

## Loyalty and Faithfulness Resolving A Giant Problem

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Last week we looked at the battles fought by Moses and the nation west of the Jordan and saw that not only was it physical, but also spiritual as well.

The mindset of the nation, what they would understand about what is going on with the various giant clans referenced in the scriptures is that they can immediately tie this back to the events of Genesis 6. Let's look at the International Standard Version of the scriptures

Genesis 6:1–8

Now after the population of human beings had increased throughout the earth, and daughters had been born to them, some divine beings noticed how attractive human women were, so they took wives for themselves from a selection that pleased them. So the LORD said, "My Spirit won't remain with human beings forever, because they're truly mortal. Their lifespan will be 120 years." The Nephilim were on the earth at that time (and also immediately afterward), when those divine beings were having sexual relations with those human women, who gave birth to children for them. These children became the heroes and legendary figures of ancient times. The LORD saw that human evil was growing more and more throughout the earth, with every inclination of people's thoughts becoming only evil on a continuous basis. Then the LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and he was deeply grieved about that. So the LORD said, "I will annihilate these human beings whom I've created from the earth, including people, animals, crawling things, and flying birds, because I'm grieving that I made them." The LORD was pleased with Noah, however." (ISV)

Did you catch the aside in the passage, “and afterward?”

This is the afterward discussed and what we see with Moses and Joshua is that anywhere the descendants of Nephilim were, there was a gene pool problem that had to be resolved.

The Nephilim bloodlines had a different pedigree. They were produced by other divine beings. They did not belong to Yahweh, and he therefore had no interest in claiming them. Coexistence was not possible with the spawn of other gods. (Heiser 2015, 203)

The first city after crossing the Jordan was Jericho and the battle was supernaturally superintended, as we discovered, by YAHWEH through the person of the pre-incarnate Christ

We also discovered that not every location was wholly devoted to destruction, just those with a giant problem

Each battle was not just physical in nature, but each also had a spiritual component. And we see faith in YAHWEH.

Joshua 10:6–13

And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp in Gilgal, saying, “Do not relax your hand from your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the hill country are gathered against us.” So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor. And the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands. Not a man of them shall stand before you.” So Joshua came upon them suddenly, having marched up all night from Gilgal. And the LORD threw them into a panic before Israel, who struck them with a great blow at Gibeon and chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon and struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah. And as they fled before Israel, while they were going down the ascent of Beth-horon, the LORD threw down large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died because of the hailstones than the sons of Israel killed with the sword. At that time Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD gave the Amorites over to the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, “Sun, stand still at Gibeon, and moon, in the Valley of Aijalon.” And the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation took vengeance on their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in the midst of heaven and did not hurry to set for about a whole day. (ESV)

Joshua knew who he was following and who was responsible for the victory, so he takes the next step.

- He knew God was with him
- He knew God was with the people
- He knew God had promised victory
- He had seen God do mighty miracles in the past

#### **Joshua’s next step**

- Joshua asked for and received a miracle on a planetary scale

In the Chinese history it is reported, that in the time of their seventh emperor, Yao, the sun did not set for ten days, and that men were afraid the world would be burnt, and there were great fires at that time; and though the time of the sun’s standing still were enlarged beyond the bounds of truth, yet it seems to refer to this fact, and was manifestly about the same time; for this miracle was wrought in the year of the world 2554, which fell in the 75th, or, as some say, the 67th year of that emperor’s reign, who reigned 90 years.

Now the year of the world 2554 is identical to Bouw’s independently derived biblical chronology for the date of Joshua’s long day. Incidentally, note that a 90-year reign (not Yao’s age) is thoroughly consistent with the 110 to 120 year ages achieved by Moses, Aaron, and Joshua who would have been

contemporaries of Yao. The length of time mentioned by the Chinese, ten days, may be too long simply because the Chinese did not have clocks which ran independently of the sun's motion so that the estimate would be purely subjective. Probably, the duration was exaggerated both by the trauma of the event and in the transmission of the story through time. (Association for Biblical Astronomy 2020)

He prays not only in light of God's counsel pledged to the battle, but to His covenant to help his people. He also prays, finally, in view of God's creation and control of His universe. He prays trusting in an incredibly great God. And he prays in light of God's commitments to Israel in the past. (Rosscup 2008, 335)

What about us, can we pray that way, can we take what God has promised and see Him move mightily on our behalf?

