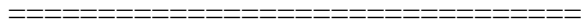


Collateral Damage and the Heart of God

Part Twenty-three

(Forced Extension)



Meditating on the Bible

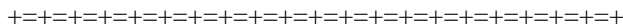
1 Corinthians 10:1-14

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.



In a prior joint venture of Israel--between Joseph and Pharaoh, king of Egypt--the interaction of Israel was extended, in a fashion that was outside of the control of the congregation of Israel. In that sense, that venture serves as one kind of model for modern international relationships. We will explore more of those types of ventures, to provide additional insight about; lessening collateral damage through faithfulness to the way of the LORD. To do that, we have included some of the joint ventures that were ordained for Israel, so as to provide for Israel's progressive immersion into the world, at large.



Joint Venture: Joshua and the stale bread

In the modern day, several nations have geographical places known as, territories. These territories are disconnected areas--either remote ones, or, places that are in the same locality, but, they are not a part of the main geographical space of the family of the founders of the nation. They are included as territories because; they are places for which the founders and their descendants bear responsibility. Originally, it seemed that Israel would have a limited ability to partake of this nation-strengthening exercise of, responsibility and accountability.

There was some opportunity for establishing territories; but, that was only available for remote ones. In the early time of the development of the nation; this, here, was Israel's limitation, as pertained to remote lands.

When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it: And when the LORD thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword: But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the LORD thy God hath given thee.

Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations.

(Deuteronomy 20:10-15)

By exercise of that commandment, a remote territory would allow Israel to exercise its authority; even though, Israel did not have a significant immediate responsibility for its well-being, or accountability for any damage that might be done to it. However, for near places, Israel was not allowed to exercise authority over, have direct responsibility for, or be accountable to, territories of that sort. Israel had the following there was also this limitation, as pertained to the opportunity for either responsibility, or accountability, for territories.

But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee: That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God.

(Deuteronomy 20:16-18)

This did not allow Israel to experience management of local territories that were not of the tribes of Jacob. To eliminate this potential restriction, and the difficulty it would cause in rounding out the skill set of the nation; the LORD provided this opportunity for Israel.

And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof; That they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord.

And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up; And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy. And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us.

(Joshua 9:1-14)

It seems that, an external voice was requesting the formation of a joint venture with Israel. This was an opportunity for Israel to be trained in participating in a confederation; one that was similar to Abram's confederation with Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner, in the time of Genesis 14:13-15. Let us watch as it forms in this latter time.

And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you?

And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants.

And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? and from whence come ye?

And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth. Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us.

This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is

mouldy: And these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new; and, behold, they be rent: and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey.

(Joshua 9:7-13)

We paused here, so that we can give some emphasis to this next action of the leaders of Israel . . .

And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD.

And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.

(Joshua 9:14-15)

At this point, Israel was still of the mind that, this could be handled by remote administration. To move Israel to the next stage, the LORD brought them into this event.

And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them. And the children of Israel journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjathjearim.

(Joshua 9:16-17)

At this point, some new rules were needed for that type of situation. The children of Israel needed to form a relationship that would lessen the damage that could spill over from infiltration of a local philosophy, and its associated doctrines of worship. In spite of the commandment for action against the inhabitants, as was declared in the law of Moses, the people of Israel were significantly limited, as follows . . .

And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes. But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them.

(Joshua 9:18-19)

The people of Israel were in a joint venture with its newly acquired ward. The congregation of Israel needed a way of fulfilling its responsibility, as it was now accountable to the LORD, in that agreement. So, they designed the following protocol.

This we will do to them; we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us,

because of the oath which we swore unto them. And the princes said unto them, Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation; as the princes had promised them.

(Joshua 9:20-21)

This is the solution, as implemented Joshua and the other leaders of Israel . . .

And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, We are very far from you; when ye dwell among us? Now therefore ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God.

And they answered Joshua, and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the LORD thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing. And now, behold, we are in thine hand: as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do.

