

JOSHUA 9 STUDY NOTES (5/1/22)

Joshua's Big Theme: The Israelites are finally ready to enter into the land that God promised - that God is *gifting* to them - that is currently inhabited by enemy forces which need to be pushed out. Over the course of Joshua, they will learn what it means to be strong and courageous in the Lord as they follow God and trust Joshua in the scariest and most overwhelming of situations.

Today's Context: The Gibeonites, *desperate* to get on God's good side and avoid punishment, develop a ruse to trick the Israelites into making a treaty with them.

Additional Study Notes:

- While the passage says that the Israelites are camped at Gilgal (v.6), this is most likely a *different* Gilgal from the one mentioned in chapter 5. It seems unlikely that after moving West from Jericho to Shechem, that the people would head back East toward the Jordan River. This is not the first time there are two locations in the Bible with the same name (see also Caesarea in Acts)
- The Gibeonites don't just treaty with the Israelites for a little bit, but are still with the Israelites at the time of Joshua's writing (v.27). This continues on even farther into the future. They are still with Israel in 2 Samuel 21 and even in one of the latest books of the Old Testament, in Nehemiah 7. This means that their covenant stays valid for hundreds of years!
- This passage has clear parallels to Joshua 2. There, the people of Jericho hear of the victories of God, and instead of submitting, they choose to remain enemies (and ultimately face destruction). This is similar to the kings listed in verses 1-2 of today's passage. However, like Rahab, the Gibeonites respond "appropriately" to the story of God's victory. They are humbled by His power and ability to destroy them, so they form a plan to get into His good graces. Even though they act sinfully and deceptively to make it happen, we still see a glimmer of faith in their desperation to find protection among His people.

- Why did these kings of verse 1-2 possibly think they could defeat such a powerful God? It's possible that this is the consequence of Israel's initial defeat at Ai in Joshua 7. If these kings would have heard of this defeat, it's possible they would've seen victory over Israel as a possibility, and therefore, rallied forces to attack God's army. Yet again we see the lingering effects of negative consequences in the lives of Israel (as well as God's ongoing protection in the midst of this).
- The word "ruse" is used to describe the Gibeonite deception of Israel (v.4). In Hebrew, and throughout the Old Testament, this word is used to describe *both* "craftiness" and "prudence" - both a good and bad concept. It's possible to see the action of the Gibeonites as *both* crafty (i.e. lying, deceptive, evil) *and* prudent (i.e. wise, savvy). This same idea seems to be reflected in the parable of the shrewd manager in the New Testament (Luke 16:1-8). In that parable, the shrewd manager acts in a deceptive and crafty way, and yet, he is strangely commended for making the most (being prudent!?) out of his desperate situation.

For Additional Study (most are available to borrow from CFC):

- NIV Study Bible
- ESV Study Bible
- Other commentaries available upon request

Discussion Questions

CATCHING UP ON LAST WEEK

- (1) What was most significant for you from Joshua 8:30-35? What's stuck with you as meaningful or impactful?

TODAY'S TEXT

KNOWING God

- (2) What questions do you (or members of your group) have about this passage? Discuss.
- (3) What does this passage tell us about God?
- (4) What does this passage tell us about humanity?
- (5) Alpha and Omega Question: As you near the end of the Pentateuch (first 5 books), what are you enjoying or learning?
- (6) Take a moment to reflect on the sinful desperation of the Gibeonites in this passage. Then, read the parable of the Shrewd Manager (Luke 16). What similarities do you see? What might be some takeaways from these comparable stories?

GROWING Together

- (7) **If people in your group are following the Alpha and Omega reading plan, take time to discuss/encourage their reading for 5-10 minutes.*
- (8) The Gibeonites pursue protection from God (a good thing) through deceitful means (lying, deceiving). How do we as humans often pursue ultimately good things through sinful and broken means? Do you have an example of how you've done this or seen this in action?
- (9) What are the consequences of the Gibeonites' actions and Israel's actions, respectively? How do we carry the consequences of our actions in our person and our life story? How can this produce fear and anxiety for us as we journey through life?
- (10) How do we live overconfident in our abilities, much like the Israelites were here? How could we be better at wisely "inquiring of the Lord" (v.14) in our own lives? What does this practically look like?
- (11) How is God's redemptive hand present in the stories of both the Gibeonites and Israelites, respectively? How does God redeem our

broken stories and sinful actions? How does God help us to carry the baggage of our past, present, and future?

(12) What questions, ideas, or themes would you want to study further?

SHOWING God to Others

(13) What in this passage serves as good news for the world around us?

PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

(14) For next week, spend some time reading Joshua 10:1-15. What's interesting? What questions do you have?

QUESTIONS FOR CHILDREN (from Children's Director Emily Reiser)

(15) What stood out to you in this story? What did you find interesting and what was confusing?

(16) What was the mistake that the Israelites made? How often do you talk to God when you need to make a big decision? When was there a time you did consult God? How did it go?

(17) How did God react to this situation? God showed the Israelites and the Hivites a lot of mercy even though they did not follow God's instructions. Does God do this for us today? How can you share the love of our merciful God with people you care about?