

Joshua 10–1-14–Preparation for Holy War: Tests

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: To make sure the large Rolls Royce engines on jumbo jets will work well, the manufacturer throws frozen 6 pound birds into the engines. Those engines literally make mincemeat out of those frozen birds. That test is to make sure that if birds fly into the engines when the planes are in the air, they won't cause the engines to die. The benefit of factory testing is valuable preparation for the real thing.

Our God also knew how it was important to test his people to make sure they were prepared for the long war ahead. He had given them the equipment for the task – wealth, power, worship – but he wanted to see how faithful they were in small things. Today you will see that test and how Israel fared.

Our headings are: **The Nature of the Tests. The Result of the Tests**

Our goals are: **That you will realize that you must prove yourself faithful in small things as part of your preparation to do battle for your redeeming King.**

The Nature of the Tests

1 Now it came to pass when **Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem** heard how Joshua had taken Ai and had utterly destroyed it—as he **had done to Jericho and its king, so he had done to Ai** and its king—and how the inhabitants of **Gibeon had made peace with Israel** and were among them, 2 that they feared greatly, because **Gibeon was a great city**, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were mighty. 3 Therefore Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon, saying, 4 "Come up to me and help me, that we may attack Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel." 5 Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon, gathered together and went up, they and all their armies, and camped before Gibeon and made war against it. 6 And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp at Gilgal, saying, "**Do not forsake your servants**; come up to us quickly, **save us** and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the mountains have gathered together against us."

1. The nations of Canaan, led by Adoni-Zedek, started to fear the Israelites and their God because they saw what God did to Jericho, Ai, and Bethel. Israel did not leave a man, woman, or child alive, as God commanded. **The Canaanites fear increased when they saw Gibeon**, a greater city than Ai, bow the knee to Israel without a fight, choosing rather to be servants of Israel's God. These nations were concerned that their life of indulgence and idolatry was being threatened. They wanted to keep their trade routes from the east and the south. They were worried that their cities could become cemeteries. These 5 nations, led by Adoni-Zedek (lord of righteousness), **saw Israel as an existential threat and took counsel together. (Psalm 2)** In order to make an example of Gibeon for refusing to fighting Israel, and to threaten any nation that might refuse to fight Israel in the future, these 5 nations decided to attack Gibeon. Curiously, they did not attack Israel – but Israel's servants!

2. The impending 即将发生 attack on Gibeon presented 2 serious tests for Israel.

a. Would Israel honor the commitment they made to the Gibeonites to let them live as their servant and so help them in war? The natural inclination would have been to say: "We will **let Gibeon fight for themselves**. They tricked us, let them die!" Or, "Let God destroy Gibeon through these 5 nations so we won't break our oaths." Or, "The Gibeonites are dishonest men, so if we try to help Gibeon **they might turn against us in battle** and join forces with Adoni-Zedek and the alliance." But Israel was bound to protect its servants. God's law would not allow them to ignore the weak – even their slaves. That was test 1.

b. Would Israel honor God's name – God whom they called to witness to their oath to the Gibeonites? God demanded that oaths made in his name be kept in order to **preserve his honor (a 3rd law issue).** This was test 2.

3. Upon learning that the wicked confederacy 同盟 of 5 nations were planning to attack them, the Gibeonites called on Joshua for help. The Gibeonites recalled Joshua's promise to them and the work they were doing -carrying water and wood for the temple). They had a right to ask for help.

The Response to the Tests

7 So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor.

1. Joshua and Israel remembered his promise to the Gibeonites and the oath he made before God. Even though

He was deceived by the Gibeonites, he knew he was still responsible for their welfare. So in order to honor the commitment he made to Gibeon and to honor the Lord's name, he gathered the armies to do battle and protect the Gibeonites. Imagine committing soldiers to battle the enemies of your not-so-close friends! But he did right. He had the bigger picture.

