

A MIRACLE IN THE HEAVENS



Passages to Study: Joshua 10:1-27.

Read with the class: Joshua 10:7-14.

Texts for memorization:

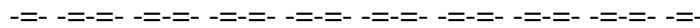
Younger: Luke 1:37.

Older: Joshua 10:14.



OBJECTIVES: To show:

- 1. That God delights to answer the prayer of those who are doing His will.
2. That those who recognize their danger and seek mercy find a merciful God.
3. That those who oppose God die without remedy.
4. The foolishness of those who seek refuge in the wrong place which, in the end, brings about their death.



SCENE No. 1. VISUAL AIDS: In the Israelite camp, figures of a person carrying water towards the tabernacle, another person, a Gibeonite, splitting wood while others carry wood towards the tabernacle.

DEVELOPMENT:

- Once Ai is conquered, the Israelites are well placed to conquer the rest of Canaan for they have the mountainous region cut in two.
- The Gibeonites had made use of deceit in order to avoid being destroyed along with the other nations of Canaan.
- The punishment for their deceit is having to do the heavy work in the tabernacle service.
- The Gibeonites accepted this service.
- The curse (Joshua 9:23) is changed into blessing for them, and from now on they serve the altar of God "in the place which He should choose." (v.27)

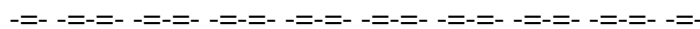
Cns. Such is the grace of God, that those who had been condemned to death can now live in His presence.

Sug. Mention to the students, especially those who have Christian parents, that it is a blessing to be "in the presence" of those who know God. (See 1 Corinthians 7:14)

Inf. Later on the tabernacle was set up in Gibeon. Solomon, and all Israel, went there at the beginning of his reign to consult God.

- News of the covenant Gibeon made with Israel reaches the ears of five other kings of the southern part of the country.
- Since Gibeon was a large city with able soldiers, the other kings were very frightened.
- These five united kings believed, like the Gibeonites, that they are in danger, but they have their own idea of how to overcome the threat and are counting on their own strength to do so.

Sug. It is interesting to talk to young people about their ideas of how they expect to get to heaven. If the teacher has some quotes from previous conversations with young people, this is the time to quote them and compare the ideas with the true message of the gospel.



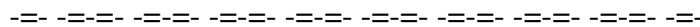
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SCENE No. 2. VISUAL AIDS: At the entrance to a city (Jerusalem), a figure of five kings talking, while a group of their generals wait nearby. Map of the campaigns made in Canaan, showing the cities where these kings ruled.

DEVELOPMENT:

- Led by the king of Jerusalem, five kings meet to make plans to attack Gibeon.
- Frightened, the Gibeonites send an urgent message to Joshua, asking for help.
- Apl.** The name Joshua means “Jehovah Saviour” and he comes to their aid bringing salvation from the threat of death.
- Jehovah assures Joshua “there shall not a man of them stand before thee” and thus he has no fear of them.
- Cmt.** The Gibeonites are making use of the terms of the pact they made with Israel. Israel has to keep its word.
- Cns.** By keeping the terms of the “contract” they have made, the Israelites put into effect the divine principles that require fulfillment of commitments. (**Cns.** Leviticus 5:4)
- Sug.** In a world where promises are taken lightly by those who make them, it is well to encourage the students to take it seriously when they take on any responsibility and make sure they fulfill it.
- Sug.** These commitments include those agreements with parents, teachers, and employers.



SCENE No. 3. VISUAL AIDS: Figures of a battle with the sun in the sky on one side and the moon on the other. Also, the figure of a cave at some distance from the battle.

