



"REASONS TO REJOICE"

"Your Words were found and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16

KEEP CALM AND MARCH ON!

Marching through the Book of Joshua: Lesson 12

We ended Joshua chapter 8 with the Israelites standing between two mountains, dead center in the land of Canaan. Israel performed an impressive ceremony to remind themselves of the importance of God's law and to renew their covenant with Him.

In our lesson this week, we see Israel fail once more by taking matters into their own hands, relying on their own judgment. As we read our text, our hearts want to cry out, "Don't do it, Joshua! You know better!" As we do, our heart also reminds us of how often we continue to do the same thing. Joshua is a man, like us. Don't be quick to point the finger at Joshua. How does that saying go? There are 4 more fingers pointing back at you?

1. Read Joshua 9:1-27. As you observe the text, answer the following questions: (You can also jot down notes, facts, questions, etc.)
 - a. What is this story about?
 - b. Who are the main characters?
 - c. Where is it taking place?
 - d. Which verse sums up the reason for Israel's mistake?
2. What people groups are mentioned in verse 1?

3. Six of the seven "people of Canaan" are mentioned. Which one is missing? Read Joshua 3:10.

Joshua 5:1 says that the hearts of the people of Canaan were melting. Rahab told the spies that the inhabitants of Canaan were "fainthearted" (Joshua 2:9). The city of Jericho was "shut up" because they feared Israel (Joshua 6:1). Joshua 6:27 tells us that Joshua's fame spread throughout the land. The kings, mentioned in Joshua 9:1, decided that enough was enough. It was time to do something about these people they were hearing so much about. The fear of Israel united these people together.

4. Locate Gibeon on a map.

Gibeon was about six miles northwest of Jerusalem and about six miles southwest of Ai. Gibeon was a "royal city" and a town of the Hivites. It was known as a great city, mightier than Ai (Joshua 10:2). It was located in the hill country.

5. What cities made up the Gibeonites? (vs 17)
6. Read Deuteronomy 20:10-15. What was Israel permitted to do with nations that were outside of Canaan?
7. What were the Israelites obliged to do to the Canaanites, according to Deuteronomy 20:16-19 and 7:1-6?
8. Do you think that the Gibeonites knew these rules? Why or why not?

The Gibeonites used their knowledge for their own benefit, and to protect themselves from being annihilated. We see two courses of action taken by the enemy. One was to attack (9:1-2) while the other was to penetrate and make peace (9:24). Satan uses the same tactics today against Christians to draw them away from the Lord. We'll look at his strategies more closely later on in the lesson. Isn't it interesting to think about? Are you under attack or has there been someone close to you that has deceived you?

For our memory verse this week, I've chosen verse 14. It's not the typical encouraging verse or promise, but I pray that it will serve as a reminder to us about how important asking God for wisdom really is.

Memory Verse of the Week: "But they did not ask counsel of the Lord."
Joshua 9:14

Second Day

Review your memory verse. Does this describe you?

1. Read Joshua 9 again. Did you pick up any more details reading it the second time?
2. What did the Gibeonites pretend to be, according to verse 4? What is that?
3. How did the Gibeonites plan to deceive Israel?
4. What "treaty" or "covenant" were they trying to make?
5. How did Israel respond in verse 7? Read Exodus 23:32.
6. Why weren't they supposed to do this? Read Exodus 34:12.
7. Do you remember what a "Hivite" is? Read Genesis 10:15-17, 36:2, and Deuteronomy 7:1 to refresh your memory.
8. Why did the Gibeonites "say" they came?

9. When they told Joshua all they had heard about Israel, why do you think they left out the victories of Jericho and Ai?

Covenants were very important to the people of the Ancient East. Israel was the only nation known to have a covenant with a god. Covenants with men were common and were sworn in the names of their various gods, but not with a god personally.

10. Who was it that made the decision to make the treaty for Israel?

It's thought that the rulers of the assemblies consisted of chosen representatives from each tribe. These men of "fighting age" would sit on a type of committee.

11. Why did Joshua and the children of Israel make this decision?

Ouch! Tomorrow we get to look at our own personal lives and the decisions we make every day. (Sounds fun, huh?) Let's **"rejoice"** that even when we make "dumb" decisions, God is a God of forgiveness and He uses our mistakes to teach us important lessons. Will you **"rejoice"** with me?

Third Day

What's your memory verse?

Today we will be taking a look at God's wisdom versus man's wisdom. What is wisdom? Wisdom is "knowledge guided by understanding" or "how to correctly apply knowledge."

