

Joshua Chapter 9.v. 1 – 10: v. 28– Dealing with deception of the enemy.

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*,² that they gathered together to fight with Joshua and Israel with one accord.³ But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai,⁴ they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended,⁵ old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry *and* moldy.⁶ 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.”⁷ Then the men of Israel said to the Hivites, “Perhaps you dwell among us; so how can we make a covenant with you?”⁸ But they said to Joshua, “We *are* your servants.” And Joshua said to them, “Who *are* you, and where do you come from?”⁹ So they said to him: “From a very far country your servants have come, because of the name of the LORD your God; for we have heard of His fame, and all that He did in Egypt,¹⁰ and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who *were* beyond the Jordan—to Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who was at Ashtaroth.¹¹ Therefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, ‘Take provisions with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say to them, “We *are* your servants; now therefore, make a covenant with us.”’¹² 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.¹³ 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.”¹⁴ Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the LORD.¹⁵ 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.¹⁶ And it happened at the end of three days, after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they *were* their neighbors who dwelt near them.¹⁷ Then the children of Israel journeyed and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities *were* Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath Jearim.¹⁸ But the children of Israel did not attack them, because the rulers of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the congregation complained against the rulers.¹⁹ Then all the rulers said to all the congregation, “We have sworn to them by the LORD God of Israel; now therefore, we may not touch them.²⁰ 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.”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.”²² 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?²³ 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.”²⁴ So they answered Joshua and said, “Because your servants were clearly told that the LORD your God commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you; therefore we were very much afraid for our lives because of you, and have done this thing.²⁵ And now, here we are, in your hands; do with us as it seems good and right to do to us.”²⁶ So he did to them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, so that they did not kill them.²⁷ And that day Joshua made them woodcutters and water carriers for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, in the place which He would choose, even to this day.

Introduction

Last week in our series on Joshua we discovered that God can bring success out of failure.

The Israelite nation failed to conquer Ai in chapter 7 because there was sin in the camp.

Once that sin was dealt with and the people were punished by God, then the Israelites could move forward to conquer more of the land. The Israelites destroyed the city of Ai and its inhabitants because they listen to God’s word, they trusted in God’s word, and they followed God’s word 100%.

God was judging the nation of Canaan because of its sin and He was using His chosen people as His instrument of judgement. This was God's Holy war against SIN.

Sin is serious in the eyes of God. This is why God had to send His only Son, Jesus Christ, to come to this sinful world. Jesus Christ died to take the punishment that we deserve for our sin. It is only by God's GRACE and MERCY that we can be forgiven through Jesus Christ.

When you become a Christian you are rescued from the wrath of God to come.

Only as we understand that God is a Holy God and He hates SIN, will we really appreciate our Salvation in Jesus. If you only learn one thing from the book of Joshua, learn that SIN is serious in the eyes of God and that He must punish sin.

We now move on to the next section in Joshua.

Chapter 9 v. 1 – Chapter 10: v.28 is a long section but not a difficult section to understand, however there are some important things in these chapters that we can apply to our lives today.

Chapter 9 involves the deception of Satan in the lives of God's people and the consequences of that deception. Chapter 10 highlights the greatness of God in helping His people win the battle. Joshua's longest day is an amazing miracle in the Bible.

Satan doesn't always come as a roaring lion. (1 Peter 5: v. 8) He also comes as a deceiving serpent. (2 Cor. 11: v. 3) In this chapter he comes as a deceiving serpent.

I will divide this section into three main parts.

1. Chapter 9: v. 1-15 deals with the deception of the enemy.

In the text of verses 1-4 of chapter 9 we are told of two reactions to the defeat of Jericho and Ai by the surrounding nations. The first reaction in v. 1-2 is for the enemies to get united against Israel. They realized that they couldn't fight Israel alone, so they all united together to destroy Israel.

However there was one group of people that didn't unite with this army. These were the Gibeonites. They only lived about 25 miles from the Israelite camp. (34 K.M.)

In v. 4 - 15 we are told that some of these Gibeonites worked in a very crafty way in order to deceive Joshua and the Elders of Israel to make a covenant with them so that they would be protected from the invading Israelite army.

On the outside the men gave the appearance that they had travelled from a distant country.

(Joshua 9:v. 4-5)

⁴ they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, ⁵ old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry *and* moldy.

In v. 7-8 we read that the men were questioned about their sincerity.

However the answers that they gave deceived Joshua.

