

Conquest of Canaan

Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Be strong and courageous.—Joshua 10:25

There are many unusual stories in the Bible that tell us of God's dealings with and watch care over his chosen people, the Israelites.

In Canaan, the city of Jericho was heavily walled for protection against its enemies. God directed Joshua to take the city in a strange way. At the end of seven days of marching around the city while blowing trumpets, the walls crumbled. Joshua and his small army were able to take the city easily.

The story about Joshua's long day when he commanded the sun and moon to stand still, sounds strange; however, it is not to be understood literally. Had they actually stopped, the earth and entire solar system would have been destroyed. The Scripture is speaking of the *sunlight* and the *moonlight*. These were darkened by a violent storm in which great hailstones rained down on Joshua's enemies, killing many. The intense darkness frightened the Midianites and confused them. They were used to bright sunlit days, and indeed, even worshipped the sun! The darkness of the day and the moonless night gave Joshua the advantage and he won the battle. This is one of several ways to interpret this incident of the sun and moon standing still (Joshua 10:12-15).

Gideon had an army of 32,000 men, but God had him reduce the number to three hundred! With this tiny army, Gideon defeated the Midianites and the land was at peace for forty years.

Read the fascinating account of Gideon's little band in Judges chapters 6, 7, and 8.

Another army captain, Jephthah, promised God that he would give him the first thing that came to meet him when returning home after his victory over the Ammonites. The "thing" that came to meet him was his daughter, his only child! Jephthah understood that a vow to God was a serious thing—if you do not want to pay a vow, do not make it (Ecclesiastes 5:4,5). His daughter felt the same way and did not rebel against her father. She asked him only for a little time to go into the mountains with some of her friends and prepare herself for a life without a husband and children; the rest of her life would be dedicated to God's service (Judges 11).



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Jephthah's daughter was given to the Lord by her father. She lived without a husband, completely devoted to God.