

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
2-22-23

Joshua 10

Adoni-Zedek And His Fear Of Israel – Verses 1-2

10 Now Adoni-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 had become their allies. ² 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.

10:1 When Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai and had utterly destroyed it: The king of Jerusalem (Adoni-Zedek) was rightly alarmed when he heard of the conquests of Jericho and Ai. He understood that the armies of Israel would soon come against all the cities of Canaan.

10:1 And how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel: In addition, the surrender and subordination of the Gibeonites caused Adoni-Zedek to be afraid. Gibeon was a great city and its men were mighty — if they surrendered to Israel, things were bad for the Canaanites.

The Gibeonites did not submit to Israel a position of weakness; indeed, all its men were mighty. Yet it was because of their love and honor of the God of Israel that they submitted to perpetual service in His tabernacle.

10:2 They feared greatly: Fear did not make the Canaanites surrender. It made them organize and fight, and Adoni-Zedek became the leader of the southern Canaanite kings. The enemies of Israel feared greatly; but like our spiritual enemies, they did not retreat but launched even more bold attacks, as a wild animal might fight when it feels threatened.

The Southern Kings Of Canaan Assemble For An Attack On Gibeon – Verses 3-5

³ So Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem appealed to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish and Debir king of Eglon. ⁴ “Come up and help me attack Gibeon,” he said, “because it has made peace with Joshua and the Israelites.” ⁵ 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.

10:3 Therefore Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron: Acting on his fear, Adoni-Zedek began to organize the kings of southern Canaan. Since Israel occupied the land to their north, he could not get help from the kings of northern Canaan.

10:4-5 King of Jerusalem...king of Hebron...king of Jarmuth...king of Lachish...king of Eglon: This again displays that the Canaanites were organized as city-states instead of one unified nation. It took the leadership of Adoni-Zedek to bring them together. Each one of these cities — Jerusalem, Jarmuth, Lachish, Eglon, and Hebron were important cities either for their location or for the trade routes associated with them.

The Plea For Help From Gibeon – Verses 6-7

⁶ 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.” ⁷ So Joshua marched up from Gilgal with his entire army, including all the best fighting men.

10:6-7 Joshua’s response shows his integrity. After having been deceived by the Gibeonites, Joshua and the leaders could have been slow about their attempt to rescue them. Instead, they immediately responded to their call for help. How willing would you be to help someone who had deceived you, even though you had forgiven him or her? We should take our word just as seriously as Joshua did.

God’s Command And Promise To Joshua – Verses 8-11

⁸ 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.”⁹ After an all-night march from Gilgal, Joshua took them by surprise. ¹⁰ The LORD threw them into confusion before Israel, so Joshua and the Israelites defeated them completely at Gibeon. Israel pursued them along the road going up to Beth Horon and cut them down all the way to Azekah and Makkedah. ¹¹ As they fled before Israel on the road down from Beth Horon to Azekah, the LORD hurled large hailstones down on them, and more of them died from the hail than were killed by the swords of the Israelites.

10:8 Do not fear them: This was a command. Though Joshua had reason to fear because Israel faced a confederation of five kings, God commanded Joshua to not fear his enemies. The command was joined to a promise. Joshua could obey God’s command to not fear because he had God’s promise of victory. Fear takes away our ability to fight God’s battles. Even in the face of strong enemies, Joshua was commanded to not fear. For Joshua, fear was unbelief — being unwilling to believe what God promised. So it is with us today.

10:9 Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly: With the assurance of God’s promise (Joshua 10:8), Joshua did not sit back to passively watch God work without his participation. He went to great effort to participate in the work and will of God. This took hard work and initiative on Joshua’s part. The march from Gilgal to Gibeon involved a climb of 3,300 feet (1,000 meters), over a distance of about 20 miles (32 kilometers). This was eight to ten hours of hard marching, all through the night.

10:9 God does His work, but He draws us into working with Him. Often God waits to see our initiative, our willingness to be a partner with Him, before He does what only He can do.

