

Joshua 10:1-43

The Gibeonites in Peril

Joshua 10:1-2 - "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; 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."

Adonizedek = *Adonai Tzedek*, "Lord of Righteousness" or "my lord is righteous." Similar name to Melchizedek (King of Righteousness - See **Genesis 14:18** and **Hebrews 7:1**.) Melchizedek was described as "priest of the most high God" and brought wine and bread for Abraham. In fact Abraham tithed to him. We have speculated that Melchizedek was possibly a pre-incarnation appearance of Christ.

The Canaanite/Jebusite kings retained *tzedeck* (righteousness) in their names, perhaps because of the influence of the story of this illustrious ancestor Melchizedek.

But Adonizedek had none of the attributes of Melchizedek, and "the Most High God" had long been forgotten. Like all Canaanites he trusted in his own "righteousness," of which he was "lord." And like the leaders of the Jewish nation in Jerusalem centuries later, he did not recognize the true Lord of Righteousness or his people.

Salem = Jerusalem.

Jerusalem = *Jarash* (possess) *shalom* (peace). Or possibly from *Jebus*, for the Jebusites.

Despite a victory over Adonizedek in this chapter, we discover later that Joshua was not successful in driving out the Jebusites:

- **Joshua 15:63** - "But the descendants of Judah could not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem. So to this day the Jebusites live there among the descendants of Judah."

(see also **Judges 1:21**)

Eventually, the tribe of Judah was able to capture the lower part of the city:

- **Judges 1:8** - "Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it, and smitten it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire."

But the upper part of the city lay in land allotted to Benjamin. In fact the future site of the Temple was split between the territories of Benjamin and Judah.

- **Judges 1:21** - "And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day."

The upper city was not conquered until the time of David:

- **2 Samuel 5:6-7** - "Now the king and his men marched to Jerusalem against the Jebusites who inhabited the land. The Jebusites said to David: "You will never get in here. Even the blind and lame can repel you." For they thought, "David cannot get in here." Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion (that is, the City of David)"

Gibeon "as one of the royal cities" - either under the control of King Adonizedek of Jerusalem, or this refers to later times: Gibeon was afterwards the city of the first king of Israel, Saul (**1 Chronicles 8:29-30; 1 Chronicles 8:33**). Or, it was "as" one of the royal cities in size and importance, but not actually one of them.

No king of Gibeon is recorded, so some speculate it may have functioned as a sort of republic, governed aristocratically by tribal elders. **Joshua 9:3-4** says only that "the people" of Gibeon sent out envoys. Joshua summons "the Gibeonites," with no leaders or king named (**Joshua 9:22**).

Confederacy of the Five Kings

Joshua 10:3-5 - "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, 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. 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 Gibeonites were facing persecution for their choice to follow God. The most powerful forces in their world were in agreement to destroy them. But although they hadn't even had a chance to prove their loyalty, or deserve protection, the test came.

- **1 John 3:13** - "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you."

- **Luke 21:16-19** - "And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls."

Note that some will be put to death, "But there shall not an hair of your head perish."

A paradox, explaining that even death cannot harm us spiritually. Our soul survives. It will awaken as our body is resurrected to new life and then transformed to become a spiritual body.

This is a test for every believer:

- **Matthew 13:20-21** - "But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended."

The five kings mentioned can be said to represent the five senses, which agree and conspire to argue against the supernatural power of God in our lives. Worshipping an invisible God, with no idol to touch, without tangible evidence or powerful feelings to move us, we are left only with faith.

And as we discussed already, this agreement mirrored the later friendship of King Herod and Pontius Pilate against Jesus (**Luke 23:12**).

The Covenant with Gibeon Tested

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."

Compare this request with the prayer of the first century church, after Peter and John were threatened by the leaders in Jerusalem:

- **Acts 4:24-30** - "And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus."

This time Joshua consulted with God, and received an answer:

Joshua 7-8 - "So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor. 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."

"Fear them not" has been a refrain of Joshua's since the scouting of the land in **Numbers 14**:

- **Numbers 14:9** - "Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defense is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not."

Against the "five senses" God addresses the unseen and unknowable future with faith. Despite all lack of evidence, God says "I have delivered them into thine hand."

Victory Over the Five Kings

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

Joshua came by night, for secrecy and surprise. But it was no doubt a very long night for the Gibeonites, surrounded and faced with an insurmountable force.

Miraculous Help from Heaven - Hailstones

At this important juncture in the conquest, God repeats some of the actions he took against Egypt (**Exodus 9:19, Revelation 16:21**) and repeats later in the great fight of Barak against Sisera (**Judges 5:20**)

Joshua 10:11 - "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."

Time Stands Still

Joshua 10:12-14 - "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. 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. 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."

Apparently Joshua was afraid that if daylight faded he would not be able to complete the victory. The rabbis interpret this more as a song by Joshua rather than a prayer, as he is captured by a divine impulse and filled with faith to command such an impossible breach of natural laws.

