

Joshua Chapter 10 – John Karmelich

1. In Chapters 10 and 11 of the book of Joshua, we get into the heart of the war campaign. There is no more "The Israelites attack one city and here is what happens". These chapters pick up the pace and deal with attacking most of the people in this land. In this lesson, I cover chapter 10.
 - a) So why does Joshua pick up the pace here? For starters, the enemies of Israel pick up the pace. A group of cities unite in their attack against the Israelites.
 - b) Of course, there is the spiritual significance. After one commits their lives to God and starts living for God, He in turn will often "pick up the pace" once we get involved in some sort of project for Him. In all my years of living the Christian life, the one thing I have learned is that it never gets boring. God has this way of "keeping it moving", as well as fresh and interesting once we get into the rhythm of learning to live for God.
2. This leads me to the title of this lesson. It is all about "Learning to depend upon God in the issues we face that separate us from Him". As usual, that is a mouthful. ☺
 - a) One has to remember that the concept of the "Promised Land" is not about heaven, but about living the type of life God wants us to live. The "Promised Land" is a nickname for the land of Israel. Spiritually speaking, it refers to living a life pleasing to God.
 - b) A big part of that life is learning to eliminate those issues that draw us away from God. It is about conquering the sin issues of our lives that make us a bad witness for God.
 - i) In order to fight those issues, first we have to know what those issues are and be willing to face them. Then we can conquer them with God's help.
3. With that said, it's time for the usual summary of the chapter:
 - a) In this chapter we are going to read about five kings that hear about how the Israelite army has completely wiped out the cities of Jericho and Ai. These five kings also heard how the city of Gibeon made a peace treaty with the Israelites. These five kings don't want any one else to "side" with the Israelites and attack Gibeon. A messenger is sent from Gideon who reports to Joshua that Gibeon is under attack.
 - b) Note that just because the Israelites made an oath to spare the Gibeonites does not mean that the Israelites are now required to defend them. Joshua could have easily said to them, "Hey too bad for you guys. Hope you do well in the battle". Instead, Joshua takes the entire Israelite army on a 25-mile hike (and about 4,000 feet higher in elevation) from their base camp to help Gibeon in this battle.
 - c) An interesting point here is that the Israelites at this point were not busy attacking anyone in the Promised Land. The only reason I could think why they were not "busy" at this point is maybe they were nervous about the peace treaty with the Gibeonites and now they were afraid to go forward.
 - i) Here, God "draws them forward" by getting them involved in this battle.
 - ii) The good news is the Israelites defeat these five kings and pretty much wipe out most of what we know of as the "southern half" of what is today, Israel.
 - d) There is one big miracle that occurs in this battle. Joshua prays for more daylight. This extra long day helps Israel wipe out their enemies. Somehow, someway, the normal 24-hour day is extended so this particular day is extra long.
 - i) So why does God extend the day? Let's face it, if "God is God", He could have just wiped out these people or let the Israeli army just march and win. Why make one day extra long just so the Israelites have extra daylight to win the battle?
 - ii) The only clues we get from the text is 1) this is the way God wanted the Israelites to win this battle and 2) the text specifically says that God will never work this way again, where a long day occurs in human history.

- iii) The extra long day is a reminder that it is still up to us to win the battles over sin. It is also to show that God is there working in the background helping us to win.
 - iv) The point is God does not work in a way where it is "all Him". God chooses to work in a way, where we must step forward and take on the spiritual enemies or issues of our lives. When we do that, God is there to help us win our battles.
- 4. Let me talk every so briefly about the "how" question of this miracle: Personally the "how God does things" question has always bored me. I figure if God can create the heavens and the earth, then God can figure out a way to make this long day happen. In other words, if one can accept the first verse of the bible (Genesis 1:1) by faith, the rest is easy.
 - a) With that said, how did God make the long day? There are all sorts of theories and I have mine as well. Some have suggested that the sun's light was somehow reflected after dark so the Israelites could continue to see after it was dark.
 - b) My favorite theory is the idea of a "close fly by" of Mars. The planets Mars and the Earth do not orbit the sun in equal distance from each other. There is speculation that Mars had at one time a close fly by of earth and this caused both the Earth and Mars to shift a little in terms of their axis rotation. That shift caused a long day on Israel's side of the earth and a long night on the other side of the planet.
