



Conquering Canaan

Lesson 3: Victories Throughout The Land

(Joshua 9:1-12:24)

When some kings heard of the way the Israelites had defeated Jericho and Ai, they met with each other and decided to work together in fighting Israel. But, the people of Gibeon decided to do something different. Rather than fighting against Israel, they decided to trick them.

So, the people of Gibeon made themselves look like they had traveled from a long ways away. They took worn-out sacks and old wineskins. They wore patched-up sandals and old clothes that looked like they were falling apart. And, they brought stale bread.

When they came to Joshua, they said they had come from a far away land and asked the Israelites to make an agreement with them. The Israelites wondered if they did live in the land and Joshua asked them where they were from. But, the people of Gibeon said they had come from a far away place because they had heard about God's fame and the things He had been doing for the Israelites. Then, they said they took the necessary supplies and left on their journey, saying that their clothes and supplies were all worn-out because of their long trip.

Israel believed the story the Gibeonites told them and did not look for God's help in making a decision about them. So, Joshua and the Israelites agreed to let the Gibeonites live as their neighbors. And, whenever the Israelites found out about this lie, they did not attack the Gibeonites because they had made a promise. Instead, they made the Gibeonites be woodcutters and water carriers for the house of God.

Later, the king of Jerusalem had heard about Joshua capturing Jericho and Ai, and the Gibeonites making peace and living with Israel. So, the people of Jerusalem were afraid and the king made an agreement with four other Amorite kings and

attacked Gibeon. When they did, the people of Gibeon sent a message to Joshua asking for help.

God told Joshua not to be afraid of them because He had handed the kings over to him and they would be defeated. After marching all night, Joshua and the Israelite army caught them by surprise and God caused them to be confused. As they tried to run away from the Israelites, the Lord threw large hailstones on them from the sky. In fact, more of them died from the hailstones than from the Israelites killing them with the sword.

On the day when God gave the Amorites to Israel, Joshua spoke to God in front of Israel, asking for the sun to stand still over Gibeon, as well as for the moon to stand still in its place. And, God made this happen. Now, the Amorites would not be able to run away from Israel in the dark. God made the sun stay in the middle of the sky without setting for almost a whole day!

The five kings ran away and hid in a cave. When they were found, large stones were rolled in front of the cave's entrance so the kings could not get away while Israel was trying to defeat the army. Then, after the fighting was over, the five kings were brought out of the cave and killed. After they were killed, Joshua had their bodies put back in the cave and the stone rolled back in front of its entrance.

After this, Joshua and the Israelites continued to capture cities throughout the land of Canaan. Nobody could defeat the Israelites – even when kings would agree to work together to fight against Israel. God would tell Joshua not to be afraid of the armies because God had given them to him. “So Joshua took the entire land, in keeping with all that the Lord had told Moses. Joshua then gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. After this, the land had rest from war” (Joshua 11:23). In addition to the two kings on the eastern side of the Jordan River, the Israelites defeated 31 kings to take the land over a period of about six years (see Joshua 14:6-12).

Study Questions:

- 1) Why did the people from Gibeon lie to Israel?
- 2) What did they tell the Israelites?
- 3) What did the Israelites agree to let Gibeon do?
- 4) How did God use hail and the sun to defeat the five kings?
- 5) Where did the five kings hide?
- 6) What did the Israelites do to those kings?
- 7) How much of the Canaan land did God give to the Israelites?
- 8) How many kings did Israel defeat? How long did it take?

Memory Verse:

“There has been no day like it before or since, when the Lord listened to a man, because the Lord fought for Israel” (Joshua 10:14).

Draw a picture of the lesson you learned about: