

No Day Like It Before or After
Joshua 10
Revelation 6:12-17 & 2 Peter 3:7-13

In our CG last week, we discussed the difficulty Christians face in explaining the slaughter of the Canaanites. Many unbelievers point to it as a prime reason not to believe that God exists; at least the God of the Bible. They say, "If God was truly good, he would never command such a horrific thing."

But a closer examination of Joshua reveals that when Israel entered the Promised Land,

- a) all the inhabitants of the land knew that God was the true God.

Rahab and the Gibeonites provide examples of this.

- b) They also knew that God had given the land to Israel.

In spite of what God had done in Egypt and in the wilderness and in spite of what they knew God had promised to do, the inhabitants of Canaan continued to reject God and choose death over life.

Every Gentile who turned to God was saved during Joshua's campaigns in Canaan.
In all the Bible, no repentant Gentile ever died under God's wrath.

The judgement Canaan faced was not Joshua's but God's. Their disbelief condemned them to death. In this way, Israel's conquest of the Promised Land serves as a model for God's future work, not just in Canaan but throughout the world. One day, it won't just be Canaan that is judged but the whole earth.

CH 9:1-2 When the Canaanite tribes saw Ai defeat Israel, it encouraged five of the tribes to band together and form the *Canaanite Military Defense Alliance* (CMDA) or *Canaanites Against Israel* (CAI).

CH 9:3-27 = Gibeonite/Israeli covenant

Note: Just like Rahab, the Gibeonites lied to get into Israel. God forgave their action and accepted their heart's passion to be aligned with him.

First: The Response of Other Kings. 1-5

1 -2 - Gibeon's defection depleted the Canaanite cause of warriors. It also discouraged the other nations.

3-5 - In response, the five kings decided to attack Gibeon. Would Israel's God fight for them? Would Israel keep their covenant with Gibeon at the cost of Hebrew lives?

Second: Israel's Response. 6-10

All of Canaan is watching this play out. The Israelites have been prevented by Joshua from killing the Gibeonites because of this mutual defense treaty. Will the Israelites fight for their new servants, the Gibeonites? The five kings in coalition have brought a very strong army into battle. Is Joshua up to the challenge? Will the Israelites fight against such a formidable force, or will they run like they did at Ai? Meanwhile, the Gibeonites must be asking themselves, "did we do

the right thing in making a treaty with Israel and YHWH?" Yes, everyone in Canaan was watching.

Joshua honors the covenant he made with Gibeon.

More, God honors the covenant and encourages Joshua.

9 - Joshua employs an all-night march to arrive on the scene in time.

10 – a) Joshua's all-night march surprised the Canaanites but it was God who threw the nations into panic.

11 - b) It was also God who hurled hailstones at the retreating army who fled as far as 20 miles from the battle scene.

Third: God's Intervention. 12-14

- a) Jasher is an extra-biblical writing that both believers and nonbelievers evidently referred to and this is why Joshua appealed to it.*
- b) Joshua prayed for a dramatic sign and God granted it.

I have a friend who converted from Christianity to atheism because of Bible passages like this. Now, you and I both know he was never a Christian. But he was a youth pastor and a very sincere young person. But he couldn't understand how, if the sun stood still, which really means that the world stopped rotating around the sun, gravity didn't cease to function.

I honestly don't know how God did it either. But the God who created the world and established natural laws is perfectly capable of compensating for any collateral complications. We may not have a scientific explanation of *how* God performed this miracle, but He did.

Interestingly, Israel's enemies worshiped the sun and moon. The arrest of the motion of heavenly bodies and the extended period of light to help Israel clearly affirmed the Lord God as the true God. The Amorites' own gods were powerless to aid their cause as the God of Israel moved heaven and earth to grant His people the victory.

One more important thing: God created light before he created the sun – Gen 1:3 & 1:14-18. In heaven, the sun will exist but will not be needed for light and there will be no night - Rev 22:5 – but there will still be seasons (22:2). If God can create light without the sun and eternal seasons without days and nights as we now understand it, God can create one day when the sun stands still. He doesn't need it for gravitation. Joshua's 'sun standing still' is only one very small part of who God is and what he is doing, only one day among eternal days.

But...don't get lost in the passage whose point he point is this: At the end of that day—and a long day that it was—it was clear to all the watching Canaanites that God was fighting on the side of Israel. Joshua asked for a sign and God responded by making it clear that he is LORD of the heavens and earth and that "*the Lord fought for Israel*" (Joshua 10:14).

Fourth: The Defeat of the Five Kings. 15-28

16-17 - After Israel's defeat of the enemy coalition, the kings went into hiding.

20-21 – Israel's victory was so stunning that no one even dared speak against the nation.

Warfare during this period of time was a brutal business. A defeated army is to be wiped out, there was no such thing as surrender. Any survivors were humiliated and then enslaved.

22-27 – Notice how the kings are put to death and then removed from sight.

Psalm 1:6 - the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

It's not just that the wicked will perish, even their way will perish. It's like the wake of a ship disappearing in the sea. Even the 'way' of the wicked will perish.

Application:

The brutality of the Israelite conquest of Canaan is troublesome, even for Christians, but in reality, this is God's gracious warning to us, pointing us ahead to another conquest yet to come.

