

THE SUN AND THE MOON STAND STILL

[BIBLE TEXT](#) : Joshua 10:1-27

LESSON 175 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased" (Psalm 115:3).

[BIBLE TEXT in King James Version](#)

Joshua 10:1-27

¹ Now it came to pass, when Adonizedek 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;

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.

³ Wherefore Adonizedek 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,

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.

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.

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.

⁷ So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with

[BIBLE REFERENCES:](#)

I Five Against One

- 1 The news that Gibeon had made peace with Israel caused consternation to the Canaanites, Joshua 10:1-3
- 2 Five kings decided to war against Gibeon, Joshua 10:4, 5
- 3 The men of Gibeon sent to Joshua for help, Joshua 10:6;

Isaiah 33:22

²² For the Lord *is* our judge, the Lord *is* our lawgiver, the Lord *is* our king; he will save us.

II The God of Battles

- 1 Joshua went to Gibeon's rescue with God's promise of help, Joshua 10:7, 8;

Judges 4:14

¹⁴ And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this *is* the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.

Psalm 27:1-2

¹ The Lord *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
² When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

Romans 8:31

³¹ What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

- 2 Israel marched all night and successfully surprised the enemy, Joshua 10:9,10;

2 Timothy 2:3

³ Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 4:7

⁷ I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith:

- 3 God cast hailstones upon the enemy to complete the rout, Joshua 10:11;

Job 38:22-23

²² Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,
²³ Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?

Isaiah 30:30

³⁰ And the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of *his* anger, and *with* the flame of a devouring fire, *with* scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.

Revelation 16:21

²¹ And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, *every* stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

III The Longest Day in History

- 1 Joshua spoke to the Lord, then commanded the sun and moon to stand still, Joshua 10:12, 13;

Isaiah 38:8

⁸ Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was

him, and all the mighty men of valour.

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.

⁹ Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, *and* went up from Gilgal all night.

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 Bethhoron, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah.

¹¹ And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, *and* were in the going down to Bethhoron, 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.

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.

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 hasted not to go down about a whole day.

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.

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

¹⁶ But these five kings fled, and hid

gone down.

Habakkuk 3:11

¹¹ The sun *and* moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, *and* at the shining of thy glittering spear.

2 The Bible records that there .has never been another day like that day, Joshua 10:14

IV The Defeated Kings

1 The five kings, hiding in a cave, were found by Israel, Joshua 10:15-17;

Isaiah 2:10-12

¹⁰ Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty.

¹¹ The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.

¹² For the day of the Lord of hosts *shall be* upon every *one that is* proud and lofty, and upon every *one that is* lifted up; and he shall be brought low:

Isaiah 2:19-21

¹⁹ And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

²⁰ In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made *each one* for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats;

²¹ To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

Revelation 6:15-17

¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

¹⁶ And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

¹⁷ For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

2 Great stones were rolled against the cave and Israel pursued the enemy, Joshua 10:18, 19

3 The victory was complete for the Israelites, Joshua 10:20, 21;

Psalms 2:8-9

⁸ Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession.

⁹ Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

4 Joshua and the men of Israel returned to deal justice to the five kings, Joshua 10:22-27;

Psalms 18:40

⁴⁰ Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me.

Psalms 110:1

¹ The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Psalms 110:5

⁵ The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

Isaiah 26:5-6

⁵ For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, *even* to the ground; he bringeth it *even* to the dust.

⁶ The foot shall tread it down, *even* the feet of the poor, *and* the steps of the needy.

Romans 16:20

²⁰ And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you.

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

¹⁸ And Joshua said, Roll great
stones upon the mouth of the
cave, and set men by it for to keep
them:

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

²⁴ And it came to pass, when they
brought out those kings unto
Joshua, that Joshua called for all
the men of Israel, and said unto
the captains of the men of war
which went with him, Come near,
put your feet upon the necks of
these kings. And they came near,
and put their feet upon the necks
of them.