The phrase "hasted not to go down about a whole day" could be translated "hasted not to go down as a perfect day." So the length of the extended time is uncertain.

The phrase in Hebrew is said to merely denote a slower motion on the part of the sun, according to many of the Rabbis, not a full stop

Jewish and Christian commentators have multiple explanations for what happened. From the traditional translation, it appears that the positions of the sun and moon were frozen, either for a short time, or for 12 or even up to 24 hours.

The literal interpretation would mean the earth stopped its rotation for that length of time, which would cause untold consequences for life as we know it on our planet.

[In the late 1960s what we would now call a fake news "meme" circulated about a NASA computer finding evidence of Joshua's "lost day." That was completely false.]

But science and physics now tell us that the "arrow of time" is one aspect of reality that is so far unexplainable. There's no fundamental law of nature that prevents us from un-breaking eggs, for instance, yet it never happens. Scientists are even asking questions like, "Is the present moment physically distinct from the past and future, or is it merely an emergent property of consciousness?" Einstein tried to merge it with space with his term "space-time." All theories have so far been unsatisfactory.

Since the very nature of time is unresolved, it's easy to contemplate God miraculously creating a time anomaly, a localized temporal breach that would allow a battle to continue within it, but which would look to the participants as if the sun and moon were not moving. This would not involve stopping earth's rotation or the disastrous effects on the solar system.

Of course this could also be figurative language.

Compare **Judges 5:20**, of the stars "fighting (not in but out of) their courses against Sisera;" in **Isaiah 34:3**; **Amos 9:13**; **Micah 1:4**, of the melting down of the mountains; in **Isaiah 64:1**, of the rending of the heavens; in **Psalms 29:6**, of the skipping of Lebanon; in **Isaiah 55:12**, of the clapping of hands by the trees in the field; in **Psalms 18:9**, of the bowing of the heavens.

- **Isaiah 30:26** - "Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day when the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."

Another explanation: God did not permit the sun to go down till Israel had avenged itself upon its enemies. The day seemed to Joshua and all Israel to be miraculously prolonged; because the work accomplished on that day was so great, that it would have required almost two days to accomplish it without supernatural aid.

- *Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*

Book of Jasher

"Is not this written in the book of Jasher?" - What is the Book of Jasher? Nobody really

knows.

The Jews are divided; some say it is the book of Genesis, others the book of Deuteronomy, others the book of Judges; the Targum interprets it of the book of the law. Some see it as referring to **Genesis 48:19** - Joseph's "seed shall fill the nations." Because Joshua is descended from Joseph, it must be prophesying about his fame for this miraculous deed.

See **Job 9:7** - God... who "shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble, which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, and sealeth up the stars." This either refers to, or prophecies, this miracle. Josephus interprets The Book of Jasher as "the Books laid up in the temple" or the Temple archives. So perhaps the book was lost at the destruction of the Temple.

It is alluded to in **2 Samuel 1:18**. It was in all probability a collection, rhythmical in form and poetical in diction, of various pieces celebrating the heroes of the Hebrew nation and their achievements. "Jasher" means "upright" so it could be "the Book of the Upright" or "the Book of the Righteous." Jasher is nearly equivalent to "Jeshurun" in **Deuteronomy 32:15**, a name for Israel.

Slaying of the Five Kings

Joshua 10:16 - "And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal. But these five kings fled, and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah."

Hiding in the cave of Makkedah = "place of shepherds," from a root meaning "to mark by puncturing or branding."

Joshua in effect acts out the mercy by which God spared the Amorites, whose sin was not yet full, until the time of the Exodus. They are allowed to live, but remain blocked from escape, awaiting the judgment.

- **Genesis 15:16** - "But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full."

Not wanting to slow down pursuit of the rest of the enemy forces, Joshua tells those who found the five kings to roll a stone and block the cave.

After completing the victory:

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."

This recalls the statement as Israel was leaving Egypt that "not a dog moved" his tongue, as in **Exodus 11:7**.

Treading on Their Necks

Joshua had the five kings brought out of the cave and performed a symbolic act.

Joshua 10:24 - "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."

This was an ancient practice to show the subservience of the defeated leader. For instance, the Assyrian king Tukulti-Ninurta boasted, "I trod with my feet upon his lordly neck as though it were a footstool." As discussed before, this goes back to the prophecy in **Genesis 3:15** of the Deliverer who would tread on the head of the serpent.

Joshua had his commanders and captains participate to show that all of them had a hand in the victory, not just Joshua alone - despite his boldness before God in the miracle of the long day.

This is another foreshadowing of Paul's statement, "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (**Romans 16:20**) i.e. God gets the victory, but we participate.

- **Psalm 91:13** - "You will tread on the lion and the adder; the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot."

- **Psalm 110:1** - "The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."

- **1 Corinthians 15:25** - "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."

Fear Not!

Joshua 10:25 - "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."

God had told Joshua this before the battle. Now Joshua tells Israel, in light of the victory, the same thing.

Enemies Hanged on a Tree (Again)

Joshua 10:26-27 - "And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening. 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."

