

The Saints Judging The World (Numbers 21)

Introduction

The God of the Bible is a just God, who will by no means clear the guilty. And if you understand this, you will flee to the cross of Calvary. Because that's where sins are paid.

Exposition

"So they defeated him, his sons, and all his people, until there was no survivor left him; and they took possession of his land" (Num 21:34-35). No survivors-men, women, and children slaughtered by the edge of the sword, devoted to destruction. This kind of warfare that Israel is called to wage in Canaan is something that often offends both Christians and non-Christians alike. What can we make of it?

Doctrine

1. This is a Unique Case of God's Specific Judgment at One Time in History There is something very different about the battles Israel fought with the Canaanite peoples. But - Deut 20:10-11, if the people surrendered, they were to be spared.

2. The Reason For This Judgment: God's Judgment

This total conquest of Canaan at God's command was God's judgment on the seven nations of Canaan. See Gen 15, "in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

"... It is perversion. Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you" (Lev 18:20-24). Israel is serving as the human equivalent of the fire and brimstone which destroyed the earlier Canaanite cities, Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:24-25).

3. It's Not Because Of Israel's Righteousness

"Do not think in your heart, after the LORD your God has cast them out before you, saying, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land'" (Deu 9:4-7)

4. It was the Lord who did this

"... and I will wipe them out." Exodus 23:23

5. WWJD?

"See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor." (Josh 5). God the Son is leading this conquest and judgment.

Application

We live in a completely different context-except in this respect. We too have been enlisted to fight in God's war. We too are soldiers who must fight in a battle that the Lord is already waging. We too must put on the armor of God. But this warfare that we wage, Paul tells us, is not against flesh and blood. It's "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore" (Eph 6:12-14).

God's people will be the very ones who will consign the wicked nations to the second death in the lake of fire. "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" (1Co 6:1-2)

The weapons of that time were terrible, bloody, and carnal. Their cry to the Canaanites was, "Except you repent you will all likewise perish." But it was sadly ineffective. Those weapons were not mighty. However, the prince of peace has brought a new age in which men beat their swords into plow shares and their spears into pruning hooks. The order of the day is harvest, not slaughter. And the weapons he's given to us, though they are not carnal but spiritual, are in God mighty for the pulling down of strongholds.

Conclusion

By means of God's judgment on the earth, God's people receive mercy. In the very same event, one receives justice, and the other receives mercy. Which returns us to Calvary.