

OVERCOMING OPPOSITION
Destruction of the Amorite Coalition
Joshua 10

From **Jericho** to the **Northern Kings**...the battles get more and more difficult for **Joshua** and the **Israelites**. Such is the case with the *abundant Christian life*. Even when living the *victorious Christian life*...we still face battles. We aren't immune to attacks and battles.

I. RECOGNIZE THE PLAN OF THE ENEMY: (vs. 1-5)

What is the plan of the devil against you?

- **Deception**...His target is your *mind*...inject evil thoughts.
- **Destruction**...He will attack your *body*...physically.
- **Disobedience**...He will attack your *will*...bad decisions.
- **Despair**...He will attack your *heart*...emotions.

Attention has shifted suddenly *five miles south* from **Gibeon** to **Jerusalem**. Near panic had seized **Adoni-Zedek** its **king**...and for good reason. The surrender of the **Gibeonite** cities completed an arc that began at **Gilgal** and extended through **Jericho** and **Ai** to a point just a few miles northwest of **Jerusalem**. The handwriting was on the wall. **Jerusalem's** security was being severely threatened. If the advances of **Israel's** armies continued without challenge, **Jerusalem** would soon be captured and defeated (vs. 1-2).

He feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were mighty (vs. 2)...

So the **king of Jerusalem** sent an urgent message to *four* other **kings** of **southern Canaan** stressing the fact that **Gibeon** had made peace with **Israel**...a disloyal act. Immediate action had to be taken against **Gibeon** (vs. 3-4).

So the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon, gathered together and went up, they with all their armies, and camped by Gibeon and fought against it (vs. 5)...

There was a quick response. A **five king southern confederacy** was formed to unite and lay siege against **Gibeon**. The **kings** were of the **Amorites**...of the hill country of **Canaan**.

II. REMEMBER THE PROMISE MADE: (vs. 6-9)

- **Remember the covenant**...the covenant made with the **Gibeonites**.
- **Respond to the commitment**...come to fight for the **Gibeonites**.
- **Recognize the confirmation**...confirm the commitment to *integrity*.

Integrity... the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness...keeping a commitment even after the circumstances under which the commitment was made have changed...Being a person/people of character and principle.

Then the men of Gibeon sent word to Joshua to the camp at Gilgal, saying, "Do not abandon your servants; come up to us quickly and save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites that live in the hill country have assembled against us" (vs. 6)... Faced with certain slaughter, the **Gibeonites** sent a messenger to **Joshua** with an urgent appeal for help against the **Amorite** coalition *...five* against *one*.

From a human point of view, it would have been easy for **Joshua** to just sit back and let the **Canaanite** forces fight among themselves. If the **Gibeonites** were defeated, **Joshua** and the **Israelites** would be rid of an embarrassing compromise that they had made when they made a covenant with **Gibeon**. But from a spiritual standpoint... **Joshua** had to respond. (*Integrity*).

So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him and all the valiant warriors (vs. 7)... To not respond to the request was not an option for **Joshua**. And this is evident from his immediate reaction.

The Lord said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands; not one of them shall stand before you" (vs. 8)... God assured **Joshua** that He would give them victory...a promise God continued to make to **Joshua** (**Joshua 1:9; Joshua 8:1**).

So Joshua came upon them suddenly by marching all night from Gilgal (vs. 9)... From a military strategy, this was great opportunity. Up until this time, **Israel's** army had attacked one fortified city at a time. At best, this would have been a long and drawn out offensive process for conquering the entire land of **Canaan**. But now, the

combined **Amorite** armies of **southern Canaan** were together in an open field outside **Gibeon**. An **Israelite** victory would break the backs of the enemy forces of the entire region.

Gathering his forces, **Joshua** and his men marched the **25 miles** from **Gilgal** to **Gibeon** under the cover of darkness.

III. RELY ON THE POWER OF GOD: (vs. 10-14)

When you face an attack...or battle with the enemy...let God fight your battle. The tool against the enemy and his plan...

- **It is always only by permission...**don't forget who is God and who is man.
- **It is always by understanding...**you are to understand His **Word** and His ways and His will.
- **It is by perseverance...**continue to deal with...and remove sin.

And the Lord confounded them before Israel, and He slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and pursued them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon and struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah (vs. 10)...

- **The Lord confounded them.** There was *panic* and *confusion* among them.
- **He slew them.**
- **He pursued them.** They headed *west* through a *narrow pass* and *down a valley* with the **Israelites** in pursuit.

As they fled from before Israel, while they were at the descent of Beth-horon, the Lord threw large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died; there were more who died from the hailstones than those whom the sons of Israel killed with the sword (vs. 11)...This entire passage provides a striking illustration of the relationship between the *human* and *divine* factors in achieving victory. The soldiers had to fight...but God gave them the victory.

