

The Holy War

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good morning. Great honor to be here this morning. Haley finally said I could come, so being the most powerful woman in the church, I mean, she finally said, Andrew, you could come visit, so I'm glad she finally relented and let me come. I'd like to add my word of welcome to those already expressed by Elliot and everyone up front, especially if this is your first Sunday.

If this is your first Sunday in One Harbor, have luck. That's cool. Might be a good time for you to run right now, but it's cool. We're so glad that you would come spend time with us this morning. And as Alan just said, we're going through a series, Look to the Rock. Now, Look to the Rock is a series based on Old Testament pictures and types of Jesus. And, you know, it's our view that Jesus is pointed to all through Scripture. And so you don't just look in the New Testament to find out who Jesus is. You see types and pictures of him all through Scripture. And so what we're trying to do in this series is try to show you how it was pointed to Jesus in their time, but also how it was applicable to them and applicable to us as well in our day. Because Scripture does have a context, but also has application that we can put into our lives and practice in our lives. And so this morning we're going to continue in the book of Joshua, and we're going to look at the conquest of Canaan.

And so this is a very difficult subject in some ways. But before I get started with the main part of the text, I need to set the context of what is going on. Israel has finally crossed the Jordan River and has entered the land. Okay, just a little geography lesson for you. The Jordan River is not very big. In fact, it's more like a ditch. And it's amazing. In your mind, you think that the Jordan River is this huge expanse like the Neuse River is. It's really not. It's kind of a small river. Now, it does get bigger when the snow melts and it comes out of the mountains, but it's really kind of a small geographic ditch. But they have crossed over the Jordan at the time when its banks were overflowing, and they are now going into the land, and they're going to take possession of the land. Now, this was in fulfillment to God's promise in Genesis chapter 15. God makes Abraham a promise, and he says, look, to your descendants, I give this land. Now, you need to understand that Abraham was in the land.

He didn't own any of it. He was in the land. He had one parcel that belonged to him, and that was his grave. He bought a small grave plot in Machpelah, and that was for him and his descendants to be placed in. So that's the only thing that Abraham had at the time. But God says, look, I give you all of this land. Now, in our present day, Israel's footprint is not very big. I think it's 240 miles long in both directions, and it's about 85 miles wide at its widest point today. What God was promising Abraham was far greater. He was promising them a land that stretched from the Nile River in Egypt to the Euphrates River in modern-day Iraq. And so this piece of property had a footprint that was way larger in expanse. We think it's kind of small because of its present-day makeup. But when God said, I want to give this to you, it was a huge piece of property. He says, all this will be yours.

Now, this promise took 430-plus-plus years to finally come to fulfillment. 430 years. Between the time that God promised Abraham that he was going to have this land for him and his descendants, till it finally came to be. They were walking into the land to take over the land.

[3 : 46] Now, what this says to us is that God's promises are sure and steadfast. What God promises, he will do. The problem with us is we don't have 430 years to wait for God to move. And so you sit there, we're time-bound. All of us in this room have a limited space of time in our lives. We have a beginning that God has set. We have an end that God has set. And so we have a very short time frame.

And so what we want God to do is move fast, right? We want him to really pick up the pace. Why? Because we don't have that much time. And so it's really amazing that God says, to you and your descendants, I give this land, it will be yours. And it takes 430 plus probably another 20. So 450 to 470 years to get to this point before they can take the land over. And so this promise of God was fulfilled, but there was another promise in Genesis 15 that God added to his promise to Abraham. And what he says in Genesis 15 is this, he says, I'm going to judge the nations in the land. And say, so you've got the promise of land to Abraham, but then you have the promise of judgment to come on the land. Okay, so God promises good, but he also promises judgment. Now the rub with this is that God uses Israel as a vehicle for his divine judgment. Now that is where the biggest rub is. Most of the people who are skeptics in our day will point to this passage and say, this is one reason that I don't believe that God is a loving and just God. Because God took one nation and he judged the other nations with him. He used them as a vehicle. But you do need to understand this, that God has a right to judge as he will. And Israel's going into the land was a part of his promise. And yet God was going to take them and use them in driving the nations out. Now, most people would probably think, okay, what Israel did is they just invaded the land and they just took it over. Okay, it's kind of what you would normally think of two million people on the border amassed and they came in with the army and they just wiped everybody out.

