



Adrian Ebens

Love Your Enemies or Kill Them

The conflict between Jesus and Joshua

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May 2021

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A Great Slaughter

And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you." Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, having marched all night from Gilgal. So the LORD routed them before Israel, killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, chased them along the road that goes to Beth Horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah. And it happened, as they fled before Israel and were on the descent of Beth Horon, that the LORD cast down large hailstones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword. Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel: "Sun, stand still over Gibeon; And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon." So the sun stood still, And the moon stopped, till the people had revenge upon their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the LORD heeded the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel. Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal. Joshua 10:8-15

There are many fascinating things about this story. Joshua appears to be the complete commander of the armies of God. God tells him that the enemy will not stand before him. Joshua appears to be assisted by God through the sending down of great hailstones from heaven which kill more of the enemy than Joshua kills with the sword. In great faith Joshua then commands the Sun and the Moon to stand still so he could complete his work of slaughter. The remarkable miracle occurs, and in the extra light of the sun Joshua annihilates those who had come together to destroy the allies of Israel, the Gibeonites.

Who could stand before Joshua, the mighty General who had the backing of the elements of nature? The terror in the land of Canaan would have been immense as the story spread of how the God of Israel smashed them with hailstones and held back the Sun and Moon that the work of death and destruction might be finished.

So complete was the destruction that it produced the same effect on the people as when the firstborn in Egypt was slain.

And all the people returned to the camp, to Joshua at Makkedah, in peace. **No one moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.** Joshua 10:21

...and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the female servant who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the animals. Then there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as was not like it before, nor shall be like it again. **But against none of the children of Israel shall a dog move its tongue,** against man or beast, that you may know that the LORD does make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.' Exodus 11:5-7

The people of Canaan had heard what had happened in Egypt with the plagues. The Gibeonites, one of the Canaanite tribes who lived not far from Jericho, hatched a plan to make peace with Israel and be their servants because they were afraid they would be killed by Israel and their God.

But they [The Gibeonites] said to Joshua, "We are your servants." And Joshua said to them, "Who are you, and where do you come from?" So they said to him: "From a very far country your servants have come, because of the name of the LORD your God; for we have heard of His fame, and all that He did in Egypt, Joshua 9:8-9

The other tribes were angry at Gibeon for making peace with Israel and gathered to destroy them. The Gibeonites asked Israel to deliver them from their neighbours.

Therefore Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon, saying, "Come up to me and help me, that we may attack Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel." Joshua 10:3-4

The 5 kings that had led their forces against Israel were trapped in a cave by Joshua until the end of the battle. When the battle was completed, Joshua

triumphed over them and commanded his captains to place their feet upon the kings' necks, symbolizing the manner God would overcome all their foes. Then the enemy kings were killed and hung.

So it was, when they brought out those kings to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the captains of the men of war who went with him, **"Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings."** And they drew near and put their feet on their necks. Then Joshua said to them, "Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; be strong and of good courage, **for thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight."** And afterward Joshua struck them and killed them, and hanged them on five trees; and they were hanging on the trees until evening. Joshua 10:24-26

After these five Amorite kings were killed, they were cast back into the cave where they had been prisoners and the mouth of the cave closed with large stones .

And afterward Joshua struck them and killed them, and hanged them on five trees; and they were hanging on the trees until evening. So it was at the time of the going down of the sun that Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees, cast them into the cave where they had been hidden, and laid large stones against the cave's mouth, which remain until this very day. Joshua 10:26-27

All these tribes were completely wiped out. No one was left, not one soul.

On that day Joshua took Makkedah, 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 Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho. Joshua 10:28

After reading this story, who would be foolish enough to question whether the God of heaven had orchestrated this massacre? Had He not gave the commands to Joshua, supported Israel's army and personally killed many people with hailstones? God had even held up the Sun and Moon so that the slaughter could be completed! Surely that is what Israel understood, seeing as the captains of

Israel had their boots crushing the necks of their enemies in triumph shouting 'this is what our God will do to our enemies!'

Shall we conclude right here and now that God slaughtered these Canaanites and is happy for his servants to stand on the necks of their enemies while gloating of the power of their God to kill? Should we follow that by going through entire cities and not leaving one man, woman or child alive? Or shall we begin to unpack this story and discover the truth of what happened here?

Most people don't take one of those two options. They instead gloss over the story, hitting the fast-forward button to ignore the reality of what happened. Aged people already near death hacked to pieces. Little children nursing at their mother's breast picked up and smashed against the rock walls while their mothers are impaled with spear or sword.

"Oh please stop Adrian, stop talking about these things," is the cry of some. Please stop? Isn't this reality for those who believe that God kills people? Why not slow it down frame by frame and take in the reality of the horror? Why do we recoil from such descriptions if this is what God is like? Shouldn't we get used to these pictures if this is indeed what God is like? Shouldn't we worship the God that smashes babies' heads against walls, crushes aged and frail people and carves young nursing mothers in half with a sword? Why be squeamish about this if the God of the Bible is like this? Why not worship this idea and glorify death? Why not stand on the necks of our enemies and yell, "This is what God will do to those who oppose us!"

Those who wish to force upon us such a violent view of God then I say to such, look in the mirror of your words and drink down the reality of what you say. See the detail in HD and feast upon the fine print of such horror. Is there no question in the soul to wonder if there is not another explanation? Is there no wondering if maybe we have missed something or could possibly be blinded to the truth? Is it possible that God's ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9) and we have misread these stories?

If you take the position that God both kills and demanded that these people be killed, then we have a conflict with the words of Jesus.

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. Matthew 5:44-45

Jesus [Joshua 2] says that we should love our enemies. Joshua 1 tells us to stand on the neck of our enemies and crush them. In our attempt to harmonise these two statements, does anyone dare to say that standing on people's necks while gloating over them, then killing them, is somehow loving them? Would you put the face of Joshua 2 (Jesus) on Joshua 1 and imagine Jesus with his boot on the neck of one of his creations gloating over them about what God does to His enemies and then, when the point is made, cut their heads off?

Does God kill and destroy His enemies in the Old Testament and then love and bless them in the New Testament up until the book of Revelation when He returns to His killing and destroying ways?

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." Revelation 14:9-11

How do we resolve the apparent contradiction between Jesus loving His enemies and laying down His life for them and Joshua laying down the lives of his enemies, standing on the necks and crushing men, women and children? More than this and probably above all in this story, how do we account for these heavenly hailstones that killed more people than Joshua did?

Our Measure of Character

The Bible tells us that the natural human heart is deceitful and at war with God. (Jer 17:9; Rom 8:7). It tells us that there is no one who seeks after God and there is no one who does good. (Rom 3:10-12). There is only one person that has ever

lived on this earth who can say they know what God is like and that is the Son of God.

No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. John 1:18

All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, **and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son**, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." Luke 10:22

As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. John 10:15

No one has seen the Father and no one knows the Father except the Son of God. He is the only one in the universe who can speak with certainty as to what the Father's character is like. He knows the Father to the same level as the His Father knows Him.

The Witness of the Son

What did Jesus reveal about the Father's character?

I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. John 17:6

Jesus tells His Father in prayer, and it is recorded for us to know, that He revealed the Father's name to His disciples – the men that were given to Him out of the world. Jesus could say to Philip with absolute certainty that what Philip saw in Jesus was exactly what the Father was like.

Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? John 14:8-9

What did Philip see in the person of Jesus? Did he see Jesus standing on people's necks and screaming death to the enemies of God? Did Philip see Jesus smashing children's heads against the wall or hacking young mothers to death with a sword? If a person believes God kills people, then why would they feel

offended by such questions? If this is what God is like, then Jesus surely would have to reveal this aspect of the Father's character – wouldn't He?

A few verses before saying these words to Philip, Jesus said these famous words in response to a question from Thomas:

Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. John 14:5-6

How should Thomas and the other disciples understand Jesus here? What Thomas saw in the person of Jesus is the only way to the Father. Jesus mediates for all of humanity that seek God but don't know His character; but to truly access the Father you need to come through the character of His Son. Jesus punctuates this truth when He continues:

If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him. John 14:7

The reason that we can say we know the Father is only because we know the Son that was revealed on earth. There is no other way to know the Father.

Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also. 1 John 2:22-23

The Veil

When you acknowledge who the Son of God is, you automatically have access to the Father. This only makes sense when you accept the revelation of God through Jesus on earth. Why do we have to labour this point? Because the world denies that Jesus on earth is the complete revelation of God. Believing this allows us to take away the veil over our eyes in our reading of the Old Testament:

Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech—unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was

passing away. But their minds were blinded. **For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.** But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 2 Corinthians 3:12-16

Why did Moses need to put a veil over his face?

Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him; and Moses talked with them. Afterward all the children of Israel came near, and he gave them as commandments all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded. And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone, then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him. Exodus 34:29-35

Why were the children of Israel afraid to look upon the light that was shining from the face of Moses?

Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. **The sight of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel.** Exodus 24:16-17

When the glory of God rested upon Mount Sinai, in the people's eyes - or according to their thinking - it was like a devouring fire. The Bible describes the Son of God as the brightness of God's glory (Heb 1:3). The radiant light on the

top of the mountain appeared to be an omen of death to the children of Israel. Yet Moses was not afraid in the presence of God; his experience with the expressions of the divine presence did not cause him fear.

Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; **but let not God speak with us, lest we die.**" **And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin."** Exodus 20:18-20

Moses told them, 'God is testing to see what is in your heart.' Their fear that He would kill them revealed that they didn't really believe God had their best interests at heart, nor that he would help them overcome their sinfulness. In like manner they were afraid when they saw Moses face shining because it could mean that God was coming to kill them for their sins rather than give them good news. This is what the veil represents, it indicates a false view of God which is causing them to fear that God will kill them. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians that this veil of misunderstanding is removed when we look at the character of Jesus on earth.

When we turn to Christ as revealed in the gospels, the veil over God's glory is removed. We can begin to read these stories correctly. We can begin to ask the right questions about the activities of Joshua, Israel, and the events related to the Sun and Moon standing still.

God's Promises and Man's Faithlessness

When Moses first came to the children of Israel in Egypt, he told them what God promised to do for them.

Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD. Exodus 6:6-8

God promised the Israelites seven things. He promised to deliver them from the Egyptians and take them to Himself to be His people. The Israelites did not do anything to free themselves from the Egyptians; they simply had to listen to God's word and follow it. They did not have to kill any Egyptians to escape Egypt. God told them that He would bring them out and He did exactly that.

It might have been possible for Israel to leave Egypt 40 years earlier except that Moses killed an Egyptian. This killing delayed the leaving of Egypt by 40 years.

The rabbis gloried in their superiority, not only to the people of other nations, but to the masses of their own. With their fierce hatred of their Roman oppressors, they cherished the determination to recover by force of arms their national supremacy. The followers of Jesus, whose message of peace was so contrary to their schemes of ambition, they hated and put to death. In this persecution, Saul was one of the most bitter and relentless actors. **In the military schools of Egypt, Moses was taught the law of force, and so strong a hold did this teaching have upon his character that it required forty years of quiet and communion with God and nature to fit him for the leadership of Israel by the law of love.** The same lesson Paul had to learn. Education page 65

God had to teach Moses to abandon the principles of force that he had learned in Egypt. This is because God does not use force.

The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. {DA 22}

Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power. {DA 759.1}

Force is the last resort of every false religion. {ST May 6, 1897}

Jesus revealed this truth when on earth. He never forced anyone to do anything. He appealed to men's hearts to turn to God, but He never forced anyone with the threat He would kill them if they did not follow Him.

Coming back to the Israelites in Egypt, when Moses told the people what God would do for them, notice their response:

So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; but they did not heed Moses, because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage. Exodus 6:9

It was only because of the great mercy of God that He continued the process of deliverance. They did not believe God's promises to them. They refused to believe. They thought about the bondage they were in and blamed God for allowing them to be in this condition. Rather than praise God for His love and mercy they refused to listen and trust Him.

God moved forward with the plan to deliver them to give them the chance to know Him and see that He was good, and through the process make a more informed decision than this initial rejection that was made in ignorance and trauma. By the time they had reached Mount Sinai, God had delivered on five of the seven promises.

God's Promise	God Delivered
1. I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians	Yes
2. I will rescue you from their bondage	Yes
3. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments	Yes
4. I will take you as My people	Yes
5. I will be your God	Yes

It is after telling them these five promises that God told them.

Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. Exodus 6:7

God told them that they would come to know God and, having begun to develop a trust in Him, they could believe that He would fulfill for them the last two promises. In Exodus 15, just after Israel had been delivered from the Egyptians at the Red Sea crossing, they began to praise God for their deliverance. Their hearts started to feel gratitude towards God. Sadly though, they praise God as a destroyer of their enemies and a man of war. Listen to part of what they sang:

The LORD is a man of war; The LORD is His name. Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has cast into the sea; His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths have covered them; They sank to the bottom like a stone. "Your right hand, O LORD, has become glorious in power; Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed the enemy in pieces. Exodus 15:3-6

Praising God as a destroyer of their enemies meant that their gratitude did not last very long. Three days after their great victory they began to complain about a lack of water.

Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them, Exodus 15:23-25

If they had trusted God, they would not have complained but believed that if God could free them from the Egyptians, then He could supply their water needs. This lack of trust on the part of the Israelites increased again in the next chapter of Exodus. They actually began to express the desire to be killed by God in Egypt rather than be out in the desert apparently without food.

Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them, "**Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD** in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots

of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."
Exodus 16:2-3

Notice that it was not a small pocket of people that were complaining – it was the entire camp.

God Wants to Kill Us

If Israel had praised God when the bitter waters were made sweet, then this gratitude might have begun to prick their conscience about the reality that they didn't believe God when they were in Egypt. Each miracle that God performed was a chance for Israel to repent of their wickedness and thank Him for pardoning their sins and leading them out of bondage. Instead, they grew in their fear that God wanted to kill them. This belief about God's character began to manifest in their desire to kill others.

Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." So Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?" And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, "**Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?**" So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do with this people? **They are almost ready to stone me!** Exodus 17:1-4

The people were angry with Moses because of a supposed lack of water. Moses pinpointed the problem and told them they were complaining against God. Their desire to kill Moses revealed their true thoughts that they believed God wanted to kill them. They accused Moses, the representative of God, of trying to kill them, and thus they desired to kill him.

The belief that God wanted to kill the Israelites kept surfacing. The same issue came up again after Mt Sinai, and once again the whole congregation of Israel was involved.

So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! **Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims?** Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt." Numbers 14:1-4

The obsessive thought of the Israelites that God wanted to kill them was a psychological projection onto God of what they actually wanted to do to Him. This proved to be the case 1500 years later when the Israelite nation killed Jesus, the Son of God, on the cross. What is psychological projection?

Psychological projection is a defence mechanism in which the human ego defends itself against unconscious impulses or qualities (both positive and negative) by denying their existence in themselves while attributing them to others.¹

The constant fear of death in Israel was simply a manifestation of their hatred of God and their desire to kill Him. We see this phenomenon in the life of Cain after killing his brother Abel.

Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and **it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me.**" Genesis 4:14

The anxiety concerning someone wanting to kill you stems from a desire to kill. We think others are like us. Now it is true that many times people have others wishing to kill them; we are not talking about this type of situation. We are talking about continual negativity and paranoia derived from an obsessive thought process of judgmental wrath towards others.

It should be evident to all that it is impossible to trust someone that you think wishes to harm or kill you. God had promised seven things to Israel and delivered on five of them by the time they reached Mt Sinai. There was only

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychological_projection

two things remaining. In Chapter 19 of Exodus God reminds Israel that He has done exactly what He said He would.

You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Exodus 19:4

There only remained two more promises to be fulfilled.

And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD. Exodus 6:8

If God had done the first five things without any force or killing required by Israel, does not it stand to reason that God would do the remaining two things without the use of force or killing required? We need to address the story in Exodus 17 related to the Amalekites, but we mention here that God never told them to kill the Amalekites and it was an extremely difficult battle for them. All Israel had to do was to listen to God's voice and do what He told them and God would do everything else. This is exactly what God told them at Mount Sinai. Notice how the Young's Literal Translation expresses what the fulfilling of the covenant means.

