

Joshua 10:1-15
“Don’t let the Son Go Down on Me”

I. Intro

II. Vs. 1-9 Blessings from blunders

III. Vs. 10-15 Hailstones from the sun

I. Intro

I suppose that had Joshua written the 1974 Elton John hit off of the Caribou album called “*Don’t let the sun go down on me*” he may have spelled sun with an “O” not a “U”. There has always been seasons in our life where we wished we had a few more hours in the day to accomplish the tasks at hand. Interestingly enough Bernie Taupin who wrote the lyrics to the song did so based upon trying to help someone who miss interpreted his intentions. Thus the opening line: “*I can’t light no more of your darkness. All my pictures seem to fade to black and white. I’m growing tired and time stands still before me. Frozen here on the ladder of my life.*” How appropriate those words could be for the situation Joshua finds Himself in as he and the nation fight five kingdoms in defense of those who deceived them only a short time before. And now the chorus saints (and I’ve changed some of the lyrics), “*Don’t let the SON go down on me; although I search myself, it’s always someone else I see. If I’d just allow a fragment of Your life LORD to wonder free. I’d be losing myself but the SON; He would be standing over me.*” Ok now let’s redo “*Bennie and the Jet’s*”, no I’m kidding!

II. Vs. 1-9 Blessings from blunders

Vs. 1-4 Old Adoni-Zedek whose name means (*Lord of justice*) was wanting to exact a little justice upon the Gibeonites for their allegiance with Israel so he turned the confederacy of nations mentioned in 9:1 upon these pretenders. It appears that this strategy was aimed at the other Canaanite nations to discourage them from joining Israel especially seeing that according to verse 2 Gibeon was a larger city and of greater power than that of Ai yet they had already surrendered. So “*Lord of justice*” seeks out Hoham (*woe to them*) king of Hebron, Piram (*wild ass*) king of Jarmuth, Japhia (*splendid*) king of Lachish (*invincible*), and Debir (sanctuary) king of Eglon. Wow what bunch of fellows to have as your neighbors! “*Come up and help me attack for they have made peace*”, Mr. Justice says. Strategically attacking Gibeon was pretty smart as geographically Israel would have to travel 25 miles and 4000 feet in elevation to protect the city. To the credit of the Gibeonites they weren’t too proud to come to Israel to seek protection but what assurances did they have that Israel whom they deceived would risk their lives to help them?

According to verse 2 these five kings “feared greatly” so they attacked. Yeh so? Well I rather believe that this gives us great insight into spiritual warfare my friends with regards to satan and his cohorts. You see if you are under attack you can now realize that you must have old “dragon breath” pretty sacred and that means you must be doing something right! Have you ever noticed that there are some folks who never want you to be at peace and the moment they see that you are they want to gather the wagons to attack? That reminds me of satan who always picks up his attacks on those who have receive Jesus’ the Prince of Peace offer of peace.

Just as God used the defeat at Ai to form a battle plan for victory over Ai (chapter. 8), so also He used Joshua’s mistake with the Gibeonites to protect Gibeon and accelerate the conquest of Canaan. The mistakes we make may embarrass us, especially those that are caused by our running ahead of the Lord and not seeking His Word. But we need to remember that no mistake is final for the dedicated Christian. God can use even our blunders to accomplish His purposes. Somebody defined success as “*the art of making your mistakes when nobody’s looking*”; but a better definition would be “*the art of seeing victory where other people see only defeat.*”

Vs. 5-9 Geographically Gibeon was at around 4000 feet in elevation above the five kings so their armies had to come together and then ascended to Gibeon in order to attack it. Oh the lengths that our enemy will go to destroy us. This caused the men of Gibeon whom we are told in verse 2 were mighty men to seek protection from those very fellows whom they had just deceived the Israelites.

Now what I find interesting is that though Israel made a covenant with Gibeon based upon verse 19 it only guaranteed **not to touch them and let them live**. There is **no where that I can find that this covenant provided protection from Gibeon's enemies**. Here is where I'm going with this if I was Joshua when I heard of the Gibeonites troubles **I would have assumed that God was about to deal with liars for their deceptive ways and that my problem would have been solved**. "*Hey fellows sorry to hear that you're about to be annihilated but I don't see how that's my problem I only promised I wouldn't wipe you out myself.*" Gibeon again as 25 miles and 4000 feet higher than Gilgal and no easy task to undertake no to mention risky for Israel's army. So here's the amazing thing to realize **Joshua went up to protect the Gibeonites even though they were lying scoundrels**. Is that not like our Lord Jesus who set's out to save those who have lied to Him? Listen up friends **Jesus doesn't just rescue those that deserve it or are worthy in fact He takes delight in saving those who least deserve it like you and me**.

