

**PARADIGM SHIFTING - V**  
**GROWING A HEALTHY CHURCH SERIES**

**Text: Joshua 10:16-28**

**Key Word: Shift**

**Key Thought: It Is Time for the Church to Gain Victories over its Enemies**

**\*\*** You might remember the comedian Yakov Smirnoff. When he first came to the United States from Russia, he was not prepared for the incredible variety of instant products available in American grocery stores. He says, *"On my first shopping trip, I saw powdered milk— you just add water, and you get milk. Then I saw powdered orange juice--you just add water, and you get orange juice. And then I saw baby powder, and I thought to my self, What a country!"* **\*\***

Smirnoff is joking but we make a few false assumptions about being a Christian. Some traditions call it repentance and renewal. Some call it the Sanctification of the believer. Whatever you call it, some traditions expect some quick fix to sin. According to this belief, when someone gives his or her life to Christ, there is an immediate, substantive, in-depth, miraculous change in habits, attitudes, and character. We go to church as if we are going to the grocery store: Powdered Disciples. Just add water and Christians are immediately transformed into full grown disciples.

Unfortunately, there is no such powder and disciples of Jesus Christ are not instantly born. They are slowly raised up through many trials, suffering, and temptations. A study has found that only 11 percent of churchgoing teenagers have a well-developed faith, rising to only 32 percent for churchgoing adults. Why? Because true-life change only BEGINS at salvation, takes more than just time, is about training, trying, suffering, and even dying.

adapted from James Emery White  
"Rethinking the Church"  
Baker, 1997, p. 55-57

It is unfortunate but as soon as we become a Christian we enter a war zone. Many enemies begin appearing the moment we cross over from death unto life. It's like a host of hindrances are trying to deter our spiritual growth. In fact, some battles seem like they are life or death situations.

Joshua discovered that as soon as he entered the promised land that he had to become a warrior on a daily basis. There were many kings and many cities that he was going to have to overthrow beginning with the southern cities and then moving northward. It is a parallel of what takes place as we surrender our lives to God. The battle is on and the course is set in place.

## What Course must We Often Travel in Order to Mature in Our Faith?

### I. A PLACE OF DANGER (10:1-5)

### II. A PLAN OF DECISIVENESS (10:6-8)

### III. A PERIOD OF DEFEAT (10:9-28)

#### I. A PLACE OF DANGER (10:1-5)

Many a Christian has asked the question why we must enter into a danger zone the moment we cross over into a new life with God as our Master. It just doesn't seem fair. If God is God, why doesn't He place us into a safety net to protect us against the assaults of our enemies? He chooses not to because He realizes that we must become very sensitive to the fact that we are being pursued by an evil enemy. The sooner the better. Remember the movie Bambi and his mother's constant alert of danger.

**Protection in God's eyes is not seen as being concealed from danger.** He rather has decided to place us into a battle zone and He helps us to gain the ability to overcome our enemies. Joshua learned this lesson very quickly. Just after a few battles, Joshua was confronted with an amalgamation of five kings who joined forces to destroy the Gibeonites and eventually they even wanted to destroy Joshua and his army. **It's important to understand the meaning of the names of these kings mean.**

1. Adoni-Zedek of Jerusalem - means *"My Lord is Just or Righteous"*
2. Hoham king of Hebron (confederacy or association) - means *"Crusher"*
3. Piram king of Jarmuth - means *"Wild One"*
4. Japhia king of Lachish - means *"High Ones"*
5. Debir king of Eglon - means *"To Speak or Challenge"*

Each one of these kings represented a different kind of danger that we must overcome to grow in our faith. The first king is the most dangerous. He represents the city of peace. He comes as one proclaiming righteousness or justice. I find it interesting that when the first seal is broken in the Book of Revelation that the rider rode a **White Horse (Revelation 6:1,2)**. **We must first of all overcome deceit. This king comes offering righteousness and peace and yet is out to destroy us.**

The Scriptures are full of warnings about not being deceived. Jesus Himself often spoke of it (Matthew 24: 4, 24-26). We must face this type of danger quickly in our walk of faith.

If deceit does not work, our enemy comes in with a greater force. Hoham (the crusher) will join forces with the rest of his thugs in an attempt to crush any type of opposition he faces. Once again we see a parallel with the breaking of the seals. The second rider is upon a **Red Horse (Revelation 6:3-4)** which is given power to take peace from the earth and to slay with a large sword.

## I. A PLACE OF DANGER (10:1-5) (Contd.)

This danger hurls us into the path of another one called “*Wild One*.” Here we are told what is the use of remaining pure in your walk with God. If He loved you He never would allow these kinds of dangers to come your way. **Why not live it up. Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you may die. This party attitude will destroy our righteous walk with the Lord if we don’t overcome it.**

The next king represents pride. His name means “*High Ones*.” We all know the danger of pride when it is out of control.

*“Before his downfall a man’s heart is proud, but humility comes before honor.”*

*Proverbs 18:12*

**\*\*** There is a story told, whether factual or not I do not know, of the one-time heavyweight boxing champion of the world, Muhammad Ali, flying to one of his engagements. Ali’s name has never been synonymous with humility, and thus whether this story is fact or fiction, the notoriously yet affectionately branded “*Louisville Lip*” at least made possible such an anecdote. During the flight the aircraft ran into foul weather, and mild to moderate turbulence began to toss it about. All nervous fliers well know that when a pilot signals “*moderate turbulence*,” he is implying, “*if you have any religious beliefs, it is time to start expressing them.*” The passengers were accordingly instructed to fasten their seatbelts immediately.

