

Joshua 9

This old passage speaks pointedly to us about issues that are new and up to date.

Intro

Keep in mind that we are seeing the book of Joshua from three perspectives

1. It records the history of Israel taking the land
2. It pictures the work of God in the life of the believer.

1 Corinthians 10:11

Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

In particular Joshua illustrates how to live a life of victory in our relationship with Christ

We will see some very practical illustrations of how to walk with Jesus

3. It pictures how God works in and through a congregation.

We will see again the all too familiar tale of leaders making foolish decisions because they failed to seek the mind of God

It is important to see the setting.

While Israel was at Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, reaffirming their commitment to the Lord, the kings in Canaan were getting ready to attack

Right after committing to obey the Word of God they fail to wait upon the ways of God.

It is not enough to look at your Bible as a manual for living, we must see it as a means for God to carry on relationship with us.

God wants to speak into our lives.

We need to learn to hear His voice

The geographical description shows that the kings opposing Israel came from all parts of the land of Canaan:

Hills - The area which belonged later to the tribes of Judah and Ephraim

Valleys - All the low country from Carmel to Gaza

Coasts - The shores from Tyre to the plain of Joppa.

The people's who lived in this area are listed in

Nu 13:29)

*The **Amalekites** dwell in the land of the South; the **Hittites**, the Jebusites, and the **Amorites** dwell in the mountains; and the **Canaanites** dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan."*

Joshua 9:1-2

*And it came to pass when **all the kings** who were on **this side** of the **Jordan**, in the **hills** and in the **lowland** and in all the **coasts** of the Great Sea toward Lebanon—the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite—heard about it, that **they gathered together to fight** with Joshua and Israel with one accord.*

When enemies become friends

The first part of the story explains how Israel's victories over Jericho and Ai caused many Canaanite nations to come together in a united effort to fight with Joshua and Israel

Prior to this they were enemies of one another

- The walls around Jericho were not erected to ward off Israel
- These kingdoms often fought against one another and prior to Israel's arrival they were each other's greatest enemies.

But now they have joined forces to fight against Israel

- We see this described in psalm 2 regarding the nations of the world opposing the ways of God

- We see this with the sadducees and Pharisees
- And we see this with Herod and Pilate

Luke 23:12

And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other.

The Canaanites were so rooted in their idolatrous practices that they joined forces to fight against the work of God

What we learn from the Canaanite Coalition

It is in the nature of man to fight with God

When we read that Jacob wrestled God it is not an **anomaly**. All of us have wrestled with God.

The shocking thing about his story is that he was victorious.

He won because he surrendered

We win when we stop fighting and give in to His ways

Are you currently wrestling with God?

It is high time you gave up and surrendered to His will for your life

The sooner you do the sooner you will begin to experience the abundant life He has provided for you

Real life will never be found in disobedience to God

And God's standards will never change!

But this coalition that is established to rid Canaan of the Israeli threat is not the subject of the chapter.

Instead we read:

Joshua 9:3-6

But when the inhabitants of **Gibeon** heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, **they worked craftily**, and went and **pretended** to be ambassadors. And they **took old sacks** on their donkeys, **old wineskins** torn and mended, **old** and patched **sandals** on their feet, and **old garments** on themselves; and all the **bread** of their provision was **dry and moldy**. And they **went** to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and **said** to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; now therefore, **make a covenant** with us."

Israel was not given free reign to conquer the world. They were never called to form an empire but to inhabit a specific area of land that was promised to them.

Instead of conquering the nations around them they were to be a light to the nations reflecting the true God so the gentiles would be drawn into relationship with God

But, Israel was forbidden to make treaties with the canaanites. And for good reason, they would lead Israel away from God

This was clearly explained in the Law

Ex 23:32

You shall make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against Me. For if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you."

And it was repeated to the second generation

Deuteronomy 7:2

and when the Lord your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.

When they failed they were led into idolatry and sin

Judges 1:28

And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites under tribute, but did not completely drive them out.

This leads to the reoccurring theme of Judges; sin leads to suffering and servitude

This is also vividly illustrated in the personal life of Solomon

1 Kings 11:1

But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites—

1 Kings 11:4

For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David.

It seems that the Gibeonites new this, so they pretended to be from a far away land

Sometimes it is shocking that the world seems to have a better understanding of how a Christianshould behave than the Christian themselves

A Christian will think he is excercising his liberty by using foul language or sitting at a bar, but the world looks on thinking, "I thought that person was religious, I guess I was wrong"

Who were the Gibeonites?

