

# The Justice of God

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[ 0 : 00 ] Will you take your Bibles and open them to Joshua and find Joshua chapter 10.

! We'll be there in just a moment. And in chapter 10, we'll start with verse 28. That's pretty much where we left off last time. I may not have really spent a lot of time on the verses just before that. We ended last time, whenever that was, with the battle at Gibeon and the sun standing still and all of that.

And then the latter part of, well, the verses just leading up to verse 28 have, of course, Joshua dealing with the kings of that coalition that thought they might just run Israel out of the land. And they found out different. And the kings, well, they had a pretty dreadful end. And so that brings us to verse 28 of chapter 10.

[ 1 : 13 ] And that's where we will be. We'll start here. In fact, we'll start here with chapter 10, verse 28. A rather lengthy passage because we have here at the close of chapter 10 a brief kind of overview of Israel's southern campaign.

The southern part of the promised land. And I say a brief overview, and really that's all it is. And then when we get into chapter 11 and on to the end of that chapter, then we'll end with the completion of Israel's northern campaign.

They've already, you know, Gibeon, the Gibeon conflict really represents the end of the central, what some would call the central campaign, starting with them coming into the land.

In fact, go ahead to that first slide there. And this kind of helps you maybe visually see the kind of the central campaign, where they cross into the land over the River Jordan.

And first up is Jericho, then Ai, and then a few other places, and ends with Gibeon. And that's where we ended last time.

[ 2 : 25 ] And then we're going to be looking tonight at both the southern and northern campaigns. And again, it's a lengthy passage, but I want to read it because as I read these texts, you're going to start picking up very quickly on a common kind of formula, kind of a common denominator with each of the events that took place in the southern campaign and northern campaign.

So let's flip to the next screen, which would be the southern campaign. And that's what we have here in chapter 10, verse 28. So just follow along as I read in that chapter.

On that day, Joshua took Makedah and struck it and its king with the edge of the sword. He utterly destroyed them, all the people who were in it.

He let none remain. He also did to the king of Makedah as he had done to the king of Jericho. And I want to stop right there and mention something that I meant to mention before we got into the reading of the chapter.

The central campaign which I showed you a moment ago, Jericho, Ai, ending with the battle of Gibeon, is very detailed, really. I mean, you have a pretty detailed account of the battles that took place in those three places.

[ 3 : 45 ] But then when we get to the southern campaign, which I'm reading about right now, and then the northern campaign, then we're going to... These accounts really include only kind of a bare-bones summary.

There's not a lot of meat there. But there is some common things that we see in each of the battles that are taking place. So let me carry on here.

Verse 29. Then Joshua passed from Makedah, or they've dealt with Makedah, and everybody died. Then Joshua passed from Makedah and all Israel with him to Libna, and they fought against Libna.

And the Lord also delivered it and its king into the hand of Israel. He struck it, and all the people who were in it with the edge of the sword. He let none remain in it, but did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho.

Then Joshua passed from Libna and all Israel with him to Lachish. And they encamped against it and fought against it.

[ 4 : 54 ] And the Lord delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, who took it on the second day and struck it, and all the people who were in it with the edge of the sword, according to all that he had done to Libna.

Then Horeb, king of Gezer, came up to help Lachish, and Joshua struck him and his people until he left him none remaining.

From Lachish Joshua passed to Eglon and all Israel with him, and they encamped against it and fought against it. They took it on that day and struck it with the edge of the sword, all the people who were in it.

And he utterly destroyed that day according to all that he had done to Lachish. Now, you're getting a pattern here, aren't you? I mean, not only do you notice that really we just have just a small little summary.

No details, really, other than the kind of horrendous outcome of each of these battles, at least horrendous for the people, inhabitants of each of these cities and their kings and so forth.

[ 5 : 58 ] The formula is pretty consistent. Then we get to verse 36. So Joshua went up from Eglon and all Israel with him to Hebron, and they fought against it. And they took it and struck it with the edge of the sword.

It's king, all its cities, and all the people who were in it. He left none remaining according to all that he had done to Eglon, but utterly destroyed it and all the people who were in it.

