

THE DECEPTION OF THE GIBEONITES



Passages to Study: Joshua 8:1-35; 9:1-27.

Read with the class: Joshua 9:3-16.

Texts for memorization:

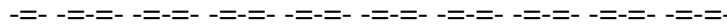
Younger: Proverbs 3:5.

Older Proverbs 16:5.



OBJECTIVES: To teach:

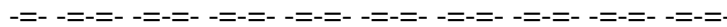
1. That we must not come to decisions based on our own ideas or thinking.
2. How to discern between what is true and what is false.
3. The importance of taking the Word of God into account.
4. We have to accept the consequences for the decisions we make in our lives.



SCENE No. 1. VISUAL AIDS: Figures of a city under attack by an army.

DEVELOPMENT:

- Once the sin of Achan was purged, the Lord instructed the Israelites to attack Ai again.
- This time, the army goes in the power given by the word of God.
- Apl.** In the Christian life, past failures can teach us lessons that will help us to correct our steps now and in the future.
- The Israelites are instructed to use a different strategy than the one they used to overcome Jericho.
- Cns.** The first time they attacked Ai and lost, the leaders of the people acted as if they had obtained the victory over Jericho in their own strength. (Joshua 7:2-5)
- This time all the people have to go, so that they will realize they are not as capable as they thought.
- Apl.** When God directs and we obey, things work out well, but we have to depend on His power and not on our own.
- The city must be burned with fire and they are warned to obey.
- Joshua and the elders of the people are to head up the operation.
- Once victory is won, they raise a heap of stones as another of the monuments Israel is establishing in Canaan. (Joshua 7:26)
- These will serve to remind future generations of the power of God.
- Cns.** God wants us to have reminders in our lives that will make us constantly conscious of our need to depend on Him. The reminders may be bitter or sweet, but each has its message.



SCENE 2. VISUAL AIDS: Figures of Joshua and of the Gibeonites in ragged clothing together with some Israelites.

DEVELOPMENT:

- The victory over Jericho and later over Ai, produced terror in the kings of Canaan.
- Cmt.** These kings were chiefs over a city. They did not rule over great amounts of land, but rather over family groups that gathered together for mutual protection.
- Several kings agree to unite to fight Israel.
- Another group in the city of Gibeon, located some 8 kms. north of Jerusalem and forming part of a confederation of kings (Joshua 9:17), decides to proceed differently.
- The people of Gibeon understand that it is useless to fight against the Israelites.
- Wanting to save their lives, they decide to try to make an alliance with Joshua and Israel.
- Inf.** An alliance is a bilateral agreement between two powers.
- Cns.** Even a leader, prepared by God and faithful as was Joshua, is capable of making mistakes if he does not consult with God at all times.

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- The Israelites are to conquer the land and cast out its inhabitants, as commanded by the Lord.
- Working deceitfully, the Gibeonites go to the camp of Israel and tell them that they come from a very distant country.
- The clothing they wear and the food they show them seem to prove their words.
- The Israelites suspect something and know that if they live nearby it is not possible to have an alliance with them.
- The Gibeonites say that even in their distant country they have heard of the fame of Jehovah and of all He did in Egypt.
- The Israelites know that the people of Jericho had also been afraid for the same reason, and they believe these men.
- They accept some of the food the visitors offer and make a pact with them, without consulting the Lord.

Cmt. They commit the terrible mistake of not verifying whether these men are telling the truth. Only God could help them at the exact moment of making this decision.

- Without consulting God, Joshua and the leaders of the people swear in the name of the Lord to spare their lives.

Cmt. The Bible contains many warnings against deceivers. (1 John 4:1-3; Ephesians 5:10; 1 Thess. 5:21)

Apl. In the Christian life, previous failures teach lessons and are used of God to show that when He directs our path, everything is different.

- The Gibeonites leave the Israelites with a sense of relief in their hearts, having obtained assurances they will be protected by Israel in the future.

Cns. God had led in the matters of Jericho and Ai, but it seems that these victories had produced self confidence.

Cmt. Would the Israelites have had the idea that the Lord was needed only for big matters and that this matter was unimportant and God did not need to be consulted?

