

# REFOCUS

## *Refocus on Prayer*

### *Joshua 9*

#### *You're on the Enemy's Radar*

**Joshua 9:1** *And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof; [2] That they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord.*

- Joshua and the children of Israel have crossed over into the Promised Land and they are overtaking cities just as God said
- But their military success was not going unnoticed
- The kings of Canaan were aware of their military success, and they were prepared to fight
- Joshua and Israel experienced opposition in two forms; *direct* and *indirect*
- The kings of Canaan joined forces against Israel in war
- But the Gibeonites didn't join the other Canaanites nations in fighting Joshua and Israel directly, they chose a more indirect method of warfare
- They chose to attack using *lies* and *deception*
- Just as Joshua and Israel's enemies heard about what God was doing in their lives and are joining forces to stop, the enemy has heard about *you*, the victories you've had, and all that God is doing in your life
- And the devil has gathered his entire arsenal to war against you
- But we must also realize that we often are doing battle against enemies we can't even see ***Ephesians 6:12*** *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*
- We must also realize some of our greatest spiritual challenges are going to come *after* some of our greatest victories
- The devil never accepts defeat and never quits.
- The more boldly your faith in God advances, the more vocal and violent the opposition will become
- Don't let your guard down when you God gives you a victory, but become even more alert ***1 Peter 5:8*** *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

#### The Deception

**[3]** *And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, [4] They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up; [5] And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy.*

- The Gibeonites used *deception and lies* to attack Joshua and the Israelites
- Deception and lies is a new method attack on Israel
- The Bible says they did their work *wilily*, or cleverly
- Notice the methods of deception the Gibeonites used on the Israelites
  - They were *clever* – the Gibeonites created a clever plan of deceit

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- They *misrepresented* themselves – we’re “ambassadors”
- They gave *false evidence* – they wore worn our clothes, worn out sandals, old wineskins, dry and moldy bread, etc.
- The Gibeonites also *simply lied* when they acted as though they had been sent as “ambassadors” from a “far country”
- When they met with Joshua, they told him they had “heard” of their God and how “awesome” He was and that they were “impressed” with all the great things he had done
- They wanted to sign a treaty with them because they were from a “far country”
- This is important because God said in Deuteronomy 7:1-2, the Israelites *could not* sign treaties with *any* of the Canaanite nations
- Joshua and the leaders of Israel asked the men where are you from?
- But they never really answered Joshua’s questions, they just kept talking about how great Joshua’s God was, what He had done, and how they wanted to be their “servants”
- If we are not careful and prayerful the devil will use lies and deception on us
- The devil will make what he is luring us into appear to be a good thing
- The devil will use God’s name or Jesus’ name to give us the feeling that God has endorsed the enemy’s deception
- The devil knows exactly what to say and what to do

#### ***The Decision***

***[14] And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord. [15] And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.***

- Joshua thought based on what “he saw” this decision required no prayer
- Joshua and his leaders s even “sampled” the men’s provisions
- But they *did not* see through the Gibeonites lies and deception
- Joshua and his leaders *did not* seek the Lord, and they *did not* pray about the decision they were about to make
- Joshua probably said to himself, “I’ve meet the people from a far country who’ve traveling a long time, they’re tired and worn, they’ve heard about our God, and they want to be our servants”
- But there is a danger in human or carnal reasoning
- The Bible says we are to walk by faith and not by sight God
- Joshua and his leaders examined their food, saw their appearance, heard their story, but he *never* consulted God
- The Gibeonites deception of Joshua and his leaders was clever, but the *real problem* was they *never* sought the Lord
- Many times, we are just like Joshua when we fail to seek God’s will about a matter
- Be it selecting a job, a place to move to, making a major purchase, or choosing someone to date or marry, financial decisions or other major life moves
- The devil doesn’t take any time off and neither should we ***Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. [6] In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.***

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#### **Why Do We Fail to Seek God in Our Decisions?**

- What's keeps believers from seeking God's wisdom and guidance in their decision-making?
- There are many reasons for this, here are a few:
  - *Self-Reliance*
  - *Lack of Faith*
  - *Fear of God's Answer*
  - *Distractions and Busyness*
  - *Cultural Influences*
  - *Overreliance on Human Wisdom*
  - *Technological Distractions*
  - *Peer Pressure*
  - *Valuing the World's Counsel Over Spiritual Counsel*
  - *Spiritual Lukewarmness*
  - *Unconfessed Sin*
- Understanding these reasons can help you address potential obstacles and cultivate a habit of seeking God's guidance in your decision-making processes.

#### **The Discovery**

***[16] And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them.***

- As soon as the ink had dried on the agreement, then the truth comes out... three days later
- This "innocent" treaty with people from a "far country" was a treaty with an enemy from right next door!
- When the Israelites found out they wanted to kill the Gibeonites, but they couldn't touch them because they made an oath
- If Joshua changed his mind and attacked the Gibeonites, they would be disobeying God and they would make God to be a liar
- They were stuck with a bad decision, in fact they had to *live with* a bad decision
- They were stuck with a decision that they couldn't change
- When we neglect prayer, we may find ourselves having to live with a bad decision
- We may have to live with the consequences of our decisions

#### **The Deliverance from A Bad Decision**

***[18] And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes. [19] But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them.***

- Once the children of Israel heard of the covenant with the Gibeonites, they were mad with Joshua and the leaders, and they also wanted to kill *all* the Gibeonites
- What do you do when you've stuck with bad decision?
- Refocus on what you *know* is right to do

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- Admit It and Repent of It
  - In vs. 19 Joshua and the leaders admitted they made covenant the enemy
- Don't Make it Worse
  - Joshua didn't want to break the covenant because it was a covenant between them and God and if they did, then God would be viewed as a liar
  - They didn't want to break the covenant because it cause the judgment of God to fall on them
- Joshua and his leaders were more concerned about not upsetting God than the murmurs and complaints of the people
- Although Joshua and the leaders blew it, they made a decision going forward to not compound their mistake and make a bad situation worse
- Make the Most of a Bad Situation
  - The Gibeonites told Joshua to do to us what you think is appropriate in vs. 25
  - In vs. 27 Joshua told the Gibeonites they will live under a curse from now on you will carry wood and water for the house of God
  - They weren't just wood choppers and water carriers, but their place of service was the Temple, a place where they would be *exposed* to presence and the Word of God
  - Their place of service influenced them so that they gave up their idols and began to worship God
  - When we refocus ion God, He can use it and turn it into a blessing for you
- Let God Handle the Rest
  - God can turn your mess ups into blessings
  - God even blessed the lying and conniving Gibeonites
- It was a blessing for Joshua and the Israelites too
- If Joshua 10, you will see that God has a way of turning things around
- When the rulers several Canaanite cities heard that Israel had made peace with Gibeon, waged war against Gibeon
- God told Joshua don't be afraid of them, I've *already* given them into your hands
- God gave Joshua the strategy for victory and Joshua's army was winning the battle
- And they were winning, but the sun was going down and the enemy was getting away
- **And Joshua prayed**
  - Joshua is refocused on God, *this time* he's going to pray *before* he takes action
  - Joshua asked God to stop the sun for him so that the enemy would not get away
  - And God did it!
- This time Joshua and Israel defeated five cities at the same time instead of one city at a time
- God turned Joshua's error in judgment into a victory that accelerated the conquest of Canaan
- God is ready to turn some things around for you when you refocus on His counsel, guidance and direction through prayer
- There's no telling what God can do for you
- We have to trust Him in the midst of what looks like a failure
- Start praying again and start praying about *everything!*