

1. In v21, “*not a man moved his tongue against any of the people of Israel.*” Why?
2. In this passage, God’s purposes are fulfilled but unexpectedly. Three conclusions from this?
3. Paul tells the Corinthians that Christ “*must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet*” (15:27). Why?
4. Explain how **Psalm 110:1, 5-6** relate to this passage.

Continuing last week’s theme: *The Warrior of Israel*. The Gibeonites heard of the mighty acts of Yahweh on behalf of Israel. For self-preservation, they deceived Israel by pretending to be from a far land, seeking peace. Israel made a prohibited yet binding covenant with them. When treachery was discovered, Joshua and Israel honored their covenant by allowing the Gibeonites to live.

When Israel surprised the Amorites at Gibeon, Yahweh showed himself to be the *Warrior of Israel*, confusing the Amorites, making the sun and moon stand still, pursuing them when they fled, and crushing them with hailstones. Israel was at war with the Amorites, and Yahweh led charge. Yahweh fights for his people and for his glory.

The five kings are contained (v16-21)

The Amorite kings fled the battle and hid in a cave. Although they were the ones who had conspired against Yahweh, who led the charge against Gibeon, and who unwittingly committed their people to utter destruction, they abandoned their positions and their people and sought protection in the cave of Makkedah.

Joshua ordered them sealed in the cave until the Amorites were defeated. Joshua reiterates Yahweh’s promise to the fighting men of Israel: “*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.*”

Joshua and Israel fought until they decimated the Amorites, then “all the people returned safe to Joshua.”

Notice v21: “*Not a man moved his tongue against any of the people of Israel.*” This idiom is used in Exodus 11:7 to speak of the reverent awe and fear that the enemies of Israel have because of Yahweh’s mighty acts on behalf of Israel. However, notice the grumbling against Israel’s leaders *by the Israelites*, has ceased.

Our actions, righteous or unrighteous, cannot thwart the sovereign power of the Lord, “*who works all things according to the counsel of his will*” (**Ephesians 1:11**).

The five kings were conquered (v22-25)

None of Israel is harmed. Joshua sends for the five Amorite kings and summons all the men of Israel to him. He calls for “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 did.

COMMENTARY: “This is a vivid, symbolic ritual of victory. Defeated enemies are often said to be ‘under the feet’ of the victor.”

If they see themselves rightly, they are ministers of divine justice who were not to exalt themselves in pride, but to give glory to Yahweh as higher than the highest.

It was a sign of humiliation and total authority; the Amorite kings had been conquered. Yahweh fought for his people, and they obeyed his commands. Yahweh put their enemies under their feet. This was Yahweh’s doing. Joshua: “*...Be strong and courageous. For thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight.*”

Fear and dismay spring from a lack of faith; Yahweh has shown himself faithful, so Israel is to be courageous – because Yahweh fights for them.

2 Chronicles 20:6 “*You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you.*”

The five kings were condemned (v26-27)

The Canaanites are judged for rejecting Yahweh. The five Amorite kings are simply a microcosm of those who set themselves against the one true God. Israel was not chosen because it was righteous. When Yahweh called Abram, he was a pagan. No, Yahweh graciously set his favor upon Abram and his descendants; otherwise, they would be the objects of his divine wrath. Instead, Israel becomes an instrument of divine judgment against the people of Canaan. Later Babylon+Assyria become instruments of judgment against Israel.

Joshua devotes the five kings to destruction: death by the sword and hanging them on trees (= cursed).

Deuteronomy 21:23 “*his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.*”

The dead kings were placed in the cave to which they fled in fear, “*and they set large stones against the mouth of the cave, which remain to this very day.*” What they had hoped would be their *refuge* became first their *prison* and finally their *tomb*. The conspirators against Yahweh and Israel were condemned.

This account recalls God’s faithfulness but also his just wrath. All who set themselves against the Lord and his purposes, who devote themselves to other gods, who reject the rightful rule of Christ over their lives, conspire to commit cosmic treason against the Sovereign Lord of the Universe.

Will you hide *from* the Lord and face eternal death under God’s righteous wrath, or will you hide *in* the Lord and know forgiveness, peace, and everlasting life in Christ?