And now, if ye really hearken to My voice, then ye have kept My covenant, and been to Me a peculiar treasure more than all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and ye--ye are to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation: these are the words which thou dost speak unto the sons of Israel. Exodus 19:5-6 (YLT)

Hornets

What would happen to the nations of Canaan if Israel had faithfully listened to God's word?

I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you. Exodus 23:27-28

God told Israel that He would drive out the inhabitants with hornets. If the children of Israel believed God and were filled with His Spirit, they would have cleansed Canaan in the same way that Jesus cleansed the temple. They would not have needed to strike one person. The Canaanites would have fled before them and left, or begged for mercy and been converted to the truth. Gesenius makes the following interesting comment on the word hornets.

צִרְעָה f. Ex. 23:28; Deut. 7:20; Josh. 24:12; according to the ancient versions and the Hebrews, *the hornet*, with the art. collect. *hornets, wasps*, perhaps from the idea of piercing, which does not differ much from that of striking (صَرِيحٌ a scourge), compare נָבָה, ضَرْبٌ. But *the hornets* by which the Canaanites, locc. citt. are said to be driven from their dwellings, seems hardly capable of being literally understood (as is done by Bochart, in Hieroz. tom. iii. p. 407, ed. Lips.; Rosenm. Bibl. Alterthumsk. iv. 2, p. 430), but (with Le Clerc and Rosenm. on Ex. loc. cit.) metaph. as designating *ills and calamities of various kinds*; compare Josh. 24:12; and Joshua chap. 10.

The word *Hornet* comes from the idea of piercing. Gesenius indicates that it is impossible that literal hornets could drive the people from the land but rather this represents various kinds of calamities. Regardless of this, the Bible makes clear that hornets did not involve the use of the sword or the bow.

I sent the hornet before you which drove them out from before you, also the two kings of the Amorites, **but not with your sword or with your bow.** Joshua 24:12

This is confirmed by Ellen White.

The Lord had never commanded them to "go up and fight." It was not His purpose that they should gain the land by warfare, but by strict obedience to His commands. {PP 392.3}

This is what God said to them. “If you will listen to my voice,” meaning to follow His instructions. The children of Israel followed the instructions of God in coming out of Egypt even though they murmured through the process. In following God’s instructions to place blood on the doorpost and leaving Egypt and walking through the Red Sea, they were saved without them killing one person.

The Amalekites

The first time that Israel took up the sword was after their deliverance through the Red Sea. As they sang on the shores of the Red Sea, they glorified war and projected their own thinking onto God.

Your right hand, O LORD, has become glorious in power; **Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed the enemy in pieces.** And in the greatness of Your excellence You have overthrown those who rose against You; You sent forth Your wrath; It consumed them like stubble. And with the blast of Your nostrils the waters were gathered together; the floods stood upright like a heap; the depths congealed in the heart of the sea. Exodus 15:6-8

You blew with Your wind, the sea covered them; They sank like lead in the mighty waters. "Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders? You stretched out Your right hand; The earth swallowed them. Exodus 15:10-12

Within three days of their freedom from the Egyptians they were complaining that their needs were not cared for. It makes sense that if they felt insecure that they would take the swords and spears of the Egyptians washed up on the shore. Where else would they get the swords from? They had no capacity to make them in the wilderness in such a short time and the Egyptians would certainly not have given them their swords when they left.

After they expressed their anger about lack of water again in Exodus 17 and their desire to kill Moses, a breach was opened in the camp. Paul tells us that murmuring can break down the wall of protection and allow Satan the ability to destroy.

...nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. I Corinthians 10:10

In Ex 17:7 the people complained against the Lord and said “Is the Lord among us or not?” This complaint pushed the Lord away and allowed Satan to stir up Amalek to destroy them.

Moses records that he spoke to Joshua. He did not record that he spoke to God and asked for guidance. In an emergency, the human soul acts on impulses that exist within the character. The complaint that God wanted to kill them in the wilderness was an idol of their imagination. God allows men the consequences of their idolatry, making God appear jealous because the calamities and misfortune that fall on those who turn from the true God will be attributed to Him as though He did them. Israel said God wanted to kill them in the wilderness and so now it appears that He is doing exactly that through the Amalekites. But God had nothing to do with it.

I was shown that the judgments of God would not come directly out from the Lord upon them, but in this way: They place themselves beyond His protection. He warns, corrects, reproveth, and points out the only path of safety; then if those who have been the objects of His special care will follow their own course independent of the Spirit of God, after repeated warnings, if they choose their own way, then He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them. {14MR 3}

Israel might have turned to the Lord and asked forgiveness and then the pillar of fire might have stood between them and the Amalekites just like God did with the Egyptians, but they complained against the Lord and He could not help them. This would have been such a grief for God. In his usual style, Satan caused the Amalekites to attack the weak and weary amongst Israel.

Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary; and he did not fear God. Deuteronomy 25:17-18

The whole of the congregation had murmured against God and Moses. They didn't trust God to care for them because they feared running out of water and

food. When faced with the Amalekites, they had to defend themselves because they didn't trust God to protect them. They think He wants to kill them.

Israel would have been wiped out less than 50 days after leaving Egypt unless God helped them.

The Amalekites were not ignorant of God's character or of His sovereignty, but instead of fearing before Him, they had set themselves to defy His power. The wonders wrought by Moses before the Egyptians were made a subject of mockery by the people of Amalek, and the fears of surrounding nations were ridiculed. **They had taken oath by their gods that they would destroy the Hebrews, so that not one should escape,** and they boasted that Israel's God would be powerless to resist them. PP 300

Israel should all have died. The Israelites were not trained in war except for Moses, and Moses was praying. God allowed them to win against Amalek in order to keep His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob concerning the promised seed. He also allowed their sin of taking the sword to abound.

Instead of confessing their grumbling and complaining and being extremely thankful that it was only due to God that they were still alive, they built an altar saying they would have war with Amalek from generation to generation, and eventually they would genocide the entire nation. God told Moses that Amalek will be forgotten; but the Israelites interpreted that as they were to war forever with them.

And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And the LORD said unto Moses, write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovahnissi: For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation. Exodus 17:13-16

All That the Lord has said we will do

God had brought Israel to the opposite shore from Egypt without Israel needing to kill one person. Israel glorified God as a God of war and destruction instead

of confessing their unbelief and lack of trust. They continued to murmur and complain against God and Moses until they cried "Is the Lord among us or not?" This created a breach that allowed Satan to attack them through the Amalekites. God in His mercy saves them. They glory in God as a God of war and death. God wishes them to be able to forget the scenes of horror with Amalek, which they interpret as God is going to destroy Amalek and any memory of him from the earth.

Israel come to Mount Sinai not with deep gratitude and humility but with fear of death. So great was their fear of the presence of God that this fear would kill them.

Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. Then the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to gaze at the LORD, and many of them perish. Exodus 19:18-21

God told Moses to ask the people to listen to what He had declared He would do for them. Their reply was "All that the Lord has said – We will do." After defeating the Amalekites, the Israelites felt confident they could conquer Canaan. They felt God might work for them so they could defeat their enemies.

So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him. Then all the people answered together and said, "**All that the LORD has spoken we will do.**" So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD. Exodus 19:7-8

This is a pivotal moment in the history of Israel. This is their promise to slaughter the Canaanites as they had done to the Amalekites.

When God gave the law on Mount Sinai, the people once again thought they were going to die because they worshipped a God of death. God once again

tried to tell them in Exodus 23 that He would drive their enemies out with the hornets of calamity, but just after this Israel once again promised to do what God had promised them.

Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, **“All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.”** Exodus 24:7

They were not doers of the word of God. They heard the words but they did not listen. They told God we will do everything that you have said. They made a covenant based on their own promises. God did not desire them to promise Him anything. He desired them to believe His promises. Nonetheless, God walked with them and allowed their sin of self-reliance to abound that hopefully grace might much more abound.

Of all the people who stood at Mount Sinai, only Caleb and Joshua survived. All the rest died before reaching the promised land. Two people out of approximately two million. That is what happens when you don't listen. There is a warning for us.

Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. **Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, they do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.** Hebrews 3:8-10

Here we see that Israel did not know God's ways. They went in their own ways and did not listen to God. Their way was to kill and destroy their enemies themselves as a reflection of the God they believed in. God says that they grieved Him and that they always erred, meaning they always did the wrong thing. That is a sober warning.