 - i) Here is where I am going to end this. I made a decision many years ago to focus these lessons on the "why" questions and let others that are much smarter than me focus on the "how" questions. If one studies this issue, one can read all sorts of interesting articles about the Mars "fly by" and Joshua's long day.
 - ii) I simply figure that if "God is God", He is more than capable of pulling this off. The "how" is God's problem. The "why" is for us to study.
 - c) With that said, we're going to cover a lot of ground today and it's time to start running. ☺
- 5. Chapter 10, Verse 1: 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 were living near them. 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. 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."
 - a) In these four verses we have a conversation among five kings of five cities living in the land. They make a decision to unite and fight against the Gibeonites. These kings were scared as they heard how the Israelites had completely destroyed the city of Ai.
 - b) Here's a key point: These kings were not scared enough of the Israelites to try to make peace with them, but scared enough to want to fight them.
 - i) That is the way sin is in our life. It wants to be in control of our lives. When we start to fight our sin issues, we can expect resistance and that resistance can unite to take a stand against us.
 - c) One can also compare this section to the book of Revelation. During that future great destruction of the earth, there will be some people that acknowledge God and turn to Him. That is "represented" by the Gibeonites in the last chapter. The rest of the world admits that God is behind the attack, but still refuse to submit their lives to Him. A "big purpose" of Revelation is to show that no matter how much effort God shows about the destruction of the earth, some people refuse to submit to Him and change their lifestyles.
 - i) For us "pre-tribulation" types, let me take this analogy further. The Gibeonites are like those that turn their lives to God during the tribulation. They have a lower status (remember they are servants) than those who have been called by God. That is like those who get saved during the "tribulation" having a lower status than those who were saved prior to that event!

- d) Here is where it gets interesting. Instead of these kings attacking the Israelites directly, they make a decision to attack Gibeon because the Gibeonites sought and got a peace treaty with the Israelites. So why attack them first?
 - i) One reason is because the Gibeonites were "one of them". It is to show the Gibeonites there is a price to be paid to turning from their old lifestyle!
 - ii) The idea for us to learn is that once one person makes a decision to turn to the "true God", don't expect one's old friends to then rejoice over that decision. If anything, they will "fight" to get us to change back to their old ways.
 - e) Before we move on, I want to talk a little about "Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem". This is the first mention of "Jerusalem" as a city to be conquered. Notice that this "Adoni-Zedek" is the leader of the five kings. He is the one who calls his fellow kings and organizes this.
 - i) There is a practical side to that desire as the king of Jerusalem may be afraid of other cities also surrendering to the Israelites. Therefore a purpose of attacking Gibeon is to prevent other cities from seeking peace with the Israelites.
 - ii) Again, the spiritual idea is that once a person makes a decision to trust in the true God of the world, don't expect our old friends to immediately accept the fact we desire to change and turn from the "world's way" of doing things.
 - a) Jesus specifically taught, "He came to bring division". (See Luke 12:51.) That includes division among one's own family. What he meant is that those who accept Jesus as Lord and Savior will have to struggle with those around them that refuse to do likewise.
 - b) That idea of "division" is what we see here with these five kings.
6. Verse 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. 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."
- a) So here in Verse 5, these five kings (and their armies) organize an attack Gibeon. One can logically assume there is a time gap between Verses 4 and 5 where the kings organize their armies and attack Gibeon.
 - b) A messenger(s) from Gibeon was able to get away from this battle and go to the Israelite camp and tell them about the battle that was happening.
 - c) A quick word about the term "Amorite". All the people living in what we call Israel at that time were called "Canaanites". Some of the Canaanites were "Amorites".
 - i) If you recall Gibeonites were "Hittites". While the Hittites were also Canaanites, they were a separate group from the Amorites. Here, five Amorite kings all unite to attack the Gibeonites, who again, were "Hittites".
 - ii) The good news is that is all you I will require you to know of these groups. ☺
7. Verse 7: So Joshua marched up from Gilgal with his entire army, including all the best fighting men. 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."
- a) The first thing I wondered is why were the Israelites just sitting around during this time? Let's face it their last victory over "Ai" must have been a while ago. In other words, the only significant thing the Israelites have done during this time is organize their peace treaty with the Gibeonites. There is no mention of the Israelites in any battle for a while.
