

THE SUN STANDS STILL FOR JOSHUA**Numbers 25**

¹ Now Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had taken Ai and totally destroyed it, doing to Ai and its king as he had done to Jericho and its king, and that the people of Gibeon had made a treaty of peace with Israel and were living near them. ² He and his people were very much alarmed at this, because Gibeon was an important city, like one of the royal cities; it was larger than Ai, and all its men were good fighters. ³ So Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem appealed to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish and Debir king of Eglon. ⁴ “Come up and help me attack Gibeon,” he said, “because it has made peace with Joshua and the Israelites.”

⁵ Then the five kings of the Amorites—the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon—joined forces. They moved up with all their troops and took up positions against Gibeon and attacked it.

⁶ The Gibeonites then sent word to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal: “Do not abandon your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us! Help us, because all the Amorite kings from the hill country have joined forces against us.”

⁷ So Joshua marched up from Gilgal with his entire army, including all the best fighting men. ⁸ The LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid of them; I have given them into your hand. Not one of them will be able to withstand you.”

⁹ After an all-night march from Gilgal, Joshua took them by surprise. ¹⁰ The LORD threw them into confusion before Israel, who defeated them in a great victory at Gibeon. Israel pursued them along the road going up to Beth Horon and cut them down all the way to Azekah and Makkedah. ¹¹ As they fled before Israel on the road down from Beth Horon to Azekah, the LORD hurled large hailstones down on them from the sky, and more of them died from the hailstones than were killed by the swords of the Israelites.

¹² On the day the LORD gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the LORD in the presence of Israel:

“O sun, stand still over Gibeon,
O moon, over the Valley of Aijalon. ”

¹³ So the sun stood still,
and the moon stopped,
till the nation avenged itself on its enemies,

as it is written in the Book of Jashar.

The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day. ¹⁴ There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the LORD listened to a man. Surely the LORD was fighting for Israel!

¹⁵ Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal.

¹⁶ Now the five kings had fled and hidden in the cave at Makkedah. ¹⁷ When Joshua was told that the five kings had been found hiding in the cave at Makkedah, ¹⁸ he said, “Roll large rocks up to the mouth of the cave, and post some men there to guard it. ¹⁹ But don’t stop! Pursue your enemies, attack them from the rear and don’t let them reach their cities, for the LORD your God has given them into your hand.”

²⁰ So Joshua and the Israelites destroyed them completely—almost to a man—but the few who were left reached their fortified cities. ²¹ The whole army then returned safely to Joshua in the camp at Makkedah, and no one uttered a word against the Israelites.

²² Joshua said, “Open the mouth of the cave and bring those five kings out to me.” ²³ So they brought the five kings out of the cave—the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon. ²⁴ When they had brought these kings to Joshua, he summoned all the men of Israel and said to the army commanders who had come with him, “Come here and put your feet on the necks of these kings.” So they came forward and placed their feet on their necks.

²⁵ Joshua said to them, “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Be strong and courageous. This is what the LORD will do to all the enemies you are going to fight.” ²⁶ Then Joshua struck and killed the kings and hung them on five trees, and they were left hanging on the trees until evening.

²⁷ At sunset Joshua gave the order and they took them down from the trees and threw them into the cave where they had been hiding. At the mouth of the cave they placed large rocks, which are there to this day.

Talk about it

- “Surely the LORD was fighting for Israel.” List three ways the LORD did that in this lesson.

- Dr. Harold Hill, consultant for the American space program, was overseeing a project to map out where the planets would be for the next 1000 years. To do this, he and his other scientist went back and mapped out past planetary alignments. But the computer kept getting stuck at a point about 1400 years BC. There seemed to have been a “lost day.” It wasn’t quite a full day. Dr. Hill, remembering his Sunday school stories, believes this demonstrates the truth of Joshua 10.

There are similar accounts of astronomers finding a astrological anomaly—a lost day—in many different cultures, both ancient and modern.

Agree or Disagree — We can believe that this story of the sun standing still is true, because there is scientific evidence.

- For the sun to appear to stand still means the earth stopped rotating. What would that theoretically do to everything on earth? What does this tell you about the “laws” of science?

- God used nature to fight for his people. Yet when a hurricane comes and causes amazing devastation, people often question the wisdom and goodness of God. How might this lesson help you view natural disasters differently.

- Joshua executes the conquered kings. This was only a *fraction* of the very powerful Canaanite nation. It was a bold act of defiance, certain to bring down the wrath of the rest of the nation. Why would Joshua be so bold? What can we learn from him?