Like Grasshoppers

Shortly after their time at Mount Sinai, Israel came to the borders of the promised land. God encouraged them to trust Him and go forward and take the land and He would give it to them.

Behold, the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged. Deuteronomy 1:21

Instead, Israel wanted to send spies to see if they could handle the Canaanites.

And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, we will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come. Deuteronomy 1:22

God says go up, but due to their lack of faith, the men of Israel said, let's spy out the land first to see if we can defeat them.

And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, we be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. Numbers 13:30-31

The Israelites did not include God as part of their host. Who could be stronger than God? They imagined taking the land of Canaan in terms of their own strength compared to the Canaanites.

And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); **and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight**, and so we were in their sight." Numbers 13:32-33

God then tells the people they must go back into the wilderness to die there because of their lack of faith. They naturally rebelled against the word of God, blamed Moses and then decided to take the land of Canaan by warfare against the command of God.

Israel was not able to break free of the desire to kill their enemies. A little later when one of the Canaanite tribes attacked them, all of Israel made a vow to God that they would kill every person if He would help them.

So Israel made a vow to the LORD, and said, "If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities." And the LORD listened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites, and they utterly destroyed them and their cities. So the name of that place was called Hormah. Num 21:2-3

There is only one reason that God listened to them and let them do what they wanted.

God keeps a reckoning with the nations. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice. Those who work evil toward their fellow men, saying, how doth God know? will one day be called upon to meet long-deferred vengeance. In this age a more than common contempt is shown to God. Men have reached a point in insolence and disobedience which shows that their cup of iniquity is almost full. Many have well-nigh passed the boundary of mercy. Soon God will show that He is indeed the living God. He will say to the angels, "No longer combat Satan in his efforts to destroy. Let him work out his malignity upon the children of disobedience; for the cup of their iniquity is full. They have advanced from one degree of wickedness to another, adding daily to their lawlessness. I will no longer interfere to prevent the destroyer from doing his work." {RH, September 17, 1901 par. 8}

These Canaanite nations had filled the cup of their iniquity; they were left defenceless. God allowed Satan to move the children of Israel to want to wipe out the Canaanite tribe by the sword. God would never have inspired them to want to kill these people, for the commandment says "You shall not kill," and Jesus demonstrated exactly how that commandment works because He never killed any person while on earth.

The children of Israel were children of disobedience. They were allowed to punish the Canaanite tribe because these had forfeited the protection of God. The sin of the Israelites punished the sin of the Canaanites.

Israel, having established the use of the sword as a means of entering Canaan, would resort to this method for the rest of their history up till the time of Christ and beyond. Joshua was only needed as a warrior soldier because the people did not trust God to fulfil His promise to bring them into the land of Canaan.

God rewarded the faith of Joshua and helped him lead Israel in the way that they said they wanted. God had no choice but to walk with them in their murderous ways otherwise they would have been wiped out.

God's Strange Work

What is fascinating about the story of Joshua – the stones falling from heaven and the Sun standing still – is that it is mentioned as one of God's strange acts.

For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth **as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work;** and bring to pass his act, his strange act. Isaiah 28:21

Commentators are divided as to the meaning related to Gibeon here. The reference to Mount Perazim is reference to David defeating the Philistines as recorded in 2 Sam 5:20 and 1 Chron 14:11. After this victory David defeated the host of the Philistines in Gibeon.

David therefore did as God commanded him: and they smote the host of the Philistines from Gibeon even to Gazer. I Chronicles 14:16

Other commentators say that the reference to Gibeon refers to the story of Joshua. Notice John Gill's Commentary.

Josephus Ben Gorion (b) makes mention of the valley of Gibeon, where a battle was fought between Cestius the Roman general and the Jews, in which the latter got the victory, and says it was about six miles from Jerusalem: here the Philistines were smitten, returning again after they had been vanquished before, ICh_14:16 **though it is more generally thought that this refers to the discomfiture of the Canaanites in the times of Joshua, when also hailstones fell upon them, and destroyed many; see Isa_28:17** and when the sun and moon stood still till Israel were avenged on their enemies, and which showed the power and presence of God with them, Jos_10:10 and so the Targum, which adds,

"and in the miracles which he (the Lord) did for Joshua, in the valley of Gibeon;"

and these instances are mentioned as proofs of the divine power and vengeance, and to assure the Jews that the Lord would rise up in the same wrath and indignation against them, and consume them: - John Gill Commentary on Isaiah 28:21

The connection to the story in Joshua 10 is also alluded to in the beginning of the chapter.

Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong one, like a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, like a flood of mighty waters overflowing, who will bring them down to the earth with His hand. Isaiah 28:2

What is the strange work that God is going to do and how does it connect with what happened in Perazim and Gibeon? In the immediate context, this chapter is addressed to Ephraim which represents the northern tribes of Israel. The northern tribes are about to be taken captive by Assyria and it is a very hard thing for God to allow this to happen. A little before Ephraim was taken, the Lord expressed His grief.

How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel?
How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboiim?
My heart churns within Me; My sympathy is stirred. Hosea 11:8

What is the strange work then?

For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his **strange** [H2114] work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act. Isaiah 28:21

Brown Driver and Briggs
H2114: 1) to be strange, be a stranger

1a) (Qal)
1a1) to become estranged
1a2) strange, another, stranger, foreigner, an enemy (participle)

Strong's

A primitive root; **to turn aside** (especially for lodging); hence to be a foreigner, strange, profane; specifically (active participle) to commit

adultery: - (come from) another (man, place), fanner, **go away**, (e-) strange (-r, thing, woman).

Many people quote the strange work of God as finally deciding to kill people because He is normally merciful, kind and loving and it is strange for Him to have to kill people. The actually meaning of the word *strange* is that God becomes estranged from His people. He turns aside and goes away.

This is exactly what Inspiration tells us that God does after repeatedly trying to reach a nation or person.

I was shown that the judgments of God would not come directly out from the Lord upon them, but in this way: They place themselves beyond His protection. He warns, corrects, reproves, and points out the only path of safety; then if those who have been the objects of His special care will follow their own course independent of the Spirit of God, after repeated warnings, if they choose their own way, then He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them. {14MR 3}

God was about to turn aside from protecting Ephraim. They had refused Him for nearly 800 years. God would respect their decision, though it distressed Him greatly. The reason this strange work connects directly to Perazim is again shown in the meaning of this word.

For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, [H6559] he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his **strange** [H2114] work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act. Isaiah 28:21

BDB: Perazim = “breaches”

Strongs: Plural of H6556; breaks;

God will allow a break in His wall of protection². He will turn aside and let them have the master they have chosen. This same verse is quoted by Ellen White in connection with Christ leaving the heavenly Sanctuary.

² For more on this see the booklet *God's Strange Act* at maranathamedia.com

God's judgments will be visited upon those who are seeking to oppress and destroy His people. His long forbearance with the wicked emboldens men in transgression, but their punishment is nonetheless certain and terrible because it is long delayed. **"The Lord shall rise up as in Mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act."** Isaiah 28:21. To our merciful God the act of punishment is a strange act. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." Ezekiel 33:11. The Lord is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, . . . forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Yet He will "by no means clear the guilty." "The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked." Exodus 34:6, 7; Nahum 1:3. By terrible things in righteousness He will vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. **The severity of the retribution awaiting the transgressor may be judged by the Lord's reluctance to execute justice.** The nation with which He bears long, and which He will not smite until it has filled up the measure of its iniquity in God's account, will finally drink the cup of wrath unmixed with mercy. **When Christ ceases His intercession in the sanctuary, the unmingled wrath threatened against those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark** (Revelation 14:9, 10), will be poured out. GC 627

It's easy to read this statement by Ellen White and interpret it with the thought that God's strange work is to execute justice by killing people. But the strange work is actually to turn aside and allow the enemy to do his work. It is to allow man to reap what he has sown (Galatians 6:7). God has been holding back the consequences of evil, but now they are to be released.

Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: **their own way have I recompensed upon their heads**, saith the Lord GOD. Ezekiel 22:31.