 - b) Personally, I see this upcoming battle as God's way to get the Israelites "moving again". It is God's desire for the Israelites to conquer the land. My point is there are times when we are ignoring what God wants us to do. During such times, God finds a way to "stir up the pot" to get us back on track of what He wants us to do.
 - c) Meanwhile, back to the story. Joshua is now told that these five kings are attacking Gibeon. Joshua takes his entire army and marches from Gilgal toward this battle.

- d) In Verse 8, we have God speaking to Joshua. God tells Joshua in effect to "Not be afraid of these five cities as I (God) have given them (these five cities) into your (Israelite's) hand."
 - e) Also notice that this is the first time God speaks to Joshua since the whole "Ai" incident. In other words, God was silent about the whole "oath thing" with the Gibeonites. Now that Israeli is moving again doing what God wants them to do, He is talking again.
 - f) Why would God tell Joshua to not to be afraid of these armies?
 - i) Maybe the Israelites were still worried about the oath with Gibeon. God was silent all of that time and now maybe the Israelites were afraid to go forward.
 - ii) The fact the Israelites would have to face an army of five combined cities would be the largest army they would face to date. In other words, God is encouraging Joshua as he is about to face a situation he has never faced before.
 - g) OK, let's personalize this: When you or I are about to face our difficult situation, how come God does not speak audibly to us and tell us how we will be victorious? The short answer is the way God worked with Joshua is not a guarantee that He will work the same way with us.
 - i) God wants us to study our bible as guidance and seek Him in prayer for the decisions we make in life. If we are obedient to God and don't do anything contradictory to the lifestyle God desires for us, we can move forward in confidence that God is guiding our lives.
 - ii) That does not mean that every battle we face in life is a guaranteed victory. Sometimes God wants to teach us lessons in our losses. While the ultimate victory is guaranteed, often, like the Israelites we have to face hardships in order to achieve victory through God.
 - h) Meanwhile, the Israelites are about to get involved in another battle.
8. Verse 9: After an all-night march from Gilgal, Joshua took them by surprise.
- a) That one short verse packs a "big punch". This verse says in effect that the five armies of the Amorites were not suspecting the Israelites to attack them. Now the Amorites were facing the entire Israelite army as well as those in Gibeon.
 - b) Think about this from the Gibeonites standpoint. They were now putting their trust in the true God. They ask for help. What they get is the entire Israelite army coming to help!
 - c) If one looks at the map of where Israel marched to, it was an uphill march. The point is the Israelite army traveled a good distance 25 miles uphill (about 4,000 feet by one estimate) to get from their base camp in Gilgal to where the city of Gibeon was located.
 - d) Here is another case where God miraculously helps out the Israelites. Let's face it, if you or I were traveling all night from "Point A to Point B", we would be exhausted. The fact that the Israelites were victorious (coming up) in this battle would require giving some credit to God just for giving the Israelites the strength after an all night march.
9. Verse 10: The LORD threw them into confusion before Israel, who defeated them in a great victory at Gibeon. Israel pursued them along the road going up to Beth Horon and cut them down all the way to Azekah and Makkedah.
- a) The first thing we read about the battle is that God Himself made the Amorite armies confused, so that the Israelites could win. The Israelites just marched all night. God helped out the Israel army and confused the Amorites over who and where to attack.
 - b) The next point is that the Israelites pursued the Amorites and killed some on the road going up to "Beth Horn" and all the way to places called "Azekah and Makkedah".
 - c) Many good study bibles have maps that show the campaign trails of both armies and the points the armies encountered each other. My purpose of these lessons is not to focus on the battles themselves, or the battle strategies but the spiritual lessons behind the battles.

- d) OK John, why should I know this stuff other than learning the Israelites won?
 - i) The point here for us is that God desires we "step forward in faith" to win the battles God wants us to win. When we are too tired to go forward, God wants us to step forward in faith and He will "confuse our enemies" and lead us to victory.
 - ii) Let me personalize this: Let's suppose there is some sin issue God wants us to deal with. That requires us to step forward and face that issue. If we are willing to take on that issue no matter how much or how little personal strength we have to face it, God promises to be there with us in that battles and "confuse our enemies" to lead us to victory.
 - iii) My point is we can't have any fear of anything that separates us from God. If any issue is causing us to take our focus off of God, it has to be dealt with. There is often a lot of fear in dealing with our problems. We have to trust that God wants us to face those fears and those sins. Even if we don't have much strength to take it on, if we are willing to "march at it", He will lead us to victory in those issues.