Then Joshua spoke to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, "O sun, stand still at Gibeon, and O moon in the valley of Aijalon." So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies. Is it not written in the book of Jashar? And the sun stopped in the

middle of the sky and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day (vs. 12-13)...**Joshua** knew that the pursuit of the enemy would be long and arduous. At the most, they would have about **12 hours of daylight**. He needed more time if he was to realize the fulfillment of God's promise (vs. 8) and see the total annihilation of his enemies. So he took an unusual request to the Lord...and the petition was quickly answered by the Lord.

Joshua prayed in faith...and a **great miracle resulted**.

The book of Jashar...a **Hebrew literary collection of songs** written in poetic style **to honor the accomplishments** of **Israel's** leaders. (**II Samuel 1:17-27**, **David's** lament over **Saul** is recorded in the book).

There was no day like that before it or after it, when the Lord listened to the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel (vs. 14)...In answer to prayer, **Israel** experienced the intervention of God and victory was assured.

The greatest miracle in all of this is *not that the sun stood still* and that *the moon stopped*. The greatest miracle in all of this is that the Lord *listened to man*. Because God listens to the voice and cry of man, we need to learn to go to God in prayer. He listens!

IV. REIGN OVER THE PROVINCE: (vs. 15-42)

Then Joshua and all Israel with him returned to the camp to Gilgal (vs. 15, vs. 43 repeats this same action)...After every battle, **Joshua** and the **Israelites** always returned to **Gilgal...***their place of worship*.

Now these five kings had fled and hidden themselves in the cave at Makkedah. It was told Joshua, saying, "The five kings have been found hidden in the cave at Makkedah." Joshua said, "Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and assign men by it to guard them, but do not stay there yourselves; pursue your enemies and attack them in the rear. Do not allow them to enter their cities, for the Lord your God has delivered them into your hand" (vs. 16-19)...

The **five strong kings** and their armies had left their fortified cities to fight **Israel** in the open. Now **Joshua** was determined to prevent them from retreating back to their walled cities. When word came that the **five kings had fled and hidden themselves in the cave**, **Joshua** ordered **large stones** to be placed over the entrance to the

cave. This allowed himself and his armies to *vigorously pursue* the Amorite armies.

Joshua said, “Open the mouth of the cave and bring these five kings out to me from the cave.” They did so, and brought these five kings out to him from the cave: the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon. When they brought these kings out to Joshua, Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the chiefs of the men of war who had gone with him, “Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings.” So they came near and put their feet on their necks (vs.22-24)...

Returning to the guarded cave, Joshua had the captured kings brought out and executed. But first, following an *eastern custom* of conquerors, often pictured on Egyptian and Assyrian monuments, Joshua instructed his commanders to put their feet on the kings’ necks. This was a symbol of the *complete subjugation* of the defeated enemy.

Joshua then said to them, “Do not fear or be dismayed! Be strong and courageous, for thus the Lord will do to all your enemies with whom you fight” (vs. 25)...Using words that were identical to those God had spoken to him, Joshua urged his soldiers not to be *afraid* or *discouraged*...but to **be strong and courageous**.

Verses 28-36...The defeat of the **five kings** and their armies sealed the doom of **southern Canaan**. In a series of quick raids, Joshua attacked the *key military centers* themselves to destroy and disable any further military capability.

- Makkedah (vs. 28)
- Libnah (vs. 29)
- Lachish (vs. 31)
- Gezer (vs. 33)
- Eglon (vs. 34)

Joshua next drove into the heart of the *southern region* and defeated its *two chief walled cities* (vs. 36-39)...

- Hebron (vs. 36)
- Debir (vs. 38)

Thus Joshua struck all the land, the hill country and the Negev and the lowland and the slopes and all their kings. He left no survivor, but he utterly destroyed all who breathed, just as the Lord, the God of Israel, had commanded. Joshua struck them from Kadesh-barnea even as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen even as far as Gibeon. Joshua captured all these kings and their lands at one time, because the Lord, the God of Israel, fought for Israel (vs. 40-42)...

V. REJOICE IN THE PURPOSE OF GOD: (vs. 43)

So Joshua and all Israel with him returned to the camp at Gilgal (vs. 43, a repeat of vs. 15)...Again, after every battle, Joshua and the Israelites always returned to Gilgal...*their place of worship*. The place where they *restored their worship*...

- Consecration.
- Circumcision.
- Passover.
- Where they returned to after reaffirming the Law at Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim.

LESSONS WE CAN LEARN:

- Even when seeking to live the victorious Christian life...even when coming under the Lordship of Christ...**we still face battles**.
- Many times when we are making Jesus Christ Lord...instead of **attacking you directly**, our enemy the devil will **attack those closest to you**.
- In a combination of what Joshua and James write...it’s not **if** but **when** you face various trials, do not fear or be dismayed! **Be strong and courageous**, for the Lord God is with you and will give you victory.