

Joshua 23:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the LORD hath driven out from before you great nations and strong: but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day.

Analysis

For the LORD hath driven out from before you great nations and strong: but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day. This verse provides motivation for continued obedience by recounting past victories. The phrase "great nations and strong" (goyim gedolim va'atsumim, גּוֹיִם גּדוֹלִים וְעֲצָוםִים) uses terms emphasizing both size and military power. Israel faced numerically superior forces with advanced technology (iron chariots, fortified cities), yet prevailed through divine intervention.

The declaration "no man hath been able to stand before you" (lo-amad ish bifneikhem, לֹא-עָמַד אִישׁ בְּפִנֵּיכֶם) fulfills God's promise in Joshua 1:5: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life." The Hebrew amad (עָמַד, to stand) implies maintaining position in battle—none could withstand Israel's God-empowered advance. This unbroken victory record testified to divine faithfulness.

The phrase "unto this day" (ad ha-yom ha-zeh, עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה) appears frequently in Joshua (4:9; 5:9; 6:25; 7:26; 8:28-29), marking enduring evidence of God's past acts. These monuments, practices, or testimonies served as perpetual witnesses to divine intervention. The phrase also appears in Matthew 28:15, indicating how the expression persisted in Hebrew usage. Such remembrance markers prevent forgetfulness and ingratitude, guarding covenant loyalty across generations.

Historical Context

The "great nations and strong" included formidable military powers. Hazor, destroyed by Joshua (11:10-11), was the largest Canaanite city-state, with an estimated population of 20,000-40,000 at its peak. Its king Jabin commanded a coalition of northern kings with "horses and chariots very many" (11:4). Jerusalem's walls were so formidable that they weren't breached until David's conquest centuries later (2 Samuel 5:6-9).

Israel's consistent victories defied normal military logic. Deuteronomy 7:7 states, "The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people." Israel's small population, recently freed slave background, and lack of advanced weaponry made their conquest impossible without divine aid. This fulfilled God's purpose—that the victory would clearly display His power, not human strength (Deuteronomy 7:17-24).

The unbroken string of victories "unto this day" covered approximately 20-30 years from Jordan crossing to Joshua's farewell. During this period, only one battle was lost—at Ai, and that due to Achan's sin (Joshua 7). Once the covenant violation was addressed, victories resumed. This pattern demonstrated the direct connection between covenant faithfulness and military success in the theocratic period.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does reviewing God's past faithfulness in your life strengthen your confidence for current and future challenges?
2. What "monuments" or remembrance practices can you establish to preserve testimony of God's works for future generations?

3. How should the reality that past victories came through God's power, not human strength, shape your approach to present spiritual battles?

Interlinear Text

וְרֹשֶׁת	יְהוָה	בְּפִנֵּיכֶם	גּוֹיִם	גָּדוֹלִים	עֲצָמִים
hath driven out	For the LORD	before	nations	you great	and strong
H3423	H3068	H6440	H1471	H1419	H6099
לֹא	עַמְדָה	אִישׁ	עַד		
H859	H3808	H5975	H376		
hath been able to stand	but as for you no man		before		
			H6440		H5704
וְעַתָּה					
you unto this day					
H3117	H2088				

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 1:5 (Parallel theme): There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Deuteronomy 11:23 (References Lord): Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves.

Exodus 23:30 (Parallel theme): By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land.

Joshua 23:5 (References Lord): And the LORD your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the LORD your God hath promised unto you.

Joshua 15:14 (Parallel theme): And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak.

