

# Joshua 10

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Date: 31 May 2026

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[ 0 : 00 ] So, if you don't know me, my name is Sean. I'm part of the leadership team here and we are continuing to look through the Old Testament book of Joshua.

And this morning we're going to be looking at the first 15 verses in chapter 10. And Joshua is all about the Israelites conquering the land that God has promised them.

But as we're working our way through this book, we find that the inhabitants of the land are starting to join together against the Israelites.

To try and come in mass, as it were, armies and cities and towns and people groups joining together to take on the Israelites.

And last week, Tim shared from the chapter 9 of Joshua. And we'll touch on that just in a moment, just to recap.

[ 1 : 13 ] Maybe you weren't here or maybe just some recap so you know where we're going this morning. But a group of four cities, the Gibeonites, they're afraid of not just of Israel, but actually of Israel's God.

They have seen what's happened and they've heard the promises that God has given to the Israelites. And they are afraid. Even though they've got great fighters, they know they can't win. And so, in Joshua 9, they go to trick the Israelites. And we're just going to touch on that briefly. This won't come up on the screen, but it's only a few verses. But this is from Joshua 9, verses 3 to 6. However, when the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, they resorted to a ruse.

So, a trick. They went as a delegation whose donkeys were loaded with worn-out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended. They put worn and patched sandals on their feet and wore old clothes.

[ 2 : 32 ] All the bread of their food supply was dry and moldy. Then they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and the Israelites, We have come from a distant country. Make a treaty with us.

And as Tim shared last week, the Israelites were free to make treaties with the people from distant lands, but not from the land in which they were to inhabit.

And the cities of Gibeon were about 20 miles away from Gilgal. They weren't very far at all. I don't know about you, but I find this really amusing, that the Israelites were taken into by such a simple ruse.

I mean, the first thing I would have said was, Well, your sandals are worn out and your bread are worn out. Why have they worn out at the same time? But never mind, they were tricked.

Okay? And then in Joshua 9 verses 14 and 15, it says, The Israelites sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the Lord.

[ 3 : 39 ] Big mistake. Did not inquire of the Lord. Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath.

So, the Gibeonites have tricked the Israelites. There is a treaty of peace made. But the Gibeonites have said, We will be your servants.

That was part of the treaty. To be servants but protected by Israel. And they return home to their cities. Meanwhile, Israel stays at Gilgal, which is near to Jericho and the Jordan River.

This is where they planted the stones that they'd taken out of the river, and this was kind of where they'd based themselves when they would go out to fight.

So, that's where Tim left us last week. Okay, so we're now going to go into Joshua chapter 10, and we're going to work our way through the first 15 verses.

[ 4 : 54 ] So, okay, starting at verse 1 then. And you can click it on now. Hopefully. Hopefully. Okay, well, if you've got your Bibles.

Joshua 10. I will read it. Now, Adonai Zedek, king of Jerusalem, heard that Joshua had taken Ai. Ai was a town not too far away from Jericho 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 had become their allies. 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. So, Adonai Zedek, king of Jerusalem, appealed to Hoham, king of Hebron, Piram, king of Jarmuth, Japhia, king of Lashish, and Deber, king of Eglon.

[ 6 : 18 ] Come up and help me attack Gibeon, he said, because it has made peace with Joshua and the Israelites. Then, the five kings of the Amorites, the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lashish, and Eglon joined forces.

They moved up with all their troops and took up positions against Gibeon and attacked it. 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. So, we see here that the local cities to Gibeon, and I guess probably allies before this treaty had been made, are not too pleased with the Gibeonites.

And clearly, they're not of the opinion that they would lose to Israel, but instead are going to fight. But first off, they're going to destroy these cheating Gibeonites.

Now, just to give it a little bit of context, Gibeon is six miles from Jerusalem, so they are very close.

[ 7 : 49 ] They are neighbors, and as I mentioned, they're almost certainly allies. They are of the same people group. But because of Gibeon and its treaty with Israel, they have now become enemies.

So, Gibeon is now facing overwhelming odds. Five kings and their cities are posed against them.

So, they fall back, as it were, or have no other option to turn to Joshua, to Israel, but also to their God, who they have decided is the God, the one who has the victory in all things.

So, Gibeon is going to trust in the Israelites. Now, this gives the Israelites, and especially Joshua, something to think about.

Okay? So, they've been tricked. But, because they are honorable, or Joshua is honorable, and it was a treaty before God, they've said, okay, we won't destroy the Gibeonites.

