

The Lord Fought For Israel

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[0:00] I'll read the first 15 verses. Now Adonai 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 were living near them.

He 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.

So Adonai Zedek, king of Jerusalem, appealed to Hohem, king of Hebron, Pyrrham, king of Jarmuth, Japhia, king of Lachish, and Deber, king of Eglon.

Come up and help me attack Gibeon, he said, because it has made peace with Joshua and the Israelites. 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.

The 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.

[1:22] So Joshua marched up from Gilgal with his entire army, including all the best fighting men. The 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.

After an all-night march from Gilgal, Joshua took them by surprise. The Lord threw them into confusion before Israel, who defeated them in a great victory at Gibeon.

Israel pursued them along the road, going up to Beth Horon, and cut them down all the way to Ezekiah and Makedah. As they fled before Israel on the road down from Beth Horon to Ezekiah, the Lord hurled large hailstones down on them from the sky, and more of them died from the hailstones than were killed by the swords of the Israelites.

On the day the Lord gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the Lord in the presence of Israel, O sun, stand still over Gibeon! O moon, over the valley of Eglon!

So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies. As it is written in the book of Jashar, The sun stopped in the middle of the sky, and delayed going down about a full day.

[2:43] There's never been a day like it before or since, a day when the Lord listened to a man. Surely the Lord was fighting for Israel. Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal.

This is the divine lamp to our feet and light to our path. Let's walk in its light. Pastor Jason. Revelation 2 and 3, the risen, the glorious Lord Jesus writes seven letters to seven churches in each one.

And to each one he says, To those who overcome. To those who conquer. And then there's a promise of eternal life of some kind.

And heaven is a promise to those who overcome. To those who conquer. And that is why the book of Joshua is so very important to us.

It's the Old Testament's picture of that dynamic, of that reality. That heaven is promised to the people of God, But it is promised to those who overcome.

[4 : 04] And so God gave them Canaan. Just like he promised to. But he gave it to them at the end of a sword.

He, it came to them through long night marches. And dusty day battles. And it's the picture.

It's an Old Testament picture of to those who overcome. The promised land. I will give eternal life. So Joshua shows us the dangers.

We see ourselves. We see our own failings. Our own weakness. Our own sin. Our own unbelief. All those things that can hang us up. But more than that, Joshua shows us, The book of Joshua shows us our God.

And it shows us our Savior. And it's the Savior who does what he promises to do. No matter the odds.

[5 : 04] No matter the difficulties. No matter the challenges. No matter his people's failings. He is going to do what he says he's going to do. Dale Ralph Davis wrote a commentary on Joshua.

And it's subtitled, No Falling Words. No falling words. Every promise is like an arrow shot out of God's bow.

And not a single one of those arrows falls short of its target. Not one of those words falls to the ground wasted or missed. And so you're going to face a lot of enemies on your way to heaven.

A lot of enemies. The world. A whole system. We just heard about it in Psalm 2 this morning. A whole system of men. And rebellion against God.

And they're against us. And they want to pull us away. Children, you know about the riptides in the ocean.

[6 : 07] That when they're strong, they want to drag you away from the shore. Out into the deeps and drown you. That's what the world is like. But God's promise won't miss. Well, there's kings.

There's enemies. There's devils. There's Satan himself. Who all want to undo us. And yet, God's promise won't miss. There's ourselves. Our doubts.

Our unbelief. Our sin. Our fears. And isn't that a theme in the book of Joshua? Joshua. That Joshua was a man like us who was afraid.

But God again and again says, don't be afraid. Don't be discouraged. Don't be afraid. Fear will keep you out of heaven. If you let it rule over you.

Cowardice will keep you out of heaven. Revelation 22 says, outside are the cowards. They gave way to fear. They saw their enemies. And instead of standing before them, they turned tail and ran.

[7 : 12] And so, there's that saying that I saw the enemy. And it was me. And yet, God's promise won't fail. God's words won't fail.

He said to Abraham. And he said to Isaac. And he said to Jacob. I'm going to give your descendants this land. And now he is doing it in the book of Joshua.