Proverbs 24:11 Deliver those who are drawn toward death, And hold back *those* stumbling to the slaughter 被拉到死地的人, 你要拯救; 将要被杀戮的人, 你要挽救 12 If you say, "Surely we did not know this," Does not He who weighs the hearts consider *it*? He who keeps your soul, does He *not* know *it*? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds?

How much are you willing to give up to fight the enemies of your God, led by your Joshua? Do you say, "What happens in Egypt to Christians is none of my business?" When Muslims behead Christians, do you remember those families – maybe send them a few dollars? When children abandon the covenant, do you abandon them too? Remember your vows? You are equipped with salvation and the Spirit, to fight sin in high places.

8 And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you."

2. To encourage Israel in doing right, God called on them to find their strength in their relationship with him and not fear. God assured them that they would indeed destroy this great confederacy. God's affirmation of the confederacy's destruction was so strong that God said that not one of them would stand up against Israel. This was a reminder again that General Jesus was with him...as he is with you in your conquering! With Jesus you fight! He was given the nations as his inheritance. Psalm 2. With Christ in the vessel, you are able to smile at the storm.

9 Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, having marched all night from Gilgal.

3. Joshua charged after the 5 kings, not resting during the night. It was an "act of pluck and energy." Joshua could have delayed and said he was "considering his options," but he knew what was right and didn't play politics, nor did he look for an excuse to avoid action. In fact, if one of the tribes of Israel were in trouble, he couldn't have gone any faster than he did here to help the Gibeonites. Joshua "never left for tomorrow what could be done today." God's motivation by revelation worked. And he trusted the promises of God. But he also knew that God's promises meant little unless they were appropriated and acted upon. Faith is always seen. Fighting for the kingdom wasn't a hidden thing. Joshua passed the test! He kept his promise to Gibeon and God. There are some churches that perpetually永远have "missions' conferences" but don't do any real mission work. They are lethargic. But just as there was no delay in Joshua's action, for a little delay can lead to great loss, you must not delay your evangelism. Others make the excuse that since the "elect can never be lost" they can delay sharing the Gospel. But learn to conquer for Christ and with Christ without procrastination.

10 So the LORD routed them before Israel, killed them with a great slaughter 击杀 at Gibeon, chased them along the road that goes to Beth Horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah.

4. Using the swords and shields of Israel, GOD, not Israel, routed the great confederacy against Israel and Gibeon. In fact, it is described as a great slaughter!

11 And it happened, as they fled before Israel and were on the descent of Beth Horon, that the LORD cast down large hailstones 大冰雹 from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword.

5. To further prove that the slaughter was from the hand of God, God reigned large hailstones down on the enemies of his people... even on those who lived in caves (Beth Horon – House of Caves). This was probably the same place where Sennacherib's army fell. And what a picture! God is the ultimate source of victory. It also reminded Israel that God was simply pleased to use them to accomplish his purposes, but they were not needed. This kept them humble. Psalm 44:3 For they did not gain possession of the land by their own sword, Nor did their own arm save them; But it was Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your countenance 你脸上的光, Because You favored them. Job 38:22 "Have you entered the treasury of snow, Or have you seen the treasury of hail 或见过雪吗? 23 Which I have reserved for the time of trouble, For the day of battle and war? Psalm 18:13 The LORD thundered from heaven, And the Most High uttered His voice, Hailstones and coals of fire.

These 5 nations that prided themselves on the towering walls around their cities could not stop God from damaging them from above with his hailstones. God killed more Canaanites by the hailstones than by Israel's swords. Do you think any of his hailstones missed the mark? Beth-horon was probably in the north of Gibeon and Azekah and Makkedah were in the south. None escaped...only God's people. The gates of hell could not prevail against God's people! Sadly, Israel did not remember this, and God rained hailstones on them. (Ez 13, Rev. 16) But isn't this also a

picture of how the conquering Gospel cannot be limited by man? When God wants to conquer 征服 a man's heart, he uses truth that cannot be stopped! Man's walls of stubbornness are broken down by the Sword of the Spirit? See the Lord's perfect provisions: He is the Word. He sent his Spirit to you.

