

Joshua Chapter 10

Verses 1-11: Gibeon and 3 other towns (9:17), were attacked by a coalition of 5 cities. Israel came to the rescue, with God giving the victory (verse 10).

Verses 1-5: King "Adoni-zedek" heard about the treaty between "Israel" and "Gibeon" and was fearful that two such strong nations would crush his city ("Jerusalem"), so he made an alliance with four other kings to destroy Gibeon. These were city-states; that is, each city was ruled by its own king. This alliance actually helped Israel, because instead of waging war on five different cities, they only had to defeat one army.

Joshua 10:1 "Now it came to pass, when Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them;"

So called, perhaps by anticipation, Jerusalem, since it seems to have had this name given it by the Israelites, when they had got possession of it. And Jerusalem signifies "the possession of Salem", and in memory of this its ancient name.

"Had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it": Which, being nearer to him than Jericho, the more alarmed him.

"As he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king": Burnt the one, and slew the other. And this terrified him, lest he and his city should undergo the same fate.

"And how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them": Which as it weakened the interest of the kings of Canaan, might set an example to other places to do the same.

"Adoni-zedek" means lord of justice. This name of the king of Jerusalem indicates that at some time earlier Jerusalem had been inhabited by people who did believe in God. They are now inhabited by the Amorites who are very definitely not pleasing unto God. This evil king has received word that Israel is headed their way. He has kept up with their exploits along the way. He has even heard of the alliance of Israel with Gibeon.

Joshua 10:2 "That they feared greatly, because Gibeon [was] a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it [was] greater than Ai, and all the men thereof [were] mighty."

The dread inspired by the rapid conquests of the Israelites had been immensely increased by the fact of a state so populous and so strong as Gibeon having found it expedient to submit to the power and the terms of the invaders.

"As one of the royal cities": Although itself a republic (Joshua 9:3), it was large and well-fortified. Like those places in which the chiefs of the country usually established their residence.

The king of Jerusalem is very angry with Gibeon because they have set a bad example for the other cities around them, by surrendering themselves to serve Israel. Gibeon was bigger and stronger than Ai. They had mighty warriors. If they could not defeat Israel, who could? The king of Jerusalem thinks they showed cowardice.

Joshua 10:3 "Wherefore Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying,"

“Hebron” was one of the “central” cities in the southern hill country of Judah some 20 miles south-southwest of Jerusalem on the road to Beer-sheba. It is situated at one of the highest points (3,040 feet above sea level), on the central mountainous ridge and is one of the oldest continually inhabited cities in Palestine. Originally Hebron was called Kirjath-arba (Gen. 23:2).

(Numbers 13:22), speaks of Hebron being built seven years before Zoan (Tanis), in Egypt. This probably refers to the rebuilding of the city by the Hyksos rulers of Egypt (1710 – 1570) B.C.). The 12 Hebrew spies viewed Hebron on their mission (Num. 13:22). Earlier, Abram spent much time in Mamre in the area of Hebron (Gen. 13:18; 14:1-13; 18:1-15). Later, Sarah died at Hebron (Gen 23:2). During the period of the conquest, Joshua killed the king of Hebron (verses 3-27). Later, Caleb drove out the Anakim and claimed Hebron for an inheritance (14:12-15). Hebron was one of the cities of refuge (20:7). David ruled from Hebron during the first seven years of his reign (2 Sam. 2:11). Absalom made Hebron his headquarters when he rebelled against his father, David (2 Sam. 15:7-12). The city was a key storage city from rations of Uzziah’s army (2 Chron. 26:10).

Joshua 10:4 "Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon: for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel."

For which he thought himself not a match, not only because it was a great city, and full of mighty men, and had other cities subject to it, but because he might reasonably judge that Joshua would come to their assistance if possible, being in league with him. He sends to these kings in an authoritative manner, as if they were in some respects subject to him. And he proposes Jerusalem as the place of their rendezvous, and which it seems lay higher than their cities, though they were in the mountainous part of the country.

"For it hath made peace with Joshua, and with the children of Israel": Their avowed enemies, and so had separated themselves from their countrymen, and from their common interest. And therefore it was thought proper to make an example of them, that others might fear to do the same.

