Unit 8, Session 3

The Provision of Peace

SESSION IN A SENTENCE: God fights for His people to provide the victory.

MAIN PASSAGES: Joshua 10:1-15; 11:23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER OF YEARS OF PEACE IN RECORDED WORLD HISTORY</th>
<th>NUMBER OF DEATHS FROM WAR IN RECORDED WORLD HISTORY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your Guess:</td>
<td>Your Guess:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer:</td>
<td>Answer:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why do you think war has been such a large part of human society?
Point 1: God promises victory for His people over their enemies (Josh. 10:1-8).

1 Now King Adoni-zedek of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had captured Ai and completely destroyed it, treating Ai and its king as he had Jericho and its king, and that the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were living among them. 2 So Adoni-zedek and his people were greatly alarmed because Gibeon was a large city like one of the royal cities; it was larger than Ai, and all its men were warriors. 3 Therefore King Adoni-zedek of Jerusalem sent word to King Hoham of Hebron, King Piram of Jarmuth, King Japhia of Lachish, and King Debir of Eglon, saying, 4 “Come up and help me. We will attack Gibeon, because they have made peace with Joshua and the Israelites.” 5 So the five Amorite kings—the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon—joined forces, advanced with all their armies, besieged Gibeon, and fought against it.

6 Then the men of Gibeon sent word to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal: “Don’t give up on your servants. Come quickly and save us! Help us, for all the Amorite kings living in the hill country have joined forces against us.” 7 So Joshua and all his troops, including all his best soldiers, came from Gilgal.

8 The LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid of them, for I have handed them over to you. Not one of them will be able to stand against you.”

An alliance of five kings attacked Gibeon, so they sent word to Joshua for help. Often in their history, Israel had avoided risk and chosen the “safe” route, even if that route meant departing from God and His ways. But here they kept their oath and marched to defend a people who had tricked them—this was truly was the safe route.

“The center of His _____________ is our only _____________." —Betsie ten Boom

Though the Israelites faced a daunting battle, God’s first instruction to their leader was not to be afraid—God would give them victory. What appeared from a human perspective to be a great risk and the fallout of Joshua’s rash promises was actually God’s way of delivering five kings and their armies into Israel’s hands.

How is it comforting to know that God can be glorified and bring good from anything, even our mistakes?
Point 2: God fights for His people in miraculous ways (Josh. 10:9-15).

9 So Joshua caught them by surprise, after marching all night from Gilgal. 10 The LORD threw them into confusion before Israel. He defeated them in a great slaughter at Gibeon, chased them through the ascent of Beth-horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah. 11 As they fled before Israel, the LORD threw large hailstones on them from the sky along the descent of Beth-horon all the way to Azekah, and they died. More of them died from the hail than the Israelites killed with the sword.

12 On the day the LORD gave the Amorites over to the Israelites, Joshua spoke to the LORD in the presence of Israel:

“Sun, stand still over Gibeon, and moon, over the Valley of Aijalon.” 13 And the sun stood still and the moon stopped until the nation took vengeance on its enemies. Isn’t this written in the Book of Jashar?

So the sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed its setting almost a full day. 14 There has been no day like it before or since, when the LORD listened to a man, because the LORD fought for Israel. 15 Then Joshua and all Israel with him returned to the camp at Gilgal.

When the Israelite army drew near Gibeon, they were worn out. Yes, they had caught the alliance of five kings by surprise, but they had marched all night to do so. Their advantage was lessened by their weakened state, which was exactly what God wanted. He wanted them to remember and to know that He is the Lord who fights on behalf of His people and that He is omnipotent over nations and nature.

Miracles: A miracle is an event in which God makes an exception to the natural order of things for the purpose of demonstrating His _______________. Because we believe God to be _______________ and personally _______________ in this world, we believe He can and does perform miracles.

Joshua knew the battle was the Lord’s and that the victory was secure, but he needed more daylight for his forces to see the battle through to the end. So he prayed in faith and commanded the sun and moon to halt their march across the sky, and God answered Joshua’s prayer. Then the army demonstrated their faith and obedience as they cast aside their exhaustion and kept fighting until the victory was won.

How does God’s omnipotence encourage you in your circumstances?
Point 3: God gives His people land and peace (Josh. 11:23).

23 So Joshua took the entire land, in keeping with all that the LORD had told Moses. Joshua then gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. After this, the land had rest from war.