It would be a good thing to write down this method of deception and be careful that we are not deceived in the same way. These were their answers.

1. Their answer was vague about their country. They were not specific.
2. They declared themselves to be servants of Israel

3. They complimented the God of Israel about historical events in the past, but not the recent events. If they lived nearby they could have quoted Jericho or Ai, but that would have revealed their identity. They only mentioned the rescue from Egypt and the battle in the wilderness.
4. They wanted to make an immediate covenant with Israel, declaring to be available as their servants.

On top of this they pointed out that their moldy bread, wineskins and clothing were worn out because of their long journey.

Basically the Gibeonites told a pack of lies. The Bible tells us that Satan is a liar and the Father of LIES.

(John 8: v. 44)

⁴⁴You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.

In v. 14 we are told why the Gibeonites succeeded and why Joshua was so gullible in this situation.

Joshua9: v. 14

¹⁴Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the LORD.

Joshua and the Elders failed to seek God on the matter of these men. They didn't pray about it. If they had prayed about it then God would have revealed the deception to them.

Joshua and his Elders walked by sight and not by faith.

It is important that we get some correct application to our lives today from this lesson.

Application

The leaders of Israel took the scientific approach, instead of the spiritual approach.

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

I want to say something very important here. The greatest deception that can come our way in the Christian life will come from people who claim that they are Christians.

They will declare themselves, like the Gibeonites to be servants of God.

2 Peter 2 v. 1-3

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction. ² And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. ³ By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.

1 John 4: v. 1

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Even if these professing Christians are high level scientists or academics, don't be deceived by them, search the scriptures to discover for yourself if what they are saying is true to the Bible.

In Acts 17: v. 11 the Berean Jews searched the scriptures to find out whether Paul as telling the TRUTH.

When I did my Bible degree with a seminary in the U.S. if I submitted any work or comment without a Bible verse to back it up, my professor put a red line through my work.

I soon learnt that what I thought about a Bible passage was worth nothing.

What was important was what the Bible actually taught. Of course it is helpful to illustrate it and make applications to our lives. However the illustrations and applications must reinforce what the Bible plainly teaches.

In Rev Dr. Colin Peckham's commentary on this matter he gives wise advice about decisions on matters where we may be deceived.

He says this and I quote;

"The way that seems so right, may not be God's way. If in doubt, allow time to pass, while you hold the matter before the Lord. Trust God to banish confusion and bring peace. When there is a hurried, insistent compulsion, the constraint is almost certainly not of God.

Don't allow yourself to be rushed into taking decisions. Never decide an important issue under strong feelings. Wait on God. The peace of God is unquestionably the umpire of the soul."

Just to add one more thing I learnt from an Elder many years ago... "The devil is always in a hurry but God has plenty of time."

It is wise advice never to rush into an important decision.

Just to summarize here a few things that will help us not to be deceived by Satan.

1. Bring everything to God in prayer and seek His face, until He gives us an answer from the scriptures.
2. Don't rush into anything quickly, no matter how convinced you might be or how convinced other people are who are advising you.
3. Ask lots of searching questions to people you are concerned about. Check them out fully. Don't accept vague answers and don't be deceived through compliments and human persuasion.

We now move on to the next section.

Chapter 9 : v. 16-27 deals with the enlisting of the enemy.

In v. 16 we are told that 3 days after Joshua had made a covenant with the Gibeonites that they discovered that they were near neighbors. We are not told how they discovered this, but we do know that they found out.

Joshua and his leaders were men of their word and they couldn't back down after making this covenant.

(In those days covenants were serious things. Usually you cut an animal in half and walked through it together. You promised to fulfill this agreement or else you could be cut in half like the animal)

(Gen. 15: v. 9-17 God did something similar, but it was only God that passed through the animals signifying that He was responsible for fulfilling the covenant.)

When Joshua arrived at Gibeon, and the three other cities, they didn't attack them.

v. 18 – no wonder the congregation complained when they observed what had happened.

It was at this point that Joshua and the Elders had to admit that they had made a covenant with them using God's name so they had to honor it.

The Leaders, not wanting to have God's wrath upon them for failing to keep the covenant, had to decide what to do with them. They made them woodcutters and water carriers. They did the menial tasks for the Israelites and they were made slaves.

In later years these people were called "Nethinim", the word means "given ones". They were given to assist the priests in the temple. (1 Chronicles 9: v. 2, Ezra 2: v. 43)

The fact that 500 of them returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity suggests that they were devoted to the Lord and His house. (Ezra 2:v. 43-58; 8:20)

Joshua made the best of a bad situation and in the long run it didn't damage Israel too much.