Then Joshua returned and all Israel with him to Debir, and they fought against it. And he took it and its king and all its cities. They struck them with the edge of the sword and utterly destroyed all the people who were in it.

He left none remaining as he had done to Hebron. So he did to Debir and its king, and he had done also to Libna and its king. So Joshua conquered all the land, the mountain country in the south, and the low land of the wilderness slopes and all their kings.

He left none remaining but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel had commanded. And Joshua conquered them from Kadesh Barnea, as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even as far as Gibeon.

[ 7 : 13 ] All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time, and this is how it caps it off, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel. Then Joshua returned and all Israel with him to the camp of Gilgal.

So there you have the end of the southern campaign. There's a lot we could say about the campaign, because we're not given very many details. Now, the details we are given, we're going to say something about eventually, because I want to go ahead and get to the northern campaign. You can go ahead and turn to that slide. And here's the northern campaign. And we have that described for us or summarized for us. Kind of bare bones, again, bare bones summary of the northern campaign, starting with chapter 11, verse 1.

And it came to pass, when Jabin, king of Hazor, heard these things, that he sent to Jobab, king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, to the king of Akshoth.

I don't know how to pronounce that one. I'm not sure I'm getting any of the pronunciations right, but it sounds good to you, right? Okay, good. I was going to say, if you object, then I'll invite you to come up here.

[ 8 : 26 ] Okay, any volunteers? No. And to the kings who were from the north, in the mountains, in the plains south of Kinneroth, in the lowland and in the heights of Dor on the west, and to the Canaanites, to the Canaanites in the east and in the west, the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Jebusite, in the mountains and the Hivite below, Hermon in the land of Mizpah.

So they went out, they and all their armies with them, as many people as the sand that is on the seashore in multitude, with very many horses and chariots. So here's a big coalition again.

They're going to stand against Joshua and Israel. And there's a bunch of them. As the sands, that's a metaphor, but it gives you an idea that we're talking about a vast number of soldiers in this army. And with that, horses and chariots. I don't think Israel had horses and chariots. All right. So it would seem that this coalition of armies in the north would have the advantage.

But no. And when all these kings had met together, they came and camped together in the waters of Merom to fight against Israel. But the Lord said to Joshua, Do not be afraid because of them.

[ 9 : 44 ] For tomorrow, about this time, I will deliver all of them slain before Israel. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire. That's so they could never be used again against them.

And so Joshua and all the people of war with him came against them suddenly by the waters of Merom. And they attacked them. And the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel, who defeated them and chased them to the greater Sidon, to the brook Mishraphoth, and to the valley of Mizpah eastward.

They attacked them until they left none of them remaining. Remember, they were described as the sands of the sea shore. And none of them are remaining.

So Joshua did to them as the Lord had told him. He hamstrung their horses. He crippled them and burned their chariots with fire. Joshua turned back at that time and took Hazor and struck its king with the sword.

For Hazor was formerly the head of all those kingdoms. And they struck all the people who were in it with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them. There was none left breathing.

[ 10 : 57 ] Then he burned Hazor with fire. So all the cities of these kings and all their kings, Joshua took and struck with the edge of the sword. He utterly, utterly destroyed them, as Moses, the servant of the Lord, had commanded.

But as for the cities that stood on their mounds, Israel burned none of them except Hazor only, which Joshua burned. Now he didn't burn the cities, but all the people were destroyed. And all the spoil of these cities and the livestock, the children of Israel took as booty for themselves.

But they struck every man with the edge of the sword until they had destroyed them, and they left none breathing. As the Lord had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua.

And so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that the Lord had commanded Moses. Thus Joshua took all this land, the mountain country, all the south, all the land of Goshen, the low land and the Jordan plain, the mountains of Israel and its lowlands, from Mount Halak and the ascent to Seir, even as far as Baal Gad in the valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon.

He captured all their kings and struck them down and killed them. Joshua made war a long time with all these kings. There was not a city that made peace with Israel, children of Israel, except the Hivites.

[ 12 : 24 ] That would be the Gibeonites. The inhabitants of Gibeon. All the others they took in battle. For it was, and this is key, for it was of the Lord to harden their hearts.

