

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching Out to Leaders Who Can Change the World.

September 2012

Joshua: Hope for God's People

Lesson #9: Significant Commitments

When have you found a promise hard to keep?

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

Read Joshua 10:1-8

Note: The Hebrew name "save us" is translated "yasha" which can also mean deliver from danger. The noun form of the word is yeshua, meaning savior. Translating from Greek to English it comes to us as Jesus. Going directly from Hebrew, we get the name Joshua. Here we see the Gibeonites, new members of God's family, admit their weakness and call upon Joshua to save them. 2 Cor 12:9 Vs 7 - The distance between Gilgal and Gibeon is about 18 miles, and could have been covered in about 10 hours.

1. Why were the Amorites upset with the leaders of Gibeon? What did the Amorites want to do?
2. Why didn't Joshua let the Amorites fight amongst themselves? Wasn't civil war among the Canaanites advantageous to Israel? 2 Cor 6:14-18; 2 Tim 2:4
3. What was the advantage to Israel of defeating the cities near Gibeon? Ps 2:1-4
4. What gave the Israelites confidence that they were doing the right thing to fight for Gibeon? Vs 8
5. The people of Gibeon were new converts to Judaism whose loyalty was quickly put to the test.

How does this compare to new believers in Christ today? Job 38:22-23

Read Joshua 10:9—15

Note: The account of the battle falls into two sections, each parallel to the other: vv. 6–11 and 12–15. They are not successive stages, but parallel ones: they both describe different facets of the battle of Gibeon.¹⁸⁴ The picture in both sections is of a great and complete victory, with different facets: (1) a successful ambush (vv. 9–10), (2) a deadly hailstorm (v. 11), and (3) a miracle or sign involving the sun and the moon (vv. 12–13). When all was said and done, the wonder of God's listening and responding to a man's appeal stands out (v. 14), showing that God was sensitive to his people.¹ The sun stood still (Vs. 12–14). Some dismiss the description as poetic hyperbole, but conservatives have always held to a historic intervention by God. Many have, however, debated what the text actually describes. The text makes it clear that what happened was a miracle, an intervention by God on behalf of Israel in answer to Joshua's prayer. The physical means God employed are irrelevant to the passage's portrayal of God's personal involvement in Israel's struggle for the land.²

6. How did Joshua respond to the Gibeonites' request?
7. Even though God promised them a victory, the Israelites still did their part. What did they do?
Note: The escape route and pursuit was over 20 miles long. Darkness would have allowed the enemy to get away by hiding in the rough terrain.
8. God "obeyed" Joshua's request. Why? Vv 12-14 What does that say about our requests to God?
9. What evidence do we see that it was God that was ultimately responsible for Israel's victory?
10. As word spread about the battle, what effect would it have had on the Canaanites? On Israel?

APPLICATION

What commitments have you made to new believers? What prayers do you have for God?

¹⁸⁴ See the introduction to vv. 12–15 for a justification of this.

¹ Howard, D. M., Jr. (1998). *Vol. 5: Joshua*. The New American Commentary (236). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

² Richards, L. O. (1991). *The Bible reader's companion* (electronic ed.) (151). Wheaton: Victor Books.