

Joshua 23:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you.

Analysis

One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you. This remarkable promise amplifies Moses' blessing in Deuteronomy 32:30, where one chases a thousand only if "their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up." Here Joshua reverses the image—one Israelite chasing a thousand becomes reality through divine intervention, not enemy weakness.

The 1:1000 ratio defies all military logic, illustrating supernatural empowerment. The phrase "for the LORD your God, he it is that fighteth for you" (ki Yahweh Eloheikhem hu ha-nilcham lakhem, כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא הַנִּלְחָם לָכֶם) repeats verse 3's affirmation with added emphasis. The pronoun "he" (hu, הוּא) stresses exclusivity—God Himself, not Israel's strength or strategy, fights on their behalf. The participial form of lacham (לָחַם, to fight) indicates ongoing action: He is the one fighting, present tense.

The grounding clause "as he hath promised you" (ka'asher dibber lakhem, כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר לָכֶם) roots present confidence in past promises. Leviticus 26:8 declares, "And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight." God's word establishes expectations; His faithfulness fulfills them. This promise finds New Testament parallel in Romans 8:31: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Divine alliance renders numerical odds irrelevant.

Historical Context

Historical examples of this promise's fulfillment appear throughout Israel's early history. Jonathan and his armor-bearer routed a Philistine garrison (1 Samuel 14:6-15), declaring, "there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few." Gideon's 300 defeated the Midianite host "like grasshoppers for multitude" (Judges 7:12-25). David faced Goliath with the declaration, "The battle is the LORD's" (1 Samuel 17:47).

Ancient warfare typically favored larger armies with superior technology and fortifications. A 1:1000 ratio was militarily impossible under normal circumstances. Israel's victories required divine intervention—panic falling on enemies (Exodus 23:27; Joshua 10:10), supernatural hailstones (Joshua 10:11), the sun standing still (Joshua 10:12-14), or enemy forces turning on each other (Judges 7:22; 2 Chronicles 20:23).

However, this promise was conditional on covenant obedience. When Israel sinned, the ratio reversed—they fled before enemies (Leviticus 26:17; Deuteronomy 28:25; Joshua 7:4-5). The 36 Israelites who died at Ai (Joshua 7:5) demonstrated that without God's presence, numerical superiority meant nothing. Covenant faithfulness, not military might, determined battlefield outcomes in theocratic Israel.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does confidence that "the LORD... fighteth for you" change your approach to overwhelming challenges you currently face?
2. What practical steps can you take to ensure you're fighting with God's power rather than relying on your own strength or wisdom?

3. How might you be avoiding difficult obedience because you're calculating odds by human standards rather than trusting God's promises?

Interlinear Text

אִישׁ	אֶחָד	מִכָּמֹה	יִרְדּוּ	אֶלֶף	כִּי	יְהוָה
man	One	H4480	of you shall chase	a thousand	H3588	for the LORD
H376	H259		H7291	H505		H3068
אֱלֹהֶיךָ	הוא	הַנִּלָּחֵם	לְךָ	כָּאֵשׁ	ר	
your God	H1931	he it is that fighteth	H0	H834		
H430		H3898				
	דָּבָר	לְכֶם:				
for you as he hath promised		H0				
H1696						

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 32:30 (References Lord): How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up?

Leviticus 26:8 (Parallel theme): And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.

Deuteronomy 3:22 (References God): Ye shall not fear them: for the LORD your God he shall fight for you.

Exodus 14:14 (References Lord): The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

Psalms 35:1 (References Lord): Plead my cause, O LORD, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.

Deuteronomy 20:4 (References God): For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.

Romans 8:31 (References God): What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

Psalms 46:7 (References God): The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

Joshua 23:3 (References God): And ye have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the LORD your God is he that hath fought for you.

1 Samuel 14:6 (References Lord): And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.

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