But that's not really how it goes. And so in our text this morning, we want to see how the conquest of Canaan begins. And so if you open your Bibles to Joshua chapter 5, we will be looking at verses 13 in chapter 5 and to chapter 6 verse 21. It's a very long passage and I just would like for you to just bear with me because I want to read it all. Okay, so let me get started. First of all, it says this, when Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, are you for us or for our adversaries? And he said, no, but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, what does my Lord say to his servant?

And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, take off your sandals from your feet for the place where you are standing is holy. And Joshua did so. Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out and none came in. And the Lord said to Joshua, see, I have given Jericho into your hand with this king and its mighty men of war, you shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus you shall do for six days. Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of ram's horns before the ark. On the seventh day, you shall march around the city seven times and the priest shall blow the trumpets. And when they make a long blast with the ram's horns, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout and the wall of the city will fall down flat and the people shall go up everyone straight before him.

So Joshua, the son of Nun called the priest and said to them, take up the ark of the covenant and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of ram's horns before the ark of the Lord. And he said to the people, go forward, march around the city and let the armed men pass before the ark of the Lord. Now what he's saying is you have the men of war in front of the ark, you have the seven trumpets, you have the ark. So it's a progression of people. The armed men are out in front. And just as Joshua said to the people, excuse me, and let the armed men pass before the ark of the Lord. And just as Joshua had commanded the people, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of ram's horns before the Lord went forward, blowing the trumpets with the ark of the covenant of the Lord following them. The armed men were walking before the priests who were blowing the trumpets and the rear guard was walking after the ark while the trumpets blew continually. But Joshua commanded the people, you shall not shout or make your voice heard.

[9 : 04] Neither shall any word go out of your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you shall shout. So he calls the ark of the Lord to circle the city going about it once. And they came into the camp and spent the night in the camp. Then Joshua rose early in the morning and the priests took up the ark of the Lord and the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of ram's horns before the ark of the Lord walked on. And they blew the trumpets continually. And the armed men were walking before them and the rear guard was walking after the ark of the Lord while the trumpets blew continually. And the second day they marched around the city once and returned into the camp. So they did for six days. 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 that day that they marched around the city seven times. And at the seventh time when the priest had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, shout for the Lord has given you the city and the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who were with her in her in her house shall live because she hid the messengers whom we sent. 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. 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. So the people shouted and the trumpets were blown. And as soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout and the wall fell down flat. So that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city. Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, sheep, oxen, donkeys with the edge of the sword. Now this passage ends with a just a vision of the the the men of war of Israel going into the city of Jericho and killing everything.

They did not spare anything. Okay, so this is a very tough passage. What do we do with this? How do we look at this passage and just see how God can use holy war?

You know, how he uses it and what it can teach us? Well, first thing we can learn about this is that the true commander of God's army is God himself. It's God himself. Now this is based on what Joshua saw when he approached the city. One of the books that I looked at said that Joshua was probably looking at the city just so he could check out what he would do to attack it. You see, a walled city, you had to build siege works. You had to get away to get inside the city. You just couldn't go to the front door and knock on it and say, let us in, we're coming in. You had to build ramps and and you had to attack it in such a way that you could overtake the city. And so as he approaches the city to see what's going to happen or how he would fight, he meets this man who's standing with his sword in his hand. Okay, so this is the vision that Joshua sees. And so this is God himself. But this has a lot of controversy because some people believe that this is just an angel of God who is giving Joshua information. Okay, they view this as simply an angelic being who is standing there and he's going to tell Joshua what to do. Now this is not without precedence in scripture because in the Old and New Testament you have instances where angels do speak for God.

