

God is in Control

DARRELL DELANEY

Have you ever heard someone say that God was working on their behalf? How can you be truly sure that it is the Lord and not just a coincidence? In this episode of *Groundwork*, there are some instances where it is abundantly clear that God was working on behalf of the Israelites. We will discuss that, as well as some applications for our lives from these challenging chapters of Joshua. Stay tuned.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DARRELL DELANEY

And I am Darrell Delaney; and Scott, we are in part five of our six-part series in the book of Joshua; and so far we have been talking about how God is a covenant-keeping, promise-keeping God, and he has a promise to keep for even his son Abraham from a long time ago; and we also see Joshua had sent some spies in to get to Rahab, and Rahab was an unlikely hero in that story, but she was part of the covenant as well, because she hid the spies and then brought the news back.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And as we said, surprisingly, not only was Rahab a surprising, unlikely hero in the story, she actually becomes part of Israel and gets into the family line of no less than Jesus. So, we have also seen the battle of Jericho; the sin of Achan and how one man's selfishness got in the way of God's being able to stay with the people; and now we are going to talk about...a little bit more...we are moving into Chapters 10 and 11 of Joshua in this episode, as we see them continuing to take on the conquest of the Promised Land.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, we see, Scott, that the reputation of God has been growing around these surrounding countries, because his hand has been with them in every battle. They have only got one loss, as you just said about that in Ai with Achan; but after they corrected that sin, they repented of that, God gave them victory there. So, all this word about the Lord's renown and what he has used these soldiers in Israel to do has been getting around to these people. It is really interesting how God is still going to get his mission accomplished, and this is actually where we pick up in Chapter 10.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; and by the way, you know, we mentioned Rahab, and one of the things Rahab told the spies way back in Chapter 2 is that, yeah, Israel's reputation was scaring people...

DARRELL DELANEY

Melting in fear, yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

It is getting...yes, they are melting in fear...and it is getting even more renown now. So, in Chapter 10 we read:

Now Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had taken Ai and totally destroyed it, doing to Ai and its king as he had done to Jericho and its king, and that the people of Gibeon had made a treaty of peace with

Israel and had become their allies. ²He and his people were very much alarmed at this, because Gibeon was an important city, like one of the royal cities; it was larger than Ai, and all its men were good fighters. ³So Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem appealed to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish and Debir king of Eglon. ⁴“Come up and help me attack Gibeon,” he said, “because it has made peace with Joshua and the Israelites.”

DARRELL DELANEY

Then the five kings of the Amorites—the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon—joined forces. They moved up with all their troops and took up positions against Gibeon and attacked it. ⁶The Gibeonites then sent word to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal: “Do not abandon your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us! Help us, because all the Amorite kings from the hill country have joined forces against us.” ⁷So Joshua marched up from Gilgal with his entire army, including all the best fighting men. ⁸The Lord said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid of them; I have given them into your hand. Not one of them will be able to withstand you.”

So, we see in these passages, Scott, that Adoni-Zedek teams up these five kings of the Amorites to attack Gibeon because Gibeon is a big city, and one army alone couldn't take it. They felt they would have a military advantage if they could take Gibeon, but we realize that God is with Joshua and the Gibeonites in this one when they formed that alliance. The Gibeonites say come save us, because that is what Joshua's name means.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

I thought that was very interesting; but then also the Lord reminds him of what he said in Chapter 1: Don't be afraid. So, God is saying that he has delivered them in his hand, which is a sovereign power and a reminder of what he said he would do.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; there is an old saying that the enemy of my enemy is my friend, but in this case, the friend of my enemy is my enemy. So, Gibeon, perhaps to save their own hide, made a peace treaty with Israel, and that angered the king of Jerusalem, and to some of the surrounding kings. So, they said: Look, we cannot let this stand. We have to punish Gibeon because they are good fighters and we don't want them fighting against us; and anyway, maybe we want to make a statement. You know, you make friends with Israel, we are going to wipe you out.

So, I don't know if Joshua thought that kind of his contract or his treaty...his agreement with the Gibeonites was going to get activated so soon, but not long after they make peace with each other, Joshua and his people have to get moving because Gibeon is in grave danger; but as you say, Darrell, what is clear in God's words to Joshua here...the Gibeonites, as you said, they kind of do a pun with Joshua's name...Joshua means God saves; *you* save us; but God said to Joshua: It is not going to be you who is going to save them...

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

I will save them...through you...granted. I mean, he didn't say to Joshua: Just sit home, you don't have to do anything. I will take care of it. No; they have to get up and get moving, but it is going to be clear if there is victory here, if they are going to repel the attack on Gibeon, it is not going to be because Joshua was so clever. Once again, it is because the Lord is with them.

