

Joshua

October 18, 2009

Joshua 10

I. Situation: Josh 10:1-7

A group of kings in the southern part of the country hears about the treaty between Gibeon and Israel. They set out to destroy Gibeon, but the Gibeonites send word to Joshua for help per the treaty. Joshua responds.

Jerusalem appears to be the lead city. Perhaps it was the closest city to Gibeon, or perhaps the Gibeonites were under the control of Jerusalem. The Jebusites are also noted to be Amorites; the Gibeonites were Hivites.

II. Initial Battle: Josh 10:8-11

Josh 10:8-11

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.

NIV

While we know that God can do it Himself, victory in this initial battle is clearly a combination of God's effort and those of His people. From Gilgal to Gibeon is about 20 miles, generally uphill. An all-night march uphill shows part of the human effort. Here is the full battle map:



III. The Long Day: Josh 10:12-15

Josh 10:12-15

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.

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This is the third of the three great miracles in Joshua. The critics go crazy with the “preposterous” statement of verse 13 (to them), that the earth stood still. We do not know how the LORD did it, but we do know that He is powerful enough to have done it. Since the Bible provides little detail on the event, we are left with a decision to believe or not to believe it. There is no way to explain it scientifically without God’s direct involvement. In the other two great miracles of the book, the drying up of the Jordan River and the fall of Jericho’s walls, scientific suggestions for how they happened are always being put forth even though these suggestions cannot be substantiated without the Lord having acted anyway.

We know from Isaiah, Zechariah, and Revelation that eventually the sun will be replaced altogether, but it is not clear if these are related to this event.

Rev 22:5

5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

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Zech 14:6-7

6 On that day there will be no light, no cold or frost. 7 It will be a unique day, without daytime or nighttime — a day known to the LORD. When evening comes, there will be light.

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Isa 60:19-20

9 The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. 20 Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end.

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The Book of Jashar is quoted, but the extent of the quote is debated; the book is also quoted in 1 Sam. 1:17-18. Verse 15 and Verse 43 are stated the same way, and are probably the same event; it is hard to tell because of the way in which Hebrew uses past tenses.

If we assume that the “day” is daylight hours and does not include the night, it would still be 12 hours. So, the Israelites would have been marching and fighting for 36 hours at least by this time. If the extra day is 24 hours long, then the marching and fighting took 48 hours.

IV. Rest of the Battle: Josh 10:16-21

The kings are captured in a cave, but the battle is still progressing in a heated way. Joshua put them into storage in a cave and completes the immediate fighting before coming back to deal with the kings.

What do you think that the kings were thinking or discussing before the rocks were removed?

V. Execution of the Kings: Josh. 10:22-26

Josh 10:22-26

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.

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We do not see any indication that the kings asked for mercy or were willing to serve the LORD. A sign of the complete victory is the ability of the Israelites to do whatever they want with the captive kings. Basically, the kings will now serve as an example to all who oppose the Israelites. These words refer back to the beginning of this book and to Deut 31 concerning promises to the Israelites and to Joshua, showing their fulfillment:

Deut 31:8

8 The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

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VI. Southern Victory Josh 10:27-40

While we will see that complete victory is not totally finished later in the book, we see that the Israelites are victorious wherever and whenever they fight, basically becoming the dominant force in the south.

The following appears to be the structure apparent in this section:

A	Makkedah (king, city, people)	Like Jericho
B	Libnah (king, city, people)	Like Jericho
C	Lachish (city, people)	Like Libnah
D	Horam, king of Gezer	-----
C'	Eglon (city, people)	Like Lachish
B'	Hebron (king villages, people)	Like Eglon
A'	Debir (king, villages, people)	Like Libnah/Hebron

VII. Wrap –Up: Josh 10:40-43

Josh 10:40-43

40 So Joshua subdued the whole region, including the hill country, the Negev, the western foothills and the mountain slopes, together with all their kings. He left no survivors. He totally destroyed all who breathed, just as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded. 41 Joshua subdued them from Kadesh Barnea to Gaza and from the whole region of Goshen to Gibeon. 42 All these kings and their lands Joshua conquered in one campaign, because the LORD, the God of Israel, fought for Israel. 43 Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal.

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While these victories might sound like they occurred quickly, they might have taken years to finish. Even though, the five kings were taken, their cities needed to be taken as well. For example, Jerusalem was not fully taken until the time of David. In some cases, the cities might go back and forth between Israelite and Canaanite. In these cases, the Israelites might take a city and kill its residents; others related to those killed might come into the city after the Israelites left and refortify it. The victory will take a long time.