When Lot was in Sodom and he was and God was getting ready to destroy the city, he sends two angels in and they speak to Lot and they say, get out, get out, let's go get your family, go. And Daniel, Daniel sees angelic beings and they give him information, they give him visions. I mean, there's things that they do. So, you know, in the Old Testament, yeah, okay, angels do speak for God.

In the New Testament, Mary, the mother of Jesus, had an angel come to her. Peter in jail had an angel come to him. So on both sides of the equation, Old and New Testament, there are instances where angels will speak for God, okay? Others believe that this is a theophany or a pre-incarnate vision of Jesus, which is where I would stand, all right? If you want to know where I stand, that's where I plant my feet for two reasons. Number one, angels are not inherently holy and worthy of your worship. That's number one.

[13 : 55] Angels are not worthy of your worship. In fact, the way they react to being worshipped is very telling to us. In Revelation chapter 19, the apostle John sees a vision, a great vision, and he is so overwhelmed with it, the person standing before him is an angelic messenger, and he falls down at his feet. Listen to what he says. He says, then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, you must not do that.

I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. You cannot worship me, worship God. And so he points John back to who God is. He said, you can't worship me. I'm just an angelic being, and I'm a brother with you. I follow Jesus, okay? So you see how that works.

There is one angel who did desire to be worshipped, and he is our adversary, Satan. And you know, Isaiah paints a picture of Satan wanting to sit in the far recesses of the north on the mount. He wanted to be worshipped as God. One angel has ever desired to be worshipped. And because of his pride, and because of his arrogance, he fell, and a third of the angels fell with him. But it was Satan's desire to be like God. I want to be worshipped like God. Secondly, and I think this is just as important as the first, is that even though God may solicit angels to carry out judgment, he very well could use angelic beings to judge man, he's more than able to do it alone. You know, God doesn't need anybody's help to judge. He really doesn't. In fact, in 2 Samuel 24, it's a great, there's a story of David. Now what

David does in 2 Samuel 24 is he tells Joab, the commander of his army, go number the people. I want you to go number the people. Now you need to understand something about Joab. He was not a righteous man. Joab was a cruel and mean individual. He was one of the sons of Zeruiah, and he gutted people. I mean, he was a bad man. But he looks at David and he says, don't do this.

What you're doing is wrong. May God add more people to you. Do not do this. This is a terrible thing. David looks at him and says, do it. I want to know how many men I have standing as an army. The number ends up being about 1.3 million that carried the sword. So David wanted to see what his army was built on, which is a, he was putting his confidence in his armed forces. And so God in his anger deals with David. He gives him three options. Okay, David, here are your options. I'll let you run before your enemies for three months and they will have their way with you for three months. I can send a famine for three years. You'll have to go through a famine as a nation for three years or I can deal with you.

[17 : 08] And so David finally says, I'd rather have God deal with me because he is so much more gracious than my enemies. And so he says, God, you deal with me. So God does. And 70,000 men die in three days.

70,000 men die over three days. Now David doesn't see a triage unit set up with tents and everybody, a pandemic signs everywhere. David sees something else. And what he sees is the angel of the Lord standing over Jerusalem with his sword drawn, getting ready to destroy it. You see, that's the vision that David sees. It's not, you know, tents and people dying. He sees God standing over Jerusalem, getting ready to strike it and to destroy it. And so this morning, I would simply say to you that this commander of the Lord's army and this angel of the Lord are one in the same. It is Jesus.

You're looking at Jesus in the Old Testament. Now, why is this important for you to see this? I mean, what is so good about seeing that this is Jesus? Joshua Ryan Butler in his book, *The Skeletons in God's Closet*, says it this way. He says, a central feature of the Old Testament holy war is that God is the one doing the fighting. The warriors are laughable. The strategies are ridiculous. They do not have ideologies of greatness on their side. It is not the weak fighting on behalf of God, but God fighting on the behalf of the weak. Okay. So this is what God is doing is he's, he's, he's fighting for Israel who does not have the ability to take over the Holy Land. They do not have the ability to go in and just take the land on their own. They don't have it. God has a plan to flourish his people. All right. And to dispossess the people in the land. God's going to bring his people in and he's going to dispossess the ones that are in the land. And it's like seven nations. I mean, it's a big area. So there's like seven different nations of people in the land. And so this, what the book of Joshua is all about. It is God's holy war. It's not Israel's holy war. It is God's holy war.