DEVELOPMENT:

- By night the Israelites march toward Gibeon.
- Arriving very early in the morning at the camp of the five kings now gathered near Gibeon, they catch their enemies by surprise.
- Jehovah allows panic to spread among them and the Israelite army achieves a great victory in Gibeon.
- Israel pursues them for some distance, overcoming them all along the way.
- While the enemy flees towards Bet-horón, the Lord casts a rain of great hailstones upon them causing the death of many more.
- Cns.** The weapons that God uses achieve more than the swords of Israel’s army.
- Knowing that they must conquer the south of the country where these enemies live, Joshua tries to finish the task in this battle.
- To do this, he needs more time.
- Joshua knows that he can count on God’s help and he asks for a miracle in the heavens to meet his needs.
- Joshua is fighting the Lord’s battles and God responds to his prayer, granting his request.
- Apl.** God delights to grant the prayer requests of those who are seeking to do His will.
- The day is lengthened while the Israelite army destroys its enemies.
- This miracle is written in great detail in the book of Jasher, a collection of poetic writings that recount important happenings in the history of Israel.
- Cmt.** There are reference books that existed in early times like the book of Jasher, which were not inspired and whose value is historical but not doctrinal.
- Seeing the battle is lost, the five kings who started the war leave their men to die while they seek refuge in a cave.
- Cns.** This insensitivity in the face of others’ suffering, seen in these kings who fled, is another evidence of selfishness that is to be found in the sinful human heart.

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Cmt. Selfishness is an example of “sowing to the flesh.” (Gal. 6:8)

- This cave of refuge becomes their tomb later when the army of Israel returns from overcoming the enemy.

Apl. The supposed wisdom of man leads them to seek refuge in places they consider appropriate but which end up bringing about their death.

- Joshua has them brought out of their hiding place and invites the Israelite army to put their feet on the necks of these kings as a sign of the dominion God has promised to give them over the inhabitants of Canaan.

- The kings are humiliated for daring to fight against Jehovah and His people.

Apl. The day will come when all the enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ will become the footstool of His feet. (Psalm 110:1; Heb. 10:13)

Apl. The students right now have the opportunity to give themselves to the Lord Jesus and no longer be counted among His enemies.

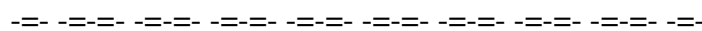
- As on previous occasions, the Lord has protected His people, setting them free from all possible danger.

Apl. God wants to extend the same care to those who place their faith in Him. He wants to be the Saviour of the students who repent of their sins and trust Him.

- After the death of these kings who have resisted the will of God, they are buried in the same cave in which they hid.

Apl. Judgment is coming to those who persist in resisting the Holy Spirit.

- The great stones that close the entrance to the cave form another monument of evidence to the power of God and the fulfillment of His promises.



SCENE No. 4. VISUAL AIDS: Figures of the crucifixion and the words written, “**IT IS FINISHED.**”

Above, a sun covered with a black net to demonstrate that it was darkened. Another figure of an empty tomb and the words written “**HE HAS TRIUMPHED.**” Figures of people observing each event.

DEVELOPMENT:

- The sign in the heavens reminds us of another occasion when the sun did not shine as usual, during the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus.

Apl. Although it was an impressive sign, the darkening of the sun when the Lord Jesus died did not produce repentance in the majority of those present.

- The cave converted into the tomb of the five kings marked the defeat of these enemies of God’s people.

- The empty tomb of the Lord Jesus was proof of His victory over Satan and his hosts.

Apl. The empty tomb is the visual symbol of the victory of the Lord over the enemies of His people and His glorious victory over death. All believers share in this triumph.

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Verse by verse commentary of Joshua 10 follows.



JOSHUA 10 VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY

vv.1-2. ADONI-ZEDEK had ample reason to be afraid. Adoni-zedec means “My Lord is righteous.” A name similar to Melchizedek, see Gen.14:18.

Jerusalem is in the hands of the Jebusites. Adoni-zedec’s reasoning: The Gibeonites have a bigger city than Ai and Gibeon is near Jerusalem. It seems the Israelites are settling on the hills. The whole land is coming under their domination. Adoni- zedec thinks: “I am in danger.”