And he says to Jesus' people. To Jesus' children. His disciples. I'm going to give you the new heavens and the new earth. Now, that is as drastic and as amazing of a promise as it was to say to Abraham.

Who had no children. I'm going to give you descendants. And they're going to conquer this land. And the land wasn't empty at the time. The land was full of people. But he said to Abraham. I'm going to do it. And he does it.

But if Revelation 2 and 3 teaches us anything. If Joshua teaches us anything. It's to those who overcome. It's the promise. But it's the promise to overcomers. It's the promise that comes at the end of a sword.

[8:17] And so, Christian, you are 50% soldier, as one person said. 50% soldier.

Does a soldier smell like hand cream? Does a soldier wear turtlenecks with corduroy jackets? Christianity. Winning heaven is not a peacetime activity.

It is not a going to Starbucks and drinking lattes and sitting around and doing nothing. It is us fighting. It's conflict.

And so, are you in conflict? Well, then, are you in conflict with the world? With the devil? With your own self? Well, that's a sign that you're a Christian. If there's no conflict.

If you've given way to the riptide. Then that tells you what you are. It's us fighting. But greater than that, and more importantly than that, it is God fighting for us.

[9:20] It is a fight. It's not civil. It's life and death. So, young moms. I'm trying to think. Young ladies. Young men.

Men. Satan wants to destroy you. He wants to destroy you. And whoever you are, it's easy for us to think that I'm not in the battle.

Or Satan. What does he have against me? Why would he be fighting against me? He won't notice me. And. But Satan hates you.

The neighborhood bully has jumped you and is now throwing punches at you. You are in a fight whether you like it or not. And so you have to overcome. The stakes are high.

The enemies are powerful. And that's why Joshua 10 is such an encouraging passage. Because what it shows us. And the point of these first 15 verses that we read.

[10:18] Is you see the point in verse 14. And I want you to look there. At the end of verse 14. Surely the Lord was fighting.

For Israel. And it's not so. It's not just you and the devil. It's not just you and the world in the pit. It's not just you by yourself in the arena.

Another warrior has come into the arena. Another warrior has jumped down into the pit. Another warrior has waded into the fight. And he has a sword for a tongue.

And his robe is drenched in blood. And Israel had already seen him. They had seen him on the far side of the Red Sea. When they had crossed the Red Sea.

And they sang their victory song. The Lord is a warrior. The Lord is his name. Or the ESV says. The Lord is a man of war. Pharaoh's chariots and his army.

[11:16] He has hurled into the sea. Hurling. It's a violent word. It's to pick up something. And to throw it down violently. And so.

What they're singing is. Is the Lord picked up those chariots. And he threw them into the depths of the water. It was a picture of all the water. Crashing down upon them.

And so there they go. Down into the depths. And then here they come up again. Bloating corpses. And Israel sings. The Lord is a warrior.

The Lord is mighty in battle. Israel had already seen him. Joshua saw the commander of the host of heaven. And remember the question was not. Are you for me or against me?

Joshua said. The right question was. Joshua are you ready to join me? I'm here to fight. Are you here to join me? Down on your face.

[12:16] And so yes. Israel had to fight. And brothers and sisters. You have to fight. Temptation. The world. Those voices.

Drawing us away from God. But brothers and sisters. Psalm 24 says. Who is this king of glory? Who is this king of glory? The Lord.

Strong and mighty. The Lord. Mighty. In battle. So who is. This king of glory? Well he's the lion. Of the tribe. Of Judah.

You are not. Alone. And the fight. The Lord fights for you. And that's what we see in Joshua 10. And so what we want to do is unpack the passage.

And explore it. And to see what it has to teach us. Remember. After the fall of Ai. All the kings.

[13:14] In Canaan. The kings by the sea. And the kings in the hills. And the kings on the plains. They had all joined together. It's reminiscent of Psalm 2. They had all joined together.

To fight against the Lord. And his people. And that's what we saw in chapter 9 verse 1. And then there's this interlude. Where we hear the story. Of how the Gibeonites.

Make a treaty with Israel. And so the Gibeonites. In the Canaanites minds. Had betrayed them. Everyone else is joining. In fighting against Joshua.