And one thing we can understand is that even though this sounds offensive, and it does sound offensive that God would go in and just dispossess a whole people groups, it's not as bad as what we think. Because in Genesis 15, God tells Abraham before in his promise for the land, he says, look, you know, your people, Abraham, are going to go into a foreign country, not their own.

They're going to be there for 430 years. And by, I will bring them out and they will plunder their enemies. He says, but then he says this, the sin of the Amorites is not yet complete. And so the Amorites were part of the clans in that area. And God says, you know, their sin's not great enough yet.

[20 : 12] And so the picture is, it's like the sin of the Amorites is just growing and growing and growing to the point where God says, okay, now I'm judging. Why? Not because they had just stunk their toe.

It's because their sin had grown so great. And so you need to understand that judgment comes, but God is very long suffering in his judgment. It is not, he's not like us. When we get mad, we want justice now. I mean, this week is a great example of the mindset of our country with what's going on in Afghanistan. And people are angry. Why? They want justice. They want it today, not next week, not tomorrow. They want it today. And see, God is not that way. He's very long suffering. And he says, look, the sin of the Amorites has to get to the point where I will finally act. And then you'll go into the land. But yet, holy war still sounds ugly, doesn't it?

I mean, it's a holy war. And it often gets misunderstood. And I think probably we misunderstand it because it's 21st century. We have our own mindsets. And we don't think about it in quite the same way as they would. But there are some things that you need to understand that holy war is not.

All right. Holy war is not about favoritism. Okay. It's not about favoritism. It's about God's holiness. It's not about making Israel a great nation. It's about God and his holiness.

You know, God is not highlighting Israel as I'm going to make them bigger than everybody. They're going to be better than the Babylonians. They're going to be better than everybody else around them. It's about God having holy character and going in and judging the nations. And so there were stipulations as to how Israel would have to fight this war and how they would handle themselves.

[21 : 56] Right? You need to understand this. They had to do things a certain way. I have a big list. And I think it may show up behind you on the screen. If not, bear with me. But this is the way that they had to handle themselves. First, they had no standing army. They were volunteers. The men of war who fought for Israel were all volunteers. They had no pay. They did not get paid for this. Now, I don't know how many might be in the service in here this morning. How would you like that? Oh, you're going to go to battle. But guess what? We're not paying you anything. We're not paying you a nickel. Okay. And so they could not get rich off the plunder. It was the land was theirs and that was their inheritance. But they could not take anything else. They could only fight for the conquest of the land, which is going in and taking the land. And they could only fight to protect the land. In other words, they were not going out and around their borders and saying, okay, now we're going to go take over this nation. Now we're going to go take over this nation. They could not do that. They could fight for the land to protect it or to go in.

They could only do it at Yahweh's call. God had the order of the battle and then a prophet would speak to them and say, this is what God says. And then they would go in and fight. And so it had to happen with God giving them direction. The Lord would therefore would do all the fighting and the winning.

Okay. The Lord would do the fighting because the Israelites could not really win on their own. They were unable to do this on their own. Now the implication is this. If they don't succeed, then God's not fighting for them, right? I mean, if they don't succeed in battle, then God is not fighting for them. He is, you know, he's maybe behind and just said, I'm not messing with you today. And this does come up in just a minute. Perfect fulfillment of this would be Israel going into the land, clearing the land of all peoples and never lose a person. Now that would be a miracle. That's unheard of. I mean, war costs lives. It does. No one would ever go into a land, take it over without losing a person. This would be perfect. God's ability to go bring them in and win everything. That would be basically a miracle. Now there were some religious undertakings or underpinnings. They had to often fast before they would go to war and they often prayed. And so this was more, this had religious undertones. You know, they had to go and they had to pray to God and they had to be prepared for battle.