 - iv) Meanwhile, back in the other battle zone. ☺
- 10. Verse 11: As they fled before Israel on the road down from Beth Horon to Azekah, the LORD hurled large hailstones down on them from the sky, and more of them died from the hailstones than were killed by the swords of the Israelites.
 - a) In Verse 11, we have the first miracle of the chapter. Large "hailstones" came out of the sky and killed more of the Amorites than the Israelites did with their weapons.
 - b) Let me state my spiritual application first. I said right before this verse that God is willing to fight our battles with us, if we are simply willing to take the step to face our sin issues. The idea of this verse is God will take care of "what we cannot handle" and will do more damage to stop the issue than we can through our own strength. God is waiting for us to make the move to take on that issue, and then and only then can God help us and yes, do more damage to those sin issues than we can ever do on our own power. That is the "spiritual" idea of the hailstones killing more than the Israelites did.
 - c) OK, back to the literal aspect of the story. Understand that the Hebrew word translated "hailstones" could also refer to meter stones. Whatever it was that came out of the sky, it was strong enough to kill a man.
 - i) The impressive thing is not that these stones came out of the sky. The impressive thing is that only the enemies were hit and killed with these stones!
 - ii) What is interesting is the literalness of "stoning" in the bible. Deuteronomy 17:2 says that the Israelites are to "stone to death" those in the Promised Land that refused to turn to God. Here we have a literal "stoning" by God of those who refuse to turn to Him.
 - iii) One can also draw another parallel to the book of Revelation. In Chapter 8, Verse 7, it mentions that hail (think big hailstones!) came out of the sky to kill those who refused to turn to God. In fact, many in that day will want to hide in caves to protect themselves from the "wrath of God". The interesting point in Revelation is people knew God was behind this "rock storm" but refused to repent of their sins.
 - a) Here in Joshua, God also is causing this stoning to fall on nonbelievers!
 - b) One would think that those fighting against the Israelites must have known that "the true God" was behind this rock storm due to its accuracy of who it was hitting. That army still refused to trust in the true God.
 - d) This leads me back to our dealings with those who refuse to turn to God. Our job as Christians is not to let such people just "stand there and be stoned", but to warn of the "set in stone" (pardon the pun) future and danger of refusing to turn to God with their lives.
 - i) The danger as believers is to start thinking and live in the "I'm saved, too bad for you" mentality. Our job as Christians is not to "stone" those who refuse to trust in God, but to reach out to others and warn them of the "set" danger to come.

11. Verse 12: On the day the LORD gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the LORD in the presence of Israel: "O sun, stand still over Gibeon, O moon, over the Valley of Aijalon."
 - a) Here in Verse 12, we come to the great miracle in the chapter. It is the story of the sun and moon "standing still" in the sky.
 - b) One can read a good study bible that gives a handful of possibilities to interpret this verse. Personally, I happen to like the more literal possibilities that somehow, the sun and the moon appear to have their rotations change as the earth actually changed its rotation.
 - i) Like I said in the opening of this lesson, I've always been bored with the "how" question of how God does things. If I believe in a God who is capable of creating the heavens and the world as I know it, than I can believe in a God who is capable of changing the earth's rotation so it appears the moon and sun stand still.
 - ii) Let me add one more comment about the literal version: Suppose one is in school walks into a science class. The science teacher says, "Good morning class and by the way, how many of you saw the beautiful sunrise this morning?" A student could tell the teacher, the sun doesn't really rise, but it is the earth rotating around the sun. The teacher would then correctly say, "I know that and I teach that, but the term "sunrise" is an expression as from our perspective the sun is rising."
 - a) My point here is don't be worried about the literalness of the sun standing still. It could literally be referring to the earth standing still but from "our perspective" it appears as though the sun is standing still.
12. Verse 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 man. Surely the LORD was fighting for Israel!
 - a) The first thing to comment on is the fact that God answered this unusual prayer of Joshua. God agreed to make the sun and moon stop as to help Israel win this battle.
 - b) Verse 14 is also a key comment: That verse says in effect that there has never been a day like that in the past or in the future when "God listened to a man".
 - i) What Verse 14 means is that we cannot literally ask God to have the moon and the sun stand still for us. This particular miracle will never be replicated again.
