

• *Laying hold of our inheritance requires diligent faith*

The story of Joshua continues to focus on how the Israelites must lay hold of their 'inheritance', the land of Israel. It pictures the diligent faith that the Christian shows in laying hold of his inheritance in Christ. Jericho and Ai have been conquered. A covenant was made with the people of Gibeon. Three fortresses have been wiped out or reduced to submission.

**1. God overrules our mistakes for good**

**1. God overrules our mistakes for good.** God turned around the covenant with Gibeon for good. Joshua is following a definite God-given strategy and has made an inroad into the centre of the territory thus dividing the north from the south. Strangely the relationship with the people of Gibeon actually helps him.

Joshua was tricked by the Gibeonites<sup>□1</sup> but his alliance with Gibeon leads Joshua into defeating five tribes in one battle. When God overrules our mistakes He can do it so well that it looks as if the mistake was intended all along. Yet this would be a mistaken deduction. The covenant with Gibeon was definitely a mistake. It would bring some trouble later in Israel's history. But God used it for His own purposes.

□1 9:1-27

• *Five Canaanite kings join to attack Gibeon*

A pagan king, Adonizedek, heard what had happened to Jericho, Ai and Gibeon, and was alarmed<sup>□1</sup>. He felt that the only hope was for the various kings of Canaan to unite together to overthrow Israel. Adonizedek called upon four nearby kings to join him in attacking Gibeon<sup>□2</sup>. The idea was to get Gibeon to join in an attempt to overthrow Israel. So the five kings attacked Gibeon<sup>□3</sup> and the people of Gibeon sent to Joshua for help<sup>□4</sup>.

□1 10:1-2  
□2 10:3-4  
□3 10:5  
□4 10:6

Joshua came to the aid of those who were now his covenant-allies<sup>□1</sup>. He was given encouragement from God<sup>□2</sup>. This battle would be a very vital one in the conquering of Canaan.

□1 10:7  
□2 10:8

• *Utterly defeated with God's powerful help*

The Israelites arrived early in the morning at Gibeon. The five kings who were besieging Gibeon were taken by surprise<sup>□1</sup>. They were soon utterly defeated. As they fled gigantic hailstones fell on them and many were killed<sup>□2</sup>. It was obvious that God was powerfully at work on behalf of the Israelites.

□1 10:9  
□2 10:10-11

**2. In crisis God can give help in dramatic ways**

**2. When God's kingdom is in crisis God can give help in dramatic ways.** At times God can give faith for miracles. If the Canaanites were to be utterly destroyed Joshua needed a long day to be able to overtake the fleeing Canaanites. He was so confident that God would give special help that he spoke a word of faith to the sun and moon! All the troops witnessed Joshua's calling out in a loud voice.

*'O sun, stand still over Gibeon.  
O moon, over the valley of Aijalon'*<sup>□1</sup>.

□1 10:12

• *An unusual miracle*

The sun in one part of the sky and the moon in another stopped their motion and the length of daylight-time was doubled! It was undoubtedly a miracle; perhaps one involving the refraction of light rather than a miracle that involved an interference in the astronomical laws of the universe.

It is not the kind of miracle one sees every day! If anyone else tried to stop the sun and the moon he might not be quite so successful! The 'prayer of faith' is a prayer that is given. There are times in the Christian life where one finds oneself enabled to believe God for something unusual. Enoch did not die. Elisha made iron float. Joshua destroyed a city by marching around it blowing trumpets. Sarah conceived in old age. Jesus fed five thousand people with a few scraps of food. And Joshua slowed down the shining of the sun in the sky!

• *God's sovereign will*

These marvellous miracles of the Bible are not the kind of thing someone can switch on at will. But God can do wonders still. Within His sovereignty, anything He wills is possible. However the key words are 'within His sovereignty'. People who think they can switch on a miracle at will either make claims that cannot be justified, or they face a lot of disappointment. But subject to God's sovereignty, anything is possible. When His kingdom is in a crisis – and victory over the Canaanites was a vitally important matter – God can step in to help us in dramatic ways.

• *An important event in Israel's history*

Because of the miracle the Israelites were able to chase their enemies further and longer. The victory went down as a famous event in Israel's history. There was a document called the 'Book of Jashar' which seems to have been a book of songs celebrating important events in Israel's history. It no longer exists but it existed in Joshua's day and the author of the book quotes it in Joshua 10:12–15.<sup>1</sup>

**3. God wants us to know the enemies of His kingdom can be trodden down.**

**3. God wants us to know the enemies of His kingdom can be trodden down.** The five kings were utterly defeated. They ran and hid in a cave<sup>1</sup>. Joshua has the cave sealed until he is able to get back to deal with them<sup>2</sup>. He pursues the fleeing Canaanites until they are destroyed for ever<sup>3</sup>. Then Joshua and his men go back to deal with the five kings. The men put their feet on the necks of the five kings. It is a symbol of utter and total defeat<sup>4</sup>. Then the kings are hung up in disgrace for several hours. Their graves are a memorial of their defeat<sup>5</sup>. The point of the treatment of the kings is to let the Israelites know that they are easily able to tread down their enemies. God is giving them their inheritance.

<sup>1</sup> 10:16; compare Revelation 6:15

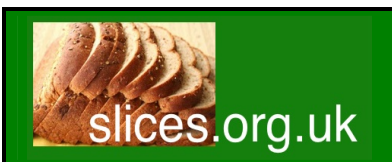
<sup>2</sup> 10:17–19

<sup>3</sup> 10:19–21

<sup>4</sup> 10:22–

24  
<sup>5</sup> 10:25–27

Note 1. Verse 15 makes sense only if it is part of the quotation from the Book of Jashar. After the quotation, the Book of Joshua itself tells the story more slowly and Joshua does not return to Gilgal until 10:43. In the quotation the story is told in a more compressed manner.



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