

The Gibeonites Trick Joshua

Joshua 9

MEMORY VERSE

PROVERBS 19:21

“There are many plans in a man’s heart, nevertheless the LORD’S counsel - that will stand.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A container of clean rocks and small prizes (stickers, pencils, erasers, etc.) for all of the children in your class.

Thin paper plates, a stoneware plate and some heavy items to carry on the plates.

Plastic cups and string.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Prize Time?

Bring a container of clean rocks to pass out.

Tell the children that it is prize time. Be real excited. Ask if anyone would like a prize. Tell the children to close their eyes and hold out their hands for the prize. Next, pass out the rocks. Have them open their eyes. Ask them how it feels to be tricked. Trade the rocks for a real prize.

Matthew 7:9-11 says, “if a son asks for bread from his father, will the father give him a stone?” Even more, God will give us good things when we ask Him. We know that when we trust in the Lord that we will never be tricked. God is able to look into our hearts.

LESSON TIME!

Today we will learn how the people of Gibeon tricked Joshua and the leaders of Israel. We will also see that Joshua and the elders did not ask counsel from the Lord and learned the hard way when they fell for the Gibeonites' trickery. We will then see that in our own lives we must ask for wisdom from the Lord to make the right decisions. When we put our trust in Him we will be protected from those who would try to trick us. **God gives wisdom to those who ask.**

JOSHUA 9:1,2

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.

The army of Israel had defeated Ai and that made the rest of the country come to immediate action. The kings of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and the Jebusites met together and formed an alliance to fight Joshua and the children of Israel.

It is interesting to note that these kings, who were very different from one another and spent a lot of time fighting each other, united against God's people. These armies, though great in number were not fighting just the children of Israel. They were fighting the almighty God.

The Bible says in Romans 8:31, "If God be for us who can be against us?" The Israelites had the promise of God, that if they kept His

law, God would give them the land and deliver the people of the land into their hands.

We as Christians have the same promise that the Israelites had. Though the whole world unites against us, we can always know that God is on our side.

JOSHUA 9:3-15

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 Ashtaroth.

"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.

Not all of Israel's enemies wanted to fight. The Gibeonites were convinced that they could not defeat the children of Israel. The Gibeonites were smarter than the other people of the land. They probably heard about the crossing of the Jordan River, the victory of Jericho and the victory over the people of Ai.

They could see Israel's God in all those things and must have realized Israel's God was the one true God. They must have known also about the provisions in the Law of Moses permitting Israel to make peace with cities that were at a considerable distance

away, but requiring them to wipe out completely the cities of the seven nearby Canaanite nations (See Deuteronomy 20:10-18;7:1-2).

After the Gibeonites consulted one another, they formed an ingenious plan. They picked two ambassadors and dressed them in old clothing. They gave them bread that was dry and moldy, and wine in old wine skins, all to give the appearance that they had been on a far journey from a far land come to make peace treaty with the Israelites.

So one day the ambassadors came to Joshua and the people while they were camped in Gilgal. They then told their tale and said they had come from a far country and asked Joshua to make a treaty with them. The Gibeonites put a special emphasis on being from a far land, keeping in mind the Mosaic Law.

At first Joshua and his staff were hesitant and not convinced of their story. Joshua and the people said to them, “but what if you live near us?” Joshua asked question after question but the Gibeonites told their story of how they came from a great distance to show respect for Israel’s powerful God and to be able to live at peace as Israel’s servants. Word had reached them of how God had delivered them from the land of Egypt and the victory over the kings of Heshbon and Bashan.

They didn’t mention however, the victory over Ai or Jericho, for if they had come on a long journey they wouldn’t know about those recent victories. Very tricky indeed! They then showed Joshua their sandals, clothes, food and wine skins. They told them that it was all new when they had left home. Joshua and the people bought their story and agreed to a formal treaty with them.

The Bible says that our enemy, Satan is a deceiver. He will try to trick us whenever he has an opportunity to. We have to be careful and test everything that we hear by God’s word so that we won’t be

tricked into believing something that isn't true and miss out on God's blessing.