 - ii) This verse does not mean that we can't ask God for anything. It just means we can't literally ask God to do exactly what He did for Joshua in this battle.
 - c) The last thing the text says in Verse 14 is "Surely the LORD was fighting for Israel."
 - i) The point of that line is that God can and does get involved with those who are attempting to do God's will at any given moment.
 - ii) This goes back to something I stated earlier. If we are willing to trust God and step forward in faith to take on the sinful issues of our life, then God is saying He will be there with us fighting on our behalf. It does not mean we kill people. The idea is that we can win over any spiritual battle if we are willing to turn that battle over to God and trust that He will help us deal with that issue(s).
 - iii) What about literal warfare? Will God be there to help us win? The problem is we don't know what is God's desire for the outcome for that war. What we can count on, if we are trusting in God, He will provide for us the strength to do well in that battle. The outcome is God's problem.
 - d) Let's get back to the issue of "The Sun and Moon standing still". Why ask for this?
 - i) Let's face it, Joshua could have said, "Dear God, I'm tired of killing. Could you wipe out the rest of the enemy by Yourself so I (or we) could get some rest?"
 - a) Joshua could also have said, "Dear God, I'm tired. Could you organize the enemy in one big group so after I get some rest, I could wipe them out?"
 - b) Instead of that, Joshua asks for a longer day, to finish what he started.

- ii) What I'm getting back to, is the issue of "facing our sins head on". Remember that the Promised Land is symbolic of living the "full rich life" of trusting God with every aspect of our life. That includes facing and dealing with our sin issues.
 - a) Once we agree to attack our sins, God gives us the strength to tackle those issues. If there is more to fight, God does not wipe out the rest by Himself, but gives us the strength to keep on attacking.
 - b) Notice that in some cases God finishes the job Himself like when the stones came out of the sky and wiped out Israel's enemies. Other times, God gives us a "longer day" so that we can finish the job ourselves.
 - c) The point is, the first step is up to us. We need to have the willingness to tackle those issues. Then God provides for us the strength and ability to have victories over those issues.
 - iii) I heard a definition of "repentance" that applies well here. To repent of a sin means not only to turn from it, but also to hate that sin so much that we never want to repeat it again. That doesn't mean we won't ever sin again. It just means we develop a "healthy hatred" of the things God hates. There is an old Christian expression that the sign of maturity for a believer is not only how much does one love God, but also, how much does one hate sin?
 - e) One more thing before I move on: Let me explain what is the "Book of Jashar" in Verse 13.
 - i) The Old Testament bible books not only mention this book, but another book called the "Wars of the Lord" (See Numbers 21:4). Some suspect these two books are the same. In either case, both record some of Israelite battles.
 - ii) Apparently, not every book written by the Israelites became part of the bible. Personally, I've never had a problem with that. If God wanted to preserve "The Book of Jashar" and make it part of the bible, He would have made it so.
13. Verse 15: Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal.
- a) In case you've forgotten, "Gilgal" is Israel's base camp in the land. The point is the battle is over and Israel has completely defeated their enemy and it is time to rest a little.
 - b) A simple point here is that God understands we need rest just as much as we need to tackle the issues we have to face in life. There is a time for both.
14. Verse 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."
- a) Remember the five kings that organized the battle in the first place? They are not dead yet. In fact, Joshua discovers they are hiding in a cave. Joshua gives the orders to not kill them yet, but just seal up the entrance the cave and then, go attack some more soldiers.
 - b) So why was rest mentioned in between these two battles? I believe the point is the Israelites did not want to go on after Verse 14, and in Verse 16, the kings were spotted. The finding of the kings gave the Israelite soldiers motivation to keep on going!
 - c) Another idea to get across is that if the five kings were hiding in these caves, I'm sure the guards of the kings were outside the cave or at least some of the armies of these kings were nearby. Therefore, if Joshua gave the order to seal the caves, I'm sure there were nearby enemies that the Israelites could pursue at this point.
 - d) OK John, once again, tell me why is this important?
 - i) The idea is that when our "spiritual enemies" are on the run, God wants us to defeat them before they can return to "home base". OK, what does that mean?
 - ii) Let's suppose we are battling some sin issue. Whatever that sin issue is, it is separating us from God. To defeat it, first one must face it head on.

- iii) The idea of pursuing it is to not give in to the desire to continue with that sin. The literal idea might be to get away from places that give us that desire to sin. The literal idea might be to run to a safe place.
