

RISE

Joshua Series, Episode 3 (Joshua 9-12)

Sunday, September 24. Joshua 10:1-43

Joshua's hasty and careless decision to make a treaty with the people of Gibeon, now puts the Israelites in the difficult position of being called on to defend Gibeon from a massive attack from the kings of the surrounding areas. The Lord tells Joshua "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hand. Not a man of them shall stand before you" (vs. 8). Trusting God, Joshua marches all night to engage in battle. As the Israelites arrive at Gibeon, God intervenes, causing panic among the opposing warriors and hurling down large hailstones from heaven. Needing more time to defeat the opposing armies, Joshua prays to God in front of all of Israel, "Let the sun stand still over Gibeon, and the moon over the valley of Aijalon" (vs. 12). The Lord answers Joshua's prayer, with the sun staying in the sky for an entire day "for the Lord fought for Israel" (vs. 14, ESV).

--Think back over the past few years. What's one example of how being careless with a decision (not seeking God but relying on your own feelings and understanding) ended up being a detriment to you at a later date?

--When you make a spiritual mistake (failing to seek God, not obeying God, giving into temptation, etc.) how do you respond?

--What does the treaty with the Gibeonites reveal about how small compromises can have BIG consequences?

--When has God fought for you? Identify one example.

--God provides for and protects (fights for) Israel even after they fail to seek Him about entering into a treaty with the Gibeonites. What does this show about God's character? His love for us? His faithfulness? How He will respond to us when we make poor choices and fall short?

--Is recognizing your mistakes and asking God for forgiveness a regular part of your prayers? Why is this important?

--Do you pray for miraculous things? Why or why not? Is there an area in which you need to pray for a miracle today?

Monday, September 25. Joshua 9:1-17

After Israel's victory over Ai, the kings of the surrounding areas are filled with fear and draw together in preparation for war. But the people of Gibeon, choose a different approach. Instead of joining with the group and readying themselves to fight, they turn to deception as a means of protection. Purposefully armed with worn-out clothing and supplies and old, dried out food, ambassadors from Gibeon travel to Gilgal where they lie to Joshua about who they are and from where they have come, and ask for a peace treaty with Israel. Without consulting the Lord, Joshua makes a treaty only to discover three days later that he had made a covenant with the very people God had instructed the Israelites to drive out from the land.

Why do you think Joshua didn't bother to consult God about entering a peace treaty with this group of foreigners? When or in what type of situation are you most tempted to take action without consulting God? What does Joshua's example show about the dangers of developing an over-confident attitude, becoming prideful and/or losing our focus after a victory or experiencing a high point?

Think about a time when you ignored a prompting or instruction from God? Why did you respond like you did (i.e. what was your attitude or thinking)? Based on this account, why is it important for us to do homework (verify details, check into someone's story, secure references) when we're making a decision about partnering with another person either informally or formally like when we sign a contract or enter into a business arrangement?

Tuesday, September 26. Joshua 9:18-27

After learning of the deception of the Gibeonites, the Israelites travel to the cities of Gibeon to confront their neighbors. The people of Israel are disgruntled about the treaty, but Joshua and his leadership team make the decision to honor the oath they had taken in front of the Lord. So rather than attacking, they meet face-to-face with the Gibeonite leaders and Joshua imposes on the Gibeonites the task of being servants to the Israelites as cutters of wood and drawers of water.

When someone takes advantage or wrongs you, how do you tend to respond? Is it your practice to meet with and address the offender? What does choosing to honor our word or uphold the terms of a contract or agreement (even if we've received the short end of the deal) convey to others about us as followers of Christ? What's one thing you noticed or learned about resolving conflict from this account? Based on this passage, what value would you say God places on promises and oaths? What does God expect of us when we choose to enter into a covenant or contract?

Wednesday, September 27. Joshua 10:1-43

Joshua's hasty and careless decision to make a treaty with the people of Gibeon, now puts the Israelites in the difficult position of being called on to defend Gibeon from a massive attack from the kings of the surrounding areas. The Lord tells Joshua "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hand. Not a man of them shall stand before you" (vs. 8). Trusting God, Joshua marches all night to engage in battle. As the Israelites arrive at Gibeon, God intervenes, causing panic among the opposing warriors and hurling down large hailstones from heaven. Needing more time to defeat the opposing armies, Joshua prays to God in front of all of Israel, "Let the sun stand still over Gibeon, and the moon over the valley of Aijalon" (vs. 12). The Lord answers Joshua's prayer, with the sun staying in the sky for an entire day "for the Lord fought for Israel" (vs. 14, ESV).

What's one example of how being careless with a decision (not seeking God but relying on your own feelings and understanding) ended up being a detriment to you at a later date? What does the treaty with the Gibeonites reveal about how small compromises can have BIG consequences? When has God fought for you (identify one example)? Is recognizing your mistakes and asking God for forgiveness a regular part of your prayers? Why is this important? Do you pray for miraculous things? Why or why not? Is there an area in which you need to pray for a miracle today?

Thursday, September 28. Joshua 11:1-23

Upon Israel's defeating of the southern kings and armies, the northern kings rally together to fight the Israelites. Their combined armies were massive in number and in strength ("their horses and chariots, they covered the landscape like the sand on the seashore" (vs. 4)). The Lord speaks to Joshua and tells him not to be afraid of them because "by this time tomorrow, I will hand all of them over to Israel as dead men" (vs. 6). With their focus fully on following God, the Israelites engage in brutal warfare with these armies. God fulfills His promise to Joshua, giving Israel victory over the entire northern region. NOTE: The details we're given about these battles are violent and brutal. They are difficult to read and certainly difficult for us to understand. So as you read, keep in mind that this was a different time in history, it was a very different culture and that God's ways are not like ours.

When you encounter a situation or circumstance that looks like it's insurmountable (financial problems, relationship struggles, health concerns, emotional problems, work conditions, etc.), how easy or difficult do you find it to trust God? Based on what we've read thus far in Joshua, how should we respond? When you read the Bible, do you believe and then claim the promises you read in God's Word?

Friday, September 29. Joshua 12:1-23

Joshua 12 gives us a historical summary of the battles of the Israelites under Moses and Joshua along with the corresponding kings and lands that were overtaken and defeated.

The process of the Israelites taking over the Promised Land was not a quick or easy one. What does that tell us about what we should expect as we navigate and move forward in life? How does reading a historical summary or synopsis of the many battles required of Israel impact your perspective about life challenges and encountering difficulties as you serve and work for God?

Saturday, September 30.

Review and consider Joshua 9-12. Read Joshua 13-16 in preparation for Sunday's message.