

Sample Study

Joshua 10-24

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Read - Joshua 10:1-12:24; other references as given.

Victory should not be the exception for the Christian; it should be a distinguishing characteristic of his life. Christ's death on the cross delivers the believer from eternal damnation and a life dominated by fear and defeat. In this study, we will learn that victory can become a way of life for those who walk by faith.

1. When the Gibeonites made peace with Israel, the southern alliance of city-states (cf. Jos. 9:1, 2) decided to attack Gibeon. Some Biblical scholars believe that Gibeon was not an independent city-state but under the jurisdiction of the king of Jerusalem (cf. Jos. 10:2). If this is true, Gibeon's treaty with Israel would have been considered an act of treason.
 - a. The king of Jerusalem Adoni-zedec (interestingly, his Hebrew name means king of righteousness) led an alliance of kings in an attack against Gibeon. Who were the other kings (Jos. 10:3)?
 - b. The southern alliance of kings had originally planned to attack Israel (cf. Jos. 9:2). Give at least two reasons they attacked Gibeon (Jos. 10:1, 2)?
2. When the southern alliance attacked Gibeon, the Gibeonites sent messengers to Joshua requesting his military assistance. What assurance did the Lord give Joshua as he prepared to attack the southern alliance (v. 8)?
3. Joshua went to defend Gibeon before he had received any word from the Lord. On two previous occasions, Joshua's failure to seek the Lord's counsel proved disastrous (cf. Jos. 7:25, 9:3-19). Why didn't Joshua need to seek the counsel of the Lord in this situation (Jos. 9:15)?
4. If Joshua had sought the Lord prior to the conquest of Ai, perhaps God would have revealed Achan's sin. When the Gibeonites came to Joshua, his failure to seek the Lord's counsel resulted in a treaty with a heathen nation (a violation of Moses' command, cf. Ex. 34:12) and unrest among the people of God. Yet, when Joshua responded to the Gibeonites' appeal for help without receiving any counsel from the Lord, God assured him of victory. In your opinion, how can a believer know when God wants him to step out on faith and when he should wait on the Lord?

5. One of the recurring themes of the book of Joshua is the account of the Israelites' initial faith being followed by the Lord's blessing. This theme emphasizes the essential need of God's people to live by faith if they expect to receive His manifold blessing. Take a few minutes to examine seriously your relationship with God,
 - a. In what specific areas of your life do you need to step out on faith and trust God if you expect to be the recipient of His blessing?

 - b. List at least one action step for each specific area you listed in part 'a' of this question.

6. Joshua made a mistake by entering into a peace treaty with the Gibeonites. When he realized his error, he admitted his mistake and accepted the consequences. God blessed Joshua's willingness to honor his covenant with the Gibeonites. In what ways *do you think* the southern alliance's attack on the Gibeonites helped the Israelites' conquest of the Land?

7. The Lord intervened on behalf of the Israelites by performing two specific miracles. The first was a hailstorm that affected only the southern alliance (Jos. 10:11).
 - a. What was the second miracle the Lord performed on their behalf (Jos. 10: 12-14)?

 - b. Some people have difficulty believing that God could perform miracles such as the one commonly known as "Joshua's long day." In reality, if the Lord cannot intervene at will with a temporary suspension of the laws of nature, how can He really be God? Numerous interpretations have been offered to explain what happened during this miracle. What *do you think* happened (Jos. 10:12-14)?

8. The defeated leaders of the southern alliance fled to the cave at Makkedah (v. 16). The Israelites sealed the cave entrance until they completed a rout of their enemies. After the battle, Joshua returned to the cave and commanded the leaders of Israel to place their feet on the necks of their enemies (v. 24). What was this action supposed to teach the leaders (v. 25)?

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1. a. Hoham – king of Hebron, Piram – king of Jarinuth, Japhia – king of Lachish, Debir – king of Eglon.
b.
 1. If Gibeon was under the jurisdiction of the king of Jerusalem, the southern alliance needed to respond to the Gibeonites' act of treason in order to prevent any further defection.
 2. Possibly the southern alliance thought a victory over Gibeon would convince the mighty men of Gibeon (v. 2) to return to the righting ranks of the southern alliance.
 3. Adoni-zedec greatly feared the Israelites (v. 2). It is possible that fear had spread throughout the peoples of the south and a victory over the Gibeonites would bolster the morale of the southern forces.
 4. The southern alliance had heard of the military advancement of the Israelites and they had to take the offensive in an effort to slow Israel's military advancement.
2. The Lord promised Joshua complete victory over the southern alliance of city-states.
3. Joshua had entered into a peace treaty with the Gibeonites that obligated him and the sons of Israel to protect the Gibeonites. Believers do not need to pray about obeying the clear commands of God's Word or fulfilling their word to others. However, Christians should pray for the strength to glorify God as they fulfill their various responsibilities.
4. If a command is explicitly stated in Scripture and there is no theological reason why the command does not apply to the believer, the believer is obligated to obey the Word of God. The believer never has to pray about simple obedience to God's Word although he should ask God to help him obey the command in a manner glorifying to the Lord. If the believer is not certain about a specific course of action he believes God might want him to pursue, he should search the Scriptures diligently, ask God in prayer for wisdom (Ja. 1:2ff), commit himself to the Lord and trust God to direct his steps (Pro. 3:5, 6). He should also seek the counsel of godly Christians (pastors and other spiritual leaders) who have demonstrated wisdom in their daily living, sobriety in decision making and knowledge in the particular area in which counsel is being sought (Pro. 1:5).
5. a. Answers will vary.
b. Answers will vary.
6. The armies of the southern alliance were drawn out of their fortified cities. This made it easier for the Israelites to defeat them. Secondly, the collaboration of the southern forces allowed the Israelites to defeat a large portion of the southern Palestinian region at one time. Thirdly, the defeat of the southern alliance enabled the Israelites to inflict a deathblow to the military morale of the southern nations, the rest of the battles during the southern campaign were inferior to this pivotal battle at Gibeon.
7. a. The sun and the moon stood still in answer to Joshua's prayer.
b. In the presence of the Israelites Joshua told the sun and the moon to stand still (Heb. danian, be still, be dumb). God answered Joshua 's request by halting the movement of the sun and the moon in the sky as they appeared. This third and last miracle in the book of Joshua has been called the most striking example of conflict in the entire Bible between Scripture and science. Joshua was not in error when he told the sun and the moon to stand still in the sky. He was using the language of observation as he addressed the sun and moon. Meteorologists and other experts in scientific evaluation speak regularly of the time of sunrise and sunset. The best explanation of this miracle appears to be that God caused the rotation of the earth to stop (Heb. Amad) and then caused it to make one full rotation in 48 hours rather than in 24 (v. 13). God stopped the cataclysmic effects of such a change (tidal waves, etc.). The mention of the appearance of the sun and the moon in the sky is significant. The Caananites worshipped both the sun and the moon and their presence in the sky at the same time was supposed to be a good omen for them. The subjugation of these heathen deities to God's servant Joshua must have been most disconcerting for the Canaanites.
8. The widespread ancient custom of the leaders of a conquering army placing their feet on the necks of the prostrated and defeated enemies was a symbol of absolute and final victory (cf. De. 33:29, 1 Kgs. 5:3; Ps. 110:1). Joshua used this ancient custom as an object lesson for the leaders of Israel. They were to gain courage and to be strengthened by the action (v. 25).