They had to get their hearts prepared before they would go. And total annihilation of the enemy was exactly what expected. Okay. Now you need to understand this. The total annihilation of their enemy was expected. God says you go in, you devote them all to destruction. So you don't leave anyone alive.

If you disobeyed God in this, then you became his enemy as well. If you did not do what he's told you to do here, then that makes you an enemy of God. And there could be no exceptions. In other words, they could not go to the people and say, look, where do you know, we feel sorry for you. We're just gonna let you go this time. And I tell you what we're going to do. You're gonna be our slaves and we're gonna work something out with you here. There could be none of this. It was like you go into the land, you take the land and you dispossess the people and you devote them to destruction.

[25 : 29] Now, how crazy is that? I mean, how crazy is that? That an army would fight like this? Now, for sure, the Babylonians didn't fight like this. The Medes and the Persians did not fight like this. Alexander the Great did not fight like this. He took over the known world. I mean, Alexander's army spread and he conquered things coming and going. He didn't fight like this. The Romans did not fight like this. Only Israel would fight a battle like this because it was God's way of assuring that they were doing it his way. And they do this in the battle of Jericho almost completely perfect except for one man and that was Achan. And what Achan does is he takes the things that were supposed to be devoted for destruction and those things that were supposed to be given to God. He took some of it. He took some gold. He took some silver. He took some fine cloth and he saw it and he wanted it. And so he took it.

The point is this. You know, God has the parameters that he wants us to live by. He has these rules that we are to live by. But everyone, Canaanite or Israelite, those who transgress God's laws, God's going to judge them. If you transgress his holiness, he is going to judge. The point is not God hates one group and loves another group. Okay. It is God saying, here's what you're going to do.

Here are my laws. If you don't obey him, obey him. I'm going to judge you. And so that is the point. The point is this, that God is going to judge those who do not hold to his holiness. Now, maybe you think this is scary, weird. I mean, yeah, I mean, I get it. I mean, this is, you know, this is very difficult. It was difficult to preach the first time because I'm sitting here thinking, man, to be told, go into a city and kill everything. I mean, that just, my brain does not go there.

Okay. So you may think this is kind of weird and scary. And it is. But the New Testament is full of promises of coming judgment that is down the road. Okay. So to speak, it's not in the here and now, it's down the road. And what this means to us is that God will continue his holy war until the last enemy is defeated. Now, this is a thread that works all throughout scripture. You could pull it in the Old Testament and it will go all the way through to the new. Divine judgment is there. We see this worked out in Luke 19 in the parable of the miners. And Jesus tells this parable, and really he's talking about himself because it mirrors what he's doing even now. You know, scripture tells us today that Jesus is sitting at the right hand of the father, waiting for his father to make his enemies the footstool for his feet. And so Jesus has a kingdom that is now, but not yet. It is coming. And so he tells this parable about a noble man who goes off to get his kingdom. Sound familiar? Yeah, Jesus. He's gone off to get his kingdom. And he leaves his people behind and he says, look, I'll give you miners. I want you to use them. Those who use them wisely were given more things to do. They were given honor. Those who did not use them at all were judged. And so what Jesus is pointing to the fact that I'm going to go away and I'm going to get my kingdom when I come back, I expect certain things out of you. But see, what happens as the nobleman leaves is that the people that are already under him say this, we will not have this man rule over us. We will not have this man rule over us.

And so at the end of this parable, he says something that is just, I mean, listen to how it reads in Luke 19 27. But as for these enemies of mine, okay, you're not, you don't want me to rule over you? Okay, you are my enemy who do not want me to reign over them. Bring them here and slaughter them before me.

[29 : 43] Okay, see, even Jesus spoke of the judgment to come as a slaughter. Bring those who do not follow me before me, those who do not want me to rule and slaughter them before me. And so you see it in just in the parable that Jesus talked about. And John the apostle echoes this in Revelation 19.