God had promised to give this land to Abraham and his descendants, and God had told Moses that His people would conquer it and inhabit it. It was His land to give; it did not belong to the nations within it. And to be clear, they were not innocent victims: the Canaanites were idolaters, rebels against God whom God had given time to repent, but instead, they continued in their sin (see Gen. 15:16). As long as these people dwelled in the land and God’s people were outside of the land, God’s glory was veiled. This was why their fight was worth it. Though it took much time and effort for the Israelites (Josh. 11:18), God made His people victorious and they received their promised land.

What are the benefits of perseverance in the faith?

The Israelites had endured a lengthy war in conquest of the promised land, but God had given them victory—the land was theirs. Then God gave them something else that they desperately needed: peace. Rest for the land ravaged by war. Rest for the battered and worn out bodies and minds of God’s people. But the Israelites’ physical, emotional, and mental rest in the land was a picture of a greater rest to come for us all: the spiritual rest we find only in Jesus (Matt. 11:28-30).

What will it look like to rest in Christ’s victory over sin and death?

Voices from Church History

“God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.”

—C. S. Lewis (1898-1963)
My Mission

Because Christ fought the battle against sin and death and won the victory through His life, death, and resurrection, we proclaim Him to others so that they too may find peace through Him.

- How will you rest in the victory and peace Christ has won for us through His life, death, and resurrection?
- What are some ways your group can encourage you to stay in the fight against temptation and sin with God’s strength for the victory?
- This week, how will you point someone to the victory and peace found through faith in Jesus Christ?

Notes
**Daily Study**

**Day 1: Read Joshua 10:1-8**

Who is your “Gibeon”? You may not be in a disgruntled relationship with an entire town or city, but we all have a person who is a Gibeon to us: someone with whom we struggle to get along, who drives us crazy, whom we wish would just leave us alone. Perhaps it’s a family member, a coworker, a neighbor, a friend of a friend, or a church member. You find yourself wondering why you are so impatient when he or she is around. This person makes you feel like you aren’t being yourself—you are on edge, defensive, perhaps even negative.

Joshua and the Israelites did not turn their backs on the Gibeonites. They had given them their word of peace, and whether they liked it or not, they were going to maintain their relationship, difficult as it was. We have been called to do the same. Consider this:

**You may be your Gibeon’s only friend.** The Gibeonites were destined to destruction without Israel’s help. Israel felt that they didn’t need Gibeon, but Gibeon sure needed Israel.

**God put you in the path of your Gibeon.** In this account, we see that God was providentially working through Israel’s strained alliance with Gibeon. The same is true with your Gibeon. God has placed you in relationship for a purpose—don’t forget that.

**You need your Gibeon.** God knows your shortfalls, and though you think you have it all together, you don’t. None of us do. One of our greatest failings is loving others. This is where our Gibeons are so helpful. We likely don’t need them for friendship or protection but to keep us humble, to teach us how to love sacrificially and selflessly.

**Who is your Gibeon? What can you do this week to reflect the love of Christ to him or her?**
**Day 2:** Read Joshua 10:9-15

“But God.” Pause right here and think about this phrase. How many stories in Scripture turn on a dime because of these two words? How many testimonies in your life could be told that hinge on the words “but God”?

Though the words “but God” don’t appear in this passage, these verses whisper its truth. The Israelites faced a formidable foe, “but God” would be the key to their victory. He was the One who cast the enemy into confusion. He was the One who threw hailstones at the enemy. He was the One who halted the sun in its place.

“But God” is the key to our victories too, both internal and external. “But God” is what takes hold of our sour attitude and gives us love in its place. “But God” is what gives us the courage to stand on the gospel when the culture around us pushes back. “But God” is what enables us to cling to our faith even in the darkest nights of pain and suffering. “But God” is the power of God working the gospel in and through us (see Eph. 2:1-10).

What is your “but God” testimony? With whom have you shared it recently?

**Day 3:** Read Joshua 10:16-43

Once the alliance of five kings was routed, the other cities in the southern half of the promised land fell in rapid sequence, like dominoes. It’s challenging to find meaning in such an abstract, sterile account of the southern campaign. It might be tempting to read through this passage rapidly, with eyes glazed over. But don’t do it! Appreciate the rapid pace of this part of the conquest because it will help you understand the importance of verse 43: After the southern cities were defeated, Joshua and the Israelites returned to their camp at Gilgal, presumably to rest.