Further more **Joshua wastes no time in fact he marches all night traveling up 4000 feet in elevation against all odds just to save those who were pretenders, fakes and frauds**. We have just seen the lengths that satan will go to attack us but I suppose I can say for myself I deserve it but **look at the lengths the Lord will go to deliver those who don't deserve it!** After getting over my anger at having Jesus' church broken into I awoke to God's heart towards the person or persons responsible which is, "*How tragic and sad it is that theses folks felt that they had to break into the sanctuary of God to take so little of what God so wants to give them for free!*" **Have you ever stop to think of what lengths God has gone to lavish His love upon thief's, murderers and liars?** Here's what's cool God wanted to **demonstrate His love through His people** who the Gibeonites just lied too so he allows five kingdoms of whom they were previously aligned with to mount an attack against them. Why? **So that they would see how much God loves them and they don't need to trick Him into it!** Every single moment of everyday, constantly before us is our Lord with a huge sign of the cross that says, "*Free love available*"! Most of the time folks just walk by with broken hearts and lives ignoring His free offer. But because the Lord knows how much we need to receive what we so desperately need He allows those whom we thought were our neighbors, friends, family and allies to attack us so that we remember that as Proverbs 18:24 says that in only Jesus do we have a "*friend who sticks closer than a brother*." The Psalmist proclaims in Psalm 27:10 "*When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me*." Very few of us parents could ever imagine forsaking our children but as much as we love our kids the Lord declares that He loves them more than even all us father's and mother's. **Did you know that God's blessing is much greater than our blunders?**

Speaking of blunders on Thursday an article appeared on Fox news concerning the atheists add campaign in London. It seems as though they have risen over a \$100,000 to place ads on the famous London buses proclaiming the benefits of being an atheist. Their slogan? Well it reads, "*There **probably** is no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life.*" Now I've got to tell you that's a pretty amazing admission from atheists isn't it? But based upon their confession of "*probably*" I'm not so certain that those who have not trusted in His love should stop worrying and enjoy life.

Joshua and the nation made a big mistake in not "*asking counsel from the Lord*" with regards to the deceiving Gibeonites and the Gibeonites made a big blunder in thinking that the only way they could align themselves with God is by faking it. But our God is so much bigger than their blunders as He turns them into blessings as **the Gibeonites get to see what lengths God is willing to go to deliver deceivers** and the Israelites get to see that **God doesn't need there reasoning to take down five kingdoms** at one time. **So saints next time you make a blunder start looking around for the Lord to turn it into a blessing!**

III. Vs. 10-15 Hailstones from the sun

Vs. 10-15 As the Israelites were giving chase after the great slaughter and were chasing the enemy down the road called "Beth Horon" (house of caverns) all the way too "Azekah" (Dug over) and "Makkedah" (place of shepherds). What it seems is that these five kings and kingdoms were looking for a place to hide from the Great Shepherd who would have taken them in as His own as He had the Gibeonites it they would only stop fighting and running from Him. Here we are brought into two miracles of the Lord as He turns blunders into blessings.

1. Vs. 11 The first one is recorded as Joshua's early dawn attack was winding down with the five kingdoms running away the Lord caused great "*Hailstones*" to fall from

the five kingdoms falling away the Lord caused great hailstones to fall from heaven. Several things are amazing here and the first is that these cultures worshipped the earth specifically the sun, moon and the forces of nature and they were on the run down the road of many caves to the town of dug over (in fact we are told in verse 16 the five kings will make it into a cave), when the Lord intervened and rained down hail on their decent. But why the hailstones? I mean Joshua records for us in verse 11 that *“There were more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword.”* What is obvious is that the manner of death was very specific and from God. If you go to Leviticus 24:16 I think we get the answer as we read the Word of the Lord through Moses saying, *“Whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of the Lord, he shall be put to death.”* So the Lord judged these five kingdoms for blasphemy and God used that very thing that worshipped to judge them in the hailstones from heaven. Friends we read in Jesus’ own words in Matthew 12:31-32 *“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.”* So just what is this “unpardonable sin” that Jesus speaks of. Well it is the continual saying NO to the Holy Spirit’s prompting to receive Jesus love for you. You do that to the point where you will never accept His loving sacrifice for your sins and you are bring your judgment that was placed upon Jesus at the cross upon your self. Is that not interesting to note that God used that which the kingdoms worshipped to judge them, so how about it folks what is it that we trust in because if it’s not Jesus then it will be that which we trust in God will use to judge us.

