

Joshua 9

I. SEVERED GUIDANCE

A. They did not consider the craftiness of their satanic enemy

Satan ***sometimes*** comes as a devouring lion (1 Peter 5:8), but he ***also*** comes as a deceiving snake (2 Cor. 11:3).

And make no mistake about it, he comes – especially after a victory – he wants to squash any type of momentum we have, he wants to catch us off guard.

“After an experience of great blessing, God’s people must be especially prepared to confront the enemy.” – Wiersbe

“...every victory that the Christian wins in his own personal life is an invitation for a full-scale attack by the enemy of his soul.” – Alan Redpath

Be ready...and don’t forget to consider his craftiness.

The enemy works craftily; the word “***craftily***” in v. 4 doesn’t mean that they were the crafty type who shopped at Michaels – no the Hebrew word (06195 ערמה `ormah or-maw’) speaks of shrewdness, craftiness, and even prudence.

The same word ***is*** translated “treachery” in Exodus 21:14; but it’s translated “prudence” in Proverbs 1:4; 8:5 and 8:12.

All I can say, is the enemy is pretty smart.

“They knew that the Israelites had been ordered to destroy all the heathen inhabitants of the land. But they also knew that no such orders had been issued concerning nations outside Canaan (Deuteronomy 20:10, 15).” – William MacDonald

The enemy is pretty smart...that’s why Wiersbe has a book called the strategy of Satan.

Alan Redpath even said that *“the very secret of winning a war lies in strategy.”*

Jesus even said in Luke 16:8, *“For the sons of the this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.”*

They didn't consider the craftiness of the enemy; may we learn from their mistake.

As we endeavor to follow the Lord, and sometimes even lead the people, we must take into constant consideration the craftiness of the enemy; here an OT ***illustration*** – and in Ephesians 6:11, a NT ***declaration***, *“Put on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”*

The Greek word translated “wiles” (3180 **μεθοδεια** *methodeia meth-od-i'-ah*) means to lie in wait, cunning arts, deceit, craft, trickery;

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B. They did not test the talk of their supposed friends.

Sometimes I forget, the language of Lucifer, the natural flow of our foe, is lies. And it's not that we should always be skeptical, but - at the same time we need to make sure that we are never ever gullible. The gullible person is easily persuaded to believe anything.

We need to remember, not only is the enemy a liar, he's an ***excellent*** liar.

“Satan's ambassadors can lie more convincingly than some Christians can tell the truth!” – Wiersbe

He went on to say, *“In my pastoral ministry I've met people who have introduced themselves as **seekers**, but the longer they talked, the more convinced I was that they were **sneakers**, trying to get something out of me and the church.”*

John 8:44, *“You 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.”*

1 Thessalonians 5:21, “Test all things; hold fast what is good.” – the word test means to prove; if you find yourself having to make a decision, based upon the words of someone else, only; it is usually best to “prove” it.

All Joshua had to do was to do a competent evaluation of the situation, to do a validation of their location.

“Gibeon was located only 25 miles from the camp of Israel at Gilgal.” – Wiersbe

I think there are times, we don’t do that extra homework, that extra investigation, that takes both time and effort, for a couple of reasons:

1. We don’t want to offend them

I know for me, offending people goes against my make-up

But the Lord has taught me, would you rather offend Me?

2. We want so much to believe them

Verse 1-2 speak of Israel’s united enemies, prior to the Gibeonite’s arrival, I’ll bet finding some friends, finding some peace, putting together a contract and covenant with another nation sounded so good to them...so they did not truly test the claim of the Gibeonites.

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B. They did not test the talk of their “supposed friends”

C. They did not ask counsel of their saving LORD! (v. 14

Literally, “they did not ask the mouth of the LORD.”

Counsel, consult, inquire, are all appropriate applications, but the literal interpretation is, “they did not ask the mouth of the LORD.” Which comes to mean they did not seem to want to wait, to even ask for the task, to

hear God's instruction, God's direction, God expression, words from His heart, and His mouth...it's just mind boggling, they did not ask counsel of the LORD.

I know when I read this, I immediately thought of Matthew 4:1-3; why don't we turn there? (**read**)

I'm not sure what this **looked** like...I know it seemed to **sound** okay. "So...you haven't eaten anything for 40 days, huh? No food, no water? You're the Son of God, there's no store, no restaurant, no food nearby; it would be so simple, you have to admit, it just logical, command these stones to become bread."

Most of us would probably say, "He wants me to eat, I'm so hungry, I'm so weak, he's acting like a friend, like he cares about me."

But not Jesus, we read in v. 4.

"He does the talk rightly, but I will not take anything lightly, I will wait for the word of the LORD, I will wait for that message from **His** mouth – not yours."

This is how we live!

Ask (Judges 1:1) (Prayer – David often inquired) Ask for an answer (James 1:5)

Seek (Ezra 8:21) (Personal and passionate Prayer) (Seek and find)

"It seems to take us a long time to learn the lesson that neglect of prayer always leads to trouble, and destroys the spirit of discernment." – Alan Redpath

Ask Him, Seek Him:

Acknowledge Him (Proverbs 3:5-6)

We need to live in the counsel of the Lord; He's the best counselor, Who even bears that title in Isaiah 9:6.

