

## Joshua 9 – 10

The news of the destruction of Jericho and Ai spread throughout Canaan. Most of the cities decided to form alliances in order to protect themselves from Israel.

But when the city of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, they acted with cunning: a group of men hung worn-out sacks on their donkeys, they dressed in tattered sandals and clothes, gathered dried out and moldy provisions. Then they went to Joshua's camp and said, "We have come from a far country and our elders want to make a treaty with you."

Joshua asked, "Who are you? Where do you come from?"

The Gibeonites said, "We are from afar. Look, we took this bread warm from our ovens at the beginning of our trip, but now it is dried out and moldy. Our garments and sandals are worn out from the long journey."

The leaders of Israel looked at their provisions, but they didn't ask God for guidance. Joshua made a treaty with them and the elders of Israel vowed that their two nations would be allies.

After three days the Israelites learned that they had actually made a treaty with their neighbors, Gibeon. Joshua summoned them and asked, "Why did you deceive us?"

The Gibeonites answered, "We knew that Moses had given you all the land with the command to kill all who lived here. We feared for our lives. Now we know you must do what seems right; we will accept your decision."

Joshua spared their lives but made them slaves. They were to hew wood and carry water for the Israelites and to serve the House of the Lord.

When the other kings learned of the treaty, they became greatly frightened because Gibeon was a large city and all its men were warriors. These kings came together and decided to gather their armies and march against Gibeon. The Gibeonites sent word to Joshua saying, "Don't abandon your servants; come quickly and save us."

The Lord told Joshua, "Don't fear these kings, for I have handed them over to you; not one of them shall stand before you."

So, Joshua marched all night and came upon them suddenly. The Lord threw them into a panic before Israel, who then inflicted a great slaughter upon them. The Lord then sent a hail storm and more of the enemy died from the hail than from the swords of the Israelites.

At this point in the battle, Joshua needed more time. So, he called out where all the Israelites could hear:

Sun, stand still at Gibeon

And moon in the valley of Aijalon.

And the sun stopped in midheaven, and did not hurry to set for a whole day. There has been no day like it before or since, when the Lord heeded the voice of a human; for the Lord fought for Israel.

Joshua returned to the camp at Gilgal. Meanwhile five of the kings fled and hid in a cave. When Joshua learned of this, he gave the command, “Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and set men by to guard them.”

Joshua and his army continued their battle, inflicting a great slaughter, until his enemies were wiped out. Then Joshua commanded, “Open the mouth of the cave and bring those five kings to me.”

Joshua called to his chiefs of war, “Come near and subdue the kings. Do not be afraid or dismayed. Be strong and courageous; for thus the Lord will do to all the enemies against whom you fight.” Joshua then executed the five kings.

After that Joshua led his army from city to city, and the Lord gave him victory wherever he went.