
Becoming Christlike – Learning How from Old Testament Kings and Prophets

Session 3 – Understanding God’s Anger

We continue to lay a foundation to our study of Old Testament kings and prophets. We seek to learn what they knew or should have known from the law. What circumstances were they confronted with? What were the motives and reasonings behind their actions? Did they receive the fruit of believing obedience or the consequences of turning aside from God’s commandments to them?

There are important elements to understand if we are going to understand these kings in the Old Testament. Consider again:

Deuteronomy 29:29

[29](#) “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, **that we may do all the words of this law.**”

I put a lot of emphasis on “being careful to do” in the first two sessions.

We, of course, no longer live under the law! We are no longer saved by works of obedience to the law in order to be declared righteous as was required of Old Testament believers. They were not able to keep it, so they had to make sacrifices to be deemed righteous.

Our belief in and confession of Christ as our savior, believing that God raised him from the dead makes us righteous in God’s sight. We do works then out of gratitude for what Christ did for us and what blessings and enablements we have as a result.

If we are really going to understand the gospels and the epistles, we need to understand the Old Testament. It is often said that the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. A firm foundation in the Old Testament enables us to abound in joy and appreciation for what we now have been given so freely in Christ!

An Angry God or a Loving God?

People often say that the God of the Old Testament is an angry God and the God of the New Testament is a loving God so they only want to read and study the New Testament.

Guess what? It is the same God!

There is a prevalence of God’s anger on display in the Old Testament. The words “anger” and “angry” occur 389 times in the Bible and only 23 of them are in the New Testament. The phrase “provoked to anger” is used many times as well. The behavior of the kings or the Children of Israel provoked God to anger.

Think of a marriage or family relationship. We learn quickly what actions or words might cause our spouse or family member to become angry and we avoid doing or saying those things. We’ve all heard “happy wife, happy life”.

There are 3 major things that provoke God to anger:

1 – Idolatry (Putting anything in place of God for provision, safety, recognition, purpose)

- 2 – Ingratitude (God did so much for the Children of Israel and all they did was complain)
- 3 – People not taking advantage of all He’s done for them (for us, not taking advantage of all Christ accomplished for us.)

It hurts and angers God when he can’t do for his children what he would like to do for them! I am going to propose that God’s anger is really an expression of his tremendous love for His children. His hands are tied by sinfulness and disobedience. He is unable to do for them what He wants to do because He loves them.

There are consequences of sin. Sin separates man from God. In the book of Ezekiel, it is repeated 65 times: **“Then you will know that I am the Lord.”** The demonstration of God’s wrath as a consequence of their failure to believe and do caused the calamities they faced and proved to them clearly and exactly that **God is the Lord.** (They could have known by being obedient and seeing the blessing follow but instead they see the curse side of the equation, the consequences of their disobedience.)

Example – College student has been reared in the Word but gets to college, gets in with the wrong crowd, makes bad choices, throws away opportunities, this makes the parent angry.

God can’t violate his nature.
God can’t not fulfill his Word.

Grieve

The word “grieve” shows up frequently.

Ephesians 4:29,30

29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. **30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God,** by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **31** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. **32** Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

We want to know the things that anger God and the things that please Him.

Jeremiah 9:23-26

23 Thus says the Lord: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, **24** but let him who boasts boast in this, **that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.”**

Consider deeply this great possibility that we have...to understand and know God! He delights in us basking in his love, justice and righteousness. He also delights in his people demonstrating these things to others as they are to be imitators of Him.

25 “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when **I will punish all those** who are circumcised merely in the flesh— **26** Egypt, Judah, Edom, the sons of Ammon, Moab, and all who dwell in the desert who cut the corners of their hair, for all these nations are uncircumcised, **and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart.”**

The nations named were not circumcised at all.
God calls some of Israel “uncircumcised in heart” and those are going to receive consequences.

When we see these terms in the Old Testament: “burning anger, fierce anger, provoked to anger”, it is an expression of his love. He is trying to shake people up and get them to understand “Look I love you, I want the best for you”. Deuteronomy 29:29 The secret things... God has revealed what will enable Him to bless his people. Those things are NOT secret.

Joshua 6 – Background for Joshua 7

Joshua 6 background: Moses had died not being permitted to enter the Promised Land. Joshua had taken over in his place. Joshua had led them across the Jordan. The wall of Jericho had fallen down as God gave them the victory over Jericho. They had been specifically instructed before going in what they were to do.

Joshua 6:15-19

15 On the seventh day they rose early, at the dawn of day, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. It was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times. **16** And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, “Shout, for the Lord has given you the city. **17** **And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction.** Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. **18** **But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them, you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it.** **19** **But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the Lord; they shall go into the treasury of the Lord.”**

All was to be devoted to destruction. If anyone kept a devoted thing for himself, it would bring destruction.

Joshua 7 – The Sin of One Person, Achan, Affected All of Israel

Joshua 7:1

1 But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things, for **Achan** the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, **took some of the devoted things.** **And the anger of the Lord burned against the people of Israel.**

The anger of the Lord burned against the entire nation of Israel. One person, Achan, took something that should have been devoted to destruction. God says Israel has sinned.

Realize and consider the parallel to the body of Christ today. God has called us to be interdependent. Each individuals’ actions in the body of Christ affects the entire body of Christ. Each person matters.

2 Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-aven, east of Bethel, and said to them, “Go up and spy out the land.” And the men went up and spied out Ai. **3** And they returned to Joshua and said to him, “Do not have all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not make the whole people toil up there, for they are few.” **4** So about three thousand men went up there from the people. And they

fled before the men of Ai, **5** and the men of Ai killed about thirty-six of their men and chased them before the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them at the descent. And the hearts of the people melted and became as water.