12 Then Joshua **spoke to the LORD** in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel: "Sun, stand still over Gibeon; And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon." 13 **So the sun stood still**, And the moon stopped, Till the people had revenge Upon their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. 14 And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the LORD heeded the voice of a man 耶稣基督听人的祷告; for the LORD fought for Israel.

6. Joshua was so certain that this was God's work that he prayed and asked God to make the sun stand still and the moon wait to come up so he would have enough time (another day!) to complete the routing of God's enemies. Why was he so certain? He had asked God for revelation of what to do and God spoke to him probably through strong impulses of the Holy Spirit. This was not his private intuition 直觉. A Spirit-filled Joshua spoke. God listened. When you rely on God's revelation you don't need to worry about your actions. You do what God's says regardless of the consequences. You might lose a job, or a war, or a friend...but as long as you are doing what is right, you are on safe grounds...and you will know that losing that job or that war or that friend was the best thing for you. And wasn't this sun standing still and reminder of the Sun of Righteousness that brings healing to his people? Malachi 4:2 But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves.

7. And notice the human efforts in God's plan. Joshua had marched the day before, then throughout the night, then fought throughout the day, and then he prayed for more sunlight for another day! So if someone promises you that he will come to church with you and don't, how do you respond? Do you become frustrated 沮丧 and give up? Or if you try to evangelize a relative and they don't move, do you say, "You're on your own?" Don't give up! Keep fighting for the kingdom. Talk to your Father. Let him talk to you. William Carey took 7 years to see his first convert in India. Isaiah 40:31 But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew *their* strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, **They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.**

8. Jericho, Ai, Bethel – and now 5 more kings are dead. You might want to ask: Was this the rest God had promised Israel when they were in Egypt? How come there was so much war? Their rest in in Jesus Christ, so rest was in their souls. God never promised that you will have no wars in life...no sickness...no love ones dying, etc. And don't miss the bigger picture here, for this was more than an example. Wasn't this the beginning of the land being made ready for the Savior to come? God was removing the obstacles one after the other.

9. Notice the Almighty's hand in all of this! Joshua passed the test and the blessings started to flow!
a. God was destroying many nations at one time and giving control of much of South East Palestine to Israel. In fact, this battle changed the shape of history. This put Israel firmly in Canaan. Suppose they stopped half way up Beth Horon when they saw the size of the enemy? Can you imagine how much longer and drawn out the war would have been? Now Israel had Jerusalem in their grasp.
b. This put even more fear into the hearts of the nations. There had no doubt that this God was unstoppable, even able to control the sun and the moon.

Conclusion:

Israel honored the vow they made to Gibeon in God's name. In doing this they **hallowed God** in front of the nations and they **showed kindness** to their servants – continuing to be a witness 见证 to them. Because they honored God, God honored them and caused them to destroy the 5 nations and gave them a foothold in Canaan.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Don't ignore duties that seem small. Most aren't called to turn the world upside down. Be faithful in whatever duties the Lord has called you to do. Be the best Christian father or mother. Be the most honorable student in school. Be the finest carer of the sick. Regardless of your job, know that that is your duty in Christ. In due time you will reap. In due time you will soar like eagles. **2. Fight for the honor of your Father's name.** Let you lips and life cause people to honor God. Honoring God before man is never a small thing. **3. You can't fulfill either of these duties unless you are fellowshiping with your Redeemer – Jesus Christ.** When you know his love, you will fulfill your duties. So feed on his Love Letter.

Finally, a word for non-Christians: No one has ever been successful fighting against Jehovah, and no one will. If you have been fighting against him, surrender. Ask him to put all your burdens on the Lord. He died for the sins of all kinds of people.