And I want you to hear how he describes this warrior Jesus. Listen to this. Revelation 19 11 through 15. Then I saw heaven open and behold a white horse. The one sitting on it was called faithful and true.

And in righteousness, he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire and on his head are many diadems or crowns. And he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a road dipped in blood. And the name by which he is called is the Word of God. John 1 1. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. And so his name is the Word of God.

And the armies of heaven arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on a white horse. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. And he will rule them with a rod of iron.

And he will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. The picture is this. That God, the Father, is going to gather all who do not follow the Son. And he is going to put them in a winepress. And Jesus will press them down like grapes. The wrath of God is going to be so great, Jesus is going to press them down. And so this idea of judgment and coming judgment is in Scripture.

[31 : 32] It's in the front and it's in the back. It encompasses all of Scripture. And so what we know from this is that Jesus, as a warrior, fights for his people and against his enemies. All right? So Jesus fights for you if you're a follower of Jesus this morning. He fights for you. And if you're not a follower of Jesus this morning, he fights against you. But don't get confused about this because he does not fight the way that we would fight. He does not fight according to our agenda. All of us have agendas.

We have things we want God to do. And we maybe have even asked God to fight for us before on our timing and our agenda. What this, you know, you see this displayed so greatly in this vision that Joshua sees. He looks at the guy who's standing there with the sword in his hand. He said, all right, whose side are you on? Are you on our side? Or are you on our adversary's side? Whose side are you on?

And Jesus looks right at him and says, no. Now, I don't think that's the answer that Joshua wanted. I think he wanted, you better believe it, baby. I'm with you. I'm here with you. But he doesn't.

He says, no, I'm the commander of the Lord's army. And here I've come. Now, what this says is simply this, that God is not on your side and he's not on my side. He's on his own side. He has his own side that he's concerned about. Now, he wants everybody else, that's us included, to be on his side. He's not coming to fight for me based on what I want or what you want. He has his own providence he deals with, his own sovereignty that he deals with. And his sovereignty drives all his decisions.

And so he's not on our side. He wants us to be on his side. In fact, the Old Testament is full of exhortations for Israel to be lights to the people around them. God's desire was that other nations would come and worship him. God wanted others to come and worship. It wasn't just Israel. He wanted other nations to do so. And one of the great failures of Israel was that instead of being lights to the people around them, they became hardened to their enemies. And this is what has been taught me over the years, that if a Jew was walking down the street and a Gentile was coming toward him, he would cross the street to get away from him. He would not walk to him and say, how you doing?

[34 : 03] He would cross the road to get away from him. And they held them at bay. And this is a great failure of Israel is that they pushed the nations away. And it wasn't that God was not being hard, too hard in their view. Israel's view was not that God was being overly judgmental. It was that he was not being judgmental enough. Because they wanted God to deal with their enemies and to completely wipe them out and so that they would have preeminence. Okay, so you see Israel's desire was God, you make us preeminent. And God doesn't fight that way. He doesn't fight according to our ways.

He fights according to his own. Now, this view still may be too violent for you. I mean, it may be way too violent for you. You still are maybe struggling with this. But God's judgment is very prudent.

God doesn't judge in anger. He judges righteously. And so he's very prudent in how he handles these things. And the Old Testament points to God's holy war. And it's pointing to his son who's going to return in glory. So he's this holy war here points to the greater holy war that is to come, in which everyone will one day face the commander of the Lord's army. Everybody will face the commander of the Lord's army. They're going to face Jesus. And this meeting is going to mean death for someone.

It's going to mean death. Now we're talking spiritual death. It's going to mean death for someone. You may meet the commander of the Lord's army, Jesus. You may see him on this day, just like the people in Jericho did.

And for the sake of his holiness, you will be judged and you will die spiritually right before him. You're going to be judged if you come to him without faith. Or you can meet him in a different way.

[36 : 11] You can come to him in faith because God's always wanted his enemies to be his friend. God wants to draw men unto himself. And what makes this even better is that the commander of the Lord's army submitted himself to the armies of the world and gave his life for you.