And so did he unto them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not. And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose.

(Joshua 9:22-27)

To test the spirit of territorial management was then entrusted to the people of Israel; the LORD crafted a challenge for them. Moreover, to that challenge, the LORD added the flavoring of parent-child type dependency.

Now it came to pass, when Adonizedek king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them; That they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all the men thereof were mighty. Wherefore Adonizedek king of Jerusalem sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying, Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon: for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel.

Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of

Eglon, gathered themselves together, and went up, they and all their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it.

And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us.

(Joshua 10:1-6)

So far; this could still be categorized as being an elective action of the children of Israel. Therefore, in order to push the accountability of Israel beyond being Israel's choice, there was a need for this flavoring, here, to be stirred into the mix. And so, the LORD did the sprinkling of absolute accountability . . .

So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour. 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 10:7-8)

. . . As that accountability was being stirred into the mix of Israel's responsibilities.

Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, and went up from Gilgal all night. And the LORD discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Bethhoron, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah.

And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Bethhoron, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.

(Joshua 10:9-11)

Thus, there was an undeniable intervention by the LORD. Moreover; in order to further instill the awareness of the presence of the glory of God, the LORD did this totally new thing, in Israel.

Then spake Joshua 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 thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.

And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged

themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.

(Joshua 10:12-14)

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Administration of territories is a very weighty matter; especially, for servants of the LORD. In the commitment that was required of Israel, by the LORD, in its connection with Gibeon, we see the weight of that measure of responsibility. The integrity of the promise that the people of Israel made to the men of Gibeon was binding across all time, for all of Israel. This formed a bond that should not ever be broken. At a certain time, a king of Israel, Saul, broke that bond, by slaughtering a certain portion of the people of Gibeon. Israel was held accountable for that violation of its oath, as a weight of accountability, as going across all time of Israel's existence.

*Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.*

(2 Samuel 21:1)

The offense to the vow with the LORD as for Gibeon required a recompense that restored the custodial position of the people of Israel, as for the sake of the people of Gibeon.

*And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.) Wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the LORD?*

*And the Gibeonites said unto him, We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel.*

*And he said, What ye shall say, that will I do for you.*

(2 Samuel 21:2-4)

This is the time of refreshing of Israel's responsibility for Gibeon.

*And they answered the king, The man that consumed us, and that devised against us that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts*

*of Israel, Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, whom the LORD did choose.*

*And the king said, I will give them.*

*But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the LORD'S oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul.*

*But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite: And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the LORD: and they fell all seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, in the beginning of barley harvest.*

(2 Samuel 21:5-9)

Thereby, the joint venture was again affirmed with Gibeon.

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The joint venture of Israel with Gibeon was not just a one sided relationship involving protection by Israel. In time, this joint venture expressed its benefit for Israel. That occurred in this event of the maturation of Solomon, as being a uniquely notable king . . .

And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall of Jerusalem round about. Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the LORD, until those days. And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places. And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar.

In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

(1 Kings 3:1-5)

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In the matter of the people of Gibeon, Israel had a pattern to follow that could be repeated in interacting with other neighbors. By this pattern, Israel was in the driver's seat, as far as collateral damage was concerned. If Israel decided to send its war assets



into an area; then, Israel could experience some collateral damage from their intervention. This damage could come from missteps in the participation itself, or it could come from the reaction of the neighbors to the intervention; such as we see, here . . .

*But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel. And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai. And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few.*

*So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.*

(Joshua 7:1-5)

Generally, both incidences of collateral damage required a return to the study of the Law of Moses, as for renewal of prior understanding. However, when there was damage from the neighbors; in the way of reaction of the neighbors; then, Israel needed to hone its skill of damage assessment. We will see how they accomplished that national enhancement. Here is an example of why that is so important.

*And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.*

*sAnd Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!*

*O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?*

(Joshua 7:6-9)

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