This removal of the hedge of the protection to allow Satan and carnal human nature to work fully seems to be taken lightly by many who believe God must

kill Himself directly to enforce His law. The only reason we think this is because we are unaware of how much Christ is doing in bearing the consequences of sin; the measure of His grace is invisible to us, and thus when told that it is to be removed we think – so what? Is removal of protection really enough to give the wicked what they deserve? It seems humanity still needs to learn of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, how we are utterly powerless against it, have our glory laid in the dust, and finally allow God to bring us into the new covenant.

God will use the great catastrophes of the end of time to awaken and teach those who are receptive to His Spirit. Commenting on this time when Christ leaves the sanctuary, notice the process.

When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. **The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent.** God's long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; **the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose.** The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old. {GC 614.1}

The strange work done when Christ leaves the Sanctuary means that Satan is enabled to take full control of the situation because God has turned aside and withdrawn Himself. The fascinating thing about Isaiah 28:21 is the connection of Gibeon to the events of Joshua chapter 10, which include the stones falling from the sky and the Sun and Moon standing still. Is it possible that the events of Joshua 10 actually represent a withdrawal of the Spirit of God? Is it possible that God turned aside and became a stranger in these events?

Search for Me with All Your Heart

The reason for our search stems from the conflict between how Jesus and Joshua deal with their enemies. Jesus tells us to love them and be willing to lay down your life for them. Joshua tells us to stand on their necks, gloat over them and then kill them.

We have briefly examined the history of the children of Israel leading up to these events in Joshua 10 and discovered that Israel had a deep-seated fear of God thinking that He wanted to kill them. We also learned that although God delivered five of the seven promises He made to them in Exodus 6, that Israel, after defeating the Amalekites, told God that all that He had promised to them, they would do it themselves.

It is important to understand the implications of this decision to do for the Lord all that He had promised to do for them. This relates to the subject of the covenants. When God is making the promises and the people are accepting what God says, this is the new covenant. When the people are making promises and God is forced to accept them in order to keep a relationship with the people, this is the old covenant.

Many people question, “Why do we have to go to such lengths to understand these stories? It should be simple to understand. This seems too complex and shouldn’t we just take the Bible as it reads?”

While this is a fair question, it does not resolve the conflict between Jesus and Joshua. This question has to be resolved. Only when all the passages of the Bible can be placed together on a subject and we can see them in harmony will we find the truth. If we leave texts in conflict, then we can’t be certain we have the truth. A text that comes to mind when dealing with these stories is this one.

Your righteousness is like the great mountains; **Your judgments are a great deep; O LORD, You preserve man and beast. Psalm 36:6**

God’s judgments are sometimes very deep and hard to understand. When Paul alluded to this verse, he adds this thought:

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!
Romans 11:33 (NIV)

Some of God's judgments are beyond our ability to trace to the source. Does that mean we should give up? Just because we will never completely understand them, does that mean that we should not try to at all? If we ask our Father to explain His ways to us that are revealed in the Bible, will He not answer us? Jesus says:

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Matthew 7:7-8

We are also promised:

And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:13

The study of these judgments in the light of the character of Jesus as revealed on earth require of us the deepest study. To refuse to do this is to leave the character of Christ in conflict with the character of His Father, which we know cannot be. Either we must harmonise the character of God with the character of Christ in the Gospels or we must ignore the character of Christ completely as a witness to humanity. There is no middle ground.

People will spend many hours working on jigsaw puzzles trying to put pieces together. Police will deploy many resources and search for years to solve a murder mystery. But when it comes to the study of God, many seem unwilling to invest the time and effort to harmonise the character of Jesus in the gospel with the character of God in the Old Testament. This is not seeking God with all your heart. This can only result in thinking God's ways are our ways.

I regularly have to stop my study and go to my knees and ask my Father to explain things to me because I can't trace them out. But I know my Father loves me and that when I ask Him to help me understand the Scriptures and make them come into harmony that He will certainly help me. This is what gives me the courage to keep searching. Yet I must admit that it hurts me that many

respond to my efforts with accusations that I am twisting the Scriptures or that I spiritualise the word of God or that I make it too complex.

Some who read this might be content to place the face of Jesus on the head of Joshua and see Him with His army boot on the neck of His enemies gloating over them before killing them and then killing all the woman and children. I am not nor ever will be one of those people. I find this the most revolting and un-Christlike picture imaginable. I believe what Jesus said to Philip: “He that has seen me, has seen the Father.” In the words of William Miller “I will resolve all these apparent contradictions to my satisfaction of I will be a Deist (or non-believer).

So for those who wish to put all the pieces together, we can continue this search together. It takes effort but the rewards are more than worth it.

The Two Covenants Effect on the Picture of God

The Bible tells us that the two covenants can be symbolically expressed through the process related to the birth of the first two sons of Abraham.

But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— Galatians 4:23-24

What is the difference between the birth of Isaac and the birth of Ishmael? God had promised Abraham a son. When that son appeared to be delayed, Abraham consented to his wife’s plan to have a child through her servant Hagar. In this way Abraham and Sarah said to God, “All that you have told us we will do.” They conceived the plan and they produced the child through Hagar. This is the old covenant and gives birth to bondage.

In the case of Isaac, there was no human possibility of Sarah giving birth to a son because she was too old. So when she became pregnant, it was clear evidence that God had fulfilled His promise without anything that Abraham and Sarah could do to produce a child. It was all the work of God, and none the work of man. This is the New Covenant which is established upon better promises.

But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. Hebrews 8:6

The summary of this is when we are making our own efforts to fulfil God’s promises to us, we are operating in the Old Covenant. When we trust God alone to fulfil His promises to us and listen carefully to His instructions, then we are in the New Covenant.

We recall the promises the God make to Israel in Exodus 6.

God’s Promise	God	Israel
1. I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians	Fulfilled	Rejected, God did it anyway
2. I will rescue you from their bondage	Fulfilled	Rejected, God did it anyway
3. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments	Fulfilled	Rejected, God did it anyway
4. I will take you as My people	Fulfilled	Rejected, God did it anyway
5. I will be your God	Promised	Rejected
6. I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob	Promised	We will Do It
7. I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD.	Promised	We will Do It

The reason I say that Israel rejected the first five promises is because of Exodus 6:9. “They did not heed... because of anguish of spirit and cruelty of bondage.” Israel never accepted God’s promises. He delivered on several of them anyway to help them to develop trust in Him. When they were free of the Egyptians, they glorified God as a man of war and complained whenever something didn’t

go according to their plans. This means that Israel was always in the Old Covenant. They never repented of their sin; they never asked for forgiveness for not trusting God. Moses, Caleb and Joshua were the ones who came the closest because of their faith, but they still held incorrect views of the character of God. How can this be possible?

Let us consider the greatest of the prophets, John the Baptist. What did Jesus say of him?

For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." Luke 7:28

How can the least in the kingdom be greater than John the Baptist?

Like the Saviour's disciples, **John the Baptist did not understand the nature of Christ's kingdom.** He expected Jesus to take the throne of David; and as time passed, and the Saviour made no claim to kingly authority, John became perplexed and troubled. ... He had looked for the high places of human pride and power to be cast down. He had pointed to the Messiah as the **One whose fan was in His hand, and who would thoroughly purge His floor, who would gather the wheat into His garner, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.** Like the prophet Elijah, in whose spirit and power he had come to Israel, he looked for the Lord to reveal Himself as a God that answereth by fire. {DA 215.2}

John the Baptist took hold of the faith of Jesus and did a great work, but he didn't understand Christ's kingdom. He thought God was one who answered by fire. He thought God was a destroyer of those who resist Him. Very few people had a correct appreciation of the kingdom of God before Christ came. Even though this truth was freely available to all, it was not comprehended or understood.

For those operating in the Old Covenant, God is understood as a destroyer of sinners. God is perceived as being like man and He appears to deal with sin as men deal with sin – punishment and death.

For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. James 1:23-25

The one who hears the word but does not do it, is the one who reads the Bible but does not do what it says. The Bible says to trust in Christ alone to do for you what you can't do. The hearers of the word still try and do it themselves as Abraham did with Hagar. When we read the Bible in this frame of mind, God looks like the natural man. But when we see God as manifested in Christ, we see a completely different person. We see one who is merciful, gracious and longsuffering and that never uses force on any person.

To understand the truth that all of Israel were looking at God through the Old Covenant reveals the truth that they all had an incorrect view of God. This is proven in their rejection and misunderstanding of Christ and His mission, which represents how all mankind has an incorrect view of God.