Cmt. A league or covenant made in the name of the Lord was valid in Israel. (See Ex. 20:7; Lev. 19:12; 1 Sam. 14:24)

- Three days later, the Israelites discover that they have been deceived.
- The people murmur against their leaders but realize that the terms of the covenant must be fulfilled.

Cmt. People suffer when their leaders make mistakes.

Sug. Mention here can be made about families, or businesses or countries that suffer due to poor administration or because of mistakes made by their rulers.

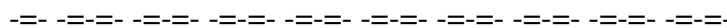
Sug. Urge the young people to learn how important it is to begin now to pay attention to the Word of God in order to avoid making mistakes in their lives.

- The Israelites can not now change the covenant they made, in order not to sin against God's law.
- The punishment the Gibeonites receive for having used deception is to be made servants.
- They are to be wood cutters and carriers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the Lord.
- The Gibeonites recognize that they have been deceitful and they accept their punishment.

Cns. This people, knowing they are condemned, looked for a way to escape the destruction that had been decreed.

Apl. This is the same fear every sinner should have, for "the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

- The Gibeonites decide on their own way of being saved from what was ahead. It brought results but not the blessing that those who obey the Lord enjoy.





SCENE No. 3. VISUAL AIDS: (1.) In large letters, the verse 1 John 4:1 written and figures of a group of Israelites with additional words written: “The Israelites did not consult the Lord about the Gibeonites.”

(2.) Figures of a man looking sick before his boss, and another figure of the same man looking happy and well with his family or friends, plus the words written: “The employer requires a medical certificate to verify the sickness of his employee.”

(3.) Another figure of a photograph of a person, plus the Bible and the words: “It is necessary to verify whether men teach the truth - Consult the Bible.”

Cmt. The application figures are intended to stress the need to check out whether or not something is true.

DEVELOPMENT: Application:

- The Israelites believed the Gibeonites’ lie without thinking about the need to look for proof of their words.
- They learned all too late they had made a mistake.
- Self deception is practised in different areas and for different reasons.
- An employee deceives his boss in order to do something without permission.
- The practise of deceit has led to employers to require a medical certificate if someone says he can not work.
- Many swindlers use falsified identity cards of another person.
- To be sure of what they say, it is necessary to check out carefully whether a person is who he says he is.

Cns. An error or mistake can lead to much suffering in this life, but there are even greater dangers that have eternal consequences that last far beyond this life.

- The Bible speaks of many false prophets that have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)

Cns. Following one of these false prophets leads to Hell.

- It is necessary to check with the Word of God every idea that is propounded and to believe only what is true.

Apl. Failed attempts to obtain peace in this life ought to motivate the sinner to seek the only right way to obtain pardon of sin.

- One’s eternal destiny is decided in this life. This is why it is so important not to make mistakes.
- God provides a way of salvation through genuine repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- In this way, one will trust the Lord instead of leaning on his own understanding. (Prov. 3:5)

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Verse by verse commentary of Joshua 8 and 9 follows.



JOSHUA 8 VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY

v.1 Having dealt with the sin of Achan, God instructs the Israelites to attack Ai. Victory is assured.

Apl. The army would go in the power of the Word of God.

v.2 That they overcame Jericho becomes the basis for encouraging the Israelites.

Cns. This time the booty could be taken by the soldiers for themselves, unlike what they were required to do at Jericho.

Cns. The strategy of attack was totally different to that of Jericho. The Lord is the Commander. The walls will not fall down.

v.3 30,000 chosen soldiers were sent out at night.

Cns. They leave with every assurance of winning. God has said so.

vv. 4-5. The plan of attack is a logical one.

Cmt. None would sleep, **ALL WERE READY.**

vv. 6-7 The failure of the first attack (Josh. 7:4-5), is used as part of their strategy.

Apl. In the Christian life, previous failures teach lessons and are useful in the hand of the Lord to show that when He is in command, everything is different.

Apl. As for the sinner, the failure of his efforts to obtain peace ought to make him ask what is the right way to receive pardon.

v.8 The city is to be burned with fire. They are warned to obey.

vv. 9-11 The preparations. Joshua stays with the people. His presence would be an encouragement to them.

Apl. The Lord is near His own, especially in times of danger.