There are several reasons these 5 evil kings wanted to come against Gibeon. One reason was they did not want the strength of Gibeon on the side of Israel. Another reason was to discourage any of the others from falling away. Another reason was their anger at Gibeon for doing this, and they wanted revenge. Adoni-zedek knew he could not defeat them by himself, so he got the other 4 kings to help him. They had made an agreement earlier to fight together against Israel.

Joshua 10:5 "Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together, and went up, they and all their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it."

The league with "Gibeon" was to be the propelling cause that opened the southern campaign for Canaan. Repulsing the Amorite thrust into Canaan's center at Gibeon, the follow-up battles would take Israel into Canaan's southland.

They were less afraid of Gibeon than they were of the God of Israel. They think they will be able to eliminate Gibeon and they will have that problem out of the way. They have forgotten their alliance with Israel.

Verses 6-8: Joshua had not anticipated that his treaty with "Gibeon" would be tested so quickly, but he immediately rallied his troops for the roughly 15 mile journey to come to their aid. Even though circumstances had changed since the treaty was signed, Joshua would honor his commitment. And because he was in the will of God, God promised to help him.

Joshua 10:6 "And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us."

Which some think they did when besieged, and not before. Which showed their faith in the power of God, whom they now professed. But it is not likely that they should defer sending for help so long, since it is reasonable to suppose they might have heard of the design of the five kings against them. Or that they should be able to send out messengers when surrounded on all sides.

"Saying, slack not thine hands from thy servants": They entreat that he would not neglect them, be indifferent to them, and delay to assist them, since they were his subjects. And were entitled to his protection.

"Come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us": They did not doubt, if he made haste and helped them, but they should be saved by him.

The Gibeonites knew they were no match for 5 groups of the Amorites. They quickly send for help from Joshua.

Joshua 10:7 "So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor."

The language reflects the urgency of the crisis. Accordingly, Joshua made a forced march, accompanied only by his soldiers (Joshua 10:7). And accomplished in a single night the distance

from Gilgal to Gibeon (about 15 miles in a direct line), which on a former occasion had been a three days' journey (Joshua 9:17).

This was not because of any great love that Joshua had for Gibeon, but because of their agreement. This would also be an opportunity to eliminate 5 of their enemies at once. The Israelites had hundreds of thousands of soldiers.

Joshua 10:8 "And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee."

Either when upon the march, and while he was proceeding on in his journey to the assistance of the Gibeonites, or rather before he set out. And it is highly probable he consulted the Lord on this occasion. Having, it may be, some doubt on his mind, whether he should go to their assistance, since the league between them was obtained by fraud. And the words may be rendered, "and the Lord hath said": before he set forward with his men of war.

"Fear them not": The five kings, and their combined army.

"For I have delivered them into thine hand": Had determined to do it, and which was as certain as if it had been actually done.

"There shall not a man of them stand before thee": But be either cut off, or obliged to flee.

The LORD encourages Joshua that they will fall to Israel. God fights on Israel's side and they cannot fail. Fear is the opposite of faith. God wants Joshua and Israel to have faith in Him.

Joshua 10:9 "Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, [and] went up from Gilgal all night."

Armed with the Lord's promise of victory, even an all-night march up from "Gilgal" to Gibeon would not leave Joshua's forces too fatigued for fighting (verse 10). The miraculous arrival of great hailstones that killed a majority of the enemy was evidence of the Lord's intervention (verse 11; compare Job 38:22-23).

The five Amorite kings had not planned on this happening. The "suddenly" shows they were not expecting Joshua and his troops.

Joshua 10:10 "And the LORD discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah."

Disturbed, troubled, and frightened them, at the appearance and presence of the people of Israel. They were thrown into terror and confusion upon their approach, being so sudden and unexpected.

"And slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon": By the Israelites, who came upon them suddenly.

"And chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon": There were two places of this name, the upper and the lower, both built by Sherah, the daughter or granddaughter of Ephraim (1 Chron. 7:24).

"And smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah": The former of which is placed by Jerom between Eleuthero-polis and Jerusalem, and was a village in his days.

This just says there was great loss of life of the Amorites at Gibeon. Those who were not killed at Gibeon, ran. They fled to Beth-horon, Azekah, and Makkedah. This would soon be known as the land of Judah.

