

Joshua 10:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight.

Analysis

And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight.

After capturing the five coalition kings, Joshua transforms their humiliation into an object lesson for Israel. The command "Fear not, nor be dismayed" (al-tir'u ve'al-techatu, אֲלֹתִירָאוּ וְאֲלֹתְּתְּכָתָוּ) uses the same paired imperatives God spoke to Joshua (8:1), showing how leaders transmit divine encouragement to their followers. The additional exhortation "be strong and of good courage" (chizqu ve'imtzu, חִזְקָעַ וִימְצָעַ) echoes God's repeated commission to Joshua (1:6, 7, 9), demonstrating the generational transmission of faith-filled courage.

The phrase "thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies" establishes the defeated kings as paradigm for all future victories. The visible evidence of God's judgment on these rulers—displayed at Israel's feet (verse 24)—provides tangible proof that Yahweh fights for Israel. This pedagogical approach recognizes humanity's need for visible confirmations of invisible realities. Reformed theology affirms that God accommodates human weakness by providing signs, ordinances, and historical evidences that strengthen faith (Westminster Confession 1.5).

Joshua's leadership demonstrates the pastoral dimension of military command. He doesn't merely achieve tactical victories; he interprets those victories theologically,

building his people's confidence in God's promises. This models spiritual leadership that connects present experiences to eternal truths, helping believers see God's hand in current circumstances and trust Him for future challenges. The pattern established here—victory, testimony, encouragement—repeats throughout redemptive history, culminating in Christ's resurrection testimony and the apostolic witness.

Historical Context

The practice of displaying defeated kings—forcing them to prostrate while conquerors placed feet on their necks (verse 24)—appears throughout ancient Near Eastern iconography. Egyptian temple reliefs show pharaohs standing on bound captives, and Assyrian monuments depict similar scenes. This was not mere cruelty but symbolic demonstration of absolute victory, intended to demoralize remaining resistance while encouraging the victors. Joshua's adaptation of this practice serves theological purposes—demonstrating Yahweh's superiority over Canaanite kings and their gods.

The five kings represented major city-states: Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon. Their simultaneous defeat broke the southern coalition's power structure, leaving smaller cities defenseless. Ancient warfare often focused on eliminating leadership; once kings were captured or killed, their cities typically surrendered. Joshua's rapid exploitation of this victory (verses 28-39) demonstrates understanding of ancient warfare's psychological dimensions—maintaining momentum after decisive victory could produce cascading surrenders.

The execution of the kings (verse 26) and their corpses' display until evening (verse 27) followed Deuteronomic law (Deuteronomy 21:22-23), which required that hanged bodies not remain overnight, lest the land be defiled. Paul later applies this principle to Christ's crucifixion, noting that Christ became a curse for us (Galatians 3:13). The kings' burial in the cave where they hid created a permanent memorial—the sealed cave with great stones (verse 27) marking the site of divine judgment on Canaanite rebellion.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How can Christian leaders follow Joshua's example of interpreting God's work in ways that strengthen others' faith?
2. What visible evidences of God's faithfulness in your past can you use to encourage yourself and others facing current challenges?
3. How does this passage's emphasis on transmitting courage from leader to followers inform our approach to discipleship and mentoring?

Interlinear Text

תְּמַתַּתְּ אַלְמָתָר יְהוָשׁ עַל אֱלֹהִים תִּירְאָ אֶל תִּירְאָ אֶל תְּמַתַּתְּ
not nor be dismayed
said H413 And Joshua H408 unto them Fear H408 H2865
H559 H3091 H3372

וְהִזְקִיקֵּן אֶת־אַמְצָא אֶל־כָּהֵן כְּהֵן יְהִי־יְהֹוָה
for thus shall the LORD
be strong and of good courage H3588 H3602 do H6213 H3068
H2388 H553

אֶל־כָּל־אֹתָם יְמִינְךָ מִלְּגָדָל אֶל־אָשָׁר אֶל־אָשָׁר אֶל־אָשָׁר
against whom ye fight H853 H3898
to all your enemies H341 H834 H859

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 1:10 (Parallel theme): Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

Joshua 1:9 (Good): Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Ephesians 6:10 (References Lord): Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Romans 8:37 (Parallel theme): Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Deuteronomy 7:19 (References Lord): The great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out: so shall the LORD thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid.

1 Samuel 17:37 (References Lord): David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.

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