DARRELL DELANEY

As the Lord says, I have delivered them into your hand, and when the Lord says that, you can take it to the bank, because God has guaranteed victory in that situation; and it makes me think about just life in general,

Scott. Like there are times when there are obstacles in my life or there are things that are bigger than me that are hard to figure out and hard to answer, and sometimes that makes me nervous...it makes me anxious; but we do serve a God who is in complete control of every situation. That is one of the prayers that I pray all the time, that he is not in heaven twiddling his thumbs, wondering what is going to happen next. He knows what he is doing; and if it is his will, then he is definitely going to see us to it and see us through it; and if he says that I am going to take care of you; I am your providential God; I look after you; then we can take that to the bank that he will take care of us.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; and you have to love it in the Bible when God refers to the future by using the past tense: I *have* given them into your hand...

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

It hasn't actually happened yet; and yet, God talks about it in the past tense; and maybe that is how God views things. I sometimes wonder, too, Darrell, we are limited, we are finite, we can only move through time in one direction, we can only take time one moment at a time; the future is unseen to us, it is unknown to us for certain; but maybe because of God's relationship to time, he is able to assure us in the present of a future thing, and it is so sure in the future, that God refers to it as already done: I have already done it. It hasn't happened yet, but I've already done it. I wonder if there are not many circumstances, Darrell, in our lives, where we are uncertain or we are praying for healing or we are praying for God to open the right door for us in our career or for what is next for our family; if only we could see what God could see, we would know that God is already going to speak in the past tense: I have already got this...I got this. I *have* already done this. You will catch up to it soon enough.

DARRELL DELANEY

We serve a God who is faithful. That is who he is and he stands outside of time and eternity, that is why he is the great I Am; and he is faithful. Coming up next, we will talk about how God uses these Israelites, and how he divinely intervenes while he is with them. So, stay tuned.

Segment 2

SCOTT HOEZEE

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DARRELL DELANEY

And I am Darrell Delaney, and we just saw in the scriptures that we read earlier that the Lord has promised that he is going to deliver the five kings into the hands of Joshua and the Israelites, and when God makes a promise, he delivers every single time; and we see that when we look into these coming verses, God gives him wisdom on how to give them particular military tactics as well.

SCOTT HOEZEE

That is right; so indeed, God spoke of it in the past tense, as we noted a few moments ago: I *have* given them into your hand; but God does this through our actions; and so, now we are at verse 9 in Chapter 10 of Joshua: After an all-night march from Gilgal, Joshua took them by surprise. ¹⁰The Lord threw them in into confusion before Israel, so Joshua and the Israelites defeated them completely at Gibeon. Israel pursued them along the road going up to Beth Horon and cut them down all the way to Azekah and Makkedah. ¹¹As they fled before Israel on the road down from Beth Horon to Azekah, the Lord hurled large hailstones down on them, and more of them died from the hail than were killed by the swords of the Israelites. ¹²On that day the Lord gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the Lord in the presence of Israel: "Sun, stand still over Gibeon, and you, moon, over the Valley of Aijalon." ¹³So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation

avenged itself on its enemies. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day. ¹⁴There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the Lord listened to a human being. Surely the Lord was fighting for Israel! ¹⁵Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, they marched all night, which is a very interesting tactic to give the element of surprise to these Amorites...get them in the middle of being half asleep, or whatnot. I mean, they catch them in the middle of the night or they get there all night and then they have the element of surprise working for them. So, God gave them wisdom on even having to do that, they were so excited and zealous for the faith that they had in believing God would deliver, they didn't even stop to take a break; and then, we see the Lord intervening powerfully by throwing the enemies into confusion and then throwing hailstones on them.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; God doesn't always show his hand *this* directly, you know. We have seen God act through ordinary battles and so forth, but in this case, things happen that God really tips his hand. I mean, whatever caused them to be confused, but also throwing down the hailstones; clearly God is revealing his hand here; and if the Israelites needed to be sure that it was God who was fighting for them, certainly these things showed that, as did this very odd thing of the sun...and they also say the moon...but it kind of focuses on the sun standing still; that we had like a forty-eight-hour day or something.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, people debate this all the time, Scott. Did it actually happen? Is it scientifically proven? Is this why we have leap year in the first place? Like a lot of people are debating; some will say yes, some say no. The goal is not to wonder what happened in the stars. That goal is actually to focus on God's intervention. He is the one being faithful. He is showing himself strong in the battle with the Israelites; and he has a promise to fulfill. This is our God; this is who he is.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; although I cannot resist a little speculation. Let's say that basically this did happen. Of course, we know the sun doesn't move, we do, right? Well, the sun moves too, but I mean, the sun goes around because the earth is spinning, right? Although we don't realize it all the time, the earth is really moving along. At the equator where the speed of the earth's rotation is the most, it is a thousand miles per hour. So, scientists say if it just stopped, it would be like being in your car: You hit the brakes, right? Everything in your car is going 55 miles per hour; you stop, you know, the lunchbox in the backseat comes flying forward and hits you in the head. If you don't have your seatbelt on, *you* go flying forward. Well, that would happen on the earth. Everything not bolted down, you know, like rocks and oceans, would all shift eastward. So, let's say God actually did stop the rotation of the earth, he would have to do a lot of other miracles to keep disaster from coming to the earth.

