

# The Typology of Judgment & Gospel, part 1

Joshua 8:24-29

Preached by Phillip Kayser at DCC on Sunday, May 7th 2023

## I. Introduction: the incredible patience of God - 400 years (Gen. 15)

Though this paragraph looks super brutal, it needs to be read in light of God's incredible patience with these people over the previous 400 years. These people were evil way back in the time of Abraham, yet God was willing to be patient with them. *That's* what we should be astonished over - the *depth* of God's patience.

In Genesis 15 God told Abraham that his descendants would live in Egypt. He then said, "In the fourth generation, your descendants are going to return here because the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Gen. 15:16). The iniquity of the Amorites was well known to Abraham, yet it would be 400 years before they would get dispossessed under Joshua. From Genesis 21:8 to Exodus 12 was 400 years, and over that time the evil of the Canaanites kept getting progressively worse. What had the Amorites witnessed during those 400 years that would leave them without excuse?

- 1) They had witnessed God's miraculous judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, yet they did not repent. They knew better, but they did not repent.
- 2) They had the witness of Abraham and the patriarchs.
- 3) They had heard what God had done to the Egyptians when the Israelites came up out of Egypt.
- 4) They had heard what the Israelites had done to the kings Sihon and Og.
- 5) They had seen the miracle at Jericho. Yet, unlike Rahab, they did not repent.

Another background thing that helps to understand the judgments in this book are the *practices* these Canaanites did in the name of their gods. And I honestly do *not* recommend that you study the archaeological discoveries of these Canaanite cultures. God had them buried for a reason. They are gross. I felt defiled just by reading the academic summaries. But even apart from archaeology we know from the book of Deuteronomy that both men and women engaged in bestiality, pedophilia, adultery, and incest. They sacrificed their children by burning them alive at the altars of their gods. They engaged in trans surgeries, sado-masochism, gender fluidity, and all of the things that America is fast falling into. They deserved the death penalty. Yet God gave those nations 400 years to repent. It actually gives me a little bit of encouragement with regard to America. Our God is an incredibly patient God. And when judgment came at the hands of God's servants, these Canaanites had

nothing whatsoever to complain about. Indeed, the book of Revelation portrays Jesus as being just as much the sword-swinging soldier of judgment as Joshua was.

And there is one more background point that I want to bring up, and that is typology. Typology refers to the symbols in the Old Testament that portray Jesus and His kingdom. We have seen in the past that the book of Hebrews portrays Joshua as a symbolic type of Jesus. Actually, Joshua and Jesus is the same name, Joshua being the Hebrew spelling and Jesus being the Greek spelling. But the book of Hebrews is quite clear that Joshua was a symbol of *Jesus* bringing all enemies under His feet. And so I am going to apply each of these verses to Jesus this morning. Until we apply this book to Jesus, we have not fully mined the meaning of the book.

## II. Jesus plans to destroy all His enemies (v. 24)

First, just as Joshua was determined to destroy all of his enemies, Jesus plans to destroy all of *His* enemies. Notice how extensive this destruction was. Verse 24 says,

And it came to pass when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness where they pursued them, and when they all had fallen by the edge of the sword until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned to Ai and struck it with the edge of the sword.

Nothing was spared. Well, in the same way, the goal of Christ's kingdom is *not* peaceful coexistence. That's what some Christians are content with. But rather than peaceful coexistence, Christ aims for replacement. And by the way, so do demons. Christians have tried to be peacefully at coexistence with pagans in the schools, in Congress, and in the arts, while the demon-inhabited humans want to rid America of any vestige of Christian influence. We can't be naive. It's a battle for keeps. One side or the other will lose. 1 Corinthians 15:25 says, "For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet." Notice that word "must." He *must* reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The kingdom of heaven invades planet earth and through grace *and* through judgment (either way) Jesus will turn wilderness into paradise.

## III. Both the elect and non-elect are numbered (v. 25)

Verse 25 shows that the people destroyed were counted; they were numbered. Statistics are kept.

So it was that all who fell that day, both men and women, were twelve thousand—all the people of Ai.

