TALKING POINTS

Lessons of Faith from Joshua

Quarter 4, Lesson 4

"The Conflict Behind All Conflicts

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MEMORY VERSE: "There has been no day like it before or since, when the Lord heeded the voice of a man, for the Lord fought for Israel." Joshua 10:14, NKJV

LESSON STUDY INTRO

This week's lesson begins a study of Israel's warfare for the Promised Land, specifically how and why God directed such military engagement.

1. Israel's battles were part of Heaven's war (Mon, Fri)

- The universal conflict began in Heaven (Rev. 12:7-9; Eze. 28:14-19).
    - "We need to recognize [the divinely sanctioned wars of Israel] as earthly manifestations of the great conflict between God and Satan, and between good and evil—all ultimately with the purpose of restoring God's justice and love in a fallen world." Qtly, Mon, par 5
- The Bible often reveals the spiritual/great controversy backdrop to the experiences of God's people (Gen. 15:16; Ex. 12:12; Dan. 10:12-14; 1 Ki. 22:19-23).
    - "Israel's divine wars not only reflect a glimpse of the cosmic conflict as in a mirror but are part and parcel of the same controversy, anticipating God's end-time judgment in the sphere of present history." Qtly, Fri, par 2

2. The Lord is a "Man of war" (Sun, Tue)

- "Michael" is Jesus (Rev. 12:7-9; Jude 1:9; Dan. 12:1; Dan. 10:13, 21; see also Adam Clarke, John Gill on Jude 1:9).
    - Historically, John Calvin, Matthew Henry, Charles Spurgeon, Martin Luther and others have come to this conclusion).

> While Satan was striving to influence the highest powers in the kingdom of Medo-Persia to show disfavor to God's people, angels worked in behalf of the exiles. The controversy was one in which all heaven was interested. Through the prophet Daniel we are given a glimpse of this mighty struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil. For three weeks Gabriel wrestled with the powers of darkness, seeking to counteract the influences at work on the mind of Cyrus; and before the contest closed, Christ Himself came to Gabriel's aid. PK 571

- It was in His role as "Commander of the army of the Lord" that Christ appeared to Joshua. (Josh. 5:13-15; Qtly, Sun, par 4)
    - The local, temporal battles of Israel foreshadow the universal and eternal war that in which Christ will prevail and restore peace to all creation. (see Qtly, Tue, par 3)

3. Faith is the victory (Wed, Thu)

- Ideally, Israel would never have fought a battle (Ex. 14:13, 14, 25).
    - "God's miraculous intervention for the helpless Israelites, untrained in military skills, becomes the pattern. The Exodus constituted the model, the paradigm, for God's intervention on behalf of Israel. Here, not only is the battle fought by Yahweh, but Israel is required not to fight." Qtly, Wed, par 2
- Because of their lack of faith, God used Israel's participation in armed conflict as an object lesson and faith-building exercise.
    - It is noteworthy that Israel's first military engagement (against the invasion of Amalek) came during a time of doubt and murmuring (see Ex. 17).
    - Furthermore, "the law of warfare (Dt. 20) was given only after the 40 years of wilderness experience, which was also caused by Israel's unbelief… and it was only then that God required Israel to completely annihilate the Canaanites (Dt. 20:16-18)." Qtly, Thu, par 2
        - "Besides the reality that war became a necessity for the children of Israel, it also turned out to be a test of their allegiance to Yahweh. God did not give up on them but allowed them to witness His power by experiencing total dependence on Him… Israel's participation in armed conflict became a way to develop unconditional trust in Yahweh's help." Qtly, Thu, par 3, 5

CONCLUSION

God had made it their privilege and their duty to enter the land at the time of His appointment, but through their willful neglect that permission had been withdrawn. . . . It was not His purpose that they should gain the land by warfare, but by strict obedience to His commands. PP 370 (Qtly, Fri, par 3)