²⁵ 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.

Amen.

NOTES:

Consternation Among the Enemy

The league that the men of Gibeon had sought and secured from the Children of Israel had an alarming effect upon the remaining inhabitants of Canaan. Gibeon was a great city and the men of Gibeon were mighty men. The Canaanites had not only lost an important ally, but Israel had gained the army that Canaan lost. Another cause for concern to the Canaanitish kings was the fact that the city of Gibeon was so situated that it was literally the key to central Palestine.

The enemy kings reasoned that only one course lay open before them. Gibeon had to be conquered and its inhabitants slain because they had made peace with Israel. What an unexpected turn of events for the Gibeonites! They had obtained a league with Israel to save themselves alive; now they faced death from the very people who had once been their friends. People who turn to God will soon find that this world is no friend to grace; but that is no proof that a covenant with God is not of infinite value.

Waiting on God

The Gibeonites sent a message to Joshua, saying that the kings of the Amorites had gathered themselves together to battle against Gibeon. They desired that Israel would come to help them and save them out of the hands of their enemies.

Israel was still at their encampment at Gilgal, the same camp that had been first pitched when they crossed Jordan (Joshua 4:19). From this camp they had conducted the successful campaigns against Jericho and Ai.

One might wonder why Israel was not more aggressive in taking more of the land of Canaan at this time. There may have been some in the camp who could not understand the delay, but Joshua was following the Lord. Joshua had seen his Captain and heard Him speak those gracious words: "As captain of the host of the LORD am I now come" (Joshua 5:13, 14). He had purposed in his heart to follow that Captain and to do what He bade — nothing less or nothing more. That was Joshua's secret of success, and it is the only hope of success for the Christian today. Jesus is Captain of the Lord's hosts; and to have any degree of success in serving Him, we must be willing to follow where He leads, when He leads, and howsoever He leads. Jesus leads! He will never require His disciple to go anywhere that He Himself will not go.

"If God Be For Us"

About the time that Joshua heard the plight of the Gibeonites, the Lord said: "Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee" (Joshua 10:8). That was all the encouragement the Children of Israel needed. They launched immediately upon a military operation that has seldom been equaled to this day. They covered the distance from Gilgal to Gibeon (approximately 40 miles) in one night. The battle was put in array in the early morning hours and continued for a period of nearly 24 hours without stopping. How could Israel stand up under such a long strain? Isaiah tells us: "They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31). Israel had been waiting upon God, therefore they could claim the promise. Another promise that Israel could lean upon was: "As thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deuteronomy 33: 25). Here was a very unusual day, but Israel found that God granted the unusual strength

²⁶ And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening.

²⁷ And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun, *that* Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave's mouth, *which remain* until this very day.

to see that day through to the successful conclusion.

God's Arsenal

The battle did not progress very far until God began to discomfit the enemy before Israel. The enemy began to flee, with Israel in swift pursuit. It was then that God opened His arsenal in Heaven and cast hailstones upon the fleeing enemy. Never was a bombing raid more effective. Every hailstone found its mark and took its toll. Further proof that God directed this timely assault upon Israel's enemies is that not one Israelite was struck by a hailstone while the Canaanites suffered greater casualty from the hail than they did from Israel's army.

A Miraculous Intervention

In spite of the fact that God had put the enemy to rout before Israel and had sent the hailstones to destroy many of the Amorites, Joshua could see that there would never be time enough before night and darkness to complete satisfactorily the victory. Under cover of the darkness the enemy might be able to retreat into the fortified cities and there make a prolonged stand against Israel. Joshua went to the Lord in prayer about the matter. The result of that prayer was that God inspired Joshua to command the sun and moon to stand still, that the day might be prolonged beyond its usual length. "So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. 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" (Joshua 10:13,14).