2. Vs. 12-13 Now the 2nd miracle as the Lord turns Israel’s blunder into a blessing is that at Joshua’s word to the Lord the sun and moon standing still. It seems as though this happened around mid day. There are those who immediately use this miracle as an indication that the Bible could not be true by saying that it is not the sun the moves but rather the earth that rotates around the sun and thus Joshua miss spoke. But the truth of the matter is that the sun does move as does every star and planet for every motion there is a relative motion. But be that as we may it seems specifically that the earth stopped its rotation as we are told that both the sun and moon stopped and the wording by Joshua is not scientific wording any more than most people say that we have a sun rise and a sun set and in fact they don’t rise and set as these are just figures of speech. This halting of rotation would have had natural atmospheric and even volcanic disturbances, which may account for the hailstones. Verse 14 tells us that there was no other day like it in all of human history but apart from the fact that we believe that the God who made the heavens and the earth is clearly capable of accomplishing such a miracle is there any evidence that this occurred? There was an attempt by some to prove this from a cultic group using 19th century astronomical calculations based upon their belief of a specific date of creation but this is false. What we do have is the evidence of the historical record outside of the what is recorded in the Bible and we find that such cultures completely distinct from each other as the Greeks, Egyptian, American Indian, South Sea Islanders and others record a long day. As impressive as this miracle is I can’t help but see this from Joshua’s perspective and from that angle which is the way you and I would see it which is that this is really a step of faith.
3. First based upon verse 8 Joshua is stepping out on God’s promise. Hey did you know that according to Herbert Lockyer’s book *“All the Promises of the Bible”* that there are over 12,000 promises in the Bible and considering that there are 31,173 total Bible verses that means that **over a third** of the bible is made up of His promises. So can you imagine what would happen if you and I like Joshua began simple to act on God’s promises towards us as Joshua does? *“Lord you said not a man of them will stand before me and time is running out in the day so Lord you’re going to have to make the day longer to fulfill you’re promise.”* Hey saint’s could the reason we don’t

- experience more miraculous events in our lives is that we don't act on the belief in God's Word's of promise towards us?
4. Secondly we take note of the fact though God promised in verse 8 Joshua acted first by doing his best to accomplish what God had promised. It is what James declares namely that "true faith works". Joshua heard the word of the Lord but didn't hang out wasting time. No, he gathered quickly the army of the Lord and traveled all night to begin a dawn attack. Hey you can say you believe the Word but unless you get up and march all night you won't see it come to pass. Joshua's trusting in the promise only occurred after he had done everything he could do to see the work of God accomplished.
 5. Thirdly, after doing his best Joshua a fresh trusts the Lord to do the rest. Notice that Joshua sees that time has run out to see the promise of the Lord accomplished and then in verse 12 we read that, "*spoke to the Lord...and said...Sun, stand still over Gibeon and moon in the valley of Aijalon.*" (the valley of strength). James says, in James 4:2 "*you do not have because you do not ask.*" Jesus said in John 15:5 "*I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*"
 6. Finally, Joshua spoke in faith "Sun, stand still"! Can you imagine being next to Joshua as he said those words and watched the sun do just that? Joshua took his words and trust and put it into action by stepping out in faith. Now here is what would have been going on in my mind, "*Lord, I believe you and all but man if you don't do this I'm really going to look stupid in front of 3 million people!*" How glorious it is to see Joshua not be paralyzed by his fear of "what if" and just went for it. How many times have we not seen what the Lord wanted to do in our lives simply because we were afraid of failure not ours but the Lord's?

Dear ones we are facing **impossible days, improbable odds, insurmountable foe's** and it is not that God is lacking it is that we aren't willing to rise up and trust in His promises. How glorious it is to see that at Joshua's simply trusting and acting on God's word of promise to him that he saw the false god's of the kingdoms of this world defeated.

This book of Jasher was apparently a sacred song book that literally means "The book of the upright ones" and we only have two of the entries left in it this one here before us and the "song of the bow" in 2 Sam 1:18-27. Not to worry the Lord knew what to preserve for you and I. There was never a day like this or will be again but my prayer is that in these last days that there will be more Joshua's who are willing to bank on the Word of God for the Lord listens to the voice of the men and women of faith and will fight for His kids. So let's go back to our place of worship and trust in Him and live a life that makes Him famous.