We'll come back to this a little bit later. Harden their hearts. That they should come against Israel in battle. That he might utterly destroy them. And that they might receive no mercy.

But that he might destroy them as the Lord had commanded Moses. And at that time Joshua came and cut off the Anakim from the mountains, from Hebron. Anakim were a race of giants.

Well, they were tall in stature. You probably know one by name. What would it be? What would his name be? Goliath was of the Anakims.

And Gath is mentioned here, by the way. Cut off the Anakim from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel.

[ 13 : 26 ] Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. None of the Anakim were left in the land of the children of Israel. They remained only in Gaza, in Gath. It's a pity they didn't take care of Gath, too, because then maybe David would have...

Well, anyway. And in Ashdod. So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had said to Moses. And Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel, according to their divisions by their tribes.

Then the land rested from war. All right. That's it. You have, in those really one and a half chapters, you have a brief summary of all the battles that took place in the southern kingdom and the northern kingdom.

And prior to that, really starting with chapter 4, we have more, actually, more said about and described for us about the central campaign, starting in chapter 4 and running all the way through the middle of chapter 10.

And then we have these descriptions. Now, what can we say about all this? I mean, we could delve into the history here and try to not only show a map here, but maybe pinpoint some places and some history about each place, I suppose, and it would be interesting.

[ 14 : 48 ] But really, what can we say? Israel, here's one thing we can say very clearly, just by the description or the lack of it.

Israel almost effortlessly took every city and king and the people they encountered.

You don't sense any difficulty here, any real challenge. They just swept through the southern kingdom, swept through the northern part of the kingdom and conquered everyone they met.

Now, the Lord did this, obviously. And so that's one thing we can say very easily. We just get that right from the reading of it. Man, how easy this was, seemingly. What else can we say about this? Well, that Israel showed no quarter with the people of Canaan.

[ 15 : 56 ] No mercy. Not any place do we sense that Israel extended any kind of mercy to the people of this land, of these cities.

Rather, over and over we read, they utterly destroyed them, all the people. They let none remain. I'll just pull out a few quotes from that passage we've already read.

They struck all the people. All the people in the city they utterly destroyed. There was none left breathing.

We have that repeated a number of times. I mean, how more conclusively could that be worded? Left none breathing.

Does it make you feel a little uncomfortable just reading this and just kind of taking all this in? Well, I think it naturally would for really all of us.

[ 17 : 02 ] I mean, when we read here about this total annihilation of every city they faced, every army they faced, total annihilation, we also begin to learn, by the way, and if you've not picked up on this, and you should have, we also learn that this destruction, this annihilation was a sacred act.

Sacred, holy act on the part of God's people, which complicates it even more in our minds. Not only is it, you know, difficult for our sensibilities to imagine God's people going into these cities and not only conquering their armies, but destroying every living thing.

Not only is that difficult for us, but then to try to reconcile that, to bring this together with God's holy purpose, that this is actually a sacred act, all of this death and destruction.

And the question is, how could this be? Now, I dealt, you know, just a little bit with this early on, I think after we considered Jericho and maybe Ai, kind of delved, delved into this just a little bit, but I want to get into this a little bit more here tonight.

The question, you know, always comes up, how can a holy, just, loving God have commanded such harsh actions on the part of His chosen people?

[ 19 : 03 ] How do we reconcile that? We're talking about the total destruction of cities, burning many of them to the ground, and worse, the merciless annihilation of all of its inhabitants.

including the aged, including the sick, including the lame, including the children, including the animals.

It's kind of embarrassed even to add that to the list. Everything that has breath is destroyed. And really think about it as you think back over my reading of it.

The biblical record here is so void of any emotion. It's just matter of fact as it describes this, as it chronicles the, you know, kind of the cold facts of these events.

I'm just trying to have us all thinking on the same line here. Something that we're probably thinking anyway, but just didn't want to admit it.

[ 20 : 09 ] And not just here in Joshua, but other places that we read in the Bible, we have difficulty reconciling what God had commanded to be done, reconciling that with our own kind of cultural viewpoint and our own kind of sensibilities.