And Gibeon is now betraying them. And so some of the kings. In the area closest to Gibeon. They said we have to do something about Gibeon.

We have to punish them. We have to try to break up this alliance. We have to try to. To somehow break up this alliance. And try to test the Israelites resolve.

[14:11] And there was probably some real doubts. Whether Israel would even come to the defense of Gibeon. Because after all. Gibeon had tricked their way into an alliance. And so it could have been very easy.

To imagine Joshua just saying. Well oops. I can't help you. You're in big trouble. The Canaanite kings had every reason. To think Israel would just wash their hands.

Of Gibeon. And if they did. If you're thinking militarily. And strategically. If Israel betrays Gibeon. It's going to show everyone else.

That you can't trust the Israelites. There's no point in making a treaty. There's no deals. It's useless to make peace with Israel. And so what the king of Jerusalem does.

Is he gathers these other cities in the area. And he marches off to war against Gibeon. Now two lessons I want you to see here. And they're two encouraging lessons.

[15:06] Just from this little part. And the first lesson is this. I want you to notice that. Or I want to point out to you.

That this is the very first time the city of Jerusalem is mentioned in the Bible. In Genesis the book of Salem. Which is probably the same city.

Is mentioned. But this is the very first time Jerusalem is mentioned. And that's interesting to me. Because what are we called as the church?

We're called Jerusalem. Zion. What's the name of the heavenly city? The new Jerusalem. When you become a Christian. Hebrews says is to come to Mount Zion.

To the heavenly Jerusalem. To the city of the living God. Jerusalem became the place where the temple was. Jerusalem was David's city. Jerusalem's the city of the living God.

[16:04] But where did Jerusalem get its start? Where is its beginning? Well it's not the city of God. It's full of enemy kings.

Or an enemy king. It's filled with the warriors who hate God. Who hate his people. But the Lord is a warrior. And he's going to conquer that city.

And transform it. And redeem it. And that's his power. And that's his grace. So Jerusalem here is filled with his enemies. But the Lord is coming. And the kingdoms. Revelation 10 says.

The kingdoms of this world. Will become. The kingdoms of our God. And of his Christ. And so what happened to Jerusalem. Eventually is the city is taken.

And it becomes the city of God. And what happened to Jerusalem. Is going to happen to every city. Every nation. Every people. A million years from now.

[17:03] The whole earth. Will be nothing but a Jerusalem. Of once enemy territory. But now taken. And conquered. And redeemed.

And saved. Transformed. The Lord is a warrior. And when he sets up his kingdom. He does not go into an empty place.

Or a peaceful kingdom. He goes into hostile territory. And he fights. And he wins. And delivers. And delivers. It from his enemy.

The second thing I want you to notice here. Is that sometimes our failures. Become. God's opening. God's opportunity. To fight against our enemies.

So sometimes our failures. Becomes God's opening. To fight against our enemies. And what I mean by that is. How did this fight ever. Get started. Well it was because.

[18:04] Israel had made a treaty with Gibeon. They had not inquired of the Lord. They lived by sight. And not by faith. And they had messed up. And they had sinned.

But God is now going to use that. To destroy his enemies. Israel's sin. Becomes this opportunity. For God. To further his cause.

So Satan meant it for evil. But God uses it for good. So. God even knows how to use our sin. To advance his cause. To start a fight.

To win a fight. Do you remember. In the book of Judges. With Samson. Samson. Is walking one day. And he sees a beautiful. Philistine woman.

And he falls in love with her. And he wants to marry her. His father and mother say don't. But he doesn't listen to his father and mother. It was wrong.

[19:00] It was dumb. It was careless. It was sin. But the book of Judges says. God was using it. To provoke a fight.

He was using it to stir up a fight. To deliver his people. And so God often uses our failures. To open up a door. To open up a battlefield.

To open up an area. Where we join him. In fighting against our enemies. And so. This is how it goes. We fall into sin. We fall hard into sin.

And if God is fighting for us. What happens is. At first. Maybe we're startled by that. We're surprised by that. In the sense of. Well. We're shocked.

We can't believe that. I fell like that. I sinned like that. I didn't know this was an area. I didn't know this was a problem. I didn't know this was something. In me. It's a battlefield.