John 14:12–14

“Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I am going to the Father. And whatever you ask in My name, this I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.” (NASB 2020)

Matthew 17:19–20

“Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” And He said to them, “Because of your meager faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”” (NASB 2020)

Jeremiah 32:27

“See, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too hard for me?” (NRSV)

Jeremiah 33:3

“Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.” (NRSV)

Philippians 4:19

“And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” (NASB 2020)

Do we have a promise from God? Do we believe Him? Am I ready to take the next step based on where I am and what I know of Him?

So, Joshua prayed, what did God do? God answered the prayer and extended the length of the day...on a planetary scale.

Genesis 1:1

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (NLT)

As the Creator, God can and does intervene in His creation. This is warfare, not just on earth but also in the heavenlies.

God was in the process of judging a people who were steeped in sin. The sin being committed by these people was worthy of the death penalty even under the law today. Among other things, they practiced child sacrifice.

Other items to consider:

What was one of the major gods of the people in the promised land?

- The sun and the moon

What does God showing He has control over those do to them?

- Obliterates their faith in their gods

If God can do this for Joshua and the nation, can we trust Him with our lives?

What about the warfare today?

Romans 8:37–39

“No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us! For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor heavenly rulers, nor things that are present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (NET)

Only those locations where there were giants was the command from YAHWEH given to destroy everyone.

After taking the south, then Joshua moved his attention to the north. Again, what was the number one goal he paid attention to?

Joshua 11:21–22

“Then Joshua came at that time and eliminated the Anakim from the hill country, from Hebron, Debir, Anab, and from all the hill country of Judah and all the hill country of Israel. Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. There were no Anakim left in the land of the sons of Israel; only in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod some remained.” (NASB 2020)

Why the note at the end? Where was Goliath and his kin from?

Goliath was Rephaim. He and the four giant warriors listed alongside him are descended from rapha (רפּה) in Gath (2 Sam 21:22; 1 Chr 20:8). If rapha is interpreted as a proper name, Rapha, then the four warriors were all brothers of Goliath. The biblical text does not actually say this. Only one of these men, Lahmi, is specifically said to be the brother of Goliath. Therefore, it is best to translate the term as “giants” or “Rephaim” as many English translations do. (Heiser, I Dare You Not to Bore Me with the Bible 2014, 57)

By the way, when David confronted Goliath, a giant, in individual combat, he recognized the spiritual aspect of the battle, and he also knew how many of these giants were there.

1 Samuel 17:40

“He took his staff in his hand, picked out five smooth stones from the stream, placed them in the pouch of his shepherd’s bag, took his sling in hand, and approached the Philistine.” (NET)

The point of the takeover was those who were to be destroyed were descendants of the Nephilim. They were entitled to the same treatment as those who existed prior to the flood – death. There was one man who understood the nature of the battle and was ready to engage.

### **Caleb**

- Called to active duty when he was 40
- Served continually to 85
- Then moved to possess what had been promised to him

Is Caleb asking for easy things to do in his later years?

We are never too old to make new conquests of faith in the power of the Lord. Like Caleb, we can capture mountains and conquer giants if we wholly follow the Lord. No matter how old we become, we must never retire from trusting and serving the Lord. (Wiersbe 1996, 124)

- Caleb knows there are giants in the land
- He knows it is a war, but he has YAHWEH
- He is calling them out

Joshua 14:12

“Now then, give me this hill country about which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day that Anakim were there, with great fortified cities; perhaps the LORD will be with me, and I will drive them out as the LORD has spoken.”

Caleb knew who the war was against, but he also knew who was on his side. He succeeded, the rest of the nation though would fail at completing the task. So much so that they would receive a visit.

Judges 2:1–4

“Then the Angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: “I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you. And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.’ But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? Therefore I also said, ‘I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.’ ” So it was, when the Angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept.” (NKJV)

Loyalty to Yahweh—refusing to worship any other god—was of course at the heart of salvation in the Old Testament. (Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible* 2015, 216)

The people though were already beginning to compromise, and that becomes very evident in the book of Judges, a book that outlines the downward spiral of the people YAHWEH had selected as His own to reestablish Eden on earth. They would fail and eventually YAHWEH Himself would be required in the person of Jesus Christ to achieve what the enemy kept working hard to stop.

Loyalty to YAWEH would = blessing, but disloyalty would = curse. That is what the scene in Deuteronomy 32 deals with and what Joshua again reiterated to the nation in Joshua 8.

But in the future, the nation would fail. First the north, followed by the south. They would be corrupted by false gods, the fallen members of YAHWEH’s divine council.