And so I want us to think about that. What do unbelievers say about this? Well, they'd be totally against this. And they would even use this, I think, as a objection to the true biblical faith.

And even liberal scholars would throw this out, you know, as not being a part of God's will and so forth. And really, God was just used here by the Israelites during this time.

God was used as an excuse or justification. You know, all kinds of objections. So what, you know, what do unbelievers think about this? You wonder about that.

But I would ask, what do you think about it? What do you think about this? How do you reconcile this? What is your answer to this? I mean, it seems so barbaric, so bloodthirsty. I mean, you know, we could, today we'd label this genocide.

[ 21 : 25 ] At the very least, mass murder. I mean, on the scale of Hitler or Stalin. But, of course, we need to admit that that that is a purely human perspective.

Earth-bound human perspective and rarely is the human perspective in agreement with the divine perspective. I mean, we could say that before we say anything else about it.

That's not enough for us. But, we have a clue, you know, a number of clues here to the divine perspective. We have a number of clues in Scripture here.

For example, we have read a couple of places here that God had informed Moses that Israel was to carry out all of this complete destruction in Canaan.

We have that already recorded in Scripture. In fact, I'll have you look at a couple of places if you want to turn very quickly. In Deuteronomy chapter 7 and verse 2.

[ 22 : 33 ] This is before all of the events of Joshua. In chapter 7 and verse 2, listen to what the Word of God says here. And when the Lord, your God, delivers them over to you, he's talking about when you get into the land, when God delivers the Canaanites over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them.

You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. That's God's command to Moses. Deuteronomy chapter 20. Just a few chapters over in chapter 20 and verse 16.

But of the cities of these peoples which the Lord, your God, gives you as an inheritance, he's speaking of the promised land, Canaan, of those people you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive.

But you shall utterly destroy them, the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite just as the Lord, your God, has commanded you.

And he goes on to add, and we'll get back to this a little bit later in verse 18, Lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods and you sin against the Lord, your God.

[ 23 : 57 ] So, Moses is clearly commanded by the Lord. We understand the divine, begin to understand the divine perspective, the divine purpose, decree, here in these verses.

And then Moses, of course, passed that on to Joshua. All right? And Joshua took that up when he led the people into Israel.

And we read that a moment ago in chapter 11, verse 12. So, all the cities of those kings and all their kings Joshua took and struck with the edge of the sword. He utterly destroyed them as Moses, the servant of the Lord, had commanded.

So, God commanded Moses and Moses commanded Joshua and also in chapter 11, verse 15, as the Lord had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua and so Joshua did.

He did it. He had the, you know, non-enviable, un-enviable task of carrying all this out. And he did it.

[ 25 : 01 ] He left nothing undone of all the Lord and commanded Moses. And we also have God even directly speaking to Joshua about this. We looked at this back in Joshua chapter 6 and verse 17.

Now, this is in, you know, direct connection with Jericho. But we can assume that this carries over to all of the cities that they would, that Joshua would lead the armies of Israel to face.

And God said directly to Joshua, now the cities shall be doomed by the Lord to destruction, it and all who are in it. So it's very clear.

So we can let Joshua off the hook, right? Because he was told to do this, commanded to do this.

We can let Israel off the hook. We can let Moses off the hook. But it begs the question then about God.

Question that we really need to answer. And I guess the question really concerns God's justice. God's basic justice here in regard to the Canaanite people.

[ 26 : 06 ] What is the answer? Why did God command the annihilation of the people of Canaan, the inhabitants of the promised land? Well, there are two answers that I want us to consider tonight.

The first answer really focuses on the Canaanites themselves, the Canaanites' wickedness. That's the first and chief answer to why God would command Moses and then Joshua to carry out the destruction of these people in the land of Canaan because of the Canaanites' wickedness.

Now, we could, you know, in a very general kind of simplistic way, we could say that from God's perspective, His holy, righteous perspective, all people have sinned and fallen short of His righteous standards, right?

I mean, that's what Scripture tells us. Romans 3.23, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. We could say that and so because of that, all people who have sinned, all people, because all have sinned, deserve the severest punishment.