Clearly they we're not a group of delegates from a distant land

- Gibeon was the capital city of the Hivtes. It was located in the hill country of Judah less than 10 miles from Jerusalem.
- In addition to Gibeon, the Hivites also inhabited the cities of cities were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath Jearim (Josh 9:17)

Gibeon was one of the chief cities in Canaan and the Hivites were feared by other tribes

Joshua 10:1-3

*Now it came to pass when Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai and had utterly destroyed it—as he had done to Jericho and its king, so he had done to Ai and its king—and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them, **that they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities**, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were mighty. Therefore Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon, saying,*

If you cannot beat em - join em

The Gibeonites were convinced they could never defeat Israel in war so they pursued peace.

They **pretend** to be someone they are not in order to become allies with Israel instead of targets

They worked craftily - a word meaning treacherously

They came up with a scheme to pretend to be from a distant land. Somehow they must have heard that Israel would not destroy distant people but were sent only to conquer Canaan.

To make their story believable they pretended to be ambassadors, took old sacks to carry their moldy provisions, wore torn garments and worn out shoes as they approached the Israeli camp.

Their goal was to make a peace treaty that would save their lives and their cities.

And their deception worked

Joshua and the leaders of Israel fell for it

Joshua 9:8

But they said to Joshua, "We are your servants."

And Joshua said to them, "Who are you, and where do you come from?"

This is somewhat comical

It is like the movie scene where the police officer is undercover and the thief asks him if he is a "cop"

How do you think he is going to respond?

- Oh, yeah man you got me. Here's my badge and gun
- Of course not, he is going to lie

And that is exactly what the Gibeonotes do

And israel fell for it

Joshua 9:14-15

Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the Lord. So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them.

Once they realized it, Joshua rebuked the Gibeonites and put them under servitude to Israel.

Joshua 9:20-21

This we will do to them: We will let them live, lest wrath be upon us because of the oath which we swore to them." And the rulers said to them, "Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers for all the congregation, as the rulers had promised them."

What we learn from the action of the Gibeonites

3 applications

- **First we learn something about the way our enemy works**

Warren Wiersbe had this to say:

For one thing, it reminds us that Christians are in a spiritual war and that deceptiveness is the primary tactic of our enemy, the devil.

Satan has his 'wiles' (Eph. 6:11).

He is able to transform himself into 'an angel of light' (2 Cor. 11:14).

He is especially fond of using ministers who are personable, warm and witty to distort the truth and deceive the people.

We know that Satan sometimes comes as a devouring lion

1 Peter 5:8

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

And sometimes he comes as a deceiving serpent

2 Corinthians 11:3

But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

He will even use the word of God as a weapon against the child of God

- He did it with Gibeon.

Israel was not to destroy the neighboring peoples

- He did it with Jesus when he insisted that our Lord throw Himself off the pinnacle of the Temple

- And does it to us

How many have had the word of God twisted in such a way that they are led into sin or stuck in its grip of guilt

Jesus spent ample time warning His followers against those false teachers who twist the scriptures.

The first church was plagued with such men

The only way to be victorious in that kind of battle is to be familiar with the what the Bible actually teaches and be quick to put it into practice in your life

Conversely many today who have sinned live trapped under the weight of guilt and feel as though they are destined to live second class Christian lives failing to understand that forgiveness is total and complete and available through the work of christ on the cross

- **Second we learn something about how the gospel works**

Mathew Henry wrote;

"Other people heard these tidings, and were driven thereby to make war upon Israel; but the Gibeonites were led to make peace with them. Thus the discovery of the glory and the grace of God in the gospel, is to some a savor of life unto life, but to others a savor of death unto death..."

"The same sun softens wax and hardens clay."

We see this clearly when the gospel is presented and one person is stirred to rage against it while another is stirred to surrender to it

Gibeon's deception cannot be justified . They were wrong in that they were liars and receivers, however their faith is to be commended.

In submitting to Israel they submitted to the God of Israel, which implied forsaking their idolatries

Israel was forbidden to make covenant with canaanites, but we have already seen them do just that with repentant people.

Rahab and her family forsook Jericho and joined with Israel and received pardon and protection under the divine contract.

The same will be true of the Hivites of Gibeon. They will remain forever under the covenant they made with Israel

Matthew Henry encourages us to do the same

"The way to avoid judgment is to meet it by repentance. Let us do like these Gibeonites, seek peace with God in the rags of abasement, and godly sorrow; so our sin shall not be our ruin. Let us be servants to Jesus, our blessed Joshua, and we shall live."

- **Thirdly we learn something about what we are saved into**

Servitude was the destiny of those cities that made their peace with the Israelites,

Deut 20:10–11

When you draw near to a city to fight against it, offer terms of peace to it. 11 And if it responds to you peaceably and it opens to you, then all the people who are found in it shall do forced labor for you and shall serve you.

When the Gibeonites were found out Joshua made them slaves of Israel

Joshua 9:21

And the rulers said to them, "Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers for all the congregation, as the rulers had promised them."