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

It is sort of like in the New Testament when Jesus would heal blind people, and they would instantly be able to start walking without stumbling, even though they had no experience with depth perception, they had no backlog of visual experience. So, God would have had to not only heal through Jesus their eyeballs, but their mental software. So, when God performs miracles like this one, you know, he is pulling a lot more strings. It is often a more awesome thing than we are aware of. This is how God provides; our God is a provider God.

DARRELL DELANEY

Oh, that is a really good point, Scott, about God being the provider, because that is one of his character names, you know: Jehovah Jireh; that is what we call him; that is what he has revealed himself to be; and you

know, most people when they think about this word, *jireh*, they are thinking about, okay, God provides. I mean, it comes from Genesis 22, when God tells Abraham you have to sacrifice your son, your only son whom you love, Isaac, on the altar; and he brings the wood, he brings the fire, Isaac notices this; he says: Where is the ram; where is the sacrifice? And Abraham says: God will provide; and you know when you read it that God provides a ram in the thicket at the end because he knows that Abraham will be faithful with his son; but this word *jireh*, if you look at it and you study it in the Hebrew, you will understand that it means more than just God will provide. It means that he will oversee the process...that he will see it from start to finish...and he is definitely in control of every aspect of it. It is one of the prayers that I pray all the time, Scott, that you are in complete control of every situation, God, when we face challenges, when we face obstacles, it is one thing to remember that God is the one who will oversee the process of not only the things that are going on around us, but our own lives, especially when he says in Romans 8:28 that all things work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose; and then in Philippians 1:6 he says he is faithful to complete the work he started in us until the day of Christ Jesus. He is the overseer of our whole lives.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; and you know, the ram in the thicket and God will provide. In the Christian tradition, we have connected that Genesis 22 story of the sacrifice of Isaac, to ultimately Christ. Ultimately, God provides Jesus; and those passages you just read, Darrell, from Romans and Philippians testify to that; that God provides and he oversees, as you said, he oversees the whole process that makes these things come true in Jesus. So, what we see here in Joshua is something that actually is vitally important for the whole Bible, but it is important for our whole lives right now today. I mean, granted we aren't fighting battles like Israel did, and our situation is vastly different; but our need to know that God is the provider and the one who oversees everything that leads up to the providing; that God is a God of providence...provide-ence, as we have said before here on *Groundwork*...we all need to know that. We all need to be comforted by that because we all face times in our lives when the bottom seems to be dropping out; when it doesn't look possible that anything good could ever come out of this; and granted, sometimes we have to wait a long time to see the good of something. Sometimes we don't even see it in this life, but we have this confidence...this faith in God that he is the ultimate provider God.

Well, as we wrap up this episode, we want to look at some more practical applications of these passages in Joshua, so stay tuned.

Segment 3

DARRELL DELANEY

I am Darrell Delaney, with Scott Hoezee, and you are listening to *Groundwork*; and Scott, we have seen and covered a lot of ground here in these passages. We really want to think about the fact that God is a faithful God who promised to deliver them, and he is working on their behalf; but I think that it is kind of obvious to see that the Israelites—the soldiers—are told to destroy everybody they come against and to not save anything, and they are told the things that they bring out of there are supposed to be devoted to God; and so the issues of war and violence are alarming to a lot of people, and we cannot ignore that that is happening in this book, but we want to bring some light to it a little bit.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; we have mentioned it probably a time or two in this series, and it bears repeating because this is no justification for genocide, it is no justification for the Church today, above all, to assume a military-like posture over against the world. We serve the Prince of Peace. We know that the punishment of our sins has fallen all on Jesus and we need to remember that that is the nature of the Church. The new Israel that Jesus founded in the Church is not the old Israel. We need to be very careful exegetically and hermeneutically, as we say in theological terms, as we interpret the Bible that we keep these historical details straight, and that we don't try to adopt them for ourselves in the Church today.