[19:58] I didn't even know about. But if the Lord is fighting for us. What we do is. Then we pick ourselves up. And we. And he stirs up in our hearts.

A desire to fight against sin. And so. Our sin. By the grace of God. Opens up the battlefield. It becomes the opportunity.

Where God says. Now let's deal. With this sin. Let's deal with this enemy. That's the Lord fighting for you. So look for it in your own life. Look for it in your own life.

If you've sinned. Don't. Don't turn tail and run. Don't lose heart. And lie down. And give up your fight. And give up your battle. Don't go away and sulk. God is using that.

To stir up. You to fight. And he. And if he stirs up a fight. It's because he wants. To fight with you.

- [20:54] It's he wants to help you. He's already fighting for you. And so be encouraged. God will even use your sin. Against your enemies. Well let's keep going.
- So what happened? The five kings marched against Gibeon. And they surround it. They besiege it. And Gibeon cries to Joshua for help. And to Gibeon's relief.
- And probably to the five kings of Canaan. Their great surprise. Joshua marches up from Gilgal. With his entire army. And says with all of his best fighting men.
- He doesn't leave anyone behind. This is no partial campaign. This is the full thing. He takes everyone. Why? Well I think it's because Joshua is encouraged.
- He knows that this is going to be a big deal. He's hopeful. He's encouraged. He's ready to fight. Why is he ready to fight? Well because of verse 8.
- [21:51] The Lord said to Joshua. Do not be afraid of them. Do not be afraid of them. I've given them into your hand. Not one of them will be able to withstand you. Now here's the third lesson for us.
- For every new fear. There is new encouragement. For every new fear. There's new encouragement. Do not be afraid.
- How many times have we heard that in Joshua? This might be the third or fourth time. How many times has the Lord said to Joshua. Don't be afraid.
- Don't be discouraged. We're going to hear it again later. In this chapter. So for every challenge. Every hard thing that they meet. In the book of Joshua. God steps onto the scene.
- And says don't be afraid. Don't be discouraged. Now there's a lot to be afraid of. There's a lot to be afraid of.
- [22:49] We're going to be facing challenges. In this life. In this battle for heaven. That will make us afraid. We heard about some of them last week.
- In 1 Peter. Or 2 Peter. Those feelings of inadequacy. Those feelings of danger. Those feelings of I'm not going to make it through this.
- I'm going to get. I'm going to arrive on the scene. And be exposed. And I'm not going to have what it takes. It's going to be too much for me. I know those feelings.
- I'm sure you know those feelings. Of fear. And new challenges bring out new fears. I've never been here before.
- I don't know how we're going to handle this. But do you see what your kind God does in every single case? Don't be afraid. I think it's something like 360 times in the Bible.
- [23:55] One for almost every day of the year. Do not be afraid. For daily fear. There's daily encouragement. For daily new fear. There's this.
- Our God who says. Don't be afraid. And he knows our fears. And again and again. He says. Don't be afraid. And well. Why does he do that? Because that's the Lord fighting for us.
- One way that someone fights for you. Is he gets down in the trench with you. He. He empathizes with you. He knows how you feel. And he says. Don't be afraid.
- And that's our God. He's this great warrior. And he's always saying to us. Don't be afraid. I'm right here with you. Don't be afraid. I'm here. I am fighting for you. And so for all of our fresh fears.
- There's fresh encouragement. And that's our God. That's our warrior. He's always the one. Who's standing beside us. Saying don't be afraid. I'm here. And I'm fighting for you.
- [24:56] Well. Let's keep going. Joshua. And his whole army. And all of his best fighting men. They march through the night. It's about 20 miles. A 20 mile hike.

Through the middle of the night. And probably early in the morning. Or late at night. Near dawn. When the enemy is probably sleeping. Or at least.

All their focus is on Gibeon. The Israelite army. Crashes. Into the Canaanite army. And look what it says.

The Lord. Threw them into confusion. Before Israel. Threw them into confusion. This is the Lord. Fighting for his people. The Lord throws them into confusion. One commander.