In the same way, Scripture indicates that the exact number of both the elect and non-elect are known by God. Here's how the Westminster Confession words it:

3.3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life; and others foreordained to everlasting death.

3.4. These angels and men, thus predestinated, and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

The point is that God is sovereign in judgment and He is sovereign in salvation, and the issues of judgment and grace, hell and heaven, are not left to chance. God determines their number. And He has the total right to do so. He is sovereign.

#### IV. Christ's rod of iron will not stop until all His enemies are destroyed (v. 26)

The next symbol of Christ is given in verse 26, which says,

For Joshua did not draw back his hand, with which he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.

Commentators point out that Joshua was *credited* with the killing even though he was up on the hill the whole time symbolically stretching out his metal javelin while his *soldiers* are doing the killing. In other words, he *authorized* the killing and he *led* the killing, but he did so symbolically. For him to be holding that rod out all day long is a very deliberate symbol.

It was a similar situation to the battle against the Amalekites in Exodus 17:8-16, where the battle was successful as long as Moses held up his hands with the rod of God in it (v. 9), but when his hands grew weary, the Amalekites gained the upper hand and when his hands went up the Israelites gained the upper hand. In Exodus 17 Moses was a type of Christ and in this verse Joshua is a type of Christ using His rod of iron against the nations. Let me read the three references in Revelation to Christ's rod of iron.

Rev. 2:27 "He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels"—as I also have received from My Father;

That verse is saying that Christ's rule involves not just salvation of nations, but also the judgment of nations - sometimes ruling them and sometimes smashing them with his rod of iron through plagues, natural disasters, through wars, etc. Let me read the next verse.

Rev. 12:5 She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.

Rev. 19:15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

All three passages show that Jesus will not stop His battle against sin, Satan, and the world until He has total victory. Contrast *that* imagery with the over-realized eschatology of Full Preterism. Full Preterism sees the millennium as lasting from AD 30 to AD 70, at which

time Jesus supposedly gained the victory over all his enemies, completely finished His Mediatorial reign, and handed the kingdom back to the Father. There is no more mediatorial reign of Jesus over nations or planet earth. Well, that doesn't make for much of a kingdom, does it? When you dig into it, Full Preterism is a really empty system. It minimizes who His enemies are and the nature of His victory. They do not see Jesus as engaging in His mediatorial reign right now. That's done. According to them Christ's reign was a forty year period. But in the *symbolic typology* of Jesus from the Old Testament, the war isn't finished until the last of the Canaanites is put down. Joshua's battle didn't end with Jericho. It didn't end with Ai. It continued year after year, and continued into the period of the Judges (each of whom was *also* a symbol of Jesus), and continued all the way up to David and Solomon, the last typological ruler-symbols of Jesus. Solomon's glorious reign of peace and prosperity foreshadows the last period of Christ's reign, which is yet future to us. That's a much fuller image of Christ's kingdom.

But even in *this* verse we get hints of Christ's perseverance with *this* symbol of Joshua holding up that rod all day long. Joshua did not stop fighting as long as there were enemies to be conquered. *That's* the point. And in the same way, Jesus will not stop His Gospel conquest and/or judgments until all enemies are either converted or destroyed. I think it is a marvelous symbol.

It's amazing that Joshua's arm did not get tired holding out that rod of iron all day long. Maybe he had helpers holding up his arms just like Aaron and Hur held up Moses' hands in Exodus 17. We aren't told. If that was the case, it points to the supportive role that we can have in prayer. But in this passage, it is clear that Joshua used the help of the *entire* army. All of us must be involved in bringing all things under the dominion of King Jesus.

In any case, the symbolic javelin of iron in Joshua's hands is representative of the rod of iron in Messiah's hands in Psalm 2 and the book of Revelation. OK, enough on that.

## V. The wealth of the wicked will be inherited by the saints (v. 27)

But there is another symbol in the next verse. Verse 27 says,

Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as booty for themselves, according to the word of the LORD which He had commanded Joshua.