YAHWEH would dwell with His people. Remember His presence is in the Holy of Holies and would also be in the first temple.

In Judges we see a pattern of faithfulness followed by apostasy, followed by a return, then YAHWEH appointing a judge to rescue, followed by apostasy. Each time would seem to get darker and darker.

In Judges 4 we meet Deborah, who is a prophetess and a judge. We miss this, think like a Jew in 30 AD, in a male dominated society. YAHWEH will use whoever is available.

This was an act of grace, but it was also an act of humiliation for the Jews; for they lived in a male-dominated society that wanted only mature male leadership...For God to give His people a woman judge was to treat them like little children, which is exactly what they were when it came to spiritual things. (Wiersbe, *Be Available*, "Be" Commentary Series 1994, 34-35)

Judges 4:10–16

“And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; he went up with ten thousand men under his command, and Deborah went up with him. Now Heber the Kenite, of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, had separated himself from the Kenites and pitched his tent near the terebinth tree at Zaanaim, which is beside Kedesh. And they reported to Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor. So Sisera gathered together all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the

people who were with him, from Harosheth Hagoyim to the River Kishon. Then Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For this is the day in which the LORD has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the LORD gone out before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. And the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from his chariot and fled away on foot. But Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth Hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left." (NKJV)

Notice who it is that routed the army, YAHWEH. Deborah says YAHWEH has gone before him and it is YAHWEH's army that routs Sisera, Barak and the army of Israel is relegated to mop up duties.

What is part of the reason, YAHWEH is in control of the weather, not Baal.

Judges 5:4–5

"LORD, when you went out from Seir, when you marched from the region of Edom, the earth trembled and the heavens dropped, yes, the clouds dropped water. The mountains quaked before the LORD, even Sinai before the LORD, the God of Israel." (ESV)

One thing that helped to confuse and frighten the Canaanites was the sudden appearance of torrential rain during the traditional dry season. Since Sisera wouldn't have taken his chariots to the fields if he had suspected any kind of bad weather, we can safely assume that this battle was fought during the June-to-September dry season. When you remember that the Canaanite god Baal was the god of storms, you can see how the sudden change of weather could have affected the superstitious Canaanites. Had their own god Baal turned against them? Was the God of Israel stronger than Baal? If so, then the battle was already lost, and the wisest thing the soldiers could do was flee. (Wiersbe, Be Available, "Be" Commentary Series 1994, 38)

A direct assault by YAHWEH on Baal, spiritual warfare. In the physical side of things, Sisera gets hammered...literally.

Judges 4:21

"But Jael the wife of Heber took a tent peg, and took a hammer in her hand. Then she went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple until it went down into the ground while he was lying fast asleep from weariness. So he died." (ESV)

Next we see Gideon visited in person by YAHWEH and the angel of YAHWEH and also go one on one with Baal worship.

Judges 6:11–23

"Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites. And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, "The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!" Gideon said to Him, "O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites." Then the LORD turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?" So he said to Him, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." And the LORD said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man." Then he said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me. Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set it before You." And He said, "I will wait until you come back." So Gideon went in and prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought them out to Him under the terebinth tree and presented them. The Angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did

so. Then the Angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that was in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the LORD departed out of his sight. Now Gideon perceived that He was the Angel of the LORD. So Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face." Then the LORD said to him, "Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die." (NKJV)

Right after this, YAHWEH instructs Gideon to destroy the altar to Baal, which he does. What is the basic problem in Israel, where has their loyalty gone?

Judges 6:30–31

"Then they said to Joash, "Bring your son out here, so that we can kill him! He tore down the altar to Baal and cut down the symbol of Asherah beside it." But Joash said to all those who confronted him, "Are you standing up for Baal? Are you defending him? Anyone who stands up for him will be killed before morning. If Baal is a god, let him defend himself. It is his altar that was torn down." (GNB)

We have spiritual warfare directed against those nations that are enslaving Israel, yet we also see the continuing saga of Israel working hard to grasp defeat from the jaws of victory by fooling around with the false gods of the surrounding nations. Just as promised by the angel of YAHWEH in Judges 2.

We have a tendency to look at Baal worship and discount that as an ancient problem, surely not something we would fight against today. Recall our world view problem and how we discount the supernatural.

Immersion in sexual perversion, the sacrificing of children for the sake of convenience and prosperity, and the lust for financial gain were all predominant features of Baal worship. (Gallups 2017, 100)

So how are we doing on this today, is Baal worship truly a thing of the past?