[ 9 : 14 ] Now, here comes the option. Let's leave the Gibeonites to these other kings, and then our treaty is annulled. That's one option.

But it's not very honorable, is it? And so, they choose to go and fight. So, the Gibeonites, having put their faith in Joshua and in God, just like Rahab did.

So, remember, right back at the start of Joshua, Rahab said, your God is the greatest. Our gods are nothing. We're going to trust in him. That is what the Gibeonites are doing by sending a delegation, or even just one runner, as it were, to Joshua.

I guess it just gives us a little pause. Who do we put our trust in?

Do we put our trust in friends and family, in doctors or other professionals? I mean, this is okay.

[ 10 : 22 ] There's nothing wrong with that. But actually, the bigger question is, do we put our faith in God? Do we trust that he is sovereign over all things, that we can rely on him?

So, we move on then to the next couple of verses, verses 7 and 8.

So, Joshua marched up from Gilgal with his entire army, including all the best fighting men. And the Lord said to Joshua, do not be afraid of them.

I have given them into your hands. Not one of them will be able to withstand you. Sounds simple, doesn't it?

Let's just march up. Okay, but let's look a little bit more closely at what's going on here. So, Gilgal was approximately 25 miles from Gibeon.

[ 11 : 27 ] Gilgal was also 250 meters below sea level. And Gibeon is 750 meters above sea level.

So, you can imagine that the Gibeonite, who ran 25 miles downhill, had definitely the easier trip.

Just to... I mean, if you know a little bit about mountains in our country, the lack of them in England, to be fair, but...

So, 1,000 meters, well, Scarfell Pike in the Lake District is 978 meters, and Snowdonia is 1,085 meters. And they had no roads, and they did it at night.

Wow. Wow. So, Joshua chooses to honor this treaty.

He will protect the weak. He's in covenant with them, and they have put faith in God. And as we see here, Joshua is finally listening to God.

[12:39] So, when the Gibeonites came, they didn't listen to God. And now, though, on the journey, we clearly see God is... or Joshua has heard, he is seeking God, and God has said, do not be afraid of them.

And God honors the Gibeonites' faith in him through Joshua. God honors or responds to Joshua in this despite his poor decision.

And he speaks faith and courage into Joshua. Again, we can grab a little bit from this. Maybe if we think ourselves in the position of Joshua, do we look out for the weak?

Do we go into battle with them or for them? Do we especially honor other Christians, those who have put their faith in God?

How do we deal with those who have treated us badly? Do we go, oh, well, they treated me badly, therefore I'm going to treat them badly? Or do we treat them with honor and God's love?

[13:52] Have you maybe made some bad decisions? Maybe you didn't seek God's direction.

Know this, that God is still for you, and he wants to speak faith and courage into you. And I just want to pause briefly there and pray.

all around that, bad decisions, that God wants to speak that faith and courage into you.

Lord, we just pray. You know, we're all prone to making foolish decisions, bad decisions, sometimes not listening to you. I just pray that where maybe those things are even relevant at the moment in our lives, Lord, we would be able to bring them to you.

I pray, Lord, for faith to rise, courage to rise, that we would know that you are still for us, that we haven't hidden away, you haven't hidden away, that you are with us, and you love us, Lord.

[15:00] Amen. Amen. Let's carry on then. Moving on to verse 9 then. After an all-night march from Gilgal, Joshua took them by surprise.

So, the Israelites have had a day of doing things. We don't know what. Suddenly, this runner comes into the camp. He's a Gibeonite.

He says, we're being attacked. Come and help us. So, but it's night time. Yep. Come and help us.

Okay, so let's take the whole army. 25 miles, uphill, at night, no sleep.

Let's rest. No, into battle. This is a great preparation for battle, isn't it? But this was to be God's battle.

God has already said, I have given them into your hand. Don't be afraid. But they had to take steps of faith. So, when they arrived, tired, worn out, having tripped over all the stones they've bumped into on the way up, they still need to step out in faith and take the battle to the enemy.

[16:15] But they had God's promise. Moving on then for verse 10. The Lord threw them into confusion before Israel. So Joshua and the Israelites defeated them completely at Gibeon.

Israel pursued them along the road going up to Beth Horon and cut them down all the way to Azkar and Magda. As they fled before Israel on the road down from Beth Horon to Azkar, the Lord hurled large hailstones down on them, and more of them died from the hail than were killed by the swords of the Israelites.