Verses 11-12: There is no other way to explain what happened here: This was a miracle. The Lord designated on whom the "hailstones" would fall, and they fell on the Amorites and not the Israelites, killing more of them than Israel had in battle. This incident recalls many of the plagues in Egypt. As part of God's miraculous help, we see the command; "Sun, stand thou still" (Hab. 3:11). In other words, the army had 24 hours of daylight to fight and rout the enemy. The integrity of God, which was demonstrated to Joshua in times of peace (1:30), was now demonstrated under terrible pressure.

Joshua 10:11 "And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, [and] were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: [they were] more which died with hailstones than [they] whom the children of Israel slew with the sword."

The hailstones were miraculous. Note their:

- (1) Source, God;
- (2) Size, large;
- (3) Slaughter, more by stones than by sword;
- (4) Selectivity, only on the enemy;
- (5) Swath, "as far as Azekah";
- (6) Situation, during a trek down a slope and while God caused the sun to stand still; and
- (7) Similarity to miraculous stones God will fling down during the future wrath (Rev. 16:21).

This is not a rockslide, but is speaking of giant hailstones that miraculously fall from heaven. Things like this Scripture let us know beyond a shadow of doubt that God is control of all the elements of the earth, and the heavens. God has killed the enemies of Israel here. It is interesting that more were killed of the enemy of these giant hailstones that God sent, than were killed in the

entire battle by Israel. It is also interesting that none of the Israelites were killed with the hailstones.

Verses 12-15: Clearly Israel's "long day", by which Joshua's forces were able to defeat the enemy fully, was something miraculous and an answer to prayer. Various scientific and literary explanations have been proposed, such as the slowing or stopping of the earth on its axis, the prolonging of daylight by a special refraction of the sun's ray, or the prolonging of darkness (e.g., by a solar eclipse or by the hailstorm), so the battle might be fought in the shade. But the best explanation is simply that the event was a miracle, just as the Bible presents it. Joshua's poetical exclamation and the report of the miraculous victory were preserved in the "book of Jasher", apparently, an early collection of poetic songs commemorating Israel's heroic deeds (compare 2 Sam. 1:18).

Another view has it as only language of observation; i.e., it only seemed to Joshua's men that the sun and moon stopped as God helped them do in one literal 24-hour day what would normally take longer. Others view it as lavish poetic description, not literal fact. However, such ideas fail to do justice to (10:12-14), and needlessly question God's power as creator. This is best accepted as an outright, monumental miracle. Joshua, moved by the Lord's will, commanded the sun to delay (Hebrews "be still, silent, leave off"). The earth actually stopped revolving or, more likely, the sun moved in the same way to keep perfect pace with the battlefield. The moon also ceased its orbiting. This permitted Joshua's troops time to finish the battle with complete victory (verse 11).

Joshua 10:12 "Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon."

In prayer, and entreated as follows, that the sun and moon might stand still, until the victory was complete.

"In the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel": The five kings of the Amorites, and their armies (Joshua 10:5).

"And he said, in the sight of Israel": In their presence, and in the hearing of great numbers, being under a divine impulse. And having strong faith in the working of the miracle, after related, and that it would be according to his word. He was bold to say what he did, being fully persuaded he should not be disappointed, and made ashamed.

"Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon": Notice the great faith of Joshua, and the power of God answering it by the miraculous staying of the sun, that the day of Israel's victories might be made longer.

We notice that Joshua spoke to the LORD in this. This is not some miraculous power that Joshua has, it is the power of the LORD speaking through Joshua. Notice he speaks to the sun and moon

as if that is their proper name. They have initial caps. The sun and the moon were created to be containers for the Light. The source of all Light is the LORD. Joshua is asking for the light to remain until he can finish this battle. Scientists have now discovered that there was possibly a time when this very thing did happen. The sun and moon stood still at the Word of God.

Verses 13-15: "Book of Jasher": Jasher means "upright". It may be the same as the book called Wars of the Lord (Num. 21:14). The Book of Jasher is mentioned again (in 2 Sam. 1:18), and a portion is recorded (in 1:19-27). The book appears to have been a compilation of Hebrew songs in honor of Israel's leaders and exploits in battle.

Joshua 10:13 "And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. [Is] not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day."

The sun that came out of his chamber like a bridegroom, and rejoiced as a strong man to run his course, stopped his course at once. And the moon that walks in her brightness proceeded not on, but both stood still.

"Until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies": I.e. till they had utterly destroyed them, as is mentioned in the following chapter.