Unlike Jericho, which was *purely* destructive, this war resulted in every Israelite inheriting something. Proverbs 13:22 says, "the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous." But God doesn't give this inheritance to His people when they are unfaithful to him. In Israel's previous foray against Ai, they got nothing. Psalm 58:11 gives a condition to a nation receiving such blessing. The condition is for that nation to follow God's principles of justice exactly - not punishing crimes harsher or less harshly than they deserve. All capital crimes must receive capital penalties. That's why we need to be demanding that magistrates bring capital punishment against all baby murderers who claim to be medical practitioners. Psalm 58:11 says, then "men will say, 'Surely there is a reward for the righteous; surely he is God who judges in the earth.'" In context, Christ is judging *through* His representatives, the civil magistrates. As Romans 13 words it, they are His ministers of

justice. Let me read that whole Psalm - a Psalm which makes Evangelically squirm because it takes real men - men like Joshua - to be used for the advancement of His kingdom in civics. Psalm 58 is scolding cowardly civil magistrates, it says,

Psa. 58:1 Do you indeed speak righteousness, you silent ones? Do you judge uprightly, you sons of men? 2 No, in heart you work wickedness; You weigh out the violence of your hands in the earth. 3 The wicked are estranged from the womb; They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies. 4 Their poison is like the poison of a serpent; They are like the deaf cobra that stops its ear, 5 Which will not heed the voice of charmers, Charming ever so skillfully. 6 Break their teeth in their mouth, O God! Break out the fangs of the young lions, O LORD! 7 Let them flow away as waters which run continually; When he bends his bow, Let his arrows be as if cut in pieces. 8 Let them be like a snail which melts away as it goes, Like a stillborn child of a woman, that they may not see the sun. 9 Before your pots can feel the burning thorns, He shall take them away as with a whirlwind, As in His living and burning wrath. 10 The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance; He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked, 11 So that men will say, "Surely there is a reward for the righteous; Surely He is God who judges in the earth."

Are you willing to pray that kind of a Psalm? If not, don't expect God to judge. Are civil magistrates willing to press for that kind of civil penalty? If not, they should not expect God to bless their efforts. Capital punishment must once again be reestablished in our land before our land will be cleansed of its blood-guilt. And when Christians reject God's justice in civics, God refuses to bless them with victory in culture. Christ doesn't work *despite* His representatives; He works *through* His representatives. And when they come into agreement with their Lord Jesus Christ, then awesome things can happen in history. So don't even run for public office if that kind of a Psalm does not grip your soul.

## VI. Christ's goal is that nothing of Satan's kingdom remain (v. 28)

Verse 28 reiterates the idea that nothing of the old life can remain. God's goal is replacement.

So Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, a desolation to this day.

The word for "heap" is Tel. You have probably heard of many areas in the Middle East beginning with the word Tel - places like Tel Abib, Tel Melah, and Tel Harsha. The New American Commentary states,

The NIV's "heap of ruins" translates Hebrew tēl. Ancient cities usually were built on high points of land near water supplies; and, when a city was destroyed, the new city was built on the same site, atop the packed and settled debris from the

former city. Thus, over time, high mounds arose, topped by the current city. Ai was not rebuilt, and it remained a heap of ruins.<sup>1</sup>

It symbolizes the fact that nothing of pagan culture can remain in Christ's kingdom. And its not just pornography that must be buried. Evolution, science falsely so called, pagan glorifying literature (that Christians actually revel in), and the idea that anything in life can be neutral - even mathematics, must be replaced. Christ's goal is to have the kingdom of heaven *invading* earth and establishing the kingdom of heaven *on* the earth. It will eventually be a 100% Christian culture, not a syncretistic mix. *Let Ai be buried.*

## VII. The Gospel is not contrary to judgment (v. 29 with verses 30-35)

The last lesson that we will look at today is in verse 29. It says,

And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until evening. And as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his corpse down from the tree, cast it at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raise over it a great heap of stones that remains to this day.

Pagan kings often spared *their* conquered kings as trophies - as bragging rights. But God did not do that. No one (not even kings) were above the law.

Second, that God's judgments are the *upholding* of His law is hinted at when it says that "as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his corpse down from the tree." Why did he do that? Well, it was to fulfill the Law's mandate in Deuteronomy 21:22-23. Let me read that law:

Deut. 21:22 "If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, 23 his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God.