Blending Jesus with Joshua?

When we read Joshua 10 through the framework of Jesus, we immediately notice that Joshua acts completely opposite to Jesus. The natural man seeks to blend these two opposites into one yin/yang whole. The temptation for us is to believe that sometimes God shows mercy and loves His enemies, and sometimes He crushes and destroys them. But doing this denies the statements of Jesus while He was here on earth. He said that He had glorified His Father – meaning revealed His complete character on Earth.

In Christ God beheld the reflection of his own image. God was manifest in the flesh because of the entire identity of his character with Christ's character. That God should be thus manifest in the flesh was a wonder to the heavenly host, “even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations.” {ST, April 15, 1897 par. 10}

The object of Christ's mission to the world was to reveal the Father. {ST, April 11, 1895 par. 2}

When the object of his mission was attained,—the revelation of God to the world,—the Son of God announced that his work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men. {ST January 20, 1890, par. 9}

It is impossible to blend the character of Joshua with the character of Jesus. To do so will completely destroy the mission of Christ to the world. If God was indeed manifest in the flesh through Christ, then it is evident that Joshua is not a revelation of the character of God to the world. With a correct understanding of the covenants, we see that Joshua trusted God in his wrong understanding as best he could even as John the Baptist did, but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than them both. Joshua can't be judged against the character of Christ for it had not been revealed to the world. But the character of Joshua is not a revelation of the character of Christ or His Father.

Recap and Revisit

We have established the story of Joshua within the context of the following things.

1. The character of Jesus on Earth is the character of God
2. All of Israel were operating in an incorrect view of God because they operated in the Old Covenant as evidenced by their promises to God.
3. God's strange work mentioned in Isa 28:21 has a connection to the story of Joshua we are examining.
4. The word *strange* means *to turn aside or be estranged* and the word *Perazim* means *to make a breach or break*
5. Isaiah 28:21 is connected to the time when Jesus ceases His ministry of intercession in the heavenly sanctuary, and therefore the story of Joshua and the stones falling from heaven has a connection to the ceasing of the intercession of Jesus in heaven.

We will return to the story of Joshua and read again some of the texts even though we do not have all the pieces needed to complete this case. It is important to read the text again and feel their weight and our natural inclination to judge God as a destroyer of men. This story is one of a number

that appears to overwhelmingly convince us that God kills and destroys people. Are you ready for this?

And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you." Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, having marched all night from Gilgal. So the LORD routed them before Israel, killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, chased them along the road that goes to Beth Horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah. And it happened, as they fled before Israel and were on the descent of Beth Horon, that **the LORD cast down large hailstones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword.** Joshua 10:8-11)

Even after I have assembled all the pieces listed above, when I came back to read this passage again everything seemed to fall apart. When I read the words "the LORD cast down large hailstones from heaven... and they died" I feel like just giving up everything else I have studied and surrendering to what this text appears to be saying. I look at the word for *hailstones* and it leads me to the story in Exodus with the plagues as well as the seven last plagues in Revelation 16. I see some clues but it isn't coming out clear in my mind. So I went to my knees and prayed:

"Father, I know your beloved Son revealed who you are but when I read this verse it looks like you killed these people. It looks like you stoned them to death. Can you please help me to resolve this conflict between Joshua and Jesus? I can't resolve this and I am stuck. But I trust you to help me and show me the truth in Jesus' name."

Jericho

Let us step back a little in the sequence of events related to the conquest of Canaan to discover more pieces in putting this all together.

The host of Israel comprised the second generation of Israelites. All of the first generation had died and only Caleb and Joshua remained from this generation.

For the LORD had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. **And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.** Num 26:65

Due to the fact that the generation of Israel that came to the borders of the promised land the first time refused to believe that God could take them in by trusting in His word alone, God would test the next generation to see if they would learn the lesson from their parents and trust God alone to fulfil His promise to bring them into the land and let God fulfil the covenant to them.

The Lord does not tell Joshua to kill the inhabitants of Jericho; He simply says that He has given them into their hand.

And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour. Joshua 6:2

As we will discover later, the question is, once in the hand of Joshua and Israel, what would they do to them? God told them to circle the city of Jericho six times with the ark of the covenant leading them.

And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. Joshua 6:3-4

The ark containing the Ten Commandments represented the presence of God. The Ten Commandments were a transcript of the Character of God.

The law of God is as sacred as God Himself. It is a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, the expression of divine love and wisdom. PP 52

Would Israel listen to the Lord and keep all the commandments that they were marching behind? Would they keep the commandment, thou shalt not kill? Notice Ellen White's commentary on this marching around the city.

“No assault was to be made. They were simply to make the circuit of the city, bearing the ark of God and blowing upon trumpets. First came the warriors, a body of chosen men, **not now**

to conquer by their own skill and prowess, but by obedience to the directions given them from God. Seven priests with trumpets followed. Then the ark of God, surrounded by a halo of divine glory, was borne by priests clad in the dress **denoting their sacred office.**" (PP 488.1)

There was not intended to be any assault on Jericho. She does not say there was no assault to me made until after the seventh rotation. It says no assault was to be made at all. They were not to conquer by their own skill and prowess but by obedience to the directions of God. Where is the direction of God to kill the inhabitants of Jericho? There is none. Again notice these words:

But the very plan of continuing this ceremony through so long a time prior to the final overthrow of the walls **afforded opportunity for the development of faith among the Israelites. It was to be impressed upon their minds that their strength was not in the wisdom of man, nor in his might, but only in the God of their salvation. They were thus to become accustomed to relying wholly upon their divine Leader.** {PP 493.1}

They were to be impressed was not in the wisdom or might of man but *only* in the God of their salvation. This story was not supposed to be a collaborative effort of God knocking down the walls and Joshua and Israel killing them all. They were to trust in God alone for salvation.

In slaying the Egyptian, Moses had fallen into the same error so often committed by his fathers, of taking into their own hands the work that God had promised to do. **It was not God's will to deliver His people by warfare, as Moses thought,** but by His own mighty power, that the glory might be ascribed to Him alone... {PP 247.3}

God never intended His people to take the land by warfare but by His own mighty power. This means God's mighty power did not include warfare. It was Joshua who told the people to kill everyone except Rahab and her family. God did not say this.

And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, for the LORD has

given you the city! **Now the city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live**, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. Joshua 6:16-17

God had indeed told Joshua the first part. But He never said the second part. Joshua was repeating the sins of his fathers by taking things into his own hands and using his power to complete the work that God had started.

Some have suggested that God killed the soldiers on the walls when He knocked the walls down. But the Bible clear who killed every single person in that city.

So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, **every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.** Joshua 6:20-21

What if Joshua had been blessed to see the ministry of Jesus. Could it be possible to have an outcome similar to this?

Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, **“Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.”** Acts 16:26-28

Ellen White under inspiration gives us a clue to the work that should have been done and the part Israel was to act at Jericho.

When Jericho fell, no human hand touched the walls of the city, for the angels of the Lord overthrew the fortifications, **and entered the fortress of the enemy.** It was not Israel, but the Captain of the Lord's host that took Jericho. **But Israel had their part to act to show their faith in the Captain of their salvation.** {RH, July 19, 1892 par. 3}

What is the part that is to be acted?

Battles are to be fought every day. A great warfare is going on over every soul, between the prince of darkness and the Prince of life. **There is a great battle to be fought, that the inhabitants of the world may be warned of the great day of the Lord, that the strongholds of the enemy may be entered, and that all who love the Lord may be gathered under the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel, but you are not to do the main fighting here.** As God's agents you are to yield yourselves to him, that he may plan and direct and fight the battle for you, with your co-operation. {RH, July 19, 1892 par. 4}

If Rahab was able to be saved, might there be others who might as they entered the stronghold of the enemy?

The evidence that Israel did not do what God wanted is found in their over-confidence in taking the next city of Ai.

The great victory that God had gained for them **had made the Israelites self-confident.** Because He had promised them the land of Canaan they felt secure, **and failed to realize that divine help alone could give them success. Even Joshua** laid his plans for the conquest of Ai without seeking counsel from God. {PP 493.4}

We see the failure of Joshua to follow the Lord implicitly. He laid his own plans and 36 Israelite soldiers died as a result. Over confidence could only come from taking some glory from the victory that had taken place just prior.