Thirty-six of Achan's brethren are killed as a consequence of his disobedience.

6 Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord until the evening, he and the elders of Israel. And they put dust on their heads. **7** And Joshua said, "Alas, O Lord God, why have you brought this people over the Jordan at all, to give us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would that we had been content to dwell beyond the Jordan! **8** O Lord, what can I say, when Israel has turned their backs before their enemies! **9** For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it and will surround us and cut off our name from the earth. And what will you do for your great name?"

Putting it back on God, not recognizing what is to follow here...

10 The Lord said to Joshua, "**Get up!** Why have you fallen on your face? **11 Israel has sinned;**

God infers: "Didn't you think this through, Joshua? After all I have done, after all I have promised...don't you realize there must be a reason this has happened, like sin?, like disobedience to my commandment?"

11 Israel has sinned; they have transgressed my covenant that I commanded them; they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings.

Notice again the plural "they", another lesson here for us as the body of Christ, it is why we in the body of Christ confront one another with the truth and admonish one another and seek to bring one another along to maturity because every person's behavior affects the whole body of Christ.

12 Therefore the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies.

Herein is another lesson, we expect to stand against and defeat our spiritual enemy, the devil who is the god of this age, he with his demons and spirits? We are able to do it only because of obedience to the Word, because of Christ in us!

They turn their backs before their enemies, because they have become devoted for destruction.^a **I will be with you no more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you.**

God couldn't be with them until the devoted things were destroyed. They couldn't stand vs their enemies until they carried out the original command.

13 Get up! Consecrate the people and say, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow; for thus says the Lord, God of Israel, "**There are devoted things in your midst, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the devoted things from among you.**" **14** In the morning therefore you shall be brought near by your tribes. And the tribe that the Lord takes by lot shall come near by clans. And the clan that the Lord takes shall come near

by households. And the household that the Lord takes shall come near man by man. **15 And he who is taken with the devoted things shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he has done an outrageous thing in Israel.**

That is how seriously God takes the disobedience of one man which led to the death of 36 of his brethren. This tied God's hand from blessing them and taking all of the promised land.

16 So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel near tribe by tribe, and the tribe of Judah was taken. **17** And he brought near the clans of Judah, and the clan of the Zerahites was taken. And he brought near the clan of the Zerahites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. **18** And he brought near his household man by man, and Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

They go through a process of elimination to discern who was the guilty party.

19 Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel and give praise^b to him. And tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me." **20** And Achan answered Joshua, "Truly I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I did: **21 when I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels,^s then I coveted them and took them.** And see, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent, with the silver underneath."

This one verse of scripture reverberates through all of history. It shows the nature of man and exactly what he will do when he is not careful to be obedient.

1 John 2:15-17

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.** **17** And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever

The lust of the eyes, David **saw** Bathsheba and this set off lust for her, Achan **saw** these beautiful things and said "I want them"
We will see this with Saul when we get to 1st Samuel.

Silver and gold were to be holy to the Lord! So, he is stealing what belongs to the Lord. We see humans through history coveting and taking what they want by any means. Then he hid it because he knows it is wrong. Think politics today, people hiding the evil they do.

Joshua 6:19

19 But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the Lord; they shall go into the treasury of the Lord."

Joshua 7

22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and behold, it was hidden in his tent with the silver underneath. **23** And they took them out of the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the people of Israel. And they laid them down before the Lord. **24 And Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver and the cloak**

and the bar of gold, and his sons and daughters and his oxen and donkeys and sheep and his tent and all that he had. And they brought them up to the Valley of Achor. [25](#) And Joshua said, “Why did you bring trouble on us? The Lord brings trouble on you today.” And all Israel stoned him with stones. They burned them with fire and stoned them with stones. [26](#) And they raised over him a great heap of stones that remains to this day. Then the Lord turned from his burning anger. Therefore, to this day the name of that place is called the Valley of Achor.^d

What happened to Achan and his family was what Achan should have been doing to the devoted things. This is harsh indeed. But God’s Word is true. God had to keep his Word. Look again at what God had commanded in Joshua 6:18

Joshua 6:18

[18](#) But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it.

We see the impact of one person. Each of us is one person. We can each have impact on others for good or for bad.

The anger of God is really an expression of the love of God. He wants to bless his people individually and collectively, but he can’t if they are disobedient.

After this incident they go on to defeat Ai as recorded in Joshua 8 because God’s protection and provision was again with them having rooted out this evil from among them.

Joshua 8:30-35

[30](#) At that time Joshua built an altar to the Lord, the God of Israel, on Mount Ebal, [31](#) just as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded the people of Israel, as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, “an altar of uncut stones, upon which no man has wielded an iron tool.” And they offered on it burnt offerings to the Lord and sacrificed peace offerings. [32](#) And there, in the presence of the people of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written. [33](#) And all Israel, sojourner as well as native born, with their elders and officers and their judges, stood on opposite sides of the ark before the Levitical priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, half of them in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, just as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded at the first, to bless the people of Israel. [34](#) **And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. [35](#) There was not a word of all that Moses commanded that Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, and the women, and the little ones, and the sojourners who lived^e among them.**

The first thing Joshua did after the victory over Ai was to renew the covenant that God had given them before entering in. He then read ALL the words of the Law to them.

We are so blessed that God has revealed himself to us so that we can know the truth. The secret things He has revealed to us. We have the opportunity to be in an intimate relationship

with the Lor. We have an open invitation. It is up to us to draw near and take advantage of the closeness available to us.