10:10 So the Lord routed them before Israel: God’s work, and the partnership of Joshua’s work with the Lord, accomplished something great. The enemies of God were routed.

10:11 The Lord cast down large hailstones from heaven: The hailstones that killed the retreating armies of the Canaanites were obviously miraculous. The hail itself could have been a phenomenon of nature, but its aim and timing were evidence of the hand of God. There were more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword: God’s miraculous work was much greater than Israel’s work. Yet we notice that Joshua didn’t wait around for the hail to come. He did what he could do in partnership with God, and God did what only God could do.

God extends the day to maximize Israel's victory – Verses 12-15

¹² On the day the LORD gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the LORD in the presence of Israel: “Sun, stand still over Gibeon, and you, moon, over the Valley of Aijalon.”

¹³ 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. ¹⁴ There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the LORD listened to a human being. Surely the LORD was fighting for Israel! ¹⁵ Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal.

10:12-14 How did the sun stand still? Of course, in relation to the earth the sun always stands still—it is the earth that travels around the sun. But the terminology used in Joshua should not cause us to doubt the miracle. After all, we are not confused when someone tells us the sun rises or sets. The point is that the day was prolonged, not that God used a particular method to prolong it. Two explanations have been given for how this event occurred: (1) A slowing of the earth's normal rotation gave Joshua more time, as the original Hebrew language seems to indicate. (2) Some unusual refraction of the sun's rays gave additional hours of light. Regardless of God's chosen method, the Bible is clear that the day was prolonged by a miracle, and that God's intervention turned the tide of battle for his people.

10:13 The Book of Jashar (also mentioned in 2 Samuel 1:18) was probably a collection of historical events put to music. Many parts of the Bible contain quotations from previous books, songs, poems, or other spoken and written materials. Because God guided the writer of this book to select this material, his message comes with divine authority.

Five Amorite Kings Killed– Verses 16-21

¹⁶ Now the five kings had fled and hidden in the cave at Makkedah. ¹⁷ When Joshua was told that the five kings had been found hiding in the cave at Makkedah, ¹⁸ he said, “Roll large rocks up to the mouth of the cave, and post some men there to guard it. ¹⁹ But don't stop; pursue your enemies! Attack them from the rear and don't let them reach their cities, for the LORD your God has given them into your hand.” ²⁰ So Joshua and the Israelites defeated them completely, but a few survivors managed to reach their fortified cities. ²¹ The whole army then returned safely to Joshua in the camp at Makkedah, and no one uttered a word against the Israelites.

10:16-18 Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and set men by it to guard them. And do not stay there yourselves, but pursue your enemies, and attack their rear guard: Joshua would not allow anything — even the personal capture of the kings — to keep him from completing Israel's victory. The kings could be imprisoned and dealt with later.

10:20 Made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter: This repeats a significant theme throughout the book of Joshua; that they were to conduct a unique war of judgment against the Canaanites.

10:21 No one moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel: The people of Canaan knew — beyond any doubt — that God was with Joshua and the nation of Israel. By analogy and application, the church — just like Israel — should be feared in the sense that it should be a place where people know God will conquer them. They should have the idea “If I keep coming here, God

is going to conquer me. I'll have to submit my life to Him." Too many churches present a harmless sort of God who demands no surrender from His people.

The Execution Of The Canaanite King – Verses 22-27

22 Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave and bring those five kings out to me." **23** So they brought the five kings out of the cave—the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon. **24** When they had brought these kings to Joshua, he summoned all the men of Israel and said to the army commanders who had come with him, "Come here and put your feet on the necks of these kings." So they came forward and placed their feet on their necks. **25** Joshua said to them, "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Be strong and courageous. This is what the LORD will do to all the enemies you are going to fight." **26** Then Joshua put the kings to death and exposed their bodies on five poles, and they were left hanging on the poles until evening. **27** At sunset Joshua gave the order and they took them down from the poles and threw them into the cave where they had been hiding. At the mouth of the cave they placed large rocks, which are there to this day.