God told Israel repeatedly not to mistreat strangers but to care for them. They were to invite the strangers among them to their feasts.

You shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. Exodus 22:21

This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country **or a stranger who dwells among you.** Leviticus 16:29

As I ponder these things, I pray once again for our Father to help me put all these pieces together in regard to the events in Joshua 10.

The Mystery of the Cross

In answer to prayer, I am immediately reminded of two statements in Great Controversy and Testimonies to Ministers.

The mystery of the cross explains all other mysteries. In the light that streams from Calvary the attributes of God which had filled us with fear and awe appear beautiful and attractive. Mercy, tenderness, and parental love are seen to blend with holiness, justice, and power. While we behold the majesty of His throne, high and lifted up, **we see His character in its gracious manifestations, and comprehend, as never before, the significance of that endearing title, “Our Father.”** {GC 652.1}

God permits His Son to be delivered up for our offenses. He Himself assumes toward the Sin Bearer the character of a judge, divesting Himself of the endearing qualities of a father. TM 245

The Cross event brings together those things which appear to be opposites. God’s mercy and tenderness blends with holiness, justice and power. God assumes the character of a judge; He appears divested of the endearing qualities of a Father. At the same time, we are told that the Cross causes us to see the love of God and give significance to the endearing title “Our Father.”

How can the cross do both these things? How can God appear as a judge rather than as a father and at the same time we see God’s character in a way that we understand God as our father? How do these opposites come together?

Serpent Justice

To resolve this apparent conflict, we summarize some of the material found in the book *Natural Justice and Atonement*. Satan is the one that introduced the idea that justice demands death to the transgressor. This justice is a counterfeit of true justice. True justice extends mercy to the transgressor because justice is doing the right thing and for God the right thing to do is to show mercy.

Satan influenced the entire universe with his ideas of justice even as Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel with his brand of justice. The conclusion of this situation is that in order to save man, God had to satisfy Satan's justice system in giving His Son to die for us. Since Satan had convinced the world of his justice system, it had to appear that God was the one being satisfied by the death of His Son when in fact it was the kidnapper Satan that was being satisfied by the death of the Son of God.

In that thick darkness God's presence was hidden. He makes darkness His pavilion, and conceals His glory from human eyes. God and His holy angels were beside the cross. The Father was with His Son. Yet His presence was not revealed. DA 753.4

God was hidden in the thick darkness, representing the darkness we are in towards God. The lightning, the thunder and the earthquake appear to mankind that God is pouring out his fury upon His Son in our place. He assumes the character of a judge in our eyes because this is how we imagine Him. But within the darkness God is there with His Son, loving Him, and wanting to be near Him. God never left His Son at all, but humanity perceives it to be this way. Therefore, Satan's justice and God's mercy are revealed in the Cross. Satan had ruled the universe through his false idea of justice; he had made justice inconsistent with mercy and made them opposite. God and His Son devised a way to bring man back to God through Satan's justice.

Justice and Mercy stood apart, in opposition to each other, separated by a wide gulf. The Lord our Redeemer clothed His divinity with humanity, and wrought out in behalf of man a character that was without spot or blemish. He planted His cross midway between heaven and earth, and made it the object of attraction which reached both ways, drawing both Justice and Mercy across the gulf. Justice moved from its exalted throne, and with all the armies of heaven approached the cross. There it saw One equal with God bearing the penalty for all injustice and sin. With perfect satisfaction Justice bowed in reverence at the cross, saying, It is enough (MS 94, 1899).

It is not God who bows in reverence before the Cross, it is Satan's justice that bows in reverence and says it is enough. But in order for God to reach us, He must be perceived as pouring out His fury on the victim. This is the deep

symbolism of the brass altar of sacrifice in the Sanctuary system. Brass is an alloy of two metals copper and zinc. It is a man-made metal made by a son of Cain. This speaks to the Cross as the satisfaction of something man made and Satan inspired.

The Cross in Joshua 10

When I behold the large hailstones coming down from heaven and crushing men and I think of the Cross; I am reminded of Psalm 18 which the Spirit of Prophecy says speaks of the crucifixion.

Christ was “despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” By wicked hands he was taken and crucified. Speaking of his death, the psalmist writes: "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.” RH, July 17, 1900 par. 11

Ellen White says that the Psalmist was speaking of the death of Christ in writing Psalms 18. This Psalm continues:

In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, and my cry came before Him, even to His ears. Then the earth shook and trembled; The foundations of the hills also quaked and were shaken, Because He was angry. Smoke went up from His nostrils, and devouring fire from His mouth; Coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down with darkness under His feet. And He rode upon a cherub, and flew; He flew upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness His secret place; His canopy around Him was dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. **From the brightness before Him, His thick clouds passed with hailstones and coals of fire. The LORD thundered from heaven, And the Most High uttered His voice, Hailstones and coals of fire.** Psalms 18:6-13

This brings us to another layer in the subject of the present Cross. This subject is addressed in booklets such as *Calvary in Egypt*, *Christ's Antediluvian Cross*, *Christ's Red Sea Burial* and Chapter 19 of the book *Agape*. These all speak of the truth of Christ slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). In short,

every time a person is killed or a large calamity falls upon the earth, Christ is crucified in Spirit because of the separation and loss of his children. Christ took humanity upon Himself and thus He is identified with every person, so whenever a person is cut off from the earth He feels their sorrow and their pain with them right to the point of death.

With this in mind, when we look at the story in Joshua 10, we see elements of the cross revealed in the lives of those who are killed.

And afterward Joshua struck them [The 5 kings] and killed them, and hanged them on five trees; and they were **hanging on the trees until evening**. So it was **at the time of the going down of the sun** that Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees, cast them into the cave where they had been hidden, and **laid large stones against the cave's mouth**, which remain until this very day. Joshua 10:26-27

In very similar circumstances, Christ was struck, hung on a tree, killed and then placed in a cave just on evening with a great stone rolled over the mouth of the cave/tomb. Did Christ cry out on His Cross of these five kings and say, "Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing?"

The killing of these 5 kings and their tribes were a sacrificial atonement for the sin of Israel who had refused to listen to Yehovah and walk in His ways. Instead of repenting of their sins, they found a substitute to kill in their place.

This does not in any way suggest that these kings or their people were innocent. They were just as guilty and as they had sown death and destruction, so they reaped. But through their story we see mingled as it were in a brass mirror a picture of the crucifixion of Christ.

Another very interesting connection of the Cross to the story of Joshua 10 is this

For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, **The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men**, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. Mark 9:31

And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for **I have delivered them into thine hand**; there shall not a man of them stand before thee. Joshua 10:8

God delivered up His Son to the human race. It was not His desire that we kill Him, for sacrifice and offering He did not desire. When God delivered up the Canaanites to Joshua, could there have been another possible outcome?

And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, 'LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see.' And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria. And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, 'My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them?' And he answered, 'Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master.' 2 Kings 6:20-22

God delivered the Syrians into the hand of the King of Israel. He asked Elisha what he should do – kill them? Elisha said feed them and send them home to their master.

When the Lord said, "not a man of them shall stand before thee," could this have been the meaning of what God intended?

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; **behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet**, and to know that I have loved thee. Revelation 3:9

The Lord has discomfited the Canaanites as He promised to do in Exodus 23:27

And the LORD discomfited[H2000] them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon,... Joshua 10:10 (KJV)

"I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion [H2000] among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you. Exodus 23:27-28)

God said He would drive them out; Joshua and His army killed them instead. When the Spirit of God came near to these heathens, they were terrified by the

presence of God. In this state they might have been slain by the word of God and converted but instead they were slain by the sword of steel.

Hailstones

It is after Joshua and his men conduct a great slaughter that great hailstones fall from heaven and kill many of those fleeing. This is the hardest part of the story to comprehend. We have already connected the hailstones to the experience of Christ on the Cross. The events at Gibeon are also connected to the time when Christ leaves the work of intercession. So in the combining of all these stories in connection to the hail that fell during the plagues of Egypt, we prayerfully will find the harmony we are seeking.

It is interesting to compare Ellen White's description of the closing scenes of Earth's history with Psalm 18.