The Gibeonites made peace with Israel, although they had men who were strong and courageous for war. Therefore, why would they seek peace with Israel if not because Israel is going to overcome all of us?

vv.3-4. The five kings were leaders of the five largest cities in the south of Canaan. Adoni-zedec comes to an agreement that the five friends will go and fight Gibeon, instead of Israel.

v.5. They begin the war.

vs.6-7. An urgent message is sent to Israel asking them to respect the terms of the treaty they have made. Israel is morally committed to respond.

v.8. A word of encouragement from Jehovah to Joshua.

v.9 They march all night, the distance between Gilgal and Gibeon being approximately 32 kilometers uphill. It would seem that the attack began near dawn, before the invaders had risen from sleep.

v.10 CONSTERNATION. Panic and terror among the people.

v.11 The road they take is downhill.

STONES FROM HEAVEN. Enormous blocks of ice or hail.

Cns. God uses the elements of nature as His weapons. See Judges 5:20; 1 Samuel 7:10. Job 38:22. vss.12-13. Joshua calls on God so that through a miracle they will be able to end the task of overcoming the Amorites.

They exercised faith so that God would receive the glory.

BOOK OF JASHER A historical book about their wars. See 2 Samuel 1:18.

It was the custom to commemorate national victories with songs and poems.

Exm. Exodus 15:1-18; Numbers 21:27-30; Deuteronomy 32:1-43; 1 Samuel 18:8.

Cns. Numbers 21:14, “The book of the wars of the Lord.”

Cmt. These books can be taken to be historical accounts in the form of a hymn book. They were not preserved as inspired by God, but as the emotional response of a thankful people.

v.14. Although very privileged to see his prayer answered, Joshua does not show pride afterwards.

vv.15-16. The promoters of the war leave their men to die, while they flee, defeated, to hide themselves.

vv17-19. Informed of the hiding place of the kings, Joshua orders that they be imprisoned there and encourages his soldiers to finish off the others, pursuing them and not allowing any to take refuge in any city.

v.20. Complete victory.

v.21. Fear of the Israelites takes hold to such an extent that no one dares to criticize or to say a word against them.

vv.22-23. The cave chosen by the kings as a safe place becomes a trap of their own choosing.

Apl. Man in his wisdom seeks refuge in places which, in the end, lead them to eternal death.

Exm. Adherents of false religions think they have a refuge in their beliefs.

This will condemn them in a future day.

v.24. PUT YOUR FEET ON THE NECKS OF THESE KINGS. A symbolic act through which the kings would have to realize that instead of overcoming the Israelites, they and their armies had fallen into the hands of the God of Israel. The kings were humiliated for having dared to fight against Jehovah and against His people. It was like a court decision before the sentence was carried out. All involved were bound by the sentence that was dictated.

Cns. Christ awaits the day when His enemies will be placed as the footstool of His feet. Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 10:13.

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v.25. To the eyes of the kings, they were humiliated.

The Israelites who placed their feet on their necks would gain strength in the future on recalling how they had overcome their enemies with God’s help.

v.26. Public execution. (Deuteronomy 21:22)

v.27. One more monument in Canaan to remind them of a victory.

REMAIN UNTIL THIS VERY DAY. Until the time of the writing of this book. It remained at that time so that the readers were able to see it. It is not known to exist today.

vv.28-30. Victory after victory while Israel cleanses the land of Canaan to be able to live in it.

Cns. When God gives the victory over previous, perverted practises, He expects that there not remain any trace of them but that there be cleanliness.

vv.31-32. **LACHISH.** One of five cities allied against Israel which had invaded their territory. A lightening attack.

Inf. Archaeological excavations in Tel Lachish, of 12.4 hectares, have reached the level of the Late Bronze Age, thought to be the time of Joshua. Evidence of rapid destruction.

TOOK IT ON THE SECOND DAY.

Bibliography: Historical data taken from different sources.

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