That too is in Romans. Romans 6.23, for the wages of sin is death. I would say this in a very simplistic way and so, then, the Canaanites only received what all people then and now deserve, right?

[ 27 : 31 ] Now, they received it here rather than later but they, and they receive it later too, but, and so we can say that pretty clearly and those, and so those who God spares are only spared because of His grace.

That includes us. That's very dear to us because of His unmerited favor. See, here's what we need to understand before we really get into the deeper issues. Sin is a harsh reality and God's judgment for sin is a harsh reality.

It's not one that we like to talk about or think about but it's a reality but sin is, you see, an extreme offense to a holy God and that is taught everywhere in Scripture.

Yet it is, I'm afraid to say, all but forgotten by many in our culture. Now, does that answer the question? You know, they all have sinned, they all deserve punishment and the Canaanites just got what everybody deserves anyway.

Does that answer the question that, you know, that we have concerning Joshua and Israel and their annihilation of the people of Canaan? Does that answer the question for us about the justice of God?

[ 28 : 43 ] Well, not really. Not really. And here's why. Because while it is absolutely true that the Canaanites only received what all people deserve anyway, it is clear from Scripture that God did not choose to annihilate other people in biblical times who also were sinful.

And we carry that over. God does not annihilate other people in our times just because they are sinful.

Now, ultimately judgment comes, but God doesn't annihilate them here. God doesn't always bring swift destruction here. All right, so what made the Canaanites different?

What was distinctive about the Canaanites that triggered this unprecedented command by God to destroy everyone and everything?

what was distinctive here? Well, you know, to answer that, we really have to go all the way back to Abraham when he was still named Abram.

[ 29 : 53 ] And the promise that God made to Abram in a particular place in Genesis chapter 15 and verse 7, he made a promise that his descendants would inherit that land and we're talking about the land of Canaan where God had brought Abram out of the Chaldeans to this land of promise and he said that your descendants will inherit this land but not yet.

And there, this promise then was delayed and here's why. In Genesis chapter 15 starting with really verse 7 and I'll just read verse 7 I'd like to read the whole chapter but we don't need to take the time.

In verse 7 it says, Then he said to him, God said to Abram, I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to inherit it. And he's speaking of the promised land.

The land that we, that Joshua and Israel are conquering here in this book. Then skip on down to verse 12. Now when the sun was going down a deep sleep fell upon Abram and behold horror and great darkness fell upon him.

Then he said to Abram, Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs and will serve them and they will afflict them four hundred years.

[ 31 : 15 ] Where would that be? In Egypt. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge. Afterward they shall come out with great possessions. That would be the Exodus.

And now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace. You shall be buried at a good old age.

But in the fourth generation they shall return here to this land for the iniquity of the Amorites.

And here's what you need to see. The iniquity of the Amorites and it's a general term to speak of the people of the land of Canaan. The iniquity, the sin, the wickedness of the Amorites is not yet complete.

I like the King James. It's not full. Now what does that mean? Well, really it's pretty clear. Apparently for many hundreds of years after Abraham many hundreds of years the Canaanites sin, their wickedness would not justify annihilation.

They were wicked, unbelieving, but it had not reached a certain level where God said enough is enough. It did not, it was not full blown is what he's saying.

[ 32 : 32 ] So the promise for the people to come into this land there's several events are going to take place. In fact, hundreds of years are going to go on to transpire. And then they'll enter the land because I'm giving all of this time for the Canaanite sin to be full grown.

Until then it does not warrant annihilation is basically what it's saying. But in the year of Joshua and Israel when they entered the land that time had arrived and God judged them.

You could make a similar comparison to the pre-flood civilization of this world. God had given them space to repent.

In fact, even when Noah began to build the ark 120 years he preached to turn to the one true God and they would not and they all perished in the flood.

You could say, find a similar comparison with Sodom and Gomorrah. and they had just reached a point where God could not allow their sin to grow anymore.

[ 33 : 43 ] And obviously for practical reasons it would have a great effect upon the civilization of the world itself. God annihilated them. And that's what he's saying about the people of Canaan.

