

Enter at Your Own Rest

Studies in the Book of Joshua

"Full blessing in the Christian life is not bestowed except to eager, hungry people who press in to receive it"

Alan Redpath

Text

Joshua 10:15-27

Topic

Joshua brings out and kills
the five kings who were hiding in the cave at Makkedah

Title

"Cavemen's Crib"

or

"Don't Make It So Easy to Defeat You That a Caveman Could Do It"

Joshua 10:15 Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

Joshua 10:16 But these five kings had fled and hidden themselves in a cave at Makkedah.

Joshua 10:17 And it was told Joshua, saying, "The five kings have been found hidden in the cave at Makkedah."

Joshua 10:18 So Joshua said, "Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and set men by it to guard them."

Joshua 10:19 And do not stay *there* yourselves, *but* pursue your enemies, and attack their rear *guard*. Do not allow them to enter their cities, for the LORD your God has delivered them into your hand."

Joshua 10:20 Then it happened, while Joshua and the children of Israel made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they had finished, that those who escaped entered fortified cities.

Joshua 10:21 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 10:22 Then Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings to me from the cave."

Joshua 10:23 And they did so, and brought out those five kings to him from the cave: the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon.

Joshua 10:24 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.

Joshua 10:25 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 10:26 And afterward Joshua struck them and killed them, and hanged them on five trees; and they were hanging on the trees until evening.

Joshua 10:27 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.

Introduction

Shoichi Yokoi was a Japanese soldier who hid in the jungles of Guam for twenty-seven years rather than surrender to American forces at the end of World War II.

Japanese troops were encouraged to fight to the death and taught that surrender was shameful. When American troops seized control of Guam in 1944 Yokoi and more than one thousand other Japanese soldiers hid in the jungle rather than give up or commit suicide.

The others were all captured within a couple of years or died of starvation or sickness. Though he knew that Japan had surrendered Yokoi continued to hide out, living in a well-concealed cave and surviving on fruit, nuts, fish, shrimp, frogs, rats and snails.

In January 1972 two American hunters surprised Yokoi at dusk as he was about to set fish traps in a river. They marched him at gunpoint to a local police station, where he told his story to the stunned police officers.

"I am ashamed that I have returned alive," Yokoi declared after his return, reflecting the traditional warrior spirit that it is better to die than to give oneself up to the enemy.

"I continued to live for the sake of the Emperor and believing in the Emperor and the Japanese spirit," he later declared.

Yokoi was a thoroughly defeated enemy and knew it but would not give up ground.

Your spiritual enemies are thoroughly defeated by Jesus Christ on the Cross at Calvary. They know it. But they won't easily give up ground.

What makes it even worse is that if we are not cautious we can cooperate with them by giving our enemies a foothold in our lives.

Our passage in Joshua ten shows us the proper attitude towards our spiritual enemies who refuse to give up ground. Instead of giving them a *foothold* in our lives we ought to see them as a *footstool*.

I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 You Have Orders To Not Let Your Enemies Gain A Foothold, and #2 You Have The Lord Who Makes Your Enemies A Footstool.

#1 You Have Orders To Not Let Your Enemies Gain A Foothold
(v15-21)

After describing the miracle of the sun and the moon standing still, extending the day so that Israel could defeat the five armies, our text gives additional information about the slaying of the five kings of those armies at the ending of that same day.

Joshua 10:15 Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

Then is really *after* the events of verses sixteen through twenty-seven. Joshua and the Israelites would return to their base camp briefly before launching out into the southern and then the northern military strike chronicled at the end of chapter ten and in chapter eleven.

First there were cavemen to kill.

Joshua 10:16 But these five kings had fled and hidden themselves in a cave at Makkedah.

Cowards! They ought to have stood shoulder-to-shoulder and fought with their men.

So, too, in Christian service. Leaders are to remain servants.

Joshua 10:17 And it was told Joshua, saying, "The five kings have been found hidden in the cave at Makkedah."

The field leaders left it up to Joshua to decide the fate of the five. In any endeavor for the Lord it's good to have leadership and to defer to it. God speaks to all of us but He also tests our submission one to another.

- being changed to bring change -

In verses eighteen through twenty-one Joshua instructed his soldiers to seal up the five kings in the cave. These guys aren't killed until later; but they are as good as dead from this point forward.

It reminds us that our spiritual enemies have already been defeated by Jesus Christ. We're told that, on the Cross, Jesus **disarmed principalities and powers, [and] made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them** (Colossians 2:15). We're told that our old nature was crucified with [Jesus] (Romans 6:6) and that in the cross of Jesus Christ the world has been crucified to me (Galatians 6:14).

- The devil has been defeated but he won't give up ground! We'll have battles to fight until the Lord comes and deals with him once and for all.
- Our flesh has been defeated but still exerts its influence towards sin. The struggle between the flesh and the spirit will go on until we are with the Lord.
- The world beckons me to leave-off following Jesus and live for its temporary pleasures and pride.

We are to reckon our enemies defeated and fight on.

In Joshua's orders to his soldiers we can identify a few good strategies for our own reckoning against our enemies.

The first was in verse seventeen where we read **the five kings have been found hidden**. It indicates they had been seeking them, searching for them.

We can too easily coexist with our enemies, allowing them to remain hidden rather than going after them. So much of our growth and progress depends upon an openness to the Holy Spirit to use God's Word to search our hearts and reveal things to us.

