

Sunday—Overview of Joshua chapter 9



Joshua Chapter 9

August 21-26

Review:

In our time with Joshua in Chapter 8 last week, we saw that God gave him and the Israelites a second chance to get things right; to trust Him and His ways of approaching the enemy city of Ai, rather than their way. So, Joshua must have never forgotten that lesson or messed up again, right? Wrong!...and so we will see this week as we look at the next episode.

Many of the good leadership lessons life has for us take several attempts (and failures) to learn—we don't always learn the first time. Joshua and his leaders certainly didn't.

This week, we will see Joshua and the Israelites suffer consequences for once again neglecting to consult God on a big decision. And again, we will see that God gives them (and us) the ability and where-with-all to confront our mistakes and redirect them into something good. Thank God He is able to turn our sour lemons into lemonade!

Read:

Joshua chapter 9. If you are in a family setting, read it aloud together as a family, then briefly discuss what you read and come to some initial conclusions. Finally, pray that this passage would come to life this week!

Monday—Leaders are Targets!

Review:

Leaders of God's people seem to be the biggest targets of God's enemies! We have seen this a number of times with Joshua already. Furthermore, the leaders of God's people are held accountable by God Himself for their decisions and He can really lay into them when they blow it! (see Joshua 7:10-12). God knows this though, that is why from day one of Joshua's leadership God told him to "be strong and very courageous". Today we will see Joshua make another leadership blunder...and we will learn from it.

Read:

Joshua 9:1-15

Reflect:

1. Look closely at 9:1-2. The enemies of Israel all rallied together to go to war against Israel...and who else within Israel specifically? Why him?
2. Look at verse 3 now. Look at who the Gibeonites seem to think was almost personally responsible for Israel's success at Jericho?
3. Think about all the ways Joshua was a target by Israel's new neighbors, for better or worse. How challenging must life have been for Joshua with so many different crosshairs aimed at him? How did he handle it?

Relate:

Being a leader is filled with both rewards and challenges. Leaders of God's faith communities are blessed and challenged in many ways. Like Joshua, they are often targets of the enemies within and outside of the Church.

Your leaders need your support!!! I (Pastor Scott) will admit that!!

Here are real ways you can support and encourage your spiritual leaders:

1. Pray for them. Just stop and pray for them in any way God leads you. Ask how to best pray for them and their families.
2. Encourage them with words. In writing, in person, however. Encourage them when they are doing well, and when they seem to be challenged.
3. Hold them accountable. Let them know you love them and want the best for the community they lead and give feedback on potential areas of growth.

Research:

For more on church leadership, read 1 Timothy 2:1-4 and Hebrews 13:7-8.

Tuesday—An Unhealthy Alliance

Review:

We have seen how Joshua and the leaders of Israel were deceived by the caravan from Gibeon. Why were they fooled? The answer is clear: they "*did not inquire of the Lord*" (v. 14). As we read the first half of chapter 9 again today, it is important to know that in the ancient Middle East, a covenant or treaty with a neighboring nation was taken very seriously and it was considered a highly dishonorable thing to renege on a treaty or contract of peace.

Read:

Joshua 9:1-15 again today

Reflect:

1. Why did the ruse/deception of the Gibeonites work? What great lengths did they go through to pull it off?
2. Consider all of the ways the Gibeonites deceived Joshua and the leaders:
 - 1) The distance of their country 2) The condition of their clothing and food 3) Their identity as a delegation 4) Their mission 5) Their status as Israel's "servants", not her enemies.
3. Consider how flattering it might have been for Joshua and Israel's leaders to think that these people had pilgrimaged so far to make peace with them.

Relate:

What is a main lesson to be learned here? This: People will tell you what you want to hear in order to get you to do what they want you to do! But even more, we must be wise when we consider partnerships or entering into agreements with others who do not share our faith and values.

What do we do? How do we decide? Here are some ideas to consider today:

1. Covenant with God above all others. Your word to Him trumps all others so ask Him for help when considering any other agreements/partnerships.
2. If you are considering an alliance or partnership, truly seek God's heart on it. It might be an amazing opportunity. Or it might end up being a deeply painful situation. Stop now, pray for God's leading and guidance.