

Day 226 - MONDAY: August 14th

Joshua 9

Joshua 9:1-27 NKJV

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, that they gathered together to fight with Joshua and Israel with one accord. But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and moldy. 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." Then the men of Israel said to the Hivites, "Perhaps you dwell among us; so how can we make a covenant with you?" But they said to Joshua, "We are your servants." And Joshua said to them, "Who are you, and where do you come from?" 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, 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 Ashtaroath. 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." ' 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. 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." Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the LORD. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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." 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." 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? 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." 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. And now, here we are, in your hands; do with us as it seems good and right to do to us." So he did to them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, so that they did not kill them. 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.

Daily Deep Dive:

We'll begin with the UCG reading plan: "Gibeon was a powerful city in the region (Joshua 10:2), possibly due in part to the shrewdness of its people (Joshua 9:4). While their scheme for saving themselves involved deceit, it is amazing to see the extraordinary measures they were willing

to take for peace and survival. Their deceit resulted in perpetual servitude for their people (verses 22-27), and perhaps there would have been better ways to escape death by submitting to God or agreeing to peacefully leave the territory. But once the agreement was made, they seem to have held to their part of it. And when Saul later broke the agreement, God Himself punished the Israelites on their behalf (2 Samuel 21:1-14).

This whole situation would have gone differently for Israel if its leaders had done what they should have in the first place. Even though they were initially suspicious of the Gibeonite ambassadors (Joshua 9:7), the Israelites relied on their own intellect to determine whether or not they were being truthful. This was a big mistake. Joshua, the most likely author of this book bearing his name, had evidently learned his lesson by the time he wrote down the words in verse 14: "But they did not ask counsel of the Lord." Indeed, this is the crux of the whole chapter. The omnipotent God was there to provide answers, if Joshua had only sought them as he had been instructed (Numbers 27:21).

We can make the same mistake. Many times, we rush to a major decision without seeking counsel from God. No, we cannot seek His answers in the Urim and Thummim anymore. But there are other means available to us when it comes to discerning God's will. We can pray, with fasting if need be, asking for direct inspiration from Him through His Holy Spirit. We can seek His answers in the laws and principles found in His Word. And we can counsel with other brethren in whom His Spirit dwells, particularly the ministry that He has specially ordained. Indeed, we should avail ourselves of all of these means. For no major decision in our lives should be made without seeking God's will. As Proverbs 3:5-6 states so eloquently, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." [END]

Verse 15 – Notice that even though this treatise was based on lies, God still expected the nation of Israel to honor their word. Later King David would deal with a famine on the land for three years only to learn that it was because King Saul had killed the Gibeonites and broke the covenant they made. This should make all of us give serious consideration before we give our word because God expects our yes to be yes and our no, no (compare Matthew 5:37, James 5:12 & Psalm 15:4).