DARRELL DELANEY

People may see these things in scripture and think what kind of God would do something like that? What kind of God would allow something like that? We need to remember the fact that these people that Joshua is fighting against, they are soldiers and they are trained in army and fighting; and so, this is a war with soldiers versus soldiers. I don't see any issues with like women and children and things like that being mentioned in these passages. Scholars have not said that this is license for violence...this is license for genocide or things like that; but we also need to remember, too, sin has its own consequences; and the Bible says in Romans 6:23 that the wages of sin is death; and if these people are worshipping foreign gods and doing idolatry and breaking the Ten Commandments, there are consequences that come along with this; and God could have been using Joshua in that instance to execute judgment in that way in that God has done that in the past, even though he does not do that anymore because of Jesus Christ. He put all his wrath on him, like it says in Isaiah 53*. So, it is different now than it was then.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; however, the consequences of sin...so, yes; the ban...the total war that we see in Joshua is terrible, but so is the death of God's own Son, right? We sometimes forget...

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

The worst thing that ever happened in history were not these wars, bad though they are, but it is the death of God's own Son. God's Son came in the flesh and we killed him—we executed him; but it was for sin, because sin is indeed, as you were saying just now, Darrell, sin is very serious.

If we look at Joshua Chapter 11 now, and we won't read all of it, but they are continuing to push into the Promised Land...they are continuing the conquest of Canaan...and we have gotten sometimes... You know, in seminary we refer to all the *ites*; so, in the beginning of Chapter 11 we have Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites and Jebusites, Hivites...all the *ites*...all these people...they are all coming together against Israel; and guess what? They all get defeated because the Lord is fighting for Israel, so it doesn't matter. In fact, in verse 4 of Chapter 11 it says that the army of all of these Hittites, Perizzites, all of them...they were a huge army, as numerous as the sand on the seashore. Long odds against Israel in other words...

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And yet, the people are successful, and they just keep winning.

DARRELL DELANEY

God is making clear that it is not because they are strong and it is not because they are numerous, but the author of the book of Joshua is letting us know that no matter what the odds are, if God is with them, then they will not lose. If they follow the instructions that God has given, if they do what God has said to do, then they will continue to be prosperous and successful, just like God promised they would in Chapter 1 of Joshua. So, every time they went in battle, Joshua was reminded of what God spoke to him early in the book, and the ultimate point of this is that God had a promise that he wanted to keep, and that promise was to bring salvation, deliverance, and rest to his people.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And that is what we find here near the end of Joshua Chapter 11. So, Joshua has 24 chapters, so we are almost at the midpoint of the book in Chapter 12, and as we hit that midpoint, we get this in Joshua 11:23: So Joshua took the entire land, just as the Lord had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions. Then the land had rest from war.

So, it said *the land* had rest from war; the land is so important; such a big part of the promise to Abraham way back in Genesis 12. So, finally now, as we get to the middle of Joshua, there is rest.

DARRELL DELANEY

Now that the Lord has executed these things in the context of these battles that are the conquest, the people have had instance after instance to continue to put their faith in God because they have seen a track record of his moving; and I think as believers, we need to have a long memory on what God has done in our lives. We talked about in earlier episodes where they brought the stones out when they crossed the Jordan...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

And how they would have teachable moments for their children: What happened? Why are these stones here? This is how God brought us through on dry ground...this and that. So, what we need to do is have a long memory on the testimonies of what God has done in and around us, so that we can remember his faithfulness, because he delivered not just them, he has delivered us as well.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And that is what indeed leads to the rest. Now, if you keep reading the Bible, and you don't have to go far beyond the book of Joshua, our final program in this series is going to look at the final two chapters in Joshua, but once you get not too far beyond that, like Judges, we find that the people didn't remember...they didn't remember what God had done for them, and they turned their backs on God, and then they did not have such periods of rest; they had much unrest. Israel would settle down eventually when you get to King David and King Solomon, but after that, for centuries things went wrong. So, we know that in the Bible—in the New Testament—that finally the only Sabbath rest...the ultimate rest for us as God's people will only come when Jesus comes. It will only come when Jesus gives up his life for us, and that then will lead to the eternal rest. So, there is a little preview here that after battling with sin and the forces of sin there is rest, but we know that finally our final rest will not come until Jesus says it is finished on the cross, which he will do; and for that we give God our thanks.

DARRELL DELANEY

Well, thank you for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We hope you will join us again next time as we conclude our study of Joshua
Connect with us now at groundworkonline.com to share what *Groundwork* means to you, or to tell us what you would like to hear discussed next on *Groundwork*.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Groundwork is a listener supported program produced by ReFrame Ministries. Visit ReFrame's website. It is reframeministries.org for more information and to find more resources to encourage your faith. We are your hosts, Scott Hoezee and Darrell Delaney.

**Correction: The audio of this program misstates the reference for this passage as Isaiah 55. The correct reference is Isaiah 53.*

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