

God Gives the Victory

10/23/2022

Hymns: 8 Great Is Thy Faithfulness 12 I'll Fly Away
 59 Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

Scripture: Psalm 20

Big idea: The LORD Gives Victory

Our scripture text for today is: **Joshua 10:28 – 11:23**

Introduction

November 8th, the second Tuesday in November -- who can tell us what is special about that day? It's election day – just two and a half weeks away – the day Americans choose representatives and leaders for the next few years. Like many elections in the past decade or so, both the stakes and tensions are high. Which party will control the House and who will win the Senate? Ads seem to bombard us from every direction as candidates vie for our votes. Some say the fate of our nation hangs in the balance. Will voters choose to increase or limit the power and reach of government? Only time will tell.

Despite all of it's flaws, our election process seems much more civilized than armed combat. Yet as the *Declaration of Independence* so eloquently concludes:

And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

These brave men offered up everything for the right to freely govern themselves. We still enjoy a measure of that freedom – despite relentless efforts by power-mad psychopaths to wrench it from us at every turn.

Review

We're in the book of Joshua -- the fifth book of the Bible. Joshua records how the armies of Israel took the land in three phases. Moses directed the first phase. He defeated the hostile kings Sihon and Og on the east side of the Jordan River and outside the Promised Land. Moses gave that territory to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manassah at their request.

When Moses died, Joshua took over and crossed the Jordan River. He entered the Promised Land and set up his base at Gilgal. Recall Gilgal is on the west side of the Jordan River near where it empties into the Dead Sea. Gilgal was a suburb about eight miles north of Jericho. That's where they set up their camp which became their home base. From there, he launched victories over Jericho and Ai. Then, he quickly defeated five kings arrayed against him in the west and south.

In Joshua chapter 10:28-39 we find Joshua swiftly defeated seven more cities with their kings:

Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Gezer, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir.

Picking up at verse 40 we find a summary of the south and central victories:

Joshua 10

[40] So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as

the LORD God of Israel commanded.

We see Joshua's continuing obedience here.

[41] And Joshua smote them from Kadesh-barnea

Where's that? That's down south in the wilderness, just south of the Promised Land.

even unto Gaza,

Gaza is a strip of land along the southern Mediterranean coast of Israel.

and all the country of Goshen,

This is not Goshen of the Nile Delta in Egypt. It's another Goshen in central south portion of the Promised Land.

even unto Gibeon.

Gibeon was just north of Jerusalem.

[42] And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time,

Why?

because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel.

That's the source of the power – the LORD.

[43] And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.

Gilgal is the location where the Israelites had set up camp.

Seeing that the south and central areas were defeated by Joshua, the kings of the north set up an alliance against Israel. That's where we pick up our story today.

Joshua 11

[1] And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor had heard those things, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph,

[2] And to the kings that were on the north of the mountains, and of the plains south of Chinneroth,

Chinneroth is another name for what is commonly known as the Sea of Galilee. It's actually a fresh-water lake. Chinneroth could refer to a city or town along the shores.

and in the valley, and in the borders of Dor on the west,

Dor is near the Mediterranean Sea north of Caesarea in the northwest area of the Promised Land.

[3] And to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and to the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and to the Hivite under Hermon

Under Hermon refers to the valley of Mount Hermon. If you've been to Israel you found that Mount Hermon is way up north near Syria. You can see Syria as you look down from that mount.

in the land of Mizpeh.

[4] And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that is upon the sea shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many.

We have an alliance formed here. They heard that the Israelites had conquered all of these people in the south. They decided to band together to fight against the invading army to defend their territory. It's interesting to note here that this was an innumerable army that the Israelites were going up against, and they had superior armaments. They had horses and many chariots. The Israelites didn't have chariots. They had the LORD.

[5] And when all these kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel.

If you go ten miles north of the Sea of Galilee, there's another lake called Miram. The Jordan River begins in the mountains north of Miram. It flows into the north of Lake Miram, flows out of the south shore of that lake to converge again as a river, and then flows into the north side of the Sea (lake) of Galilee. So that's what we're talking about – the area around a lake called Meram that is about ten mile north of the Sea of Galilee.

[6] And the LORD said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them: for to morrow about this time

The LORD is being specific here.

will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt [cripple] their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.

Despite this formidable army with superior armaments, you will win this battle.

*[7] So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom **suddenly**; and they fell upon them.*

Joshua and his army down in Gilgal, traveled about 120 miles to north of the Sea of Galilee. Then, they strike first. They strike the enemy before the enemy strikes them. This is a military strategy here. Of course, the central part of their strategy is the LORD. So the made this surprise attack.

[8] And the LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon, and unto Misrephoth-maim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward; and they smote them, until they left them none remaining.

The Israel came with a surprise attack. The enemy turned and fled. As they fled, the Israelite army slaughtered them by the power of the LORD.

[9] And Joshua did unto them as the LORD bade him: he [crippled] their horses, and burn[ed] their chariots with fire.

Recall the passage we read today in Psalm chapter 20: We don't need horses and chariots. We depend on the LORD. The LORD doesn't want Israel to depend on these things, so they destroy them.

*[10] And Joshua at that time turned back, and took Hazor, and smote the king thereof with the sword: for Hazor beforetime was the **head** of all those kingdoms.*

The king of Hazor was the one who set up this alliance against Israel. It turns out that city served as the capitol in that area. If you think about big cities, one of the things we know about them is that evil tends to congregate in those kind of places. If you think about New York, Las Vegas, and similar cities, evil people tend to gravitate there and hide in the crowd.

