

RE READ *the big story*

JOSHUA 9-10

PREVIOUS BEDTIME STORY: THE FIVE KINGS
CHARACTERS: YAHWEH, JOSHUA, GIBIONITES, THE KING FIVE KINGS

RE VIEW *the context*

Joshua and the Israelites were warned by God to not make friends with the Canaanites. This wasn't because God was mean. Rather, God wanted to ensure that His people wouldn't enter peace agreements of mutual protection, and thereby mutual support of local kings, temple practises, and belief systems. Yet Joshua entered into such an agreement with the Gibeonites. And when the five Amorite kings strategically waged war on the city of Gibeon - Israel was obliged to come to their aid.

RE ENTER *through the 2nd story*

A REIMAGINING OF JOSHUA 10

'Run!' Adoni-zedek shouted. He was the King of Jerusalem and leader of the five armies. **'Run for your lives! We cannot hide from Yahweh!'** The five kings of the Amorites blew the horn of retreat. Their soldiers scattered down from the hills and ran into the low-lying valley. The Israelites followed close behind. Thunder bellowed from above and the clouds turned a deep purple. THUMP-THUMP. Suddenly, ice-blocks fell from the sky like large boulders. THUMP-THUMP-THUMP! **'Yahweh sends ice from heaven!'** Joshua said. **'Look! The Amorites are being struck down!'** Soldier after soldier. Chariot after chariot. The ice spared none of Joshua's enemies. More were struck down by the hail than by the swords of Joshua's army.

'Full pursuit!' Joshua called to his men. **'Keep up the chase!'** Joshua cleaned his blade and gathered his remaining generals. **'The Amorites will no doubt continue through the valley. If we stop our push now they will escape. But the better part of the day is gone. We need a plan to quicken this battle to secure God's victory!'** The generals looked to one another. **'We are doing all we can,'** they replied. **'Unless we can stop the sun, we will have to continue our fight tomorrow!'** Joshua nodded. **'Of course. No discredit. You have fought valiantly. We are doing all we can.'** Joshua walked to the ridge of the hillside. He stared down to a scattering of ice and blood and dust and the distant sounds of battle echoes over the rocks and hills.

'Unless we stop the sun...' he whispered to himself. **'Unless. We stop... the sun! Of course!'** Joshua turned and walked to the highest point on the ridge. He raised his arms and looked to the heavens. **'Sun!'** he shouted, **'Stand still at Gibeon! Moon. Stay in your place!'** Joshua's generals looked up, perplexed and confused. **'You don't mean - you think you command the heavens?!'** Joshua shook his head. **'I don't. But I know who does.'** The generals gazed in amazement. **'It can't be! Look!'** The eldest general laughed out loud. **'Yahweh be praised! The sun! It stands still in the sky!'** On that day - unlike any other before or since - the sun stopped moving. The battle waged on.

Moments later, a scout scampered up the ridge to Joshua. **'Sir!'** he panted. **'The five kings! We have caught them.'** Joshua smiled. **'Where are they?'** he asked. **'They are hiding in a cave. All five of them, hiding together. What shall you have us do?'** Joshua grinned. **'Keep them there. We will deal with them later.'**

RETHINK *in sacred sharing*

Spend some time in sacred reflection, conversation, and listening. Use the following questions as a guide.

- Q: Who is your best friend?
- Q: What makes a good friendship?
- Q: Name a time that a friend influenced you for the better. Name a time when a friend influenced you for the worse.
- Q: KIDS: Why did God warn against the Israelites making friends with the Canaanites? Why did the Israelites have to defend the Gibeonites?
- Q: Jesus said to his disciples that the world would know they are His disciples, 'by their love for one another'. Is there a difference between friendship and Jesus-centred-love?
- Q: What should a Christian community look like?
- Q: How can you be a true friend to those around you in this difficult times?

RECREATE *in sacred play*

Spend some time in sacred play loosely recreating the Amorite attack on the Gibeonites. Have a Gibeonite-pillow-fight! Set up teams and alliances and use the story as a guide.

COSTUMES/PROPS: Large soft pillows! Use smaller pillows or stuffies as hail.

CHARACTERS: Divide the group into two teams.

TEAM YAHWEH: Joshua, the Israelites, and the Gibeonites.

TEAM AMORITES: The five kings of the Amorites.

SPACE: Choose a safe spot within the home where there are no breakables (i.e., pictures, glass jars, televisions, computers, etc.) and set up the city of Gibeon (i.e., a couch or corner). Make sure there is enough space for the battle to spill over and outside of the city.

FLOW: Once the teams are divided and the room is set - go to war! The five kings attack Gibeon and the Israelites respond! Because Yahweh fights with Joshua, the Israelites get the extra small 'hail-pillows' to rain down on their foe! Swing and pop and fight until the battle is over. Repeat and replay!

REMAKE *in a sacred meal*

Just like that - the sun stood still! And even after all that Joshua and the Israelites had seen, done, and heard, this miracle is by far the most cosmically extraordinary. Extra daylight!

CHALLENGE: With the coming summer sun, bring a little prophetic vision into your Sunday mealtime and make some ice-cream! Find a recipe online and churn that cream into a delicious sweet treat! Pour on the toppings, drip on the sauce, and bask in the sun with your soon-to-be-summer treat!

RESPOND *in sacred prayer*

Joshua and the Israelites failed to consult God and hastily entered into an agreement with the Gibeonites. Their relationship was defined by conflict and strained under the stress of a crisis. In times of stress or crisis, our interpersonal relationships are often pushed to their breaking point.

Take time to pray and reflect on the health of your relationships. Who comes to mind? Is there anything you wish to share with that person? How would you pray for them? Grab some paper and a pen and write them a 'letter of prayer' and send it to them.