The armies of this world nailed him to a tree. Romans did that. The armies of this world did that. He submitted to that. And so he shows his love for you this morning in that he was willing to let the armies of the world crucify him.

So when you meet Jesus, it will either be in unbelief, skepticism, and all those things, or it will be in faith.

Now, if you're here this morning and you're not yet a follower of Jesus, I understand that this is very difficult. Because war, death, judgment are not three things that we normally want to think about.

I don't even like to think about it. I mean, I really don't. And so that's just our mindset. We do not want to think about war or death or judgment. Standing before God, we don't want to think about that.

[37 : 27] So that context is something that you try to hide from. My call to you this morning, our call to you this morning, if you're not yet a follower of Jesus, is that you would come put your confidence in the commander of the Lord's army.

For he is good. Let him rule over your life. Come to him this morning and say, Lord God, I need you. I want to be spared the judgment that is coming.

Spare me from this. And I will say this to you, skepticism and unbelief have a great cost. They have a great cost in the life of a person.

You can be skeptical about who God is. You can not believe that he's a God of love and grace and mercy. You can be skeptical of his ability to judge the nations and to use whatever means he desires to use.

You can be skeptical about that. And you can say, I will not believe. But that has a great cost. And that cost is at the end when you will stand before God and give account. Now, if you're here this morning, and that's you, I would love a chance to talk to you about this.

[38 : 33] I would love to talk to you about Jesus and just who he is and how you can be saved in him. I would love a chance to talk to you about this. If you're here this morning and you are a follower of Jesus, I think the biggest thing this can do for you today is heighten your sense of worship.

See him as he really is. The vision of John is overwhelmingly just, it shows you all he is. You need to let that heighten your worship.

Now, why do I say that? Well, because of where we are today. School has just started, which is bad for the kids, great for moms and dads, but it's been a stressful week. Parents, I mean, there's people fighting.

I mean, there's a lot going on. Everybody's angry with each other. School's getting started. So you come in here in the mornings and your brain is not ignited in worship. It's just not. I mean, you know that.

Just in the news this week, it's just been overwhelmingly just disappointing. And so you dwell on those kind of things and you just sit there and you let those things grab a hold of your attention. And so our ability to worship God has been crowded out by what?

[39 : 41] Everything else around us. We kind of let the things of the world really crowd our minds and drive us away from worship. So what ends up happening is that we speak with God and we do things with our lips.

And as we honor God with our lips, but our hearts are far from him. We speak great things. We may hold up our hands in worship.

We may do a lot of things. But our hearts may be down the road. All right? Down the road. Our lips are saying one thing, but our hearts are way over here.

And God speaks about this in Isaiah. He said, the people, they honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. This morning, if you were following Jesus, I would call you to come to him.

You come to him this morning. You worship him for who he is. This one who has the sword open, who's always ready to battle. You come to this one. Why? Three things.

[40 : 43] He judges righteously. You come to the one who judges righteously. He will not judge unrighteously. He's going to make war righteously.

It will be a righteous war. He is eternal. The eternal word of God. That is who he is. And by his death and resurrection, we have been delivered from the wrath to come.

By his death, letting the armies of the world nail him to a tree and his resurrection, you, me, are free from the wrath to come. So let me pray for us and we will conclude.

Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for just this picture of Jesus, this warrior king. And oh, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Yeah.

Come quickly. You are righteous. You are good. You are all those things that we are not. And we love you, Lord. And we want to honor you as king. And we look to that day, Lord, when you will come and you will and you will just bring the judgment of the father.

[41 : 50] And power and glory we desire to see that day. Amen. I pray for those this morning who are struggling in their hearts to worship you, Lord God. Be very gracious to them. Especially those that don't know you, Father God.

Please, by your grace, your grace that is so great that you draw men unto yourself. Draw them this day to your graciousness and goodness. I just lift us up before your throne this morning, Lord God.

We ask you that you would be glorified in all this. We pray that Jesus' name has been glorified. And we ask all these things in his name. Amen. Amen.