 - a) The point is we can overcome sin issues with God's help. If we are willing to face those issues, God promises us to give us the strength and endurance to overcome them. I'm not promising "victory" in five minutes or one day. I am saying that "victory is certain" if we are trusting God to lead us there!
 - iv) So what does the text mean to us when it says "get them before they return to their cities?" Their "cities" refers to their base of operation. What it means practically is we don't "leave a place in our hearts" for those thoughts to dwell. We seek God and pray for victory over those issues. We avoid those places (as much as possible) where those issues can flare up again. When such sinful desires return, we not only should ask for victory over those issues, but have as much victory as possible before such issues can return to their "home base".
 - v) I have to admit, the easy thing to do is to apply these verses to others around us. The trick is to find the issues that God Himself wants us (yes, us!) to deal with. I personally find that half the battle is having the willingness to face those issues and just take them on. The challenge is having the courage to fight the battle as often and not just live with the shame of the issue.
- 15. Verse 20: So Joshua and the Israelites destroyed them completely--almost to a man--but the few who were left reached 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.
 - a) This victory was a major one, but not a complete victory in that some of the enemy made it back to their home cities. Joshua points that out for us here. Even with the extra long day of Joshua and all of the fighting, some of the enemy made it back to their home.
 - i) Despite that minor setback, don't lose site of the fact this is a major victory. The entire Israelite army returned to their camp at Makkedah safely.
 - ii) I thought you said earlier that the Israeli base camp was at Gilgal. Here, we read of a different place. That's simple. Makkedah is Israel's base station during this attack. In a few verses we will read of Israel destroying Makkedah.
 - b) Spiritually speaking, sometimes we have to take our victories in steps. Even if we don't completely wipe out our sin issues in one day, we have to take progress as it comes.
 - i) In life most people "slowly" get over their addictions and sin issues. Once in a while I hear of a miracle where God takes away someone's problems instantly. Most of the time, such victories come over time if we are willing to ask for God's help to overcome sinful issues in our life.
 - ii) In these verses, we have a case of the Israelites taking on their "issues" and even asking for God's help. They got a great victory, but not a complete victory. My point here is simply to appreciate the fact that God is working for us over time. Usually sin issues don't start in a quick moment of time and they don't end that quickly either. Like the Israelites, we have to take our victories as they come.
- 16. Verse 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.
 - a) In case you have forgotten, the five kings of these five cities that battled Israel were all hiding in a cave. Earlier, Joshua found out about this cave, and sealed the entrance.
 - b) Now Joshua brought the five kings out of the caves and told the leaders of Israel under his command to place their feet on the necks of these five kings.
 - c) Let me add the next two verses, and then I'll discuss the significance of this event.

17. Verse 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 struck and killed the kings and hung them on five trees, and they were left hanging on the trees until evening.
- a) In these verses, Joshua kills the five kings and hangs their bodies on tree branches until dark. If you recall from previous lessons, God set up a rule that any body hung on a tree must be taken down by nightfall. The reason is nightfall begins a new Jewish day. The idea is once our sins are "hung dead", they should not be left there as a reminder that they still exist. They must be taken down to "start a new day". (See Deut. 21:22-23).
 - b) These five kings were the ones that started this war in the first place. Notice Joshua uses the phrase "Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged. Be strong and courageous". If you can remember, way back in Chapter 1, God preached that phrase to Joshua himself. The idea is that God has taught Joshua how to be strong (by trusting in Him and not his own strength). That was the teaching idea first laid out in Chapter 1. Now Joshua is passing on that lesson to the leaders under him. Killing the five kings at that moment became a "teachable moment" to the younger leaders Joshua worked with.
 - c) OK John, so Joshua killed these five kings. What's the point?
 - i) One can think of the five kings as the "power behind" the battle against Israel.
 - ii) One point is there is no escape from God's "death sentence" for those who refuse to turn to Him. I stated earlier that when the "stones from heaven" fell and killed only Israel's enemies, it reminded me a lot of Revelation 8:7 where hail rain down and kill a lot of nonbelievers. Some people (in Revelation Chapter 8) hide in caves. The point then and now is there is no escape from God. The ability to hide in caves won't prevent the destruction that God desires to accomplish.
