

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

The Sun Stood Still

THE BIG YEAR SEASON 1 WEEK 9

1

WHAT YOU NEED

- 2 x A4 sheets of paper
- Scissors
- Sticky tape
- Kokis/crayons
- Small sweets/marbles/small rocks to represent hail
- Ice cream stick/skewer/straw/ stick from your garden to stick your "sun" onto

LET'S READ THE BIBLE

Take turns reading the following passages:

- Joshua 9:3-16
- Joshua 9:22-23
- Joshua 10:5-14

2

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

After winning the cities of Jericho and Ai, Joshua continued to lead the Israelites in winning the cities of the land of Canaan (the land God had promised to the Israelites). God was on the side of the Israelites, so the kings in all of the land were very worried. They decided to join together and form a big army to fight God's people.

The city of Gibeon was very near to the Israelites. The people of Gibeon knew that God was on the side of the Israelites, so they thought up a plan to protect themselves. The Gibeonites were very tricky. They loaded up their animals and made it look like they had been travelling for a long time. They wore old and worn-out clothes and shoes. They even put old dry bread and food in their travel packs.

When the Gibeonites arrived, it seemed to Joshua and the rest of the people that their visitors had come from a place far, far away. God had warned the Israelites not to make any agreements with the people living in the Promised Land. The men of Israel looked at the Gibeonites' old clothes and even tasted the old bread and they were fooled.

The Gibeonites asked the people of Israel to make a special agreement to never hurt them. A special agreement like this is a very big decision. The men of Israel should have taken the time to pray and ask God to give them wisdom. Instead, they just thought, "This is not that important. God wants us to take over all the cities in Canaan but Gibeon is a city far away. We will just promise to never hurt them." So they made the promise to the Gibeonites.

Three days later the Israelites learned the truth. Gibeon was not an enemy city far away, it was an enemy city very close to them! They had made a terrible mistake and now they had to keep their promise. They wished so much that they had asked God to give them wisdom instead of rushing right into the agreement. The Israelites argued about what to do about the Gibeonites. Finally, they came to a decision. They would keep their promise and not hurt the Gibeonites, but the Gibeonites would have to work for the Israelites, carrying water and cutting wood for them.

When the kings from the other nations, who had decided to come together and fight against Israel heard that the Gibeonites had made a special agreement with the Israelites, they got very angry. They decided to fight with the Gibeonites and teach them a lesson. When the Gibeonites heard that the other nations were going to attack them, they sent a message to Joshua and the people, "Help! Come and save us or we will be destroyed."

3

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

3

Joshua remembered the promise to the Gibeonites. He led the Israelite soldiers in a battle against the kings and the people of the land. They defeated them in a great victory. Everyone knew that God was the God of Israel. As the Israelites chased the enemies away, large hailstones began to fall from the sky. More enemy soldiers died from the hailstones than were killed by swords.

Joshua and the soldiers had been fighting so long that night would come soon and it would be dark. So Joshua and the soldiers did something no one expected. Joshua told the sun to stand still, and it did! That day God showed that he was God for his people. God made the sun stand still so it continued to be daytime long enough for the Israelites to win the battle. There had never been a battle like this and there has never been one like it since that time!

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

4

- How did the Gibeonites trick Joshua and his men?
- Did Joshua ask the Lord to help him make a good decision about the special agreement with the Gibeonites?
- When Joshua found out he had been tricked, what happened to the Gibeonites?
- What unusual things happened when the Israelite army fought the enemies of Gibeon?

LET'S GO A BIT DEEPER

5

- What should we do before we make an important decision? (*Pray to God so that He will help us make the right one*)
- Do you think God listens to our prayers? Why or why not? (*God always listens to our prayers, even when we feel like He is not. He also answers our prayers but not always in the way that we expect Him to*)
- Why do you think God listened to Joshua?
- How does God talk to us? (*Through prayer - in our hearts; through the Bible; through other people who believe in Him*)

LET'S PRAY TOGETHER

6

Ask each family member if there is anything specific you can pray for as a family.

Pray together:

- Thank God that He hears us when we pray and that He cares about us.
- Thank God that He answers prayers, even if it's not in the way that we expect Him to answer.
- Pray for any specific prayer requests of your family members.

LET'S HAVE SOME FUN

- Cut 6 horizontal strips from your paper – these will represent the 5 enemy armies and the Israelite army (see the picture).
- Fold the strips of paper to make 6 standups
- Take one colour and draw some stick figure soldiers onto 5 of the standups (the 5 enemy armies). Take another colour and draw some stick figure soldiers onto the 6th standup (the Israelite army).
- Stand up your five enemy armies on one side and the Israelite army on the other side.
- Cut a piece of paper into a circle and colour it yellow (the sun).
- Attach your “sun” to a stick (ice cream stick/skewer/straw/stick from your garden).
- Take your “hail” (any kind of hard sweets/marbles/rocks) and rain it down on the 5 enemy armies. Talk about how God fought for the Israelites and helped them to win this battle, even though they were outnumbered.
- Hold up the sun over the battle and talk about how the sun stood still and the day was longer so the Israelite army could defeat their enemies. God can do anything!

