

Message #20**Joshua 10:29-43**

As we come to this section of Scripture, we cannot help but observe that there is a phrase that is repeated six times—“**all Israel with him**” (10:29, 31, 34, 36, 38, 43). What this phrase tells us is at this point in time, Israel, as a group, was finally united. They were all after the same goals. They all wanted to take the land. They were all focused on the same objective and were unified in going after it and, as a result, God was blessing them.

Because of this unity, they were experiencing one victory after another. Without any interruption or setbacks, God’s people experienced victory after victory. This was a rare moment in the history of Israel.

This is a lesson we need to learn. When God’s people in a nation or in the church function as a united group, they will get a job done for God. They will be victorious. They will tackle one problem after another and will have victory and more victory. That point is clear from this text:

WHEN ALL OF GOD’S PEOPLE ARE UNITED AND FOCUSED ON OBEYING GOD’S WORD AND DOING GOD’S WORK, THEY WILL EXPERIENCE ONE VICTORY AFTER ANOTHER.

It is not the size of the group that gives victory; it is God who gives victory. When His people unite with a focus of doing what God wants them to do, God will give one victory after another.

Now there is a great deal to be learned about warfare in these verses. There are seven battles that are fought and won. What this shows us is that the enemy does not stop after one defeat. The enemy keeps coming but Israel keeps winning.

This is the warfare of the southern campaign. Geographically it moves counterclockwise. It is a very precise warfare and specific enemies are targeted. The nation functions as a unit. There are seven victory battles described in these verses:

VICTORY BATTLE #1 – The victory at Libnah. 10:29-30

The first battle on the southern campaign was a battle at Libnah. Libnah was obviously a Canaanite city. It is said to have been located about five miles north of Lachish; about four miles from the caves at Makkedah.

It must have been a secure city because we learn later in Scriptures that the Assyrians were having a tough time taking it (II Kings 19:8-10, 35). Libnah was no problem for Israel and there are three important facts stressed in these verses:

Fact #1 - All Israel fought against Libnah. **10:29**

The whole nation was in this together. There was loyalty and there was unity. They fought this war side by side. People were united in their cause for the Lord. They wanted to accomplish what God wanted them to accomplish and they were willing to fight. When you get everyone wanting to accomplish something for God, it is a powerful thing.

Fact #2 - God gave victory to Israel. **10:30a**

As the people united and fought, God gave them victory. There is human responsibility and that works hand in hand with God's sovereignty. God has structured things so that we do our part and then trust His sovereignty to do what we cannot do.

Fact #3 - All enemies were destroyed. **10:30b**

There were no survivors. In order to have total victory, all enemies must be cut off. The enemy will not just surrender willingly. There will need to be a fight fought. This is true in any context of life, including our own spirituality.

We are in war with our flesh, the world and the Devil and none of those things will willingly surrender. It will be an intense battle and we will have to fight it; but as we unite with ourselves and others to wage a good war, we will see God give victory.

VICTORY BATTLE #2 – The victory at Lachish. **10:31-32**

Lachish is located about 30 miles SW of Jerusalem. It was a very strategic city which controlled a major road that ran from the Nile river valley to the Palestine high land. We learn later from Scripture that it was a strong, fortified city (II Chron. 11:9). In fact, the city was so strong that when Amaziah turned away from God, he fled to this city, thinking it would protect him (II Chron. 25:27)

Lachish was excavated in an archeological expedition beginning in 1933-35. The most famous discovery which came from this was the "Lachish Letters" which contain Hebrew as written in carbon ink letters on clay tablets. There were 19 of these letters discovered and these letters go back to the days of Jeremiah.

Now what is specifically brought out in **verse 32** is that victory in Lachish was "on the second day." In other words, not every battle was a simple one day fight. The battle obviously took two days.

The lesson to be learned is that in order to experience some victories, multiple confrontations are demanded. Some of our enemies are more powerful than others and it may take a little longer for victory.

You may fight one enemy and it will instantly drop, but another enemy may take a few battles before it falls. But if we will remain faithful and obedient, no matter how large or impressive the enemy, it will eventually fall.

An enemy of drugs or alcohol may fall quickly, but the enemy of pride may take more than one battle.

