

“God’s Treasured Possession!”

The Book of Deuteronomy- Old Israel and New Israel = The Church

Lesson 3 for us:

“O Lord GOD, show your servant your greatness and your mighty hand!”

Date: 10-23-16 Study: #3 Text: Chapter 3:1-28

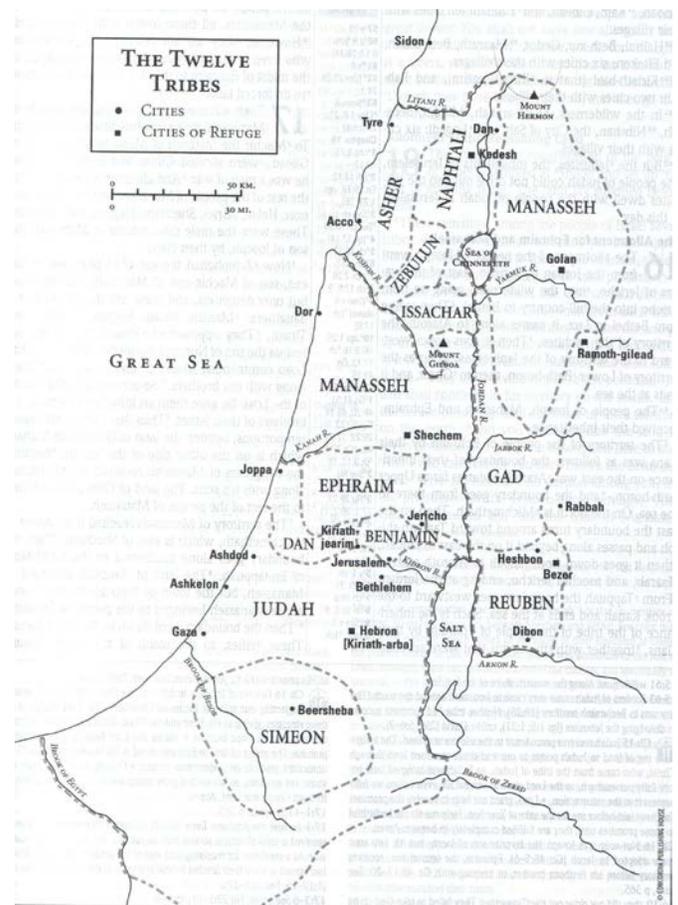
(1) "Then we turned and went up the way to Bashan. And Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. (2) But **the Lord** said to me, 'Do not fear him, for I have given him and all his people and his land into your hand. And you shall do to him as you did to Sihon the king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon.'

(3) So **the Lord our God** gave into our hand Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people, and we struck him down until he had no survivor left. (4) And we took all his cities at that time--there was not a city that we did not take from them--sixty cities, the whole region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. (5) All these were cities fortified with high walls, gates, and bars, besides very many unwalled villages. (6) And we devoted them to destruction, as we did to Sihon the king of Heshbon, devoting to destruction every city, men, women, and children. (7) But all the livestock and the spoil of the cities we took as our plunder.

(8) So we took the land at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, from the Valley of the Arnon to Mount Hermon (9) (the Sidonians call Hermon Sirion, while the Amorites call it Senir), (10) all the cities of the tableland and all Gilead and all Bashan, as far as Salecah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. (11) (For only Og the king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaim. Behold, his bed was a bed of iron. Is it not in Rabbah of the Ammonites? Nine cubits was its length, and four cubits its breadth, according to the common cubit.)

(12) "When we took possession of this land at that time, I gave to the Reubenites and the Gadites the territory beginning at Aroer, which is on the edge of the Valley of the Arnon, and half the hill country of Gilead with its cities. (13) The rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, that is, all the region of Argob, I gave to the half-tribe of Manasseh. (All that portion of Bashan is called the land of Rephaim. (14) Jair the Manassite took all the region of Argob, that is, Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and called the villages after his own name, Havoth-jair, as it is to this day.) (15) To Machir I gave Gilead, (16) and to the Reubenites and the Gadites I gave the territory from Gilead as far as the Valley of the Arnon, with the middle of the valley as a border, as far over as the river Jabbok, the border of the Ammonites; (17) the Arabah also, with the Jordan as the border, from Chinnereth as far as the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, under the slopes of Pisgah on the east.