"The book of Jasher": Either of a man so called, or of the righteous or upright, wherein possibly the memorable actions of worthy men were recorded, and this amongst the rest. And this book was written and published before Joshua wrote his, and so is fitly alleged here. But this, as well as some few other historical books, is lost, not being a canonical book, and therefore not preserved by the Jews with the same care as they were.

"So the sun stood still": That the sun and moon did really stand still, is affirmed (Hab. 3:11).

"About a whole day": I.e. for the space of a whole day. Understand an artificial day, between sun-rising and sun-setting. For that was the day which Joshua needed and desired, a day to give him light for his work.

Because (2 Sam. 1:18), refers to a lament (song of mourning), in the "Book of Jasher", scholars believe this book was a collection of historical accounts put to music. No parts of it have been found.

It is normal for the sun to shine about 12 hours, so this would be assumed that the sun shone for 24 hours on this particular occasion. The book of Jasher is mentioned again (in 2 Samuel).

2 Samuel 1:18 "(Also he bade them teach the children of Judah [the use of] the bow: behold, [it is] written in the book of Jasher.)"

These two witnesses show that there was a book of Jasher. My own personal knowledge of this book is limited. It would possibly be a book such as the Apocryphal books. The sun shining twice as long this day as any other in history would certainly be classed as one of the great miracles of God.

Joshua 10:14 "And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel."

Which must be understood as referring not to natural days, or such as are according to the natural course of things. As those in the northern and southern poles, which are much longer, but to miraculous and extraordinary ones. Never was there such a day as this, occasioned by the sun standing still. And as for Hezekiah's day, which is objected, when the sun went ten degrees backward on the dial of Ahaz, it is not certain whether those degrees were hours, or half hours, or quarters of an hour.

"That the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man": Expressed in prayer, and which prayer was a prayer of faith.

"For the Lord fought for Israel. By casting hailstones upon their enemies, and preserving them from them by the stopping the course of the sun, until they had taken full vengeance on them. The day on which this miracle was wrought, is conjectured to be Wednesday the eleventh of April, in the year before Christ 1454.

The LORD answered the prayer of Joshua and extended the light until the battle could be finished. This day is like no other in all of history.

Joshua 10:15 "And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal."

That is, he thought to have returned, had determined upon it, and prepared for it, but was prevented by hearing that the five kings had hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah. Which he ordered to be stopped up till the people had finished the pursuit of their enemies, when he destroyed Makkedah, and which led him on to the conquest of other places before he returned.

When the battle was won, Joshua returned to Gilgal with all Israel.

Joshua 10:16 "But these five kings fled, and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah."

They were not killed by hailstones, nor slain by the sword of the Israelites, but made their escape, being reserved by the providence of God for a more shameful end.

"And hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah": Not in the city of Makkedah, which as yet was not in the hands of Israel, whereas this cave was, as appears by what follows. But it was in some hill, or mountain, near it; in the border of it, as Kimchi expresses it.

Their armies were dead, so they fled to a cave in the mountains. Makkedah was in Palestine.

Joshua 10:17 "And it was told Joshua, saying, The five kings are found hid in a cave at Makkedah."

Either by some of his own people, or by some of the inhabitants of the land in his interest, who had observed it.

"Saying, the five kings are found hid in a cave at Makkedah": This seems to make it appear that they were others, and not Joshua's soldiers, that found them. For had they, no doubt they would have seized them, and brought them before him, or slain them, unless they chose first to know his will concerning them, next expressed.

It appears that some of Joshua's men had followed and knew where the kings were hiding.

Joshua 10:18 "And Joshua said, Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave, and set men by it for to keep them:" Joshua had them imprisoned by rolling great stones to the mouth of the cave. There would be no way out, unless someone from outside freed them.

To keep the kings in, that they might not make their escape, until he had convenient time to have them brought before him, and be treated by him as they deserved. And no doubt there were plenty of stones about the hill or mountain, in which this cave was, fit for this purpose.

"And set men by it for to keep them": As a guard upon them, to prevent their escape.

Joshua 10:19 "And stay ye not, [but] pursue after your enemies, and smite the hindmost of them; suffer them not to enter into their cities: for the LORD your God hath delivered them into your hand."

That is, do not stay at this cave, but having placed a sufficient guard there, go in pursuit of the enemy, with as much swiftness as possible.