You know anything about the Canaanite sin? we can know something about it quite a lot about it from the Bible.

In Leviticus Leviticus chapter 18 and really the entire chapter you know you can begin with really verse 6 and as we go along we get toward the end of really down into 24 and so forth.

you begin to understand that he's talking about the sin of the people in the promised land and so in verse 6 just starting there none of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him to uncover his nakedness I am the Lord.

He's talking about incest and verse 7 the nakedness of your father or the nakedness of your mother you shall not uncover she is your mother you shall not uncover her nakedness I'm sorry this kind of graphic at least it causes our imagination to think about these scenarios the nakedness of your father your father's wife you shall not uncover it is your father's nakedness he's not just talking about taking their clothes off he's talking about immorality the nakedness of your sister, the daughter of your father, or the daughter of your mother, whether born at home or elsewhere. Their nakedness you shall not uncover. The nakedness of your son's daughter, or your daughter's daughter, their nakedness you shall not uncover. For theirs is your own nakedness. The nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, begotten by your father. She is your sister. You shall not uncover her nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister. She is near of kin to your father. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she is near of kin to your mother. These are all descriptions of incest. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother. You shall not approach his wife. She is your aunt.

[ 36 : 04 ] You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law. She is your son's wife. You shall not uncover her nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife.

It is your brother's nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, nor shall you take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter to uncover her nakedness.

They are near to kin to you. It is wickedness. Nor shall you take a woman as a rival to her sister to uncover her nakedness while the other is alive. These are just various descriptions of incest, sexual immorality going on within the close family near of kin. Again, a little later, it's going to attach all of this to the dominant sins of the people who live in the land of Canaan.

And so you can imagine what kind of thing was going on in their culture, but it gets worse. Also, you shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness as long as she is in her customary impurity. Moreover, you shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife to defile yourself with her.

Now we're in the realm of adultery here. But it gets worse. And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire of Malak, nor shall you profane the name of your God. I am the Lord.

[ 37 : 29 ] He's talking here about human sacrifice. You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination. That's the sin of homosexuality. Clearly. Can't explain that away. Not that you would, but there are many today who are trying to do that. That's homosexuality. Clearly. Nor shall you mate. It gets even worse.

Nor shall you mate with any animal to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It is perversion. Do not defile yourselves with any... And that's bestiality, by the way.

Do not defile yourselves with any of these things, for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. The nations, the nations of the promised land, the people who can be cast out before Israel as they enter into the land. And this is now coming about, as we're reading through Joshua. This is the sin of the Canaanites. And so clearly, like it or not, the wickedness of these nations in the land of Canaan is the major reason why the Lord would command Israel to destroy them without mercy. That's the answer to that. In fact, that is exactly what Deuteronomy chapter 9 and verse 4 and 5 says. Let me read that to you. Deuteronomy 9 verse 4. Do not think... He's talking to God's people, His people, His chosen people. Do not think in your heart after the Lord your God has cast them out before you. Do not think this in your heart saying, Behold, of my righteous...

Because of my righteousness, the Lord has brought me in to possess this land. But it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is driving them out from before you. It's not because you are righteous that I'm, you know, just going to reward you with this land flowing with milk and honey.

Not because of that. It's because of the wickedness of the people. I'm giving you this land so that I can judge these people whose sin has become full blown and I cannot allow it to go on any longer. [ 39 : 48 ] And it's not good enough to wait till they die and judge them at the last judgment. I'm going to judge them right now very severely and you're going to be my instrument of judgment. That is clearly what this is all about. He says in verse 5, It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land. But because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord your God drives them out from before you and that he may fulfill the word which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. So a dual purpose here. I've promised this beginning with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. I've renewed that promise all the way through them.

And I'm giving you this land that's promised to you but I'm using it to judge these people. And that's clear what God's motive is here because of the Canaanite wickedness. But you really need to add something else to the issue of the Canaanite wickedness that's mentioned here in those chapters I read. In fact, mentioned a couple of times. Their destruction was also due to their hardness of heart. Not just their abominable sin. Heinous sin, over-the-top sin. I mean human sacrifices, bestiality, and all of this gross sin. Not just because of that. But because of their hardness of heart. Could they have repented? Well, the Ninevites did. Could they have repented? Theoretically, they could have. Now, God knew they would not. And so it's because of the hardness of their heart.

