

## *Joshua Chapter 10: “The Lord God of Israel fought for Israel”*

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### **Introduction**

Did you know that during the most trying times in your life, God is ready and willing to fight for you? Joshua chapter 10 reveals that Israel's God was not only willing but moved heaven and earth to fight for Israel during a very difficult and long day of battle. Are you aware that this is the same God you worship today? Why do you think He recorded the miraculous events in Joshua 10? They are there to show you that your God is real and very powerful. If He can move heaven and earth for the nation of Israel, do you think He's able to deliver you from the troubles you face?

### **Israel's History Prior to Joshua Chapter 1**

- God frees Israel from Egypt (Ex. 12:29-41).
- God leads Israel to the Promise Land, but they refuse to enter (Num. 13:1-14:12).
- Israel is cursed to wander in the wilderness for 40yrs (Num. 14:20-35).
- Moses is not allowed to enter the Promise Land (Num. 20:5-12, 24; 27:14).
- Joshua is appointed by God to replace Moses (Num. 27:15-23; Deut. 31:14).
- God delivers two Amorite kings into Israel's hands. (Num. 21:21-35; Deut 2:24-3:10).
- God brings Israel back to the Promise Land (Num. 33:40-56).

**Joshua Chapter 1:** *Victory before Entering the Promise Land*

**Joshua Chapter 2:** *The Two Spies Confirm God's Word about the Promise Land*

**Joshua Chapter 3 & 4:** *The Parting of the Jordan River, Israel's Crossing, and the Stones of Remembrance*

**Joshua Chapter 5:** *A Tuning Point in Israel's History*

**Joshua Chapter 6:** *The Lord Delivers Jericho into Israel's Hands*

**Joshua Chapter 7:** *Israel's Sin and their Subsequent Defeat at Ai*

**Joshua Chapter 8:** *Israel's Victory Over Ai*

**Joshua Chapter 9:** *Failure to Seek the Lord's Counsel: Treaty with the Gibeonites*

While the kings of the Land prepare for war, the Gibeonites fool Israel into a covenant, which has ramifications for generations to come. They were fooled because they didn't seek God's counsel. But once Israel swore by this covenant, they were bound by their oath. Lessons: always seek God's counsel and always be a man/woman of your word.

## **Joshua Chapter 10:** “*The Lord God of Israel Fought for Israel*”

**10:1-2**, the king of Jerusalem and his people are terrified of Israel because of their terrible victory over Ai and their control of Gibeon (and the surrounding territory), which was approximately 6 miles away and had a strong army.

**10:3-5**, the king of Jerusalem gets 4 other Amorite kings to fight against Gibeon, which reveals what interrupted the plans of the giant army that was gathering against Israel in 9:1-2: the treaty of Gibeon caused these 5 Amorite kings to take action now.

**10:6-9**, Gibeon sends word to Joshua and Israel must defend them (2 Sam. 21:2). The Lord guarantees Israel’s victory by repeating what He said to Joshua in 1:5. Thus, Joshua and his army march all night (which was approximately 25 miles and a 3,500’ ascent on difficult terrain) and surprise their enemy.

**10:10-11**, God is the one who gives this victory to Israel. He gave Joshua and his men the strength to fight after a 25-mile all-night march and He strikes and kills more Amorites with hailstones than Israel kills with their swords.

**10:12-15**, Joshua, realizing that he’s going to need light to fight these battles, asks God to still the moon and sun. Thus, God slows down the rotation of the earth extending the moonlight and when the sun comes up, it too remains longer than usual. It’s interesting that the moon and sun were gods to these pagan nations, but Israel’s God makes these “gods” stand still. 10:15 is the conclusion of the battles, which is identical to 10:43. Thus, 10:16-42 are the details of the battles that took place during this miraculously long day.

**10:16-21**, during the battle, the 5 Amorite kings get away and hide in a cave at Makkedah. When Joshua is told, he commands the cave to be sealed but tells the army to pursue their enemy (which the Lord’s delivered into their hand) to keep them from fleeing into their fortified cities. They get most of the enemy, but some escape. At the end of the slaughter the army returns in peace (i.e., *no one moved his tongue*) to Joshua’s camp at Makkedah.

**10:22-27**, Joshua brings out the 5 kings and has the army’s commanders put their feet on their necks, showing complete domination. And Joshua encourages the commanders by repeating what God told him in 1:9. Joshua then kills and hangs the 5 kings, but their bodies are brought down at sunset (Deut 21:22-23) and cast into the cave.

**10:28-33**, this contains further details of the battles and reveals that Joshua killed 3 other kings (Makkedah, Libnah, and Gezer). Lachish was one of the original 5 (10:3-5); it took longer to conquer because Gezer’s king and army came to its aid. However, it didn’t matter because “the Lord delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel.”

**10:34-39**, this gives details of two more (Eglon and Hebron) of the original 5 that Joshua conquers and a 9<sup>th</sup> king and 8<sup>th</sup> city (Debir) that Joshua kills and conquers. The defeat of Jarmuth (one of the original 5) isn't mentioned. Jerusalem isn't mentioned either because it wasn't conquered until David's time (2 Sam. 5:7).

**10:40-43**, verse 40 lists all the territory that Joshua conquered and 41 gives the general northern and southern borders of this territory. Verse 42 reveals the real reason why Joshua and Israel had such a tremendous victory: "because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel." Verse 43 is the conclusion of the battle, which is the same as 10:15.

Some have a problem with the fact that Joshua killed all human life during these battles as the Lord commanded Him (10:40). This was God's חָרָם (*haram*) curse on the Canaanites, which originated in Gen. 9:24-27 with Noah's curse of Canaan, Ham's fourth son. He was the forefather of all the Canaanite nations. God gave these nations over 400 yrs to repent (Gen. 15:16), but they did not (Deut. 18:9-14). So God had to eradicate this cancer that would (and did) spread to Israel (Deut. 7:1-4; 20:16-18; Jud. 2:8-15).

**Application:** As you look at Joshua 10 as a whole, the one thing that stands out is the fact stated by verse 42, "the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel." It is a refrain that is echoed in one form or another ten times in the chapter, 10:8, 10, 11, 12-13, 14, 19, 25, 30, 32, and 42. What does this teach you about the God you worship? Have you forgotten who He is, what He can do, that He is a God who fights for His people?

How does He fight for you today? Is His help today as real as the hailstones He rained upon Israel's enemies? Yes, it is. However, today His help comes by way of His Word. He provides you with the armor you need to fight today's battles (Eph. 6:13-17), but it requires **faith** to take up the "sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God," Eph. 6:16-17. Do you **believe** that He fights for you today and are you familiar with that sword? What troubles do you need help with and have you asked Him for help, i.e., have you familiarized yourself with His sword so that you can use it effectively?