 - iii) Further, one can compare these kings to the "spiritual forces" behind the sin issues we have to deal with. The point is we can achieve victory over those issues. Yes, we can never be perfect in this lifetime, but if we are willing to tackle the sin issues that we face, we can count on our "Joshua" (again, Joshua and Jesus are the same name) to wipe out the spiritual forces that are leading the attacks against our lives.
 - iv) The point is trusting in God and believing in His Son Jesus, does lead us to victory in life. It also means we can have victory over issues that separate us from God. If we are willing to take on those sin issues, we can count on our "Joshua" to wipe out the spiritual "kings" that are leading those attacks on our life.
18. Verse 27: At sunset Joshua gave the order and they took them down from the trees 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.
- a) At sunset, Joshua took the dead bodies off the tree (again as required in Deut. 21:22-23). The dead bodies were put back in the cave. The cave was sealed up with large rocks and remained there at the very least until "the day", which is when Joshua was written.
 - b) So, what is the significance of doing this, other than having preventing the dead bodies from "stinking up the joint" and placing them back in the cave? When the "root" of our sin is killed, we should seal up its place. Further, the place is marked as to symbolize that we should never going back to that place again.
 - i) Eventually, when we do have victory over some issue in our lives, we want it buried in a place that is "beyond our reach" where it can influence us again.
19. Verse 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.
- a) Way back in Verse 3, we had a list of five kings of five cities. The city of Makkedah was not among the list of those five cities that organized this battle.

- b) During the battles, this city was a temporary base-camp for the Israelites. Here in Verse 28, we read of the Israelites destroying this city and everyone who lived there. Further, the king was killed, like the king of Jericho.
 - i) I was curious what was meant by "as he had done to the king of Jericho". I reread the story of Jericho and there is no mention of the death of their king. Therefore, one can assume it refers to the fact that the king of Jericho was killed as part of the "general wipe out" of that city, as opposed to a special event like when the five kings of these five cities were killed.
 - c) The main point is God gave Israel "such a victory" that they not only wiped out the five kings that organized the attack but other cities as well.
20. Verse 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. 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 handed Lachish over to Israel, 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. 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. 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.
- a) In this big chunk of verses, it essentially says that Joshua wiped out four of the five cities that were behind the initial attack on Gibeon. Note it was "four of the five". After I discuss these verses, I'll come back to the issue of which city is missing.
 - b) What God wants us to know is Joshua attacked each of these cities one at a time. The Israelites did not leave any survivors in any of these four cities. Remember that the kings of each city organized a combined army that attacked the Gibeonites. Most of the soldiers died in the battles. The only people left in the cities were the soldiers that made it back to their cities, plus whoever else were living in these cities.
 - c) The one question I wondered is, "Why give so much text to this event?" Why not just say, "And then the Israelites went to each city that fought in these battles and completely destroyed those cities"? Why list them one at a time and essentially repeat the same key points about each city?
 - i) The spiritual significance is the idea that God wants us to "wipe out" any and all aspects of sin that affect our lives. There are times to attack "all of them at once", but more often we have to conquer each one, one at a time.
 - ii) Let me put this another way: Every one of us can list our "top three" or "top ten" sins that we struggle with the most. Yes there are times where we have to tackle all of our issues at once. In order to live the type of life God desires for us, there needs to be times in our lives when we need to (first of all) admit that each of these sin issues exist and one at a time, work to eliminate those issues from our lives.
 - iii) The idea of conquering sin is not about having the willpower to overcome it. It is about trusting God to work through us to take on those issues and letting God destroy them when we are willing to let them go.
 - d) Let me get back to a point I made earlier about these verses: There is no mention of the defeat of Jerusalem. In fact, we don't read of Jerusalem's fall until King David comes along many centuries later. So if Joshua is "so strong and courageous", why didn't he attack the city that was the "ring leader" of these attacks? The text is silent on that issue.

- i) That of course, won't stop me from speculating. ☺ In life, we can have victories over a list of sins, but there are always more battles to fight as long as we are living. God may help us have victories over a whole list of things, but we should never assume that list is "complete" and we are now living sin free.
 - ii) It doesn't mean we have to spend every waking hour worrying about sin issues. It does mean when such issues "flare up", we have to give those issues to God and ask for His help in dealing with and defeating those sin issues.