(18) "And I commanded you at that time, saying, **'The Lord your God has given you** this land to possess. **All your men of valor shall cross over armed before your brothers, the people of Israel.** (19) Only your wives, your little ones, and your livestock (I know that you have much livestock) shall remain in the cities that I have given you, (20) **until the Lord gives rest to your brothers**, as to you, and they also occupy the land that **the Lord your God gives them** beyond the Jordan. Then each of you may return to his possession which I have given you.'



(21) And I commanded Joshua at that time, 'Your eyes have seen all that **the Lord your God has done** to these two kings. **So will the Lord do** to all the kingdoms into which you are crossing. (22) You shall not fear them, **for it is the Lord your God who fights for you.**' (23) "And I pleaded with **the Lord** at that time, saying, (24) '**O Lord GOD, you have only begun to show your servant your greatness and your mighty hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as yours?**' (25) Please let me go over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, that good hill country and Lebanon.'

(26) But **the Lord was angry with me** because of you and **would not listen to me.** And **the Lord said to me,** 'Enough from you; **do not speak to me of this matter again.**' (27) Go up to the top of Pisgah and lift up your eyes westward and northward and southward and eastward, and look at it with your eyes, for you shall not go over this Jordan. (28) But charge Joshua, and encourage and strengthen him, for he shall go over at the head of this people, and he shall put them in possession of the land that you shall see.'

Study Notes:

1. The 60 cities were large, walled and fortified (**1 Ki 4:13**) and the territory was densely populated.
2. Once again, these places were completely destroyed, to clear the land of the debauched and abominable paganism and make it ready for God's holy people. Objects like gold, silver, bronze, plunder and livestock (to support the people) were put in a secure place as God's possession. Destruction of the people made them useless to the conquerors, but put them into the hands of God. "Destroyed" also = "devoted" to God. (See page 3 about "Divine Warfare")
3. Mt. Hermon is up north in Lebanon and has the height of 9200 feet, and is also called Sirion and Senir.
4. The bed or sarcophagus, of Og, king of Bashan was made of iron and wood and was 13 ft. long and 6 ft. wide. They kept it for people to see in Rabbah, which was Philadelphia in the New Testament and today is Amman, capital of Jordan.
5. The division of the land in (**vv. 12-20**) is explained in (**Nu 21:31-35; ch. 32; 34:13-15**)
6. Kinnereth was the area of the Sea of Galilee (**Mk 1:16**)
7. The Lord gives "rest" to them and to the land. This is the peaceful situation when free from external threat and oppression, untroubled by conflict, famine or plague. (**Josh 1:13; 1 Ki 5:4; Heb 4:1-11**).
8. The Lord God himself will fight for them. It was his power, not theirs, which achieved victory. Their resolve should be bolstered and their faith be assured in trusting the Lord's greatness and mighty hand.
9. Moses went to the top of Pisgah (**Nu 20:1-13; 21:20**) This was the high plain overlooking the Dead/Salt Sea from the northeast and contained Mt. Nebo (2700 ft. high) where Moses would die and be buried by God. Like Abraham (**Gen 13:14**) looked west, north, south, east to see the land Israel would inherit, but where he would himself not enter. Note in (**vv. 23-29**) how Moses talks to God and God to him like a man talks to another man (**Dt. 34:10; Mt 17:2,3; Mk 9:4; Lk 9:30**).
10. Joshua would be the one to lead the people across the Jordan to take the land. He would be commissioned by Moses and be encouraged and strengthened to lead the people. (**Nu 27:18-23**)
11. "It is the Lord your God who fights for you.'...Lord GOD, you have only begun to show your servant your greatness and your mighty hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as yours?"
(**Ex 8:10; 14:14; 15:11; Ps 23:4; 71:16; 86:8; 89:6; 106:2; 145:12; 150:12; 1 Chr 29:11; 2 Sam 7:22; Is 40:9-31; 41:10; Mt 11:25; 24:35; Lk 10:21; 21:33; Ac 17:24; Rev 14:7**)

Life Application:

How has the Lord GOD shown to you, his servant, his greatness and his mighty hand?

Divine Warfare

Satan and Man's Sin Started Warfare

Before the rebellion of Satan, war did not exist. . . . Humanity's conflict is first vertical, because reprobate man naturally hates the just and holy God, and then horizontal, between people, even between husband and wife (Gn 3:16), who are united as one flesh.

The first point that must be made, then, is that wars will continue to flare up between sinful human beings as long as they live in this fallen world, in which Satan is at work. The devil is the original murderer, and he continues to foster hatred and killing. Christ himself declared that there would continue to be wars and rumors of war, and that "it is necessary for this to happen" (Mt 24:6; similar are Mk 13:7; Lk 21:9). Only when he returns in glory to bring this world to its end and fully subjugate Satan will war cease.