Again, the picture of the crucified Christ taking the curse (**Deuteronomy 21:23**, **Galatians 3:10**) upon himself is displayed, along with Jesus/Joshua in victory over enemies.

The "five senses" (see below) in effect are put to death and buried, like the old man Adam, never to rise or challenge faith again.

But this story also has a new facet - a cave, where great stones block the entrance and which "remain until this very day." This is in contrast to the tomb of the crucified Jesus, whose empty tomb and opened entrance proclaimed a resurrected Christ.

The remaining verses - **Joshua 10:29-43** - A list more cities defeated by Joshua and his warriors - Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir. This finished the conquest of the southern part of the land.

Remember - The record of Israel's conquest of the Promised Land is written for us a metaphor for Christ's spiritual conquest of us - our "land," our inner landscape - dispossessing idolatry and self-seeking and taking dominion. The first Christians understood it this way.

Origen's Interpretation

Origen, the early church father, also saw these five kings as worldly temptations and threats to a new believer, who he saw represented by the Gibeonites. Commenting on Joshua's defeat of the five kings, Origen wrote:

"Would that the Lord might thus cast out and extinguish all former evils from the souls who believe in him — even those he claims for his kingdom — and from my own soul, its own evils; so that nothing of a malicious inclination may continue to breathe in me, nothing of wrath; so that no disposition of desire for any evil may be preserved in me, and no wicked word 'may remain to escape' (**Joshua 8:22**) from my mouth. For thus, purged from all former evils and under the leadership of Jesus, I can be included among the cities of the sons of Israel.

"Even now my Lord Jesus Christ wars against opposing powers and casts out of their cities, that is, out of our souls, those who used to occupy them. And he destroys the kings who were ruling in our souls, "that sin may no longer reign in us," (**Romans 6:12**) so that, after he abolishes the king of sin from the city of our soul, our soul may become the city of God and God may reign in it."

The Woman at the Well and the Five Senses

The situation of the Gibeonites and the Five Kings might also be seen in the New Testament story of the Samaritan woman.

Early Christianity saw her as representing the soul, and the "five husbands" as the five senses (a concept first proposed in Aristotle's *De Anima*, Book II, ch. 7-11 - These five chapters being respectively devoted to sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch). Her living

currently with a man who was not her husband suggested to some a growing “thirst” or interest *beyond* the senses - philosophy or some other still illegitimate occult practices - to try to satisfy the thirst that Jesus addresses.

From *Inner Christianity* by Richard Smoley

<https://hsm.stackexchange.com/questions/5978/whats-the-origin-of-the-concept-of-the-five-senses>

External and Internal Senses

C. S. Lewis adds that by the Middle Ages, the five outward senses were paired with five inward means of perception, or “wits” - common sense, imagination, fantasy, “estimation” (meaning either judgement or instinct) and memory.

Rabbinical authorities agreed. They saw the five senses reflected in the five gates of the Temple. The quorum of ten (the Minyan), which is required for the holding of public worship, is, according to Abraham ben Shalom, a symbol of the five internal and the five external senses. Each of the five priestly prohibitions (**Leviticus 21:16-21**) corresponds, according to Solomon ha-Levi, to one of the five senses.

The Lampstand

The five elements on each branch of the Golden Lampstand in the Temple represent the five senses in their unsullied condition, cleansed of sin.

- **Exodus 25:33** - “Three bowls shall be made like almond blossoms on one branch, with an ornamental knob and a flower”

According to Levi ben Gershon (1288 – 1344), on each branch of the Lampstand, the three bowls represent the three coarser senses; the knob, the sense of hearing; the flower, that of sight.

This means the human senses were meant to receive, understand and then reflect the light of the glory of God. (In fact, only the Messiah would do this perfectly).

The Deception of Eve

But the five senses were involved in the deception of Eve by the serpent: first in listening to the lie of the serpent, and then the lust of the eyes in searching out the fruit, and finally touch, taste and presumably smell as the fruit is eaten.

- **Genesis 3:6** - “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”

The 'Five Holy Wounds'

The defeat of the five kings (and atonement for the misuse of the five senses) can be seen reflected in the five wounds of Christ.

During the Middle Ages, Christians began writing about the Five Holy Wounds, the five piercing wounds Jesus Christ suffered during the crucifixion in his hands/wrists, feet and side. (The five inner senses might also be represented by the crown of thorns around his head). In this picture, all the human senses are crucified with Him. Christ's shed blood rights the wrongs that have been done through humanity's sinful use of the senses since Adam and Eve.

Mysteriously, the wounds remained on Christ's body even after His resurrection. That is why if we find we have been wounded through being spiritually deceived by our senses of perception, we can turn to Jesus - his wounds remind us of divine healing and atonement.

Summary

Although beautiful and wondrous if used in their proper function, all of our inner and outer human senses can be avenues of deception and danger to faith and a believer's soul, which is what the Five Kings can be seen to represent in this chapter.

That's why the five kings must be hanged on a tree and then buried by Joshua/Jesus.