

Joshua 10:12-21

This is a remarkable chapter. It includes a prototype of God's final victory over Satan and his allies, a miraculous extension of what has been called "Joshua's Long Day" and a reference to this week's description of the rules of holy war in **Deuteronomy 2 and 3**.

Although the haftarah reading is from verses 12 to 21 we should look at the whole chapter as well as the previous chapter.

The inhabitants of Gibeon - a Canaanite city north of Jerusalem - were Hivites. Hearing of Israel's victories at Jericho and Ai, they essentially tricked Israel by sending ambassadors portraying themselves as a distant kingdom outside of the Promised Land that wanted to make a treaty with Israel. Joshua "asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD" but made a rash vow of peace with them, the Gibeonites promising to be subject to Israel. Thus they were spared from the harsh doom on the Canaanites described in **Deuteronomy 2:34-35** and commanded in **Deuteronomy 20:10-18**.

This trick is in the tradition of Jacob tricking Isaac by posing as Esau. Jacob became Israel, and likewise the Gibeonites were absorbed into Israel as servants - woodcutters and drawers of water in the Temple.

Battle with the Five Kings

Five kings of Canaan gathered to attack Gibeon for breaking ranks and making peace with Israel.

Adonizedek ("lord of righteousness") king of Jerusalem carried a similar name as Melchizedek king of Salem who met Abraham in Genesis 14. Since Melchizedek was a mysterious figure who prefigured Christ, this Adonizedek is an antitype - sort of an antichrist figure opposing Israel, who calls together the other kings for battle against Gibeon.

(See **Psalms 110:1** - "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (as interpreted in **Hebrews 7:21-22**).

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."

Joshua and his army marched to Gibeon and attacked the five kings, causing a rout.

Hailstones

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."

Hail mixed with fire was one of the plagues on Egypt (**Exodus 9:13-35**).

The 'Long Day' or the 'Lost Day' of Joshua

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."

With the Egyptians, the sun was blotted out by a thick darkness. Here, both sun and moon seemed to be halted in their revolutions to allow for Israel to completely eradicate their enemies.

The rabbis interpreted this as God stopping the sun and moon (or the earth) in its orbit.

Rashi - This matter is written in the Torah [i.e., the Pentateuch] that Jacob said to Joseph, "His seed [of Ephraim] will fill the nations." When? On the day that the sun stood still for Joshua, the entire world was filled with Joshua's fame, and the sun stood still in the midst of the heaven, and it did not hasten to go down exactly a whole day."

Stories about science proving the biblical account of God halting the sun and moon have appeared since the 1890s, but without any proof. Some are still floating around the internet. In the 1970s it was updated to credit NASA with upholding Joshua's account through its computer calculations, but all these stories are spurious. (see <http://apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=11&article=1090>)

More to the point is that science does not know what time really is - i.e. its fundamental nature - despite breakthroughs in quantum mechanics. Physics says the "arrow of time" should work forwards or backwards, but it always seems to go forward.

God could miraculously create a bubble around the battle area that allowed time to be accelerated within it while the orbits of sun and moon and earth and the earth's rotation continued without interruption, unnoticed by the rest of the world. That would be the least messy way of explaining this.

The Sundial of Ahaz (2 Kings 20:8-11)

A similar miracle seems to be related when Hezekiah asks Isaiah for a sign from God:

- **2 Kings 20:8-11** - "This shall be the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do

the thing that he has promised: shall the shadow go forward ten steps, or go back ten steps?" And Hezekiah answered, "It is an easy thing for the shadow to lengthen ten steps. Rather let the shadow go back ten steps." And Isaiah the prophet called to the LORD, and he brought the shadow back ten steps, by which it had gone down on the steps of Ahaz.

The word for "steps" is the same word as "degrees" Some interpreters say Isaiah simply poured water into Ahaz's sundial, which caused the shadow to be refracted and seem to retreat. Alternately, another bright object like a meteor entered the sky, with its new source of light momentarily pushing the shadow back.

God's Final Victory

The main thing to notice here is that this battle with the five kings is a prefiguring of God's defeat of his enemies in the Book of Revelation, where there is also a disruption of nature - the earth quakes, the sun goes black, the moon turns red, and the stars fall from the heavens.

These Canaanites, like the Egyptians, worshipped gods who represented the natural world - thunder and rain, the sun and moon and the heavenly bodies, etc. It must have seemed that their own gods had turned against them.

Compare a similar statement in the Song of Deborah:

- **Judges 5:19-20** - "The kings came and fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; they took no gain of money. They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera."

The five kings themselves hid in a cave after their defeat

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

Compare the reaction of God's enemies on the last day:

- **Revelation 6:15-16** - "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; 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: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

The five kings could represent the five senses that our old identity uses to oppose faith. If so, then their ultimate fate is crucifixion:

First the captains of Joshua's army put their feet on the necks of the kings:

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 ritual of Ancient Near East warfare used to display total submission of the enemy, also comports with **Genesis 3:15** - "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Then the kings were killed by Joshua (Jesus - *Yeheshua*) and hung them on a tree (*talah* = to suspend or impale on a stake, to crucify)

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

Jesus put our old man on the cross. All of Adam died on the cross:

- **Galatians 3:13** - "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

- **Romans 6:6** - "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

Joshua 10:27 - "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."

The difference is that when Christ was resurrected, the stone was rolled away. In contrast, Adam stays dead like the five kings in their cave; a new creation comes forth instead.

- **Galatians 2:20** - "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."