Joshua and the Israelites should not have agreed to the treaty so quickly. First, the proofs that the Gibeonites showed to Joshua and the people were weak. Had they been ambassadors with the power to form a treaty with a nation they would have had more credible evidence. Did they have a letter from their king or some other official way to prove who they were? Joshua should have asked for this.

Second, the main thing Joshua and the people did not do, was to go before God and ask His council in the matter. Joshua should have gone before the Lord without hesitation, but instead he trusted his own judgment. **God gives wisdom to those who ask.**

God sees and knows every situation from the beginning to the end. It would be foolish then to not ask council of God in even the smallest situation, let alone the big ones. It says in James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him." So we as children of God have the creator of the universe, ready to help us in making decisions.

What a peace that gives us in our lives. We don't have to stress about making decisions, we just have to trust God. Let us be careful in thinking we don't need God's help in making choices, because God really does know best. And usually, when we do what we think is best for our lives, we can be tricked or make the wrong decision, like Joshua did. And in making wrong decisions the consequences can be very bad. The children of Israel would never fully have the land to themselves because of this bad decision as we will see.

It is so important for us in our lives to seek the Lord in every decision we make. **God gives wisdom to those who ask.**

Proverbs 19:21

Use thin paper plates for a test. Let the kids try to carry some heavy items across the room on a paper plate. Stack it up real high and make sure it is overloaded. What should happen is the paper plate will give in to the weight and collapse. Then give them a real stoneware plate to try to carry the same amount of items. You can then even give them a choice as to which one they would prefer to carry all of those items.

Ask how the stoneware plate is like God's wisdom compared to the paper plate which is like man's wisdom. Man's wisdom will never hold up to the test and will always fail us. Proverbs 19:21 - "There are many plans in a man's heart, nevertheless the LORD'S counsel—that will stand." **God gives wisdom to those who ask.**

JOSHUA 9:16-27

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.

Three days after the treaty was made the Israelites found out that the Gibeonites were their neighbors and knew they had been tricked. A group of the Israelites went and confirmed the fraud by discovering Gibeon and its three dependent cities.

The Israelites were outraged at being lied to and wanted to disregard the treaty and destroy the Gibeonites. But Joshua and the leaders stopped the Israelites and said that the deception did not nullify the treaty. They could not go back on the treaty because they had sworn an oath by the Lord God of Israel, and to break that would be to bring down the wrath of God on Israel.

Joshua and the leaders were men of integrity. They kept their word even in the face of being deceived. That is something that is essential in good leadership and a quality that we must possess as Christians. We represent God to other people, so when we do not keep our word we are misrepresenting our God who keeps all of His promises. If we say something then we must do it. And remember God will give us the strength to do what is right.

Since the people could not kill the Gibeonites, Joshua made them servants to Israel. Joshua made them water carriers, and woodcutters. So the very freedom they tried to obtain, they lost. It is never profitable to resort to trickery.

But the curse on the Gibeonites became a blessing. Such is the grace of God. In Joshua 10:10-14, God worked a miracle while the Israelites were defending Gibeon. Later, the tabernacle was pitched at Gibeon. And later yet, some Gibeonites helped Nehemiah rebuild Jerusalem's walls. Do we not have a forgiving and loving heavenly Father? But sin does have its consequences and now the children of Israel will never fully possess all of the land as God had intended.

Let us ask wisdom from the Lord daily and always trust that He knows best for our lives. Let us keep our word always, no matter

what the situation. Let us not trick someone, for God will repay sin. May we all fall deeper and deeper in love with our Lord. **God gives wisdom to those who ask.**

Plastic Cup Phones

Make phones out of plastic cups. Punch a hole in the bottom of two cups. Put a long string between the cups and tie the strings in knots on both ends. Be sure pull it tight so the sound will carry.

Have someone demonstrate that if you talk you can be heard through the phone. But what happens if you don't talk? No one can hear you! The same is with God, He wants us to talk to Him through prayer. This is how we get wisdom to make important decisions. **God gives wisdom to those who ask.**

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of petition to the Lord for wisdom. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.