But Joshua placed them in service under the Levites, closest to the things of God.

Joshua 9:22-23

*Then Joshua called for them, and he spoke to them, saying, "Why have you deceived us, saying, 'We are very far from you,' when you dwell near us? Now therefore, you are cursed, and none of you shall be freed from being slaves—woodcutters and water carriers for the **house of my God.**"*

As a result the Gibeonites not only left their idolatry but became servants of the Lord

- As time goes on Israel never has a problem with the Gibeonites
- Later the tabernacle was pitched at Gibeon (2 Chron. 1:3);
- Still later some Gibeonites returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity and helped Nehemiah rebuild Jerusalem's wall (Neh. 3:7).

Such is the grace of God; those under the curse are saved and brought near unto the Lord and into His service

What we learn from the actions of the leaders of Israel

Their Spidey-Senses were tingling

Joshua 9:7

Then the men of Israel said to the Hivites, "Perhaps you dwell among us; so how can we make a covenant with you?"

Israel has an immediate question whether or not the Gibeonites are telling the truth

But when questioned the Gibeonites respond with evidence to support their claims

Joshua 9:12-13

This bread of ours we took hot for our provision from our houses on the day we departed to come to you. But now look, it is dry and moldy. And these wineskins which we filled were new, and see, they are torn; and these our garments and our sandals have become old because of the very long journey."

Joshua and the other leaders take the bait

Joshua 9:14

Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; **but they did not ask counsel of the Lord.**

This is the main lesson from the story

If we forget all else we should not forget this

- The leaders walked by sight and not by faith
- The leaders of Israel took the “scientific approach” instead of the “spiritual approach.”

They depended on their own senses, **examined** the “facts,” **discussed** the matter, and **agreed** in their conclusion. **It was all very logical and convincing**, but it was all **wrong**.

From an article entitled - "Keys To Making a Good Decision"

1. Identify the decision to be made
2. Do your homework. Gather as much information as you can
3. Brainstorm and come up with several possible choices.
4. Weigh the probabilities or possible outcomes.
5. Make a list of the pros and cons and Prioritize
6. Solicit opinions and obtain feedback from those you trust or have had a similar situation to contend with.
7. Make the decision and monitor your results.

In an article in Forbes magazine titled 6 Tips for making decision

"Why do leaders fail? They make poor choices that lead to bad decisions. And in some cases they compound bad decision upon bad decision. You cannot separate leadership from decisioning"

To counteract this they suggested

- Go with your Gut instincts
- Look at and analyze the data
- Let others give input
- Do a risk reward ratio
- Ask if it the right thing to do
- Make the decision

Some of these are very wise and practical tips, however that all fail to suggest the most important step in decision making - **we must seek the Lord!**

It was not that they were sloppy in their investigation but they were alone in their decision. It wasn't that they didn't think but that they didn't pray.

In this case 'Yahweh's direction was available but was ignored.'

One commentator writes, 'No proposed course of conduct can be so clear to a Christian as to excuse him from the duty of seeking direction from above.'

BKC

Did Joshua think the evidence to be so beyond question that they needed no advice from Yahweh? Did he think the matter too routine or unimportant to "bother" God with it? Whatever the cause it was a mistake to trust their own judgment and make their own plans. This holds true for believers in all ages (James 4:13–15).

What should they have done

This failure was contrary to the explicit instructions the Lord gave to Joshua concerning how to discern his will, that they should consult him, by going to Eleazar the priest, who would consult the Lord using the Urim

Numbers 27:21

And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before the LORD. At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he and all the people of Israel with him, the whole congregation."

We are told in James

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5, NKJV).

We should seek direction from God

9:16 - in three days,

- Three days of waiting would have weeded them out

But three days while an army is forming to attack you is a life time

There are always pressing matters than make waiting difficult

- But waiting on the Lord is necessary, we cannot find the mid of the Lord without it

WAITING ON GOD

Joshua used all his senses to make a decision.

It is the same decision we all would have come to unless we chose to seek the Lord

This is the missing element in many of our calculations

We often neglect to seek God

- Why is that important?

Proverbs 21:2

Every way of a man is right in his own eyes,

But the Lord weighs the hearts.

Proverbs 28:5

evil men do not understand justice,

But those who seek the Lord understand all.

Jesus needs to change the way His disciples think

- Sermon on mount

- Servanthood
- Calling fire down from heaven
- Going to Samaria for lunch

We need to learn to think about things the way God does

- How do we wait on the Lord?

Step one - wait

Step two - seek

This is done in the word and prayer

His is also done through seeking godly counsel

Step three - act

We must do what we are told even if it does not make sense or is difficult

Conclusion

- If you are fighting it is time to surrender
- If you have been saved, you are in a covenant designed to keep you close to God and use you for His kingdom
- If you are needing direction WAIT