Joshua 10:18 So Joshua said, "Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and set men by it to guard them.

Joshua ordered them to stop-up the cave and to set a reasonable guard at its entrance.

Sometimes we need to just stop what we are doing. It is sin. Jesus once put it in terms of amputation by saying, "If your right eye offends, pluck it out; if your right hand offends, cut it off."

Maybe something we're doing isn't sin but it is weakening us towards sin. **Stop it!** The stakes are too high to toy with liberties that can too easily turn into license.

Then set a guard. Change your habits. Get rid of whatever it is causing you spiritual harm. Make it hard if not impossible for you to return to that cave and roll away the stone.

Joshua 10:19 And do not stay *there* yourselves, *but* pursue your enemies, and attack their rear *guard*. Do not allow them to enter their cities, for the LORD your God has delivered them into your hand."

It wasn't enough to route the enemy for a day. They must be pursued and destroyed.

In your walk with the Lord you are expected to gain ground, not just protect territory. Be looking to grow. Ask the Lord to stretch you.

Joshua 10:20 Then it happened, while Joshua and the children of Israel made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they had finished, that those who escaped entered fortified cities.

Despite their best efforts, and the Lord's supernatural intervention, some of the enemy soldiers **escaped** and **entered fortified cities**. They would be defeated later as the Israelites embarked on their southern and northern campaigns.

It reminds us that, this side of Heaven, we will have no respite from war. Even though principalities and powers are defeated; even though we can say "No" to the flesh and the world; the battle rages on. It's going to take a new earth and a new glorified physical body for our warfare to be finally over.

You can grow discouraged and weary in the fight. Or you can see it as a challenge that sharpens your spiritual skills.

It is a phenomenon of soldiers and sailors, of emergency service personnel and law enforcement, that as much as you do not want to be needed you are up for the challenge. If you get discouraged every time there is an emergency you are in the wrong field.

So it is in your spiritual warfare. You can allow trials and tribulations to defeat you. Or you can understand they teach you that you can do all things through Jesus Christ.

Joshua 10:21 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.

None of the Israelites were lost in battle. Similarly, you are secure in Jesus Christ. He will not lose one of those the Father has given to Him to save.

They returned to **camp**. Similarly, you will be with the Lord one day.

These eternal truths ought to give you **peace**. Too many people are stressed out and that includes Christians. Maybe we have forgotten we are in a war. Sometimes we react to struggles and sufferings as if we are civilians who've been attacked. We're not civilians; we're soldiers. There is a very different mindset and readiness to a soldier as opposed to a civilian.

We're not civilians; we're soldiers. There is a very different mindset and readiness to a soldier as opposed to a civilian.

At the end of verse twenty-one it says, **No one moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel**. In other words, their enemies feared them.

Both Christians and churches are targets for criticism. We don't seem to inspire much fear in the world. I'm sure there are dozens or hundreds of reasons why that is so.

If we remember we are soldiers and get in the fight all that will change. God will do things for us and among us that will stop the mouths of our enemies.

Your enemies fight on. Don't let them gain a foothold in your life. Remain cautious and vigilant.

#2 You Have The Lord Who Makes Your Enemies A Footstool
(v22-27)

In the remaining verses, Joshua makes a public spectacle of the five kings. They are made to bow before him. He tells his captains to place their feet on the necks of those kings. Then he kills them and hangs their bodies until nightfall.

It summarizes in a picture the struggle that began in the Garden of Eden and will end with the creation of a new heaven and a new earth.

In the Garden, after man sinned, God promised to come Himself as our Savior. It would involve His death as a sacrifice; but it would be His triumph over Satan, sin, and death. Announcing His triumph, the Lord said to the devil that He would bruise his (Satan's) head (Genesis 3:15). **It's this same picture of putting your foot on the neck of your enemy to show he has been totally defeated.**

On the Cross Jesus defeated the devil. He defeated sin. He conquered death. He rose from the dead. He ascended into Heaven. He waits to return and finally, fully establish His rule and reign.

Thus you read in Psalm 110:1,

Psalms 110:1 The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

On the Cross the Lord bruised the devil's head just as prophesied. The full and final fulfillment of His victory waits for His return when Jesus will make the devil and all His enemies His footstool.

We live in this **Till** (or until) between Jesus' victory and His coming to finally, fully establish it. That's why the apostle Paul could say,

Romans 16:20 And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly... There's no doubt about the outcome. Jesus is coming; He will have His **enemies** as His **footstool**.

In the mean time we are to assume the position that our enemies **are** a footstool. Just as Joshua invited his captains to take that position, so Jesus invites us to do the same. It's why we are told things like, **Do not give the devil an opportunity** (Ephesians 4:27 NASB).

Or like,

Colossians 3:5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. - *being changed to bring change* -

We are to take a spiritual stand against the devil and against our flesh **as if they were already our footstool**.

It comes down to Foothold vs. Footstool. It's one or the other.

- We can give spiritual foes and forces a foothold by sinning or by setting ourselves up to sin.
- **Or** we can assume a position of placing them as our footstool because of what Jesus Christ – our 'Joshua' – has accomplished for us in His death, burial, and resurrection.

Ask the Lord to bring out any 'cave dwellers' in your life. Bring them out into the light of God's Word. Claim your victory over them.