We read that a moment ago here in Joshua, in Joshua 11, in verse 19. Let me read that to you again. 11, 11, 19. There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel. It means not a single city said, hands up, we give up, we repent. We want to believe in your God. Not a single one did.

Except the Hivites, and that's, you know, the people of Gibeon. All the others they took in battle. For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might utterly destroy them, and that they might receive no mercy, but that he might destroy them as the Lord had commanded Moses. Now, does that mean that it's God's fault that they did not repent? Because he hardened their hearts. We read a similar thing about Pharaoh, don't we? God hardened his heart. He would not let the people go. He hardened, God hardened his heart. Now, I don't suppose to know all of the ins and outs of that, but I can tell you this very, very, very surely. That God is simply allowing the desire of the heart to become a reality.

[ 43 : 02 ] Pharaoh was headed a certain direction. He would not. His heart was against God, and God allowed his heart to be hardened as he desired it to be hardened, as Pharaoh did. And the people of the land of Canaan did as well. God just simply allowed their heart to go on to its desired result, their desired hardness. Hardness, same thing he did with Pharaoh. All right, so the first reason, first explanation, the answer to the question about the justice of God here is the Canaanites wickedness. The second answer, and we'll not spend really any time on this, but the second answer focuses on Israel's worship. Israel's worship. Israel's worship, Yahweh worship, worship of the one true God, which, by the way, encompassed their entire lives, not just something they did on Sundays or Saturdays.

Their worship, their devotion to Yahweh as one true God was to be maintained absolutely pure. This was God's desire. Without any taint of the false worship of the Canaanites. And I read that passage in Deuteronomy a moment ago. Remember in Deuteronomy 20.

I think I can give you the gist of it, but let me read it real quick here. In 20 and verse 18 of Deuteronomy, lest they teach, he's going to destroy the people, lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the Lord your God. And God guarded them, was to guard them from that by annihilating the people and their worship, their false worship from the land of Israel, land of Canaan. All right, now to sum all this up, it will be finished. First, the Canaanites were to be destroyed because of the extreme heinousness of their sin. It was full grown. God could not allow it to go any further. Second, the Canaanites were destroyed because of their extreme hardness toward God, the hardness of their hearts. There was no possibility of repentance. Third, the Canaanites were to be destroyed because of the need to keep Israel's worship pure, pure in the land of promise. So God's instructions to annihilate the Canaanites was for these reasons and to accomplish this purpose. Now, one other word. God's instructions to annihilate the Canaanites was for a specific time. I think this is important for us to understand.

It was for that time, for a specific intent, and we've kind of looked at that intent, and for that place, that geography. You can't transfer that to other occasions, other scenarios, other peoples, other times, other places. Israel was not given, see, they were not given a blanket permission to do the same to any people they encountered who were opposed to them. And so, and I would say that the crusaders at the beginning of the last century, they failed to see this. Christians then cannot apply this precedent of Israel's conqueror of the promised land to any modern-day scenario, not even in our thinking, in our desires of our heart. Remember the apostles and how they reacted when the Samaritans would not allow Jesus to enter into their cities? We studied this back in Luke chapter 9, a number of Sundays ago, I grant you. Remember that they said to Jesus, Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?

[ 47 : 22 ] They didn't have any right to do that, or to even think that way about unbelievers. God had no desire, no such desire. In fact, Jesus turned to them and responded this way. He turned and rebuked them, and he said, you do not know what manner of spirit you are of.

For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. That's how we need to operate today. So you look at what Israel did in the land of, in the conquering of the land of promise, and you consider what God commanded them to do, and all of the why and wherefore of that, and it makes sense. It may still horrify us, and it should, but it makes perfect sense. We begin to see it from God's divine perspective.

That does not apply carte blanche to any and all situations that Christians face when they encounter unbelievers. We're to respond in compassion, with compassion and love, with a desire to save, not to destroy.

Thank you.