This thrown into confusion means basically that the Amorites experienced fear and panic.

They've just had a night's sleep and suddenly the Israelites are upon us. Where did they spring from? They were 25 miles down the hill. Nope, they're here.

But also, God has arrived as well. When the Israelites came, God came with them.

[17:28] Actually, God came and the Israelites came with God. But Israel still had to swing the sword. They had to get bloody and potentially suffer injury.

But we see here, God fought on their side. Well, actually, they fought on God's side. He carried the bigger load.

And the final bit, verse 12 through to the end. On the day the Lord gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the Lord in the presence of Israel, sun, stand still over Gibeon, and you, moon, over the valley Ajalon.

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. There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the Lord listened to a human being.

[ 18 : 43 ] Surely the Lord was fighting for Israel. Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal. Wow. It's an interesting bit of the Bible, isn't it, this?

The sun and moon stood still. Joshua. He sees the fighting going on. He has listened to God. He's seen what God has been doing. And he has faith to ask for the impossible. I mean, you can imagine Joshua at this point.

They marched all night. They've been fighting. He's probably physically shattered. His arm is physically shattered. But instead of asking God for it all to be over very quickly, to be finished so they can rest, instead he says, give us more time so we can complete what you have called us to do.

Tired, but give us more time. Where did this incredible faith come from? Well, for Joshua, if you read about his life, you'll see that it was hours spent in prayer and in the presence of God.

[ 20 : 05 ] But even just up to that point, he had heard God's promise. He'd known previous victories.

He'd seen the confusion of his enemies as God had gone before them. That the Amorites have been routed. They're running. And if that wasn't enough, he'd seen these huge hailstones flying out of the sky as well.

But even so, wow, what faith to ask for the sun to stand still. So what do we learn about God from this?

The impossible is possible for God. That even the universe obeys him.

Every part of nature listened when God stopped the sun. Somehow, everything stopped revolving.

[ 21 : 18 ] Nothing flew off at a thousand mile an hour when the earth stopped. The sea didn't cover the earth. God held it all together in his hand.

It all obeyed God in that instant. And then restarted again as well when he said it was to start.

So let's pull all this together then. What about us? Often, our battles come when we are weakest.

We've marched all night up a hill with a heavy load. We've been fighting illness. Lost a loved one. Life has been really tough.

But it is in our toughest times we realise he is with us.

[ 22 : 20 ] That he's fighting on our behalf. You know, we may not always like his victory. But when God fights, it's for his glory, not ours.

For his will to be done. For his plans, not our plans. You know, he may do, and probably does, do most of the work.

But we still need to swing our swords, get bloody, and potentially suffer injury in the battles of life. I'm going to draw this to a close. I'm going to be just concentrating on that whole thing of faith and praying for us in that.

But I'll just ask Ben and the band to come back up. Joshua had faith in God for the impossible.

[ 23 : 36 ] Sun and moon stand still. Do we have faith in God for the impossible?

Now, I'm not suggesting that any of you is to be telling the sun and moon to stay still. But maybe there are things in your life that you look upon and go, that looks impossible.

That looks impossible. Maybe healing. Maybe salvation.

Maybe finances. Broken relationships. Now, our faith level may be low, but we come to the God who's the creator of all things.

And I just want to pause here before we continue worshipping and pray for faith, for the impossible, for each one of us.

[ 24 : 41 ] Lord, you are the same God who flung the stars into space and created the heavens and the earth and all that's upon it.

You're the same God who fought against the Amorites, who stopped the sun. You're the same God, Lord Jesus, who came to earth and went to a cross and died in our place.

The same yesterday, today, and forever. You're still in full control. Sovereign. Lord, we, I just pray for us that our faith might rise in you, that we would have a confidence in you, that the prayers we bring, you are more than capable of answering and dealing with.

Lord, would you rise faith up within us, pour out your spirit upon us and may we be a people who start to bring prayers that seem impossible to us.

Come with faith and confidence in our God who died for us, who loves us, who will never leave us or forsake us, who we cannot hide from and has good things for us.

[ 26 : 29 ] Lord, help us to see you for who you are. Our Father, our Daddy, that we are restored in relationship with you and you love us so much.

We thank you, Lord, for this incredible grace, this relationship we have and we pray, Lord, more of your spirit, more faith in our lives.

Amen. Thank you.