Be so careful you don't follow the dictates of your own heart or the counsel of the world, the scientific approach, the only, merely, solely logical approach.

"The leaders of Israel took the 'scientific approach' instead of the 'spiritual approach.' They depended on their own senses, examined the 'facts,' discussed the matter, and agreed in their conclusion." – Wiersbe

"Never, never, NEVER trust your own judgment in anything. When common sense says that a course is right, lift your hearts to God, for the path of faith and the path of blessing may be in a direction completely opposite to that which you call common sense." – Alan Redpath

The world, the flesh, the enemy, will tell you one thing, God will tell you another.

Psalm 1:1, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly."

There's a very heavy warning about this, over in Isaiah 30:1-3, "Woe to the rebellious children,' says the LORD, 'who take counsel, but not of Me, and who devise plans, but not of My Spirit, that they may add sin to sin, who walk down to Egypt, and have not asked My advice, to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt! Therefore the strength of Pharaoh shall be your shame, and trust in the shadow of Egypt shall be your humiliation.'"

Woe to us, when we don't ask or seek or acknowledge the Lord; woe to us when we trust in this fellow, or that fellow, or even the Pharaoh Himself...we will suffer the consequences of ungodly counsel.

Joseph Scriven wrote about it in that great hymn in 1855,

"What a friend we have in Jesus; all our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry, everything to God in prayer!

Oh, what peace we often forfeit, oh, what needless pain we bear

All because we do not carry, everything to God in prayer!"

Isaiah brings up an interesting point, on how God will guide us, counsel us, speak to us from His mouth – so to speak “Woe to the rebellious children,’ says the LORD, ‘who take counsel, but not of Me, and who devise plans, but not of My Spirit...”

You see, the Spirit of God, will show the children of God, the perfect and wonderful will of God.

As we pray and obey, and have a heart to stay in His will, not our own, then the Spirit, especially us as NT Christians, the Spirit who lives inside of us, will counsel us...and I do believe He can speak to us, His whispered word, that still small voice, ever so personally, but primarily He will counsel us...how?

Not just the whispered word, but the written Word - the Bible!

Psalm 119:24, “Your testimonies also are my delight and my counselors.”

God can use human counselors:

Proverbs 11:14; 15:22; 24:6

But since He is the King of counselors, make sure that the human counsel lines up, and lives up to the counsel of His Word.

May God give us a heart to truly want to follow Him.

“We don’t seek God’s will like customers who look at options but like servants who listen for orders.” - Wiersbe

Don’t make the same mistake they made here in Joshua 9

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- C. They did not ask the counsel of the saving LORD

II. SOVEREIGN GRACE

Now just in case there are any of you here who have fallen short in following the Lord, I think it's pretty obvious in the study of this chapter that the Lord worked everything out for good, for both the Israelites and the Gibeonites.

For the Gibeonites it's probably a little more obvious, they lived, they survived, they did not die; we read in v. 21 and 27, that they became woodcutters and water carriers for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, and we read there in the latter portion of v. 27, *"in the place which He would choose, even to this day."*

"References indicate that a Gibeonite was among David's military heroes (1 Chronicles 12:4), and that Gibeonites helped rebuild Jerusalem's walls after the exile (Nehemiah 3:7)." – Revell Bible Dictionary

"In later years the Gibeonites were called the Nethinim ('given ones' = given to assist the priests) they labored as servants in the temple (1 Chronicles 9:2; Ezra 2:43, 58; Nehemiah 3:26). In Joshua 10, we shall see that God overruled Joshua's mistake and used it to give him a single victory over 5 kings at one time." – Wiersbe

So...does this then give us a license to sin; to make decision without Him; not bothering to ask Him, seek Him or acknowledge Him?

I know you know – no – it does not.

If you go into sin, presumptuously, defiantly, with open eyes and closed hearts, I gotta warn you, you're playing with fire, you're skating on thin ice, you need a healthy dose of the fear of God in your life.

But, if there really is that element of earnestness in your heart, revealed, not by intentions but actions...then, there really is hope for you, you might need a healthy dose of the love of God tonight.

And even here, in Joshua chapter 9, we learn, those of us who have fallen short, and Severed God's guidance at times, we **do** have hope in His Sovereign grace, His saving grace, His absolutely amazing grace.

Guide us, Lord, Grace us Lord

Help us to be led by you by believing in Your guidance, help us to be fed by you, by receiving Your grace.

Let's be strong in the grace of God, not wrong, but strong in the grace of God that is in, Christ Jesus our Lord.

In Christ...thank You Lord, for this place of Grace; lead our lives, give us a heart to follow you, and even when we fall short of following you, please Lord, I implore You, to restore us, and work everything out for good. Please Lord, I pray, in Jesus' Name.