Joshua inspects the people as if to assure himself that all is well in view of what is ahead.

Joshua goes up with the elders and the soldiers. There is a duty for every one of them.

v.12 Approximately 17% of the army hides in order to ambush the city and enter it unseen. The rest of the people had to flee in a very visible way.

vv. 13-16 The people obey. They go ahead stage by stage. The trap is laid and gives the desired result. It works out exactly as the Lord said.

v.17 All the men of Ai left the city. Ai and Bethel were allied cities, united to fight against Israel.

v.18 The Lord directs the action. The stretched out spear in the hand of Joshua gives the signal for the ambush.

v.19 Obedience to the Word.

Apl. In God's service, we need to work together, each person attending to the task in hand.

THEY SET THE CITY ON FIRE. It had to be destroyed.

Cns. God would give the Israelites the means sufficient to build new cities.

Lsn. The destruction of what belonged to the enemy signals that when God is in control, other people's things are not needed.

v.20 The moment in which the men of Ai realize what is happening.

vv. 21-24 Everybody except the king died.

v.25 12,000 died altogether. Although these are called cities, they were quite small towns.

v.26 Complete victory.

vv. 27-28 The city is reduced to rubble.

v.29 The king is placed on a pole. The Israelites did not hang people. It may be that they executed and then raised him on a pole. A symbol of the end of a dynasty. The stones would become a monument from then on.

vv. 30-31 An altar to recognize the power of the Lord. They made offerings of peace.

v.32 The written law represented the pact between the Lord and His people.

Apl. The responsibility to keep it in the fear of the Lord.

Another visible monument.

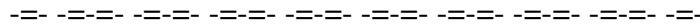


Lsn. We always need to remember what God has done for us, and respond to His mercy.

vv. 33-34 The law is read out loud. All the people are gathered together to hear what are their responsibilities before the Lord and the BLESSINGS and CURSES that accompany.

v.35 Every word was read. The reading included the whole congregation, including women, children and foreigners.

Apl. The Bible is needed in the life of ALL.



JOSHUA 9 VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY

vv.1-2 The victory over Ai caused alarm among other kings.

Cmt. These kings were like chiefs over a city populated by a number of families. They were dynastic chiefs. They did not reign over large areas of land. They made a pact to join their soldiers together and fight against JOSHUA and ISRAEL. Joshua is shown to be a capable general.

vv.3-5 Gibeon, located to the north of Jerusalem.

It seems that Gibeon was the stronger of a confederation of kings. Cmp. v.17.

Motivated by fear of Israel, their objective was to preserve their lives through a covenant with Joshua and Israel.

v.6 ALLIANCE A bilateral agreement between two powers.

The Gibeonites take the place of SERVANTS. Cmp. vs.8 and 11.

v.7 The Israelites suspect something and know that if they live as near as Ai and the others, they were not to make an alliance with them.

The Israelites had to conquer the land and cast out its inhabitants.

vv.8-10 They refer to the deeds of the Israelites who had by now acquired the name of conquerors. Cmp. 2:10. This was also known in Jericho.

vv.11-13 The story they made up.

v.14 Their big mistake. THEY DID NOT ASK COUNSEL OF THE LORD.

Cns. God had led them in the matter of Jericho and Ai, so why not now?

Cmt. Would the Israelites have had the idea that the Lord was needed only for big matters and that this matter was unimportant and God did not need to be consulted?

v.15 A peace treaty. They swear it in the name of the Lord.

This made it valid in Israel. See Ex. 20:7; Lev. 19:12; 1 Sam. 14:24.

vv.16-17. True wisdom.

v.18 The Israelites had reason to murmur.

Apl. Others suffer when a leader makes a mistake.

v.19 They recognize that the covenant is a valid one and its terms must be carried out.

v.20 To cancel the pact would be to sin against God's law.

vv.21-23 The Gibeonites admit to their deceit and are punished by being made servants of the Israelites.

Worship in the tabernacle and later in the temple required much water and wood for the sacrifices.

Cns. When Solomon became king, the tabernacle and altar were in Gibeon. (2 Chron.1:3, 5)

vv.24-25. The Gibeonites accept the results of their deceit.

vv.26-27. It seems there were those who wanted to kill them.

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