Can't find another commander. Communications. Breaks down. People are trying to. Get a line together. To stand in defense. And yet. They can't. Somehow. They can't pull it off. There's confusion.

[25:58] It's the fog of battle. But now. It's the fog of battle. Enhanced by. The God. Who's this mighty warrior. And so. Just like Babel. When the Lord. Confused the tongues.

The same thing happens here. The army. That was so disciplined. And so trained. And had besieged the city. And now. They can't get their act together. They can't figure out.

What to do. It's confusion. And it's fear. And it's men. Dying all around. And that's something we see in the Bible too. When. When the. The defeat starts. See that in the Bible.

You see that in real life. When the defeat starts. And the route starts. Things fall apart. And it gets worse. And so it's confusion. It's fear.

And men are dying. All around. And. And the. And kings. And commanders. They can't figure out. What to do. They can't get their act together. And. And suddenly. The Canaanite army.

[26:56] Is surging. Down the road. In retreat. Running back. To where. They came from. They don't know. What else to do. They can't figure out.

Where else to go. It's this massive retreat. But you can't think. It's an organized retreat. It's not. It's not an organized retreat. Men are running. All by themselves.

Down the road. And. This is at Rambo. Because. In. In real war. Men isolated. Men confused. Men afraid.

In the face. Of an oncoming army. Are easy pickings. They can't stand. Before an army. And so. The. Israel. Is cutting them down.

Mile. After a mile. As they run down the road. And men are scattered. And they're terrified. And the kings are desperately. Trying to rally their men. And the day gets worse.

[27:56] Because. At some point in the morning. The sky began to cloud over. And maybe you've seen. Those dark clouds. That rise thousands.

And thousands. Of feet in the air. And they're purple. And black. Well they. Show in the sky. They appear in the sky. And then it begins to happen.

Hail. Begins to fall. You've seen hail kids. Right? The ice. Balls of ice. A week and a half ago.

In a thunderstorm. We had some at our house. Little tiny pieces of ice. In the middle of summer. But it wasn't tiny. Hailstones. It says it was large.

Hailstones. There's some interesting reading. On the internet. If you want. See large. Hailstones. And what the damage. They can do. And verse 11 says.

[28:57] The Lord. Hurlled. Hailstones. Down on them. Remember the Lord hurlled. Pharaohs. The Pharaohs. Chariots.

And his army. Into the sea. Now here he is again. The warrior shows up again. And this time he's not in the water. He's in the sky. And he's hurling down hail. Upon them.

And so. Israel killed their thousands. But the Lord killed his tens of thousands. Hurlled. I want you to imagine.

The Canaanites horror. Of what they're seeing. They can't escape. Now even. The heavens are fighting against them.

And can you imagine. Israel's awe. This is our God. This is our God. And he's fighting for us. Who is this king of glory?

[29:53] It's the Lord. Mighty in battle. And this is your God. The same yesterday.

Today. And forever. This is your God. Are you lost?

Are you unsaved? Well this is the one. Who you're rebelling against. The Lord. Mighty in battle. You can't stand before him.

Joshua 10. In some ways. Is a picture. Of the very last day. When men. Flee. And yet cannot escape. And so.

As Pastor John said. The only place to run. Is into Jesus arms. The only place. To safety. Is to grab a hold of the son. But.

[30:53] Still. The story hasn't even reached. Its peak. Now the hours. Are slipping away. And it's. It's about noon. Or so now. Israel has marched.

About 30. Ish. Miles. 30 miles. Now. They've marched. Through the night. And now they've. Fought through the morning. And they're. Going down this road.

Total victory. Is at hand. But. It's about to slip away. They're going to wipe out. Five. Kings. And five cities.

And five armies. All in one day. But the problem is. Is that victory. Is going to slip away. And if it slips away. They're going to recoup. Recupérate. They're going to. Get back together.

And. And they'll fight another day. So total victory. Is at hand. But it's about to slip away. They. And Israel. Doesn't need more warriors. Israel. Doesn't need a more. A better plan.

[31:47] They don't need to regroup. And figure out. What they're going to do. They need. More time. Where do you get more time? How do you get more time?

Well Joshua knows only one way. To get more time. The day. Has to slow down. The day has to. Hit the pause button.