1. Who is wisdom? Read Romans 16:27, Jude 25, and Proverbs 2:6-7.
2. How valuable is God's wisdom to us? Proverbs 16:16, 8:11

3. What are some of the benefits of having wisdom?
 - a. Proverbs 3:13-18
 - b. Proverbs 5:1-2
 - c. Ecclesiastes 7:11-12
 - d. Isaiah 33:6

4. How do we get wisdom? How much can we have? Read James 1:5

5. What makes us wise? Read 2 Timothy 3:15, Deuteronomy 4:6

6. Fill in the blanks:
 - a. We are to _____ in wisdom. (Colossians 4:5)
 - b. He who _____ is wise. (Proverbs 11:30)
 - c. Don't walk as _____, but as wise. (Ephesians 5:15)

7. Read Matthew 25:1-13. Why were five of the virgins considered wise? What application do you see for yourself in this parable?

God wants to give us wisdom. He is not "stingy" with His wisdom; He will give it to us liberally (James 1:5). He wants us to come to Him for it. He wants to be the one we come to with our questions, our problems, our concerns, and our fears. He wants us to do the "right thing," but He wants to show us what the "right thing" is! When we continually lean on our own understanding (Proverbs 3:5-6), we make decisions based on what "we think" instead of what God's Word says. This, my friends, is not a wise thing to do!

8. Read 1 Corinthians 1:25-3 and 3:18-20. What does Paul say about the wisdom of man? Why does God choose the "foolish things of the world to confound the wise"?

9. What are some of the "foolish things" that God has used in your life as a testimony to Him, to confound the wise?

10. Looking back at your week, can you think of any decisions that you made without seeking God's counsel? What was the result?

11. All of Israel was affected by their mistake of not seeking God's counsel. How was someone affected by your mistake?

12. How does the world see the Gospel? Why? Read 1 Corinthians 1:18

13. What does Paul say that God will ultimately do to the "wisdom of the wise" in 1 Corinthians 1:19?

14. Can you think of anything that the world thinks is wise and yet the Christian would see as foolish? Give some examples.

We'll end our discussion here on wisdom for today. Colossians 2:3 tells us in God are hidden "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Romans 11:33 says, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" We have access to the wisdom of the Father through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit! What a **"Reason to Rejoice"**!

Fourth Day

Review your memory verse. Has it been reminding you to seek God?

1. Read Joshua 9:15-27.
2. Did Joshua honor the treaty that was made with the Gibeonites, even if they had been deceived? Why?
3. What did the congregation think about that decision?
4. According to Joshua, what would happen to them if they killed them?
5. What curse did Joshua put on them?
6. What did the Gibeonites think about this? Did they argue with Joshua?
7. Who eventually broke this covenant with the Gibeonites? What were the Gibeonites given to make up for it? Read 2 Samuel 21:1-9.

The Gibeonites were given the job of being woodcutters and water carriers for the house of God. Being the size that they were, Israel used a lot of wood to burn the daily sacrifices at the temple. They also used a huge amount of water for cleaning.

The Gibeonites were put in a place that allowed them to become familiar with who God was and were made to dwell continually in the Lord's house. Later in Scripture, the Gibeonites were referred to as part of the "Nethinim." "Nethinim" means "the given ones," and this term was given to those who were set apart to do the menial work of the sanctuary. Originally the Levites were given to Aaron and his sons (Numbers 3:9, 8:19) to do this work. David then gave the Nethinim over to the service of the Levites

(Ezra 8:20) to relieve their duty. After being taken captive by Babylon, they even helped Nehemiah rebuild the wall of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 3:26).

The Nethinim most likely lived by the temple and were supported by the contributions of the people through their tithes and the temple treasury. They were governed by a chief of their own body (Ezra 2:43, Nehemiah 7:46). They conformed to the Jewish religion (Exodus 12:48, Deuteronomy 29:11, Nehemiah 10:28), but they occupied a very low position. No specific description of their duties is given in Scripture, except to relieve the priests of the menial work. Eventually they seem to have merged into the Jewish population as there is no mention of them in the New Testament. (You can find this information in Unger's Bible Dictionary.)

God has an interesting way of dealing with unbelievers. Many times He puts them in positions where they are continually around the things of God. He put me in that position for many years before I accepted Him as my Savior.

8. Were you ever put in the place of the Gibeonites? When? What effect did it have on you? Is there someone you know who is there now?