With shouts of triumph, jeering, and imprecation, throngs of evil men are about to rush upon their prey, when, lo, **a dense blackness, deeper than the darkness of the night, falls upon the earth.** Then a rainbow, shining with the glory from the throne of God, spans the heavens and seems to encircle each praying company. **The angry multitudes are suddenly arrested. Their mocking cries die away. The objects of their murderous rage are forgotten.** With fearful forebodings they gaze upon the symbol of God's covenant and long to be shielded from its overpowering brightness. {GC 635.3}

By the people of God a voice, clear and melodious, is heard, saying, "Look up," and lifting their eyes to the heavens, **they behold the bow of promise.** The black, angry clouds that covered the firmament are parted, and like Stephen they look up steadfastly into heaven and **see the glory of God and the Son of man seated upon His throne.** In His divine form they discern the marks of His humiliation; and from His lips they hear the request presented before His Father and the holy angels: "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." John 17:24. Again a voice, musical and triumphant, is heard, saying: "They come! they come! **holy, harmless, and undefiled.** They have kept the word of My patience; they shall walk among the angels;" and the pale,

quivering lips of those who have held fast their faith utter a shout of victory. {GC 636.1}

It is at midnight that God manifests His power for the deliverance of His people. **The sun appears, shining in its strength. Signs and wonders follow in quick succession.** The wicked look with terror and amazement upon the scene, while the righteous behold with solemn joy the tokens of their deliverance. **Everything in nature seems turned out of its course. The streams cease to flow. Dark, heavy clouds come up and clash against each other. In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes the voice of God like the sound of many waters, saying: "It is done."** Revelation 16:17. {GC 636.2}

That voice shakes the heavens and the earth. There is a mighty earthquake, "such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." Verses 17, 18. **The firmament appears to open and shut.** The glory from the throne of God seems flashing through. The mountains shake like a reed in the wind, and ragged rocks are scattered on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest. **The sea is lashed into fury. There is heard the shriek of a hurricane like the voice of demons upon a mission of destruction. The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way.** Mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. The seaports that have become like Sodom for wickedness are swallowed up by the angry waters. Babylon the great has come in remembrance before God, "to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath." **Great hailstones, every one "about the weight of a talent," are doing their work of destruction.** Verses 19, 21. The proudest cities of the earth are laid low. The lordly palaces, upon which the world's great men have lavished their wealth in order to glorify themselves, are crumbling to ruin before their eyes. Prison walls are rent asunder, and **God's people, who have been held in bondage for their faith, are set free.** {GC 636.3}

In this description the wicked are bent on destroying the righteous. Thick darkness descends and they are discomfited and confused. There is a bow in the heavens and darkness under His feet. [Ps 18:9]. There is an earthquake [Ps 18:7]. There is bright or indescribable glory [Ps 18:12]. The foundations of the world are giving way or revealed [Ps 18:15].

The reference to the hailstones in the seven last plagues is significant.

And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came **a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.** And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a **great earthquake**, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. **And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.** Revelation 16:17-21

In describing the scene of Christ leaving the temple a little earlier, notice the similarities.

"At that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book." Daniel 12:1. {GC 613.1}

When the third angel's message closes, mercy no longer pleads for the guilty inhabitants of the earth. The people of God have accomplished their work. They have received "the latter rain," "the refreshing from the presence of the Lord," and they are prepared for the trying hour before them. Angels are hastening to and fro in heaven. An angel returning from the earth announces that his work is done; the final test has been brought upon the world, and all who have proved themselves loyal to the divine precepts have received

"the seal of the living God." **Then Jesus ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above. He lifts His hands and with a loud voice says, "It is done;"** and all the angelic host lay off their crowns as He makes the solemn announcement: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Revelation 22:11. Every case has been decided for life or death. Christ has made the atonement for His people and blotted out their sins. The number of His subjects is made up; "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven," is about to be given to the heirs of salvation, and Jesus is to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. {GC 613.2}

When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. God's long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old. {GC 614.1}

In this description, after Jesus says that it is done and the earth falls under a deep darkness, it is Satan who plunges the earth into one great final trouble. The Spirit of God is withdrawn and Satan takes control of the elements. Added to this when the angels let loose human passion, this also has a terrible effect on the earth. While Satan is destroying the earth, God is blasphemed as the one who is doing the destruction.

And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. **Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.**
Revelation 16:21

This is similar to the calamities that fell upon Job. Satan was doing the work of destruction but God was the one who was blamed for it.

And the LORD said to Satan, **“Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person.”** So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD. Job 1:12

While he was still speaking, another also came and said, **“The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; and I alone have escaped to tell you!”** Job 1:16

It is also interesting to note that Ellen White connects hailstones to the work of denunciation.

He saw we talked the truth, not with storm; not pelting the people with denunciations like hailstones. . . . {5MR 275.1}

God allows men to believe that He is the one doing this great destruction, just as He allows men see Him as a judge without the endearing qualities of a father. We remember that on the Cross, Christ had been delivered up by God to the power of men and demons. This was His strange work – where God turned aside and appeared to the estranged from His Son. Again, we remember what inspiration says about how judgments fall:

I was shown that the judgments of God would not come directly out from the Lord upon them, but in this way: They place themselves beyond His protection. He warns, corrects, reproves, and points out the only path of safety; then if those who have been the objects of His special care will follow their own course independent of the Spirit of God, after repeated warnings, if they choose their own way, then He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them. 14 MR 3

God never directly brings judgments on people. It happens when He tells His angels to step down from holding the winds of strife. In the events that unfolded at Gibeon, God turned aside and became a stranger. The sequence of events is a seed of what would take place at the Cross as well as the end of the world.

Sun and the Moon Stand Still

Habakkuk states this about the judgements that fall at the coming of the Lord:

The sun and moon stood still in their habitation; at the light of Your arrows they went, at the shining of Your glittering spear. Habakkuk 3:11

The Sun is sometimes a representation of Christ.

But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; Mal 4:2

It was morning; **the sun had just risen** above the Mount of Olives, and its rays fell with dazzling brightness on the marble palaces, and lighted up the gold of the temple walls, when **Jesus, pointing to it, said, “I am the light of the world.”** {DA 463.4}

In the person of Joshua, we see the dominance of man over Christ. In the words “all that the Lord hath said we will do,” Christ, the Amen of God, is crucified. Joshua did not petition the Lord in request; the language regarding the Sun and Moon is in the imperative – it is a command. Truly Christ could say: “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.” It is interesting that the word *arrows* can imply wounding and even thunderbolt. *Glittering* can mean *lightning*. *Wounding, lightning, spear*; these terms have connections to the Cross.

We remember that any attempt to enter the land of Canaan by force is a rejection of God’s promise to bring the people into the land. This means that Joshua is operating in the Old Covenant. The offence of man is abounding in Joshua, as it should when in the Old Covenant. It is a glorious work as Paul tells us (2 Cor 3:9). We do not condemn Joshua for his actions but in looking at him, we see ourselves; we see what we are if granted to be in his position.

In the person of Joshua we foresee the crucifixion that the Israelite nation would bring upon Christ when they hung Him on a tree. We also gain an insight into the close of probation when Michael shall stand up and the seven last plagues fall, culminating in the falling of the hail.

In looking into the story of Joshua and the hailstones, Christ holds up before us a mirror in which we can begin to discern our true relation to God. Joshua, operating in the Old Covenant, offers a sacrifice of Canaanite kings on the brass altar of human atonement. He, along with Israel, represent a world that has refused God's covenant and seeks righteousness in the condemnation and destruction of their enemies. Joshua shed blood like David, so we can't look to him to build the spiritual temple of the Lord's character in us. But also like David, Joshua loved the Lord with all his heart and served God faithfully according to the knowledge he had. Like John the Baptist, he that is least in the kingdom as revealed in Christ is greater than he; not greater in value, but greater in effectiveness of lighting the earth with the glory of the Lord.

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES OR KILL THEM

Jesus tells us to love our enemies and do good to them. On the other hand, we read about what Joshua told the Israelites

So it was, when they brought out those kings to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the captains of the men of war who went with him, "Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings." And they drew near and put their feet on their necks. Then Joshua said to them, "Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; be strong and of good courage, for thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight."

Joshua 10:24-25

How do we resolve this conflict between Jesus and Joshua in how we treat our enemies?