The real point is that God keeps his promises and nothing can keep him from the ultimate victory he has promised. He cannot lie.

Titus 1:1-3 - Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, ² in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began¹ ³ and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior...

Even though God promised salvation back in Gen 3:15 and people had to hope for at least four thousand years, Jesus appeared. God has also promised to judge the world. It may take time but it will happen. No one should misinterpret the time it takes as a delay.

One day the greater Joshua will cross the eastern sky and step onto this earth once more.

a) Unbelievers

T - Revelation 6:12-17 - When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, ¹² and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. ¹³ The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.¹⁴ Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave¹⁵ and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

b) Believers

T - 2 Peter 3:7-13 - But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. ⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord **will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works**

*that are done on it will be exposed. " Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, " waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! " But according to his promise **we are waiting** for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

Conclusion:

The good news is that every person who repents of sin and places faith in Jesus Christ is regarded by God as perfectly obedient and without sin. This grants us heaven instead of hell, salvation instead of judgement and life instead of death.

Community Groups:

- 1 – Have you ever met anyone for whom God’s destruction of Canaan proved to be a stumbling block to faith?
- 2 – Why might such a concept be a stumbling block?
- 3 – How would you explain it?
- 4 – How does the 7-day siege of Jericho demonstrate God’s patience with unbelievers and the opportunity for people to repent?
- 5 - Is there any record of any destroyed person or tribe attempting to join Israel or trust God?
- 6 – What does that say to you and how might you use that to help your unbelieving friend?
- 7 – Why did Joshua and Israel go to Gibeon’s aid?
- 8 – What does this say about God’s covenant keeping character?
- 9 – How would you defend the sun standing still to an unbelieving friend?
- 10 – How does defeating the 5 kings and sealing them in a cave point to God’s ultimate judgement on the earth?
- 11 – How might you turn the conversation with your friend from what God did in Canaan to what God is going to do in the future?
- 12 – How does God’s judgement of Isreal’s enemies bring comfort and hope to Christians?
- 13 – Take time to pray for unbelieving *FRAN*’s; friends, relatives, associates, neighbors.

*** A word about the book of Jasher.**

Also known as the “Book of the Upright One” in the Greek Septuagint and the “Book of the Just Ones” in the Latin Vulgate, the Book of Jasher was probably a collection or compilation of ancient Hebrew songs and poems praising the heroes of Israel and their exploits in battle. The Book of Jasher is mentioned in Joshua 10:12-13 when the Lord stopped the sun in the middle of the day during the battle of Beth Horon. It is also mentioned in 2 Samuel 1:18-27 as containing the Song or Lament of the Bow, that mournful funeral song which David composed at the time of the death of Saul and Jonathan.

The question is, if the Book of Jasher is mentioned in the Bible, why was it left out of the canon of Scripture? We know that God directed the authors of the Scriptures to use passages from many and various extra-biblical sources in composing His Word. The passage recorded in Joshua 10:13 is a good example. In recording this battle, Joshua included passages from the Book of Jasher to state, in effect, “*There is another source for this incredible story. If you don’t believe what I’m saying, then go read it in the Book of Jasher. Even that book has a record of this fantastic event.*”

***A word about the sun standing still**

The best explanation seems to be the view that in answer to Joshua’s prayer God caused the rotation of the earth to slow down so that it made one full rotation in 48 hours rather than in 24. It seems apparent that this view is supported by both the poem in verses 12b-13a and the prose in verse 13b (Donald K. Campbell, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, John Walvoord and Roy Zuck. eds., Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1985, p. 351).

God caused the rotation of the earth to slow down. The earth, therefore, made one full rotation around the sun in a longer period of time. This fits with verse 13 which says, "The sun . . . delayed going down about a full day." Thus the sun was abnormally slow in getting to sunset, giving Joshua and his soldiers sufficient time to complete their victorious battle.

***What happened to the Gibeonites?**

You may ask what happened to the Gibeonites? Some think their descendants are the people known today as Falashas, meaning *migrants*, who fled from Palestine to Ethiopia when Israel was expelled from Palestine. According to one legend, they travelled there after learning that the Ark of the Covenant had been moved from Jerusalem to Ethiopia around 70 A.D when Titus and the 12th Roman legion destroyed Jerusalem. A small Jewish community still exists in the northwest of Ethiopia.

For an interesting article see <https://www.timesofisrael.com/how-a-village-left-behind-by-jews-in-ethiopia-became-a-top-tourist-draw/>

One final wonderful note about the Gibeonites: After the Ark was captured by the Philistines, King Saul moved the Tabernacle to Nob, near his home town of Gibeah, but after he massacred the priests there (1 Samuel 21-22), it was temporarily moved to Gibeon. (1 Chronicles 16:39; 21:29; 2 Chronicles 1:2-6, 13). Just prior to David's moving the ark to Jerusalem, the ark was located in Kiriath-Jearim (1 Chronicles 13:5-6). David moved the Tabernacle to Kiriath-Jearim to house the ark. The Tabernacle remained there until Solomon built the Temple. What a privilege the Gibeonites enjoyed having the Tabernacle of God in their city. Thank God for his grace to Gentiles!