Only 55 percent of born-again Christians leaned toward making abortion illegal, compared to 38 percent who would choose to make it legal. (Barna 2011, 76)

In addition to the moral issues evaluated by Gallup, we learned that more than half of all born-again adults also believe that cohabitation is morally appropriate; half say that entertaining sexual fantasies about someone other than one's spouse is morally acceptable; and one-third condone the use of profanity in public and the viewing of pornography. Deeper analysis of the data showed that the segments of churched adults who are most at risk were men, people under thirty-five, upscale adults, and people who attend large churches. (Barna 2011, 75-76)

How about a Biblical world view?

#### Elements Include

- absolute moral truth exists;
- the Bible is totally accurate in all of the principles it teaches;
- Satan is a real being or force, not merely symbolic;
- people cannot earn their way into heaven by trying to be good or by doing good works;
- Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth; and
- God is the all-knowing, all-powerful creator of the world and still rules the universe today. (Barna 2011, 137)

...among born-again adults, the statistics have remained flat: 18 percent in 1995, 22 percent in 2000, 21 percent in 2005, and 19 percent in 2010. The specific components most likely to keep born-again adults from having a biblical worldview are belief in the existence of absolute moral truth (54 percent of born agains dismiss the idea), the existence of Satan (60 percent of born agains are not sold on this), and

the belief that it is impossible for people to earn their way into heaven through good behavior (53 percent fail to meet this criterion). (Barna 2011, 138)

As you can tell, Baal worship is alive and well in the United States and goes under the name of – tolerance. This fallen one is no longer hiding in the shadows and lying to us, in 2016, the arch of the Temple of Baal, which was destroyed by Isis in Palmyra, was rebuilt and went on a world tour.

Baal worship in reality corresponds exactly to activities that most people freely participate in today. They do so without really understanding the nature of idolatry...The people were involved because they liked the excitement and the liberty and the business it facilitated. Plus, the music was great and the entertainment was exciting. (Brown 2017)

Baal worship continues today, we just have new names for it, but the spirit behind it has not moved away from the original concept...to keep us from being faithful to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Ultimately, our destruction is in mind.

Back to Gideon. Gideon continued on with YAHWEH who provided a stunning victory, yet:

Judges 8:33

“After Gideon died, the Israelites again prostituted themselves to the Baals. They made Baal-Berith their god.” (NET)

Fallen divine beings continued to mislead Israel and Israel, who was to remain loyal to YAHWEH only, continued to struggle with that loyalty. Jephthah, another judge, used this knowledge of the other nations belief to his advantage

...it is difficult to escape the clear import of Jephthah’s question to the Ammonite king: “Should you not possess what your god Chemosh gives you to possess? And should we not be the ones to possess everything that the LORD our God has conquered for our benefit?” (Judg 11: 24). Like all people of his time, Jephthah believed that spiritual forces— the gods of various nations— were deeply involved in human battles and played a crucial role in whether they won or lost a battle. Thus if Yahweh defeats the god Chemosh and gives “Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel” (v. 21), then Israel wins the battle and the land of the Amorites is rightfully theirs. (Boyd 1997, 117-118)

The problem though with loyalty continued throughout the time of the Judges until finally, Samuel is called as a Judge and a prophet. But we continue to see the struggle between YAHWEH and the fallen ones who are working to usurp what it is He is doing. We see clearly what the Bible is showing us, there is a supernatural realm of faithful spiritual beings who are servants of YAHWEH and then there are those in rebellion.

This notion that there exists a council, or a society, of divine beings between humans and God who, like us, have free wills and can therefore influence the flow of history for better or for worse is obviously jarring to a number of Western worldview assumptions. Indeed, for many believers it is foreign to their Western Christian assumptions as well. (Boyd 1997, 140)

But this was reality for the Jew and this is the reality of the scriptures. To combat this ongoing issue with disloyalty, YAHWEH turns to a group of people we call prophets.

They have job interviews before getting started and we will discuss that next week.

I note with grave displeasure that your patient has become a Christian. Do not indulge the hope that you will escape the usual penalties; indeed, in your better moments, I trust you would hardly even wish to do so. In the meantime we must make the best of the situation. There is no need to despair; hundreds of these adult converts have been reclaimed after a brief sojourn in the Enemy’s camp and are now with us. All the habits of the patient, both mental and bodily, are still in our favour. (Lewis 1996, 5)



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