We wish we had more time in a day. Sometimes don't we? Well. Jesus didn't just. Joshua just didn't. Wish for it. He prayed for it.

And really. That. Of all the things that are amazing. The. The. The Bible points out this. That when Joshua prayed. That prayer. The Lord answered him.

And so the Lord. And so Joshua prayed. Lord. Make the sun. Stand still in the sky. Make the moon. Stand still. In the sky. And the sun.

[32:54] Stood still. And the moon. Stopped. Pages. Pages. Of commentaries. Have been.

Written on this. What did God do? Is this figurative? Is this literal? Some say. It can't be.

The way it was. Some say. It must have been something. A little bit different. Some say. We just don't know how. Some. And they all. Or not all of them. But a lot of them say.

It probably wasn't. That somehow. God. Actually. Stopped the earth. From spinning. Because. If he did that. Well. I mean. They say. Everyone on earth.

Would have fallen down. And. The earth. Would have started on fire. And all this other stuff. Like. If you physically. Stop. The. Earth. From. Spinning.

[33:47] That's what. Is going to happen. A lot of words. Words. And words. And words. But God spoke.

The world. Into being. And it was. Ex nihilo. Out of nothing. How many tools.

Did he use? Zero. And our God. Marks off the heavens. With the breath. Of his hand. And he holds the oceans.

In the palm. Of his hand. And when the Lord. Goes to war. Physics. Are not his handcuffs. And man's expectations.

And man's reason. The human possibility. And physics. And all the rest. Are not his chains. I don't know. How God did it. But.

[34 : 44] I don't know. Exactly. How Jesus. Turned water. Into wine. Both are. Inexplicable. Both are. Unexplainable. I couldn't. Stopping the earth. Turning water.

Into wine. Are equally. Impossible. And equally. I don't get it. And so the question is. Is not. Can God. Do it. The question is.

Is. Do you believe it? Is God. A big God. God. Or is God. A small God. Do you have. A big God.

Or do you have. A little God. And so. I have no problem. Taking the passage. Totally on face value. That the sun.

Stopped in the sky. And that meant. The earth. Stopped moving. And probably. The whole solar system. Stood at a standstill. Why?

[35 : 40] Because the Lord. Was fighting. For Israel. And that's our God. And this is what he does. He does the impossible. For us. To fight for us.

He does the impossible. For us. To save us. And so yes. You have to overcome. And you have to fight. And you have to go to war. But a mighty warrior. Is in the pit with you.

He's in there with you. The devil. Is a roaring lion. But we. Have our own life. The lion. The lion of the tribe. Of Judah. The weapons of the enemy.

Are real. And his schemes. Are real. But the Lord. Fights for his people. So what can his schemes be? What can his weapons.

Do against the Lord? And next week. What we want to do. Lord willing. Is to see how the Lord. Fights for you. We want to take all of this. And bring it down.

[36 : 35] And to say. Okay. Now how does the Lord. Fight for you? No. But this is where we'll end. I want to end with worship. With saying. This is our God. He is mighty in battle.

And he's our friend. He's our savior. And we want to praise him. Amen. So let's pray. Oh God.

It is a delight. To preach this passage. It's a delight. To think about you. About how great. And strong you are. We have many.

Enemies. More cunning. More crafty. More powerful. More deceitful. Longer lived. Than us.

With more experience. Than us. We are like sheep. Lord. We thank you. That you are.

[37 : 36] Like our David. Who fights bears. And who fights lions. And who fights giants. For us. Lord Jesus. Thank you.

That you came. To crush. The head of the serpent. To destroy. The works of the devil. Thank you. That you're coming again. To take the kingdoms.

Of this world. And to make them. Your own kingdom. To conquer your enemies. To save your people. Pray for any here.

Who are rebelling. My only prayer. Is that they would come. To their senses. See how pointless it is. To fight against. The one who rules over.

Wind and water. Sky and sea. The one who is everlasting. So I pray that you would. Bring them to their senses.

[38 : 33] And bring them to mercy. And let them. Know the salvation. That is in Jesus Christ. I pray this in Jesus name. Amen.

Amen.