Yes, God had been the One delivering victory after victory. And yes, there was still work to be done—the northern cities had to be defeated so that all of the land would be Israel’s possession. But God’s people needed rest. Just as God established the Sabbath rest in the creation account and just as Israel was to abstain from collecting manna on the Sabbath, we see here a reminder of our limits as people. Even while doing the Lord’s work, we still need to find time to rest.

How do you guard time to rest as a rhythm of life? Do you tend to fall more toward working too much or resting too much? Why?
Day 4: Read Joshua 11:1-23

Forty years before the Israelites entered into the promised land, their parents had been given the same opportunity, but their faithlessness resulted in them missing out. As we know, that generation refused to enter into the land and was forced instead to wander in the wilderness until they all died off.

In verse 15, we see how Joshua and the next generation were wise not to repeat the same mistake of faithlessness. At the conclusion of the conquest, we read that Joshua was faithful to obey all God had commanded, which led to the successful conquest of the land. God was not just after a portion of faithful obedience; He was after full, faithful obedience. Each battle and each step in each battle was a step of faith for Joshua and the Israelites. They could not have picked and chosen which steps to take and which not to take. They had to walk fully in faith, and when they did, they were successful. God was not after their obedience in isolation—just as He is not after ours in isolation. Instead, He is after our faith, which is made known through our obedience.

In what areas of your life are you struggling to walk fully in faith? Why? What steps can you take toward more faithfulness?

Day 5: Read Joshua 12:1-24

Thirty-one kings conquered; each one listed and counted as “one” in Joshua 12:9-24. It might be helpful to read these verses aloud to appreciate the repetition and the cadence. That is what we need to feel as we read these verses; we need to appreciate the scope of the victory God had given His people. A nation of the children of slaves had entered into the promised land—a choice land with many a city defended by mighty armies—and defeated each enemy that was before them. Thirty-one of them, to be precise. But also to be precise, Israel did not win any of these victories—God had won each one of them through Israel and for Israel. This was what God wanted the people to remember. He wanted them to be able to look back on the conquest and remember precisely what He had done to give them the victory—not just one large convoluted victory but what He had done thirty-one times. Each fallen king was a testament to God’s power and a reminder of His provision for His people. That was what they would need to remember.

What have you done to record and remember the many victories God has won for you?
Encourage One Another

Join together with 2-4 people from your group, or with your family, sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and you are responding.

Share your thoughts and reflections on the truths from Scripture in this session:

- God promises victory for His people over their enemies (Josh. 10:1-8).
- God fights for His people in miraculous ways (Josh. 10:9-15).
- God gives His people land and peace (Josh. 11:23).

How have you responded to these truths from Scripture?

What can you share with fellow believers to encourage them in how God has fought for you in specific ways?

How will the truth that God fights for His people in miraculous ways sustain you as you strive to share the good news of Jesus with the world?

Notes
UNIT 7
SESSION 1
1. Tony Evans, Tony Evans’ Book of Illustrations (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2009) [eBook].

SESSION 2

SESSION 3

SESSION 4
1. Amy Carmichael, Thou Givest … They Gather (Fort Washington, PA: CLC Publications, 1958) [eBook].

UNIT 8
SESSION 1
1. Noël Piper, Treasuring God in our Traditions (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003), 64.

SESSION 2

SESSION 3
1. Betsie ten Boom, quoted in The Hiding Place, by Corrie ten Boom with Elizabeth and John Sherrill (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2006), 84.

EASTER SESSION

UNIT 9
SESSION 1
1. Andrew Murray, Abide in Christ, in The Essential Works of Andrew Murray, ed. Tracy M. Sumner (Barbour, 2008) [eBook].

SESSION 2

SESSION 3

SESSION 4

SESSION 5
In these sessions of *The Gospel Project*, we experience some of the most exciting narratives in Scripture. There are accounts here of sin and judgment, of moral decline and merciful intervention, and of rescuers who need rescue. Through it all, one thing is clear: God is with His people and He is faithful to His promise.

It’s important to keep that central theme in mind because many people read these stories about the conquest of the land and try to find examples for emulation. To be clear, we can learn a lot from these Old Testament heroes (see 1 Cor. 10), but we cannot implement their virtues apart from our connection to the Vine—Jesus Christ Himself, the One who bears fruit in us and through us.

As we walk through our present wilderness, struggling against sin and encountering sorrow, we know that the God who has gone before us is faithful. He is the One who prepares the way for us to be His ambassadors. He is the One who breaks the chains of our idolatry and lifts our gaze to His unchanging glory.