

## **The Treaty with the Gibeonites**

**Joshua 9:16** And it happened at the end of three days, after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they were their neighbors who dwelt near them.

**Joshua 9:17** Then the children of Israel journeyed and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath Jearim. **:18** But the children of Israel did not attack them, because the rulers of the congregation had sworn to them by the Lord God of Israel. And all the congregation complained against the rulers. **:19** Then all the rulers said to all the congregation, “We have sworn to them by the Lord God of Israel; now therefore, we may not touch them.

**Joshua 9:20** This we will do to them: We will let them live, lest wrath be upon us because of the oath which we swore to them.” **:21** And the rulers said to them, “Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers for all the congregation, as the rulers had promised them.”

Although many contend that this oath was obtained by fraud and thus the Israelites could declare it ab initio, null and void, Israel chose not to break the league; for “the violation of an oath is a sin of the first magnitude, for it is a breach of the third commandment, a taking of God’s name in vain, which He will not hold guiltless.

As Leviticus 19:12 informs us, to commit perjury in the name of God is an act of profanity. From such awful considerations it follows that an oath is to be feared (Eccl 9:2), and that once made it is binding (Num 30:3), a solemn example of which is seen in the case of Jephthah (Jud 11:29–31)” (Pink, p. 256).

**Joshua 9:22** Then Joshua called for them, and he spoke to them, saying, “Why have you deceived us, saying, ‘We are very far from you,’ when you dwell near us?”

**Joshua 9:23** Now therefore, you are cursed, and none of you shall be freed from being slaves—woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God.” What are your thoughts?

**Joshua 9:24** So they answered Joshua and said, “Because your servants were clearly told that the Lord your God commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you; therefore we were very much afraid for our lives because of you, and have done this thing. **:25** And now, here we are, in your hands; do with us as it seems good and right to do to us.”

**Joshua 9:26** So he did to them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, so that they did not kill them. **:27** And that day Joshua made them woodcutters and water carriers for the congregation and for the altar of the Lord, in the place which He would choose, even to this day.

### **Joshua Commands the Sun to Stand Still**

**Joshua 10:1** Now it came to pass when Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai and had utterly destroyed it—as he had done to Jericho and its king, so he had done to Ai and its 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, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were mighty.

Adonizedek, king of Jerusalem, upon hearing of the destruction of Ai and Jericho, and the recently instituted peace between Gibeon and Israel, viewed the Gibeonite league as a dangerous trend in southern Canaan. He discerned that opposition against the Israelites was wearing down when such a great city as Gibeon, a royal City, one that was greater than Ai, established a league with Israel. Something had to be done.

**Joshua 10:3** Therefore Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon, saying, **:4** “Come up to me and help me, that we may attack Gibeon, for it has 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, and the king of Eglon, gathered together and went up, they and all their armies, and camped before Gibeon and made war against it.

The Jerusalemite king summoned other kings whose positions were threatened by Gibeon’s association with Israel.

As we might expect, Adonizedek stood at the head of this Amorite league. Next came Hebron, a city of great importance from a very early period (Gen 23:2; 35:27) and her king Hoham. Piram king of Jarmuth was also summoned. Jarmuth is also mentioned in chapter 15:35 and in Nehemiah 11:29. It has been identified with Yarmuk. Japhia, king of Lachish, a city in the Shephelah or lowlands of Judah, and Debir, king of Eglon, the modern Ajlan, not far from Lachish, were summoned.

Adonizedek does not propose to attack Israel directly, but to attack Gibeon and punish her for her league with Israel. What can we learn from this?

**Joshua 10:6 And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp at Gilgal, saying, “Do not forsake your servants; come up to us quickly, save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the mountains have gathered together against us.”**

**Joshua 10:7 So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor. :8 And the Lord said to Joshua, “Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you.”**

Once again Joshua heard those comforting words from the mouth of the Lord, “Do not fear them.” He had heard them before the victory at Jericho and before the successful ambush of Ai. They guaranteed triumph despite the size of the opposition.

**Joshua 10:9 Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, having marched all night from Gilgal. :10 So the Lord routed them before Israel, killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, chased them along the road that goes to Beth Horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah.**

Assured of victory by the Lord, Joshua engaged the enemy’s forces at Gibeon, causing them to flee.

**Joshua 10:11 And it happened, as they fled before Israel and were on the descent of Beth Horon, that the Lord cast down large hailstones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword.**

Two miracles occurred in the destruction of the enemy. First there was a tremendous hailstorm, which killed more men than the Israelites had slain. But note that they were discriminating hailstones—they killed only the enemies. What are you thoughts?

**Joshua 10:12 Then Joshua spoke 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 still over Gibeon; And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon.”**

**Joshua 10:13 So the sun stood still, And the moon stopped, Till the people had revenge Upon their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day.**

A favorite passage of biblical critics and scoffers, the theme is later found under almost the identical circumstances in Greek literature. Agamemnon prayed to Zeus not to let the sun go down before the Achaeans were victorious (Iliad, II, 412ff). No single explanation of this phenomenon is entirely satisfactory. Better than a natural explanation is what may be learned from the passage.

To be noted here are Joshua’s intrepid faith in God in the midst of an impossible situation and Jehovah’s complete and utter providence over His creation.

“Here, as in many other passages, we are taught that the Lord God has a superintendence over all the creatures of His hand. He sends forth His imperious commands not only unto angels and men (Dan 4:34), but to the birds of the air (1 Kgs 17:4) and to the wild beasts (Dan 6:22), yes, to inanimate things ... The host of heaven, as well as the inhabitants of the earth, are entirely at His disposal. The whole source of nature moves or stands still at the mere will of its Maker” (Pink, p. 282). What are you thoughts?

The book of Jasher is believed by many to be “the book of the wars of the Lord” mentioned in Numbers 21:14. It is also referred to in 2 Samuel 1:18 and apparently was a national epic recording the warlike exploits and notable battles of the Israelites. Joshua’s reference to its historicity, coupled with the fact that it recorded the event of the sun standing still during Joshua’s lifetime, enhance the validity of this great miracle.

**Joshua 10:14 And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the Lord heeded the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel. :15 Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.** Do you believe that God would answer a prayer like this for us?