

THE GOD OF JUDGMENT

Joshua

INTRODUCTION

- A. Marcion
 - 1. Preached the gospel as he thought it really happened.
 - 2. The Old Testament, the product of a sick and evil mind.
 - 3. The Old Testament god may be the powerful creator, but He is not the good heavenly father Jesus proclaimed.
 - 4. Christians must reject the Old Testament entirely.
- B. The Same Problem Today?
 - 1. Have you ever felt that way?
 - 2. Reading at the nursing home – “apologize” for some of the ugly.
 - 3. My loving and merciful God could not do this...

I. THE DILEMMA OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

- A. Passages in this book which cause problems.
 - 1. Joshua 6:20-21 – the fate of Jericho.
 - a. “Yes, but God doesn’t specifically tell them to kill the women and children.”
 - b. See 6:2, “...kings and valiant warriors.”
 - c. “Perhaps an example of men losing their tempers in the heat of battle.”
 - 2. Josh. 8:24-27 – the fate of Ai.
 - a. “...all the people of Ai.”
 - b. The Lord instructed Joshua to carry off livestock and plunder of city, 8:2.
 - c. Surely He did not command / condone killing of women and children in Ai.
 - 3. Josh. 10:40; 11:18-20 – the fate of Canaan.
 - a. These two passages make it very clear that God did command all this killing.
 - b. It was His intention to destroy the Canaanites, to “exterminate them.”
 - 4. Joshua is a book about war and bloodshed.
 - a. All of it is at the instigation and command of God.
 - b. Does that sound like the God we worship?
- B. These passages highlight a major problem many have with the God of the Old Testament.
 - 1. Examples of this same problem from other books:
 - a. The Flood, Gen. 6-8. God wipes out entire population of the earth except Noah and his family.
 - b. Sodom and Gomorrah, Gen. 19. Only Lot and his family are saved. The remainder of the city – men, women and children burned up, v. 25.
 - c. It was God who killed the firstborn of Egypt, Ex. 12:29. No exceptions.
 - d. Nadab and Abihu, Lev. 10. Burned up with fire.
 - e. Korah and his family, Num. 16. Swallowed by the earth.
 - 2. How can the God we know from the New Testament, the God we see in the face of Jesus, the loving and compassionate God of the cross, possibly be responsible for this kind of death?

II. THE MESSAGE OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

- A. The Earth is the Lord's.
 - 1. He created it, maintains it, and determines its fate.
 - 2. Especially is this true with Canaan. It is the Lord's land, Josh. 22:19a.
 - a. It was promised to Abraham and his descendants.
 - b. It was the destination of the Israelites when God brought them out of Egypt.
 - c. Satan may rule throughout the rest of the earth (Eph. 2:2; 2 Cor. 4:4).
 - d. It is God who lays down the law by which to live.
 - 3. The rules of the land – God would bless those who obeyed Him and punish those who disobeyed, Dt. 28.
- B. He Blesses Those Who Obey Him.
 - 1. Canaan belonged to those who would be obedient to God's commands and who acknowledged God's rule.
 - a. The Patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.
 - b. Moses could not enter because of disobedience.
 - c. Those who disobeyed God when He had first commanded the Israelites to conquer the land died in the 40 years of wandering.
 - d. Only Joshua and Caleb survived to enter Canaan – because of obedience.
 - 2. Joshua 1:6-9.
 - a. Once they entered the land, "success" was conditioned on the obedience of Joshua and those who followed.
 - b. If they would be obedient, God would bless their efforts.
- C. He Judges Those Who Disobey Him.
 - 1. This was true of His chosen people.
 - a. Example of Achan, Josh. 7.
 - b. When there is sin in the camp, you must expect God's judgment, not His blessing.
 - 2. This was equally true of other nations as well.
 - a. God judged and punished Egypt, Gen. 15:13-14.
 - b. God judged and punished the Midianites, Num. 31.
 - c. So in Joshua, He prepares to judge and punish the Canaanites.

III. THE GOD OF JUDGMENT.

- A. A "Full Measure" of Sin.
 - 1. Genesis 15:13-16
 - a. The time would come for the descendants of Abraham to drive out the Canaanites and take the land.
 - b. That time was not yet, however. First, the sins of the Canaanites had to reach full measure.
 - 2. The Sins of the Canaanites.
 - a. A degraded and degrading religion: Baal and Ashtoreth and archaeological evidence.
 - i. They burned their children in sacrifice.
 - ii. Orgies were a common part of their "worship".
 - iii. Homosexual priests and prostitute priestesses were a normal part of religious observances.

- iv. Serpents played a large part in their religion – demonic overtones.
- b. A degenerate culture:
 - i. Sexual immorality, including homosexuality and bestiality, was a prominent part of this culture.
 - ii. Leviticus 18:24-28, a land defiled.
- B. Joshua: An Introduction to the God who Judges.
 - 1. This is a book about God's holy judgment:
 - a. The wars recorded in Joshua brought punishment to those who had turned completely away from God and His precepts. Just as God would use pagan nations to punish His own people, so here He uses His people to punish a depraved culture.
 - b. Joshua is a mini-Armageddon, a sample of what will occur in the last days predicted by the New Testament. Here is God sitting in judgment of sin and wickedness, punishing those who give themselves over to such things.
 - 2. Joshua shows God to be God of all people and all nations. He requires a certain level of morality from all men and women. Throughout history, when people have degraded themselves beyond all hope, He has come in judgment and punished those whose lives are an offense to Him.
 - 3. And can we be too far from that today?

CLOSING: The God of Joshua is the God of Jesus also.

- A. The dilemma we face with the God of Joshua is the same as that we always face about the issue of judgment.
 - 1. Do we really believe there is a heaven and a hell?
 - 2. Some, who fail to learn the message of Joshua, fail to understand something important about the nature of God.
 - 3. God is a God of holiness and judgment as well as a God of love. Until we understand that, we do not know our God as well as we should.
- B. Jesus, meek and gentle Jesus, knew his father to be a God of Judgment.
 - 1. Matthew 13:37-43
 - 2. "God said it, I believe it, that settles it."
 - a. Should be, "God said it, that settles it."
 - 3. I know it is a "sin", but I don't believe God will send to hell...