

Victory

Joshua 10:15-43

INTRODUCTION

In Joshua we have received our invitation to enter the land—and conquer the land. Later we will join join Joshua in possessing the land!

What makes victory possible?

Prayer.

Joshua prayed for more time. He needed a miracle to defeat his enemy.

The presence of God and the promise of God. But the soul that would experience victory must also embrace the art and science of spiritual warfare. We must enter the battle. We must engage in the fight.

We are to become seasoned soldiers of our heavenly King Jesus.

We battle not against flesh and blood “but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12). In Ephesians Paul tells the believers to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might (v.10). Put on the whole armor of God so that we may withstand the wiles of the devil (v.11).

We Christians have three great enemies: Satan and the invisible forces of darkness. We are also given equipment to fight Satan—the armor of God (Ephesians 6)

We also have to contend with our flesh. The secret of victory over the flesh is to discover that we are crucified with Christ—that we must put to death the deeds of the flesh in our body. We identify with Christ and experience the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

We must also contend with this world. The secret of victory over this world—is separation to the Father. In 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 Paul pleads with the Corinthians to be separated from evil and allow God to be your heavenly Father. Don’t be unequally yoked. What fellowship does darkness have with light? What fellowship does Christ have with Belial? And what agreement does the temple of God have with idols? Paul quotes Jeremiah 31:32 “I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God And they shall be My people” and “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.” “I will be a Father to you, And you shall be my sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty” (2 Corinthians 6:17-18).

We are crucified with Christ—the secret of victory over self.

We are given equipment in the Lord—the secret of victory over Satan.

We are separated from sin to the Father—this is the secret of victory over the world (see also 1 John 2:14-17).

We walk in the Spirit—this is the secret of victory over the flesh (see Galatians 5:16-21).

But these are not our only enemies. We have our tongue to contend with. We have the ignorance of foolish people to contend with. We have our own failures to contend with.

Our speech is seasoned with the salt of grace which is the secret of victory over the tongue (Colossians 4:6). We as Christians are to do well—we are not called to low living and the secret of victory over the talk of ignorance and foolish men is “well doing”. “For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” (1 Peter 2:15).

Christ in us is the secret of victory over failure in the Christian life. Ephesians 3:16-17: “that He would grant you according the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you being rooted and grounded in love”.

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In this chapter there are seven recorded battles:

1. The first battle is against the enemies of Gibeon (vv.1-14).
2. The battle against Makkedah (vv.15-28).
3. The battle against Libnah (vv.29-30).
4. The battle against Lachish (vv.31-33).
5. The battle against Elon (vv.34-35).
6. The battle against Hebron (vv.36-37)
7. The battle against Debir (vv.38-39)

The Battle Campaigns (vv.15-39)

The Battle Against Makkedah (vv.15-28)

15Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

Verses 15 and 43 are identical—this is not accidental but intentional to mark this section.

16But these five kings had fled and hidden themselves in a cave at Makkedah.

17And it was told Joshua, saying, “The five kings have been found hidden in the cave at Makkedah.”

18So Joshua said, “Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and set men by it to guard them.

19And do not stay there yourselves, but pursue your enemies, and attack their rear guard. Do not allow them to enter their cities, for the Lord your God has delivered them into your hand.”

Joshua orders them to seal the cave and to continue to “pursue your enemies and attack their rear guard”. Continue the fight. Prevent the enemy from gaining a strategic advantage by returning to their fortified cities. Trust the Lord.

20Then it happened, while Joshua and the children of Israel made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they had finished, that those who escaped entered fortified cities.

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21 And all the people returned to the camp, to Joshua at Makkedah, in peace. No one moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.

The sweeping defeats meant that Israel was a force to be reckoned with and feared!

There is a sense in which the people of God should be feared. God's enemies will be overthrown and defeated. Not in the sense—that we make life miserable or unbearable—or act cruelly towards the unbeliever.

Our Savior is King and Judge. We are to be courageous in our faith—uncompromising in our testimony—holy in our lives! In our **worship and praise of our great king we should experience awe and reverence by the presence of God.**

In his book *Victorious Christian Living*—Alan Redpath writes:

22 Then Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings to me from the cave."

23 And they did so, and brought out those five kings 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.

24 So it was, when they brought out those kings to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the captains of the men of war who went with him, "Come near; put your feet on the necks of these kings." And they drew near and put their feet on their necks.

In the ancient world on monuments and coins are pictured rulers with their feet on the necks of their conquered enemies. This was a symbol of complete subjugation by a defeated enemy. It was also to serve as a warning to future enemies.

25 Then Joshua said to them, "Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; be strong and of good courage, for thus the Lord will do to all your enemies against whom you fight."

26 And afterward Joshua struck them and killed them, and hanged them on five trees; and they were hanging on the trees until evening.

Joshua repeats what has been given to him—'don't be afraid or dismayed'. Be strong. Endure. The Lord will conquer and give your enemies into your hand.