Joshua's Success

Observe the success of Joshua in that memorable day. God had delivered the enemy into Israel's hand. Without doubt Joshua was a very busy general, directing the intricate movements of his army in hot pursuit of the enemy; yet Joshua found time to pray. It is not difficult to take time to pray when adversities are encountered, but how different when all is going well and a man thinks himself too busy to take the time to call upon God. What would have been the outcome had Joshua waited until darkness and night to seek God's counsel? There would have been no miraculous intervention, no lengthening of the day, and only a partial victory. It is lamentably true that too often God's soldiers gain only partial victories because they do not pray at the time the Spirit of God calls them to pray. Perhaps they are extremely busy at that moment, and they decide to wait until a more convenient time; but when they do get around to pray, the blessing is gone that God intended they should have. Take time to be holy!

That Long Day

God must have inspired Joshua to make that request for the sun and moon to stand still — to remain in their relative position to Gibeon for a longer period of time than was customary. Joshua would never have asked such a miraculous display on his own initiative or for his own glory; had he done so, the Lord would not have answered his prayer (**James 4:3** ³ *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts*). However, when God inspires a person to a work or gives a commission to duty, and that person goes forth in simple faith in God, the Lord will move mountains, cause the sun to stand still, or do whatever is necessary to see the completion of that work. The failure of a mission never lies with God; it can always be traced to the lack of faith or lack of obedience to God on the part of the human instrument.

Some people find it difficult to believe that God could cause

the sun to remain in the midst of heaven for an extra space of time. Men of science tell us that the world is so perfectly timed that it never varies the hundredth part of a second in its yearly journey around the sun. The daily rotation of the earth is kept on the same plane of accuracy by an unseen hand. How did the Lord stem all this natural law in order to bring about this miracle of the long day?

Only Believe

We may not be able to explain how God brought about the miracle; it is enough to believe that He did the miracle. A miracle is an event wrought by the immediate power of God, and is possible because God created all things, controls, and guides all things. The creation is subject to the Creator. It is, not hard for a child of God to believe that his heavenly Father is able to do anything. We can say, with Jeremiah: "Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee" (Jeremiah 32:17).

Another remarkable fact about this long day is that it left its record for all time. Students of astronomy have found that a period of 24 hours has been inexplicably lost out of time—unexplained, that is, without referring to the Bible. There the answer is supplied to the unprejudiced heart. Joshua tells us that the sun "hasted not to go down about a whole day." Turning to Isaiah, we read that the Lord brought the sun back ten degrees on the sundial of Ahaz as a sign to Hezekiah: "So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down" (Isaiah 38:8). These combined incidents will account for the total of 24 hours that the astronomer declares is missing out of time.

The Conqueror's Display

By the time the long day had ended, Israel had completely vanquished his foe. This proved to be the most important battle that Israel had to fight for possession of Canaan. Israel won the battle, "for the LORD fought for Israel."

When all Israel had returned to the camp at Makkedah, Joshua commanded that the five kings be brought forth out of the cave for judgment. An unusual thing took place. Joshua had all the captains of his army put their feet upon the necks of these kings. Thus were these kings, who thought they would be death unto Israel, brought unto death. Does not this act of Joshua, who is a type of Christ, show us the great mission of the Son of God to earth? "For he [Christ] must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Corinthians 15:25, 26).

QUESTIONS

- 1 Why were the kings of Canaan so worried when they heard that the Gibeonites had made peace with Israel?
- 2 What did these kings determine to do about this matter?
- 3 How did the Gibeonites react toward these proceedings?
- 4 Tell what the army of Israel did when they heard about the activity of the Amoritish kings.
- 5 Who helped Israel in this warfare with the heathen?
- 6 Name at least two ways in which this help was given.
- 7 Joshua prayed to God in the midst of the battle. Tell what happened as a result of that prayer.
- 8 Who won the battle? Why?
- 9 Tell what happened to the enemy kings.
- 10 What enemy will the Christian gain the victory over, through the promise of God?