10:24 Placing a foot on the neck of a captive was a common military practice in the ancient Near East. It symbolized the victor's domination of his captives. These proud kings had boasted of their power. Now all Israel could see that God was superior to any earthly army.

10:25 With God's help, Israel won the battle against five Amorite armies. Such a triumph was part of God's daily business as he worked with his people for victory. Joshua told his men never to be afraid because God would give them similar victories over all their enemies. God has often protected us and won victories for us. The same God who empowered Joshua and who has led us in the past will help us with our present and future needs. Reminding ourselves of his help in the past will give us hope for the struggles that lie ahead.

Southern Cities Conquered – Verses 28-33

28 That day Joshua took Makkedah. He put the city and its king to the sword and totally destroyed everyone in it. He left no survivors. And he did to the king of Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho. **29** Then Joshua and all Israel with him moved on from Makkedah to Libnah and attacked it. **30** The LORD also gave that city and its king into Israel's hand. The city and everyone in it Joshua put to the sword. He left no survivors there. And he did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho. **31** Then Joshua and all Israel with him moved on from Libnah to Lachish; he took up positions against it and attacked it. **32** The LORD gave Lachish into Israel's hands, and Joshua took it on the second day. The city and everyone in it he put to the sword, just as he had done to Libnah. **33** Meanwhile, Horam king of Gezer had come up to help Lachish, but Joshua defeated him and his army—until no survivors were left.

10:32 Notice that in every Israelite victory, the text gives the credit to the Lord. All of Israel's victories came from God. When we are successful, we may be tempted to take all the credit and glory as though we succeeded by ourselves, in our own strength. In reality, God gives us the victories, and he alone delivers us from our enemies. We should give him the credit and praise him for his goodness.

Southern Cities Conquered – Verses 34-43

³⁴ Then Joshua and all Israel with him moved on from Lachish to Eglon; they took up positions against it and attacked it. ³⁵ They captured it that same day and put it to the sword and totally destroyed everyone in it, just as they had done to Lachish. ³⁶ Then Joshua and all Israel with him went up from Eglon to Hebron and attacked it. ³⁷ They took the city and put it to the sword, together with its king, its villages and everyone in it. They left no survivors. Just as at Eglon, they totally destroyed it and everyone in it. ³⁸ Then Joshua and all Israel with him turned around and attacked Debir. ³⁹ They took the city, its king and its villages, and put them to the sword. Everyone in it they totally destroyed. They left no survivors. They did to Debir and its king as they had done to Libnah and its king and to Hebron. ⁴⁰ So Joshua subdued the whole region, including the hill country, the Negev, the western foothills and the mountain slopes, together with all their kings. He left no survivors. He totally destroyed all who breathed, just as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded. ⁴¹ Joshua subdued them from Kadesh Barnea to Gaza and from the whole region of Goshen to Gibeon. ⁴² All these kings and their lands Joshua conquered in one campaign, because the LORD, the God of Israel, fought for Israel. ⁴³ Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal.

10:34-39 All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel: The victory was won one at a time. We often want to do everything and win every battle for God all at once. This can be Satan's strategy to set us up for a strong attack of discouragement.

10:40-43 God had commanded Joshua to take the leadership in ridding the land of sin so God's people could occupy it. Joshua did his part thoroughly—leading the united army to weaken the inhabitants. When God orders us to stop sinning, we must not pause to debate, consider the options, negotiate a compromise, or rationalize. Instead, like Joshua, our response must be swift and complete. We must be ruthless in avoiding relationships and activities that can lead us into sin.

10:40-43 The Lord God of Israel fought for Israel: This was obviously the most important factor. This illustrates the key aspect in our battle against our own spiritual enemies. We can only win as we see the Lord fighting on our behalf. He provides the victory and we walk in it.

10:43 Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal: Israel's victories always came from Gilgal. This was the place of total faith, commitment and fellowship with God, and the place where Israel had been conquered by God.