Third, the Law I just read makes it clear that the king was hanged on a tree to symbolize the fact that he and the kingdom he represented were accursed of God. This is a critical point that thematically ties this judgment to the judgment symbolized by the sacrifices in the next section. Hershael York drew out the meaning of this verse so well, that I want to quote him at length. I am so glad that I stumbled on his observation. He is the Dean at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.<sup>2</sup> He said,

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<sup>1</sup> David M. Howard Jr., Joshua, vol. 5, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 210.

<sup>2</sup> Hershael York is pastor of Buck Run Baptist Church in Frankfort, Kentucky, as well as professor of Christian Preaching and dean of Southern Seminary's School of Theology in

Joshua knew that this king represented his people: all of their bestiality, all of their pagan pornographic worship, all of their sacrificing of children. This king represented all of the sins of all those people, and Joshua puts him to death. He hangs him on a tree. He leaves him hanging there in disgrace. There is no punishment too great; there is no curse too awful for this king, because he has been the leader of his people. He bears the mark of the sins of his people, and Joshua brings him outside the city walls and hangs him there in defeat and disgrace. It's an awful picture.

If you judge God for that act, you're going to have a real problem with something that happens 1,300 years later. There is another King [capital K King], and his people are every bit as wicked as the people of Ai. His people are guilty of all kinds of atrocities and sins. His people deserve the same death the people of Ai received; their cup of iniquity also is full. This King's name is Jesus, and he represents all the sins of all his people. One day he's taken outside the city walls, and he bears the sins of all those he represents, and there he's hanged on a cross. God's judgment is poured out on him. He bears God's wrath. The same curse that Joshua inflicted on the king of Ai is applied to Jesus. But this King is different, because unlike the king of Ai, this King—though he represents all his people, though he bears all their sin—this King has himself not sinned. This King is perfect. This King is holy. Yet he takes their guilt and receives their punishment. God's judgment is poured out on him, and his people are allowed to live. I find it much more difficult to understand why God allows the people of King Jesus to live, than I do to understand why God allowed the people of Ai to die.<sup>3</sup>

And I say, "Amen." Amen! Amen! Amen! The real Gospel is not a Gospel that sweeps sins under the carpet. The real Gospel does not represent Jesus as a therapist who is here to help you feel good about yourself. No. He is a sovereign Judge and King who has also in His mercy decided to be our Savior. If anything, the real Gospel highlights the curse and hell and judgment and God's hatred for sin far more than we can even imagine. It will be symbolized by the sacrifices in verses 30 to 35 - sacrifices of blood that pointed forward to the suffering of Jesus. And I hope that this chapter on judgments makes you praise God for having saved you and makes you want to be holy as He is holy. I hope that this chapter makes you want to fight against your flesh and your sinful temptations with every ounce of strength that is in you, and to never stop fighting as long as sin rears its ugly head. Never pit the Gospel against God's judgment. The Gospel is meaningless apart from judgment. If

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Louisville, Kentucky. Here is a brief bio on him:  
<https://www.sbts.edu/academics/faculty/hershael-w-york/>

<sup>3</sup> Sermon by Hershael York posted at  
<http://d3pi8hptl0qhh4.cloudfront.net/media/audio/fall2010/20100930york.mp3> and  
 transcribed at  
<https://www.preachingtoday.com/sermons/sermons/2011/april/judgmentai.html>

you are saved it means that you have come into agreement with God's judgments. And if you disagree with God's judgments, you are still identifying with Ai, not with Jesus.

But there is one more lesson to be learned from these verses and that is that we do not need to be sin-focused. And I love this lesson. Yes, sin is *exposed* by Jesus just as this king was exposed and humiliated. But the king wasn't allowed to be the center of attention forever. Once it was clear that he was dead and under God's curse, he was taken down. In the same way, once our sin is exposed, confessed, and put under the blood of Jesus, cut it down from the tree, bury it, and move on. Don't dwell on the past. Some people are so ashamed of their past that they have a hard time moving on. But once your past is buried, you have a new identity in Jesus. Move on by grace into the future that God has for you, and do so with faith that if He is for you, who can be against you? Amen? Let's pray.