even in death fulfilling all righteousness.

V. Some lessons to glean from this chapter thus far.

- A. In the process of inheriting their promised land the Israelites had to fight some long and hard battles.
It should not surprise us if in the process of living our lives in union with Christ we too will encounter some long and hard battles. Do you have realistic expectations in this area?
- B. In giving themselves to these long and hard battles the Israelites found that the Lord would meet them along the way and provide for them what was needed to secure victory.
In giving yourself to your battles you will find that the Lord is the same still, and that He will provide for you as well.
- C. There is a "Cave of Makkedah" in your heart as well. And in it are lurking about any number of enemy kings; ruling desires which war against your soul and the cause of Christ.
Bring them out, and put your feet on their necks, be of good courage; show them no mercy, but execute them by hanging them on the tree of the cross of Christ. Do so, not in your own strength, but always looking for the able assistance of the Holy Spirit, who alone can make these kinds of operations successful.