Everyone complied but Ali. Noticing this, the flight attendant approached him and requested that he observe the captain’s order, only to hear Ali audaciously respond, “*Superman don’t need no seatbelt.*” The flight attendant did not miss a beat and replied, “*Superman don’t need no airplane either.*” **\*\***

Ravi Zacharias  
*“Can Man Live Without God”*  
Word Publ., Dallas: 1994, p. 7

The final offence against us in battle is that of verbal abuse. Many Christians have backed away from sharing their faith and winning the war because they have been ridiculed and put down. This final king tries “*To Speak or Challenge*” his way into our soul. We must do like our Lord did in the wilderness and come back with the Word of God to overcome his challenging words.

## II. A PLAN OF DECISIVENESS (10:6-8)

Lets talks further about the decisive plan that Joshua made and executed.

If you were Joshua would you have just let these kings destroy the Gibeonites and eliminate these people who stood as an embarrassing failure of his past decision making. Isn't it interesting that God prompted Joshua to protect the very people who deceived him and had him make a treaty of peace with them? **Some failures are best kept before our eyes and in our minds in order to keep us from repeating them.** Joshua was man of his word and protected the Gibeonites instead of destroying them (cf. 9:26).

I've discovered that sometimes **the point of making a decision is harder than fighting the battle. In fact, the main battle is often fought most intensely in our mind.** Once we make the decision it doesn't always mean that the pathway will be easy to walk.

Up to this point Joshua had only led his army against single cities. To continue in this mode would mean plenty of time and battles ahead. If he could conquer his enemies in a group, he would lessen the need for as many battles and the time and effort it would take. **Here was an opportunity to defeat the combined forces of the Amorite armies of Southern Canaan who had camped outside of Gibeon.**

Joshua led the children of Israel under the cover of darkness. They marched for 25 miles from Gilgal to Gibeon. It was a tiresome trek rising over 4,000 feet up a steep and treacherous terrain. They had no time to rest. **They arrived exhausted. Yet they arrived ready to fight because of Joshua's plan of decisiveness.**

### There is Time

There is a time, we know not when  
A point we know not where  
That marks the destiny of men  
For glory or despair.

There is a line by us unseen  
That crosses every path  
The hidden boundary between  
God's patience and His wrath.

Joseph Addison Alexander  
Source Unknown

### III. A PERIOD OF DEFEAT (10:9-28)

Some battles take longer than others. As the day of the battle of Beth Horon wore on, Joshua realized that he didn't have enough time to destroy his enemies. His prayer was one of the most unusual ones found in Scripture. He commanded the normal forces of time to temporarily be put on hold.

*“O sun, stand still over Gibeon, O moon, over the Valley of Aijalon.”*

*Joshua 10:12*

It is also important to know that both the sun and the moon were deities worshipped by those living in Gibeon and Aijalon. They were useless against the Creator God who sustained the sun and the moon. God Himself intervened with hailstones (that accordingly to the other uses of this word usually included fire) and destroyed more enemies than the sword did.

Joshua returned to the cave where he had the five kings placed earlier while he went on to fight the battle. He had the stone removed and then brought out and performed an ancient custom of having his commanders place their feet on the necks of their conquered enemies (Deuteronomy 33:29; I Kings 5:3; Psalm 110:1). He went on to have them killed and hung until nightfall. He then gave his men a word of encouragement to go on and destroy the other forces.

*“Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Be strong and courageous. This is what the Lord will do to all the enemies you are going to fight.”*

*Joshua 10:25*

We need, early in our Christian walk, to realize that there is a coalition of forces that oppose what we believe and what we do. They have been identified in the Bible as the world, the flesh and the devil. There is only one way to overcome them. We must go with the wisdom and strength of the Lord. Those who have entered into a covenant with God have nothing to fear about.

\*\*\* When Mark Twain was travelling in Europe with his young daughter, he was feted in several cities by royalty and famed people in the arts and sciences. Toward the end of their journeys, his daughter said to him, *“Papa, you know everybody but God, don't you?”* \*\*\*

Donald K. Campbell  
*“Joshua: Leaders Under Fire”*  
Victor Books, p. 85

### **III. A PERIOD OF DEFEAT (10:9-28)**

Joshua was a man who knew God above all else and everyone else. It made the biggest difference in him winning the war.

*“The people who know their God will display strength and take action.”*

*Daniel 11:32b*  
NASB

Joshua not only destroyed these 5 kings, he went on to conquer every city in the south and then in the north. Time and time again the Scriptures note that he didn't leave any survivors (Joshua 10:28,30,32,35,37,39,40). He left no stone uncovered.

As we are set in a battle, we must also recognize that God has set us on a course that will bring us into a place of maturity. It will lead us to . . .

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Date: Feb 4/18

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: I Will Arise (And Go Forth) - G; Joshua Generation - G

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*White Horse - Revelation 6:1,2; Matthew 24: 4,24-26; Red Horse - Revelation 6:3-4;  
Proverbs 18:12*

**II. A PLAN OF DECISIVENESS (10:6-8) - cf. Joshua 9:26**

**III. A PERIOD OF DEFEAT (10:9-28) - Joshua 10:12; Deuteronomy 33:29; I Kings 5:3;  
Psalm 110:1; Joshua 10:25; Daniel 11:32b; Joshua 10:28,30,32,35,37,39,40**