Therefore every utopian religion or philosophy that has the goal of eliminating all earthly warfare is doomed to fail because it fails to reckon with the total depravity of human nature and the ongoing activity of Satan in this world.

Christ's Divine Warfare Achieves Victory and Salvation

The second and crucial point is that divine warfare is God's means for saving his chosen people. For the sake of OT Israel, God engaged in temporal and national warfare, while for the salvation of all believers of both Testaments, God won the spiritual war through the physical death of Jesus on the cross and his bodily resurrection. Without this divine warfare, mankind would have been doomed to eternity in hell, but God's warfare enabled Israel to inherit the promised land, and his victory on the cross has made all believers heirs of eternal life in the new heavens and new earth. . . .

The book of Joshua has striking historical records of the personal involvement of the LORD in the battles of Israel for the promised land. God told Israel that it was "not by [their] sword and not by [their] bow" that they were victorious over the Canaanites (Josh 24:12). The LORD himself must fight and achieve the victory for the benefit of his people, in keeping with the biblical doctrine of divine monergism (versus synergism) in salvation. . . .

Divine Warfare as God's Just Punishment on Human Sin

A third point is that justified warfare is God's means to punish evildoers and that such punishment is necessary to curb sin and maintain temporal order. God carries out such punishment not only for the good and stability of societies, but also so that his church can do its proper work of proclaiming the Gospel. A pacifist religion or philosophy actually contributes to violence and iniquity by failing to curtail evildoers—by death if necessary. God may be patient for long periods of time, justice may be delayed, and evildoers may evade their temporal due, but the final day of reckoning will come.

To comprehend the twofold meaning of the military conquest of Canaan by Israel in the book of Joshua, we need to bear in mind that the LORD is a God of Law and Gospel, judgment and salvation. He damns the impenitent to eternity in hell and justifies penitent believers, making them

heirs of eternal life in the new heavens and new earth. Both of these actions are expressions of his character as the one holy and righteous God. . . .

The Church's Warfare Is Spiritual

We see the long history of divine warfare culminate at the cross in the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, who atoned vicariously for the sin and rebellion of the whole world. As he lay dead in the tomb, he appeared vanquished by the devil, who had entered his betrayer, Judas. But on earth's gladdest day, he rose as the victor, having conquered sin, Satan, and death. Paradoxically, the instrument of his death was his instrument of conquest: "Having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross" (Col 2:15). He is the stronger man who has disarmed the strong man—the devil—and plundered the devil's palace (Lk 11:22) by freeing those the devil had kept in bondage. . . .

Through the preaching of the Gospel and administration of the Sacraments, lost sinners are transferred from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God. This transfer took place through OT Israel too, as in the cases of the former prostitute Rahab and her family (Josh 6:22–25) and the Gibeonites (Joshua 9), who were spared, incorporated into God's Israel, and justified before God (Heb 11:31 and James 2:25 affirm this about Rahab). The Gibeonites even became sanctuary servants, cutting wood and drawing water for "the house of my [Joshua's] God" and "for the altar of the LORD" (Josh 9:23, 27).

The Christian Gospel in Word and Sacrament rescues the perishing from eternal destruction and fortifies them to do battle against the forces of evil within (the sinful flesh) and without (the devil and the world) that assail them. It is necessary for Christians to oppose detestable practices such as idolatry, sexual immorality, homosexuality, abortion, euthanasia, and occult practices, which correspond to the ancient abominations of the Canaanites. The church rightly prohibits God's people from engaging in such practices. The church also rightly endeavors to persuade society at large to prohibit such evils, and to do so Christians work peacefully through lawful means, not by violence. . . .

A Christian View of Warfare Must Distinguish Law from Gospel

The church and individual Christians must carefully distinguish Law and Gospel in order to follow and implement what God's Word says about warfare. Physical warfare may be a justified use of force according to God's Law, since God uses nations, armies, and society's laws to punish evil and protect the common welfare. However, earthly warfare cannot bring about God's kingdom of grace, which comes only through the Gospel in Word and Sacrament. In the OT too, it was not Israel's warfare, but faith in God's acts of salvation in fulfillment of his Word that caused Rahab and the Gibeonites to be saved.

Adolph L. Harstad, *Joshua*, CC (St. Louis: Concordia, 2004), 256–66. See also, "devote to destruction," p 6.