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It would appear that Joshua killed them himself. Some have suggested that Joshua did not simply hang them from a tree—with a rope but may have impaled them on stakes. Do you think Joshua cruel? Do you wonder if they might be ‘overkill’?

27So it was at the time of the going down of the sun that Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees, cast them into the cave where they had been hidden, and laid large stones against the cave’s mouth, which remain until this very day.

Joshua broke the coalition of the five kings. Their deaths would mean that Southern Canaan would be secured. The cities guarded the approaches to the southern highlands.

Once again Joshua establishes a memorial of victory along the way. The memorial was to serve as a warning of what will happen to those who reject God and embrace judgment.

28On that day Joshua took Makkedah, and struck it and its king with the edge of the sword. He utterly destroyed them—all the people who were in it. He let none remain. He also did to the king of Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho.

Once again Joshua deals decisively with his enemies. All leadership in the Bible is based on covenant. In the ancient world the king represented the people to God and God to the people. What happens if the king misrepresents God—opposes God rebels against God and invites the people to dishonor and disobey God? We are to resist evil. We are to resist—violence, child abuse, brutality, adultery, immorality, divorce, etc. We are to remain loyal to the Lord Jesus. We are to endure against the enemies—who celebrate evil. We are to combat and struggle and fight against evil—we are to stay the course and persevere—remain steadfast and not give up until we have experienced total victory.

Joshua executes the king—as a warning.

The Battle Against Libnah (vv.29-30)

29Then Joshua passed from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, to Libnah; and they fought against Libnah.

30And the Lord also delivered it and its king into the hand of Israel; he struck it and all the people who were in it with the edge of the sword. He let none remain in it, but did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho.

The Battle Against Lachish (vv.31-33)

31Then Joshua passed from Libnah, and all Israel with him, to Lachish; and they encamped against it and fought against it.

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32And the Lord delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, who took it on the second day, and struck it and all the people who were in it with the edge of the sword, according to all that he had done to Libnah.

33Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish; and Joshua struck him and his people, until he left him none remaining.

The Battle Against Elon (vv.34-35)

34From Lachish Joshua passed to Eglon, and all Israel with him; and they encamped against it and fought against it.

35They took it on that day and struck it with the edge of the sword; all the people who were in it he utterly destroyed that day, according to all that he had done to Lachish.

The Battle Against Hebron (vv.36-37)

36So Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, to Hebron; and they fought against it.

37And they took it and struck it with the edge of the sword—its king, all its cities, and all the people who were in it; he left none remaining, according to all that he had done to Eglon, but utterly destroyed it and all the people who were in it.

The Battle Against Debir (vv.38-39)

38Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to Debir; and they fought against it.

39And he took it and its king and all its cities; they struck them with the edge of the sword and utterly destroyed all the people who were in it. He left none remaining; as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir and its king, as he had done also to Libnah and its king.

The battles were constant. We must wage an ongoing war. We must oppose the enemy. These enemies were committed to keeping Israel out of the promised land.

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The Breath And Scope Of Victory (vv.40-43)

40So Joshua conquered all the land: the mountain country and the South and the lowland and the wilderness slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel had commanded.

41And Joshua conquered them from Kadesh Barnea as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even as far as Gibeon.

42All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel.

We are given the breath and scope of the victory. It included the highlands (the hill country); the south lands (the modern Negev); the foothills (shephelah—or lowlands) and the ascents (slopes)—Joshua left no survivors (see *The Moody Bible Commentary* p.331).

What or rather who was the source for these sweeping victories? The Lord God of Israel. The Lord God fought for Israel.

Haley's helpful comment: "Joshua swept over this region in too rapid a manner to depopulate it entirely. . . All whom he pursued he destroyed; but he did not stop to search into every possible hiding place. This was left to be done by each tribe in its own inheritance" (cited in *Believer's Bible Commentary* p.248).

43Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

You can imagine that Joshua and the army returned to their camp at Gilgal for much needed rest and relaxation. But their task remains unfinished. The northern borders remain occupied and unsecured.

There is an interesting story about Mark Twain and his daughter as they made their way through Europe. Twain's writings had made him famous and he was sought out by the rich and the famous of his day. In several cities artists and scientists met with Twain and his daughter. Towards the end of the journey his daughter said to him, "Papa, you know everybody but God, don't you?"

In the book of Daniel we read; "The people who know their God will display strength and take action" (Daniel 11:32b).

In the end only those who really know and trust the Lord will experience victory.

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Conclusion

We would do well to remember that one defeat does not mean we abandon the fight. You will remember the children of Israel experienced a crushing blow and disappointing set back at Ai. The loss of one battle in the Christian life does not mean permanent defeat.

We know that if we refuse to pray—and act out in disobedience against the clear commands of Jesus we will suffer defeat. We are encouraged to pray and keep a constant watch.