"And smite the hindmost of them": Their rear; or "tail" them, as the word is, cut off the tail of them.

"Suffer them not to enter their cities": Where they would not only be safe themselves for a while, but would be able to hold out against a siege for some time, and give much trouble to conquer them.

"For the Lord your God hath delivered them into your hands": This he said to encourage them, and quicken them to the pursuit of them with all eagerness and vehemence. According to the Samaritan Chronicle, the signal or watchword was, "God is strong in battle, God is his name."

This had probably happened before Joshua went back to Gilgal. He was not going to allow them to get away. The troops followed them and killed them, until there were no more except for the handful that escaped. If they had made it to their cities, they might have been able to hide from the troops of Israel. They would not fail in destroying them, because it was the will of God for Israel to defeat them.

Joshua 10:20 "And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed, that the rest [which] remained of them entered into fenced cities."

Joshua seems to have pitched his camp at Makkedah, while the rest of his army pursued the fleeing Canaanites, and when he and they were at different places.

"Had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed": And not to be seen in any large bodies, but scattered here and there.

"That the rest which remained of them entered into fenced cities": To which they belonged, and which were afterwards taken, as related in the latter part of this chapter (Joshua 10:28).

There were very few that escaped. Those few fled to their walled cities and hid from Joshua and all Israel.

Joshua 10:21 "And all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace: none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel."

Sound and well, as not one killed or missing. So not one wounded, as the Vulgate Latin version, "sound and in full number:"

"None moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel": As to curse them, reproach them, and speak ill of them. For invading them, and using them in the manner they did, such was the terror that was upon them. It may be supplied, "not a dog moved" his tongue, as in (Exodus 11:7). As it was with them when they came out of Egypt, so it was when they entered the land of Canaan. It seems to be a proverbial expression, as Ben Gersom observes. Signifying that no harm was done to them by word or deed.

This is explaining that there was no murmuring for what happened. The fact that they returned to Makkedah, instead of Gilgal, shows this is relating what happened before Joshua returned to Gilgal.

Verses 22-24: A common practice in those days was for the victor to put his foot on the neck of a conquered king as a symbol of dominance over his captives. In the Israelites' triumph, all the nations could see that God was stronger than any earthly king (Isa. 26:5-6).

Joshua 10:22 "Then said Joshua, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings unto me out of the cave."

That is, roll away the great stones that were laid at the mouth of it.

"And bring out those five kings unto me out of the cave": To receive their sentence in a public manner. For the encouragement of his troops and the terror of the Canaanites, particularly Makkedah, now besieged by him.

The 5 Amorite kings were brought out of their prison cave and brought before Joshua for judgement.

Joshua 10:23 "And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, [and] the king of Eglon."

Opened the mouth "of" the cave, by rolling away the stones.

"And brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave": Who are next mentioned by name, one by one, according to their dignity, and in the order, they were brought unto him.

"The king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon. Who are particularly named for the greater glory of the conquest, and the triumph over them.

The names of the 5 kings are given again here, to show they are the same that started this war.

Joshua Chapter 10 Questions

1. Who was king in Jerusalem?
2. What had he heard about Joshua?
3. What had he heard about Gibeon?
4. "Adoni-zedek means what?
5. What does the meaning of his name indicate?
6. How did he describe Gibeon?
7. Why was he so angry at Gibeon?
8. Who did Adoni-zedek make a pact with?
9. What were some of the reasons the 5 evil kings wanted to come against Gibeon?
10. They were less afraid of Gibeon than they were of the _____ of Israel.
11. They were the 5 kings of the _____.

12. What have they forgotten about Gibeon?
13. When Gibeon saw them encamped around them, what did they do?
14. Why did Joshua come to help Gibeon?
15. What encouragement does the LORD give Joshua?
16. Where did they run for safety?
17. What were the stones, in verse 11, that God cast down on them?
18. What are some interesting things about those stones from God?
19. In verse 12 who does Joshua speak to?
20. Why were the sun and moon capitalized in verse 12?
21. How long did the sun shine that day?
22. Where is there another mention of the book of Jasher?
23. Where did the five kings hide?
24. How did Joshua find out where they were?
25. What did Joshua have his men to do to the cave?
26. Where did the few that were left of the Amorites go?
27. Who were the five kings?