

August 11

Scriptures: Read Joshua 10

Key Verse: “All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel.” (Joshua 10:42)

Overview

When the other kings heard of Gibeon’s peace treaty with Israel, they were enraged. Adonizedek, king of Jerusalem, assumed leadership and rallied together four other kings from the southern area of Canaan to attack Gibeon and destroy them. These kings did not plan any direct attack on Israel, which is surprising, because they had previously planned to do so by a united effort (9:1-2). Possibly the defection of Gibeon had foiled their plans, so they felt betrayed. They wanted to punish the Hivite cities for joining league with Israel and make an example of them, as well as taking Gibeon in order to block Israel from advancing.

The covenant into which Israel had entered with these Hivite people put them under the obligation to come to their aid. The Lord encouraged Joshua concerning the enemies, saying, “I have delivered them into your hand” (v.8). This attack on Gibeon gave Israel the perfect opportunity to gain quick possession of the land and to be a means of God’s judgment upon all those who were doomed to destruction because of wickedness.

Joshua immediately responded to Gibeon’s desperate plea for help and led the whole Israelite army on an all-night march of at least forty kilometers. With Israel’s surprise attack at daybreak, the Amorites were sent into confusion and fled southwestward, with Israel in pursuit. The Lord increased the panic by sending a severe hailstorm, which caused the death of more enemy soldiers than had the sword (v.11). This miraculous event made it clear that God, not the strength of the significant, for the Canaanite god Baal was supposed to control the rain, hail, snow, and floods within that territory, but the God of Israel proved to all that Baal was powerless before Him.

Joshua had yet more help from heaven in this Holy War. With great faith, he called upon God to arrest the sun that they might continue to fight, “So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day” (v.13). All things are possible since God did the creator of the universe. There is no adequate natural explanation as to how God did this miracle, but there are many things our finite intelligence cannot comprehend. We can only believe in faith, for it is written in the inspired word of God as an historical fact. The reference made to the Book of Jasher (a book of praise for their heroes in songs, poems, history; 2 Sam.1:18; it may also be called the book of the Wars of the Lord, Num.31:14) was a further attestation to its historicity.

The kings who waged war against Gibeon paid dearly with their kingdoms and their lives. Before Joshua executed them he wanted to encourage and build the faith of his men, so he had his field commanders put their feet upon the king’s necks. This was an ancient eastern symbol of victory and subjugation. Often pictured on Egyptian and Assyrian monuments and referred to in the Bible (c.f. 1 Kings 5:3; Ps.8:6; 18:38-40).

Joshua continued to wage war for what appeared to be a short time until all of southern Canaan was under Israel's control. As they moved in obedience to God with active faith, they dealt severely with the evil in the land and God honored them. They understood full well that their victory was only because God was with them. Our Lord is the same today. If believers press on in faith and obedience, putting away the sin from among them, then God will give victory after victory.

Prayer

Lord, in our reading today we're told of how You stopped the rotation in the solar system for Your purposes. We know that when we are in the center of Your will for our lives, you will fight for us. Please give us the knowledge of Your will and the grace to do Your will always. Amen.