Application

It is easy for us to criticize after the event. However we must give Joshua credit for making his mistake work for him.

When we make a mistake or we are deceived by the enemy that is not the end of the story. We can make our mistake work for us and use it to our advantage under the guidance and sovereignty of God.

In my case when I moved from being a Pastor to a Mission that was reaching out to Jewish people world-wide, I learnt a lot about Jewish culture and about the Jewishness of Jesus. I saw the book of Matthew in a different light. I also got to understand Hebrew a little. It wasn't a complete disaster and I had to make the best out of a bad decision.

Maybe you have been deceived in the past or made a bad decision about something. Ask God to help you to turn it around and use the situation for God's glory. God is able to move us forward in our walk with Him, when we admit our failings and mistakes.

Don't forget that God loves us in a deep and personal way and He wants the best for us. However He gives the best to those who leave the choice to Him.

Chapter 10: v. 1-28 deals with the defending of the enemy.

Joshua had made a covenant with the enemy and he ended up having to defend them.

Joshua 10 v. 1-8

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,² 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.³ 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,⁴ "Come up to me and help me, that we may attack Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel."⁵ Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon, gathered together and went up, they and all their armies, and camped before Gibeon and made war against it.

⁶ And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp at Gilgal, saying, "Do not forsake your servants; come up to us quickly, save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the mountains have gathered together against us."

⁷ So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor.
⁸ And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you."

Joshua was about to have the biggest battle of His life against 5 kings and their armies.

However God promised them success and he helped them in various ways.

Firstly He rained down "Hailstones" from Heaven and killed lots of the enemy, in fact more that Joshua's soldiers had killed.

Joshua 10:v. 11.

¹¹ And it happened, as they fled before Israel *and* were on the descent of Beth Horon, that the LORD cast down large hailstones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. *There were* more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword.

Secondly in answer to Joshua's request God extended the day, by stopping the sun and the moon from their normal progression until Joshua had won the battle and defeated the enemy.

Joshua 10:v. 12-15

¹² Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel: "Sun, stand still over Gibeon; And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon."

¹³ So the sun stood still, And the moon stopped, Till the people had revenge Upon their enemies. *Is* this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go *down* for about a whole day. ¹⁴ And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the LORD heeded the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel. ¹⁵ Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

Although the 5 Kings escaped and hid in a cave, eventually Joshua found them and killed them.

Application

There were three factors that gave Joshua success. These were a Divine Promise – v. 8, using sound battle strategy – v. 9 and calling on the Lord in prayer – v. 10-15.

Joshua's actions illustrate two important verses in the Bible.

1. Romans 14: v. 23 –

²³ But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *he does* not eat from faith; for whatever *is* not from faith is sin.

2. Romans 10:17 –

¹⁷ So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Whenever we believe the promises of God and obey the commands of God, we act by faith and can expect God's help.

Whatever situations we are facing in life today, we too can believe the promises of God to our heart from the Bible and act in faith. We will receive God's help.

The second part of this application involves the battle strategy.

The book of James tells us that faith without works is dead.

(James 2: v. 14-18)

¹⁴ What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit? ¹⁷ Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

Joshua decided upon an all- night march and a surprise attack. He used his initiative and experience and God blessed that. The soldiers would have been tired the next day but God helped them by raining down hailstones.

When we obey God's will and step out in faith and do our best for God, He operates in a wonderful way to help us.

I can think of lots of situations in my Christian life where I have obeyed God's will, gone out in "Faith" and God has produced miracles. If I had more time I could tell you some wonderful stories, but we must move on.

The last thing is the prayer of Joshua in chapter 10: v. 12-13. Joshua's men were tired and weary if only they could extend the day they could finish the job. Joshua needed a special act from God. Joshua prayed for God's help, and God answered in a remarkable way.

Jeremiah chapter 32; v. 17, 27

¹⁷ 'Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You.

²⁷ "Behold, I *am* the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?

Psalms 74: v. 16-17

¹⁶ The day *is* Yours, the night also *is* Yours; You have prepared the light and the sun. ¹⁷ You have set all the borders of the earth; You have made summer and winter.

The issue here is that we must not try to explain away a miracle, but just believe in it.

When we cry to God for a miracle in prayer, and it is God's will for it to happen, it will happen. I hope that you believe this. I do. However if you don't I pray that God will help you with your unbelief.

Amen, let us PRAY.