 - iii) Remember that one of the "big picture" aspects of the Book of Joshua is that it is a model of how to draw close to God and live the type of life He wants us to live. Part of that life is eliminating things that separate us from God. If we cannot focus on God at some moment that is a sign of a "thing" we have to deal with.
 - iv) Along that line of thinking, one should never think they are through with the battles of sin in this lifetime. Just as demonic forces can't be killed, we have to remember that such forces are always looking for opportunities to draw us away from God. When such issues come back, we start by giving that issue to God. We use His power to have victory over any issue we are facing at that moment.
 - v) Remember what is the goal of demonic forces: To make us a bad witness for God. They can't take away our salvation, but they can get us to focus on other things. When we are being a bad witness for God, (or "drawing away from God") we cannot lead others to Him. That is the battle we fight.
 - e) One more bit of theology about the temporary sparing of Jerusalem and then I'll move on. Since Jerusalem is the "city of our king", symbolically it is going to take a "stronger" king" to overcome that temporary king. God had David be the one who first conquered the city of Jerusalem. (See 2nd Samuel 5:6).
 - i) One day, the "Son of David" will overthrow the power behind Jerusalem so that "Son" can rule over the earth from Jerusalem. (See Luke 1:32 on that point.)
21. Verse 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.
- a) These verses summarize what is called the "Southern Campaign". The point is Joshua had victory over every king that lived in the Southern part of Israel.
 - i) I thought you said there is no mention of defeating the city of Jerusalem. That's right. At the same time, the Israelites did kill the king of Jerusalem, who was one of the five kings that was hiding in the cave.
 - b) The way I summarize this section is to say that Joshua "wiped out" most of the cities that were in the southern section of what we call Israel today. They did not wipe out every last person, but they did do a lot of damage and did wipe out every "king" in that area.
22. Verse 43: Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal.
- a) In the final verse, we have a reference to Joshua and the entire army of Israel returning to their base camp at Gilgal.
 - b) The point is there are still more battles to be fought, which is what Chapter 11 discusses. In the meantime, God still provides rest for those who trust in Him. The point is there are times to rest and there are times to go and fight. Both are mentioned here.
23. I want to end this chapter with a short discussion of all the key miracles so far in Joshua:
- a) The first big miracle was the Jordan River stopping so all of Israel could enter the land.
 - i) The second big miracle was the walls of Jericho coming down.
 - ii) The third big miracle was "the long day of Joshua" as described in this chapter.

- b) Let me now tie together all of these miracles as they affect our lives:
 - i) First God makes it possible for us to enter the "Promised Land" and perform a miracle in our life in that He and He alone makes it possible for us to enter that land. Remember that the "land" refers to living a life where one is trusting God and living by what He desires for our life and not what we desire.
 - a) That is symbolized by the Israelites crossing the Jordan River.
 - ii) Next, God "knocks down the walls" that separate us from the sin issues we need to deal with in our lives. God "exposes sin" that we have to deal with and conquer. It was appropriate right after that that God taught us to "deal with" the parts of our life that still compromise with sin (e.g., the guy who stole from Jericho) and teach us how to completely wipe out the sin issues of our life.
 - a) That is symbolized by God knocking down the walls of Jericho.
 - iii) Finally, God makes it possible for us to completely destroy any and all issues that separate us from God. That is symbolically shown through the "long day of Joshua". Do I believe this was a literal event? Yes I do. At the same time, it has lessons for us to apply to our lives. The Book of Joshua teaches us how to draw closer to God every day of our lives and at the same time, have complete victories over any and all issues that separate us from God.
 - iv) If you think the last couple of lessons have been "repetitive" with the issue of dealing with sin, think of it this way: Do we have victory over sin in one quick moment of time? Usually no. Usually it is a long struggle where we have to keep on focusing on God and keep on letting Him lead us to victory. The good news is that the focus on sin does come to an end in this book, and if we are trusting in God, there is coming a day of victory over any and all issues we face in our lives.
 - c) On that positive note, we can wrap this up in prayer.
24. Let's pray: Father, we thank You first of all, for calling us into salvation. Help us not to waste our new life in You and work to draw closer to You. We do that not by trying harder, but by trusting that You can and You are working in our lives if we let You. Further, help us to face whatever sin issues are separating us from You. Help us to draw on Your power to face those issues and give us victory over those issues. Just as You provided the miracle to lead us to salvation, so we ask that You "miraculously" work through us to draw us closer to You. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.