9. What does this tell us about the character of God?

God wanted Israel to remain pure and undefiled by other pagan nations and their practices. God wants us to remain pure also and not be conformed to this world in any way (Roman 12:2). We are told not to be "yoked" with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14), but we are called to do the work of an evangelist (2 Timothy 4:5).

10. What is the balance between remaining unmixed with the world and being an example of Christ to unbelievers? What can happen if we become too attached to the world or if we never allow ourselves to be around the world? Give Scriptures to support your answer.

11. Discuss the dangers of becoming business partners or best friends with unbelievers.

12. Are you too closely tied in with the world in any area? Maybe in your job or your friendships? What steps can you take to get back in balance?

This ends our discussion for today. I pray that we continue to seek the Lord in all of our ways. I pray that the Holy Spirit continually fills us with the desire to remain pure and spotless in this sinful world. By the way, what's your **"Reason to Rejoice"** today?

Fifth Day

Write out your memory verse. How did God use it in your life this week?

Breaking a covenant made in God's name was not to be done. This would dishonor God by insinuating that He could not be trusted. Their reproach had been taken away at Gilgal (Joshua 5) and they sure didn't want to bring it back!

The Israelites had made a wrong decision with lasting consequences. We make many mistakes and are also forced to live with the results. To quote Dale Davis, **"Be faithful to God in the wake of our mistakes, and be assured that His mercy does not cease because we have been wrong. We must glorify and magnify the grace of God in our messes."**

1. Why do you think the Lord didn't just override Israel's treaty and command that it be broken?
2. Do Christians today ever make promises of things in God's name that He wouldn't approve of? Can you give an example? Does God always honor them? Why or why not? Be ready to discuss your answer.
3. Explain why it is so important for a Christian to keep their word. Read Matthew 5:37, Colossians 3:9, and Titus 1:2 for help.

The Israelites were deceived very easily by the Gibeonites. I'm sure I would have fallen for it, too. We, too, can be deceived very easily. Satan is the deceiver (Revelation 12:9, John 8:44), and knowing this should cause us to walk carefully, knowing that he walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). The Word of God tells us not to be ignorant of his devices (2 Corinthians 2:11). He has many clever schemes, doesn't he? Let's look at a few of them.

4. What scheme did Satan use on Eve in the Garden? Genesis 3:1-5
5. What scheme did he try to use on Jesus when He was in the wilderness? Read Matthew 4:1-10. (Halleluia! It didn't work!)
6. What does 2 Corinthians 11:14-15 tell us that Satan can do? Give an example of this.
7. What are some ways that we can be deceived? Read Romans 16:17-18, Colossians 2:4, Ephesians 5:6.

8. Who else can easily deceive us? Read Jeremiah 17:9 and 1 Corinthians 3:18.
9. How can we discern between good and evil? Read Hebrews 5:13-14 and 4:12.

We must continually pray for the gift of discernment (1 Corinthians 12:10). We must test every spirit to see if it is from God (1 John 4:1-3). The deceitfulness of this world will continue to increase (2 Timothy 3:12-13) which is why it's so important to know God's Word (2 Timothy 3:14-17), pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17), and be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). This will keep us armed and ready to fight the battle before us.

10. Have you ever been deceived by someone because you didn't pray first? (Should I say, how often does it happen?)
11. What does the word "discernment" mean? Explain the balance between being discerning and being critical.
12. What was David's prayer in Psalm 119:18? Is that your prayer?

After studying about some of the devices that Satan uses against God's children, let us remember never to be afraid of him. 1 John 4:4 says, "Greater is He that is in us, than he who is in the world." Satan is not all-knowing, all-powerful, or almighty! John tells us that there is victory in Christ and that those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God are overcomers! (1 John 5:4-5). Fear not, the Lord your God is with you wherever you go! (Joshua 1:9)

To wrap up our lesson, let's end with these two questions:

13. What did you learn about God this week?

14. How and why is this story of the Gibeonites relevant to us today?

I pray that we will learn to "test the spirits" and discern good from evil, and the truth from the lies. Joshua and the rulers of Israel made a mistake that we often make ourselves. I read a quote this week that reminded me of Joshua: **"A Christian is not one who never falls, it is one who gets up and goes on every time he falls."** Don't let the enemy, your flesh, or the world keep you down, ladies. Get up! March forward! And remember, "Hold fast to the Word of Life, so that we may rejoice in the day of Christ, that we have not run in vain or labored in vain!" Philippians 2:16

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