An enemy of lust may go quietly, but a back-biting tongue may not go so quickly.

An enemy of cursing may fall immediately, but a hot temper may not go so immediately.

Some battles are won overnight and some are not.

VICTORY BATTLE #3 – The victory over Gezer. 10:33

Gezer was located about 20 miles north of Lachish. It was located about 18 miles N.W. of Jerusalem. Excavations revealed that Gezer had a stone wall ten feet thick, which surrounded the city and the wall was reinforced with square towers.

When the King of Gezer heard about Israel taking one city after another, instead of seeking to get right with Israel, he decided to fight her. For some reason, he wanted in on the action against Israel. So Hiram, the king, brought his people some 20 miles south to fight against Israel and he was totally defeated. **What is so interesting about this is that Joshua actually picks up a city in the north, while he is fighting in the south.**

There are a couple of points to observe about this warfare:

- 1) When we are truly waging war for God, enemies may come from other places to join in the war against us.
- 2) When we are waging a war for God, we will experience some victories we weren't even looking to experience.

VICTORY BATTLE #4 – The victory at Eglon. 10:34-35

Eglon is located about seven miles west of Lachish in the edge of the foothills. When all of Israel came to this place, they camped by it, fought against it and destroyed it.

The lesson to see is that the Israelites are camped in enemy territory and experiencing one victory after another. **You do not have to be removed from the world to have victory.** You can live in this world and experience many victories in life.

VICTORY BATTLE #5 – The victory at Hebron. 10:36-37

Hebron, along with Lachish and Eglon, had belonged to the Amorite coalition against Israel (Josh. 10:3, 5). It is located in the hill country (Josh. 11:21) approximately 19 miles SW of Jerusalem.

One problem that exists in this narrative is the fact that we learn in Joshua 10:23-26 that the king of Hebron had been killed, yet we read in Joshua 10:37 that the king was struck and killed here. The obvious solution is that the people of Hebron had appointed another king. In other words, a new king had replaced the old king, but like the old king, he too was against Israel.

Just because there is a change of leadership does not mean that the new leadership has had a change of heart and mind and desires to be right with God. Hebron already had lost one king and now she loses another.

No matter how big or powerful the enemy, when God's people are faithful in carrying out God's will, those enemies will go down one by one.

VICTORY BATTLE #6 – The victory at Debir. 10:38-39

Debir was located 11 miles SW of Hebron. This was a strategic spot on the way south into the land. It was a place noted for its scholarly activity. In fact, the earlier name Debir was Kiriath-sepher, which means "city of books." This was a sophisticated and educated group of people.

But no matter how sophisticated or educated or scholarly or strong, it cannot defeat God. As with all other enemies of God, Debir completely fell and there were no survivors.

Sometimes you may be called to challenge scholars. Don't back down and don't surrender; God can and will give victory.

VICTORY BATTLE #7 – The victory over the south. 10:40-42

After this string of victories, Joshua went south toward Egypt. There are two facts brought out about his southward movement:

Fact #1 - Israel was functioning in complete obedience to God. 10:40-41

Israel was doing what God commanded her to do and, as a result, God was giving her victory one right after another. The key to God giving victory is obedience to His Word.

Fact #2 - God was the one who was giving victory. 10:42

Israel needed to fight, but she was not fighting alone. God was fighting with her and for her. The victories were not coming because of her abilities, but because of her obedience. God was the One giving the victory.

Now the southern action ends in **verse 43** in that Joshua and all Israel went back to their camp at Gilgal. **They did not lose one soldier.**

What a team. What a nation. What a unit. All were focused on obeying God and going to war for God.

GREAT LESSONS TO LEARN:

- 1. We will have great victory when our whole being is devoted to obeying God.**
- 2. We will have great victory in church when we are united in knowing God's Word and obeying it.**
- 3. Some of our battles will not be won instantly and may take a while; others may be won instantly.**
- 4. When we are fighting a good fight, other attacks from unsuspecting places may come against us.**
- 5. We will not have complete rest until all our enemies are defeated.**
- 6. Our job in the warfare is obedience to God and obedience is always the key to victory.**
- 7. God's job in the warfare is to determine whether we have victory or defeat.**