[11] And they smote all the souls that were there[] with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them: there was not any left to breathe: and he burnt Hazor with fire.

Then he went and destroyed all of the cities of those other kings.

[12] *..., as Moses the servant of the LORD commanded.*

[13] *...*

[14] *And all the spoil of these cities,*

He didn't burn them.

and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves;

They captured the wealth of the cities.

but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe.

This was another big slaughter. The inhabitants of all of these other cities associated with the enemy armies were killed. This sounds really **brutal**, but we have to remember that the LORD gave these Canaanites 400 years to repent from their wickedness and idolatry, and they refused. Now the LORD is coming in and cleaning house. He's judging the Canaanites with destruction and at the same time purging the land so the Israelites would not be tempted by their wickedness and idolatry.

[15] *As the LORD commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses.*

Joshua took all of that land. This is a statement of Joshua's obedience and also of the chain of command. The LORD spoke to Moses (Joshua's mentor and predecessor) and Joshua fulfilled them.

Next we have a broad summary of all that happened in the taking of this portion of the Promised Land. Don't get confused by this as it summarizes the account of all that happened and is about to happen regarding both the conquest and settling of the Promised Land.

[16] *So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen,*

That's the south central area of the Promised Land.

and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same;

The Promised Land is the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. Between them is a mountain range.

[17] *Even from the mount Halak, that goe[s] up to Seir,*

Seir is south and west of the Promised Land.

even unto Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon under mount Hermon:

That's the northernmost border of Israel. He took all of the Promised Land from the south to the north. Notice the name *Baal-gad*. Does *Baal* ring a bell? He was one of the primary false gods that the Canaanites worshiped.

This is another indication of what was going on up north. If you've ever been up there when you see those altars you should have remembered how dark and wicked. The caves there and that altar still gives the feeling of darkness and wickedness. That's what was going on up there. It was evil.

and all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them.
[18] *Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.*

A long time is a non-specific term, just as we used it today. To my grandson waiting for food, fifteen minutes is a long time. In the book of Esther, this same phrase referred to 180 days. In the book of Joshua the phrase referred to the forty years of wilderness wandering. In young Solomon's prayer he did not ask for long life and prosperity but instead for wisdom. Long life there would have referred to seventy years. My opinion is that the reference to a long time in this passage could be fifty years. The time of these battles were very quick, but the mopping up and actual taking possession. In Deuteronomy the LORD instructs them to take possession little by little. They could not settle in all at once.

[19] *There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, [except] the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon:*

Remember the Gibeonites coming in and dealing deceitfully with Joshua in order to be slaves rather than be killed.

(Note II Samuel 21:2 tells us these Hivites were Amorites. Another Hivite reference is found in Joshua 9:7.)

....

[20] *For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts,*

Can you think of a reference in the Bible where the LORD hardened the heart of someone?

Pharaoh of Egypt.

We don't want to get the wrong idea about hardening of the heart. God didn't **force** them to do anything. He let them go. If you look at the book of Romans, there's a good

example where it says “He gave them over to a reprobate mind.” It’s the same idea here. That’s what this hardening of hearts was.

that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly,

which He did.

and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses.

[21] And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims

Who were the Anakims? They descended from Anak – a giant. Joshua was defeating giants.

Do you remember when Moses sent twelve spies to spy out the land? Ten spies feared the people living there, but two spies, Caleb and Joshua said, “We can take these people.” Joshua said that if we depend on the LORD, He will give us the victory. So here’s Joshua living out what he said by faith over forty years earlier. He said “we can win.” Now the LORD is letting him win it. Isn’t that great? The ten spies had said “There are giants in the land. We feel like grasshoppers. We can’t defeat them.” These are the giants, and they are defeating them.

from the mountains, from Hebron,

Hebron is near Jerusalem.

from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities.

[22] There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained.

Gath should ring a bell here. Do you know who lived there? He was the most famous giant in the Bible whose name was Goliath – the one David defeated. That was four hundred years later, and the giants were still hanging out in Israel. While Joshua cleaned up a lot of them, but some still remained.

*[23] So Joshua took **the whole land**,*

You know what that is. It’s the Promised Land. Another way of expressing it is from Dan, way up north near Mount Herman, to Beersheba, down south by the wilderness.

*according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land **rested** from war.*

He divided the land. They took possession of the land, but that took a long time. In the

process, they will move their camp from Gilgal to a place called Shiloh. What does *Shiloh* mean? Rest.

Application

So, how can we apply this to our lives today? Let's wrap up with a glimpse back about 50 years in your life and see if you remember this classic quote:

Spanning the globe to bring you the constant variety of sport...the thrill of victory...and the agony of defeat...the human drama of athletic competition...This is ABC's Wide World of Sports!

Do you remember the clip of the skier who fell? That was classic.

Our study today included both **victory** and defeat – victory for the Israelites, and defeat for the Canaanites. There's a passage in the Bible that speaks of our victory in I Corinthians 15:54-57.

[54] *So when this corruptible*

Speaking of our body.

shall have put on incorruption,

We will rise with a perfect body.

*and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in **victory**.*

[55] *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy **victory**?*

...

[57] *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the **victory** through*

Whom?

our Lord Jesus Christ.
(I Corinthians 15:54-57)

As we meditate on the words we studied today, let's remember that our great victory we have in the LORD comes through Jesus whose name can also be pronounced *Joshua*.

Benediction

*The LORD bless thee, and **keep** thee:*

*The LORD make his face **shine** upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:*

The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)

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