

Deceitful Neighbors
Joshua 9
Sermon Outline

Introduction: There is always something disappointing in life—even at the conquest of Canaan.

I) The particular shape of the disappointment in Joshua 9

A) Direct disobedience

- *v. 15: Joshua...made a covenant with them*
- *Deut. 7:2: When the Lord your God gives them over to you...you shall make no covenant with them*

B) Prayer-less decision-making

- *v.14: They did not ask counsel of the Lord*
- Allergic to dependence on God

C) Liability

- *v. 19: We have sworn...and now we may not touch them*
- Take away: Pray always
 - *Sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you... (Genesis 4:7).*

II) The deep meaning of the disappointment

A) God must conquer because we cannot

- The entire OT story is a disappointment
- Leveraging our disappointments

B) God will conquer because he never lies

- *v. 19: We have sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we may not touch them...lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath we swore.*
- We can't lie because our God does not.
- God and his promise:
 - *Genesis 15.17-18*
 - *Psalms 15. 1-2, 4: O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent?...he who swears to his own hurt*
- The reason why Joshua could keep his word to the Gibeonites...

C) God's promise and the Second Joshua

- *v. 15: Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them to let them live*
Matt. 26.28: For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for the remission of sins
Luke 24.36: Peace to you
- The 'curse' that falls to the Gibeonites: *To cut wood and draw water for the house of God (v.23)*

Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) Document from your experience that there is always something wrong with life.
- 2) List the disappointments in Joshua 9—the choices and circumstances that are less than ideal. Why do such things keep cropping up? What is God saying by them?
- 3) Note verse 14. Why do the leaders not consult the Lord? Why do we so often not consult him?
- 4) Recall a hasty, prayer-less decision that you or someone you know made. Why was the decision made hastily? What were the results of the decision, good and bad? Evaluate what happened in the light of Romans 8:28.
- 5) Reflect on a present disappointment in your life—at work, in a relationship, regarding your health. How with God's help can you leverage that disappointment spiritually? As you reflect bear in mind the prayer at the end of Psalm 139: *Search me and know me. See if there is any wicked way in me. And lead me in the way everlasting.*
- 6) Reflect on v. 19-20. Note that the leaders refused to undo their covenant promise, despite the fact that the people of Israel were justly angry at them and despite the fact that the Gibeonites had wheedled the promise out of them by lying. Why do the leaders refuse to reverse themselves? What is at stake?
- 7) Read Genesis 15:1-21 (noting especially vv. 9-12 and 17, where God uses an ancient covenant ratification ceremony to say, 'May I myself be torn asunder if I ever break my promise to you'). Now read Psalm 15:4, where the man whom God loves is the man who 'swears to his own hurt' (who keeps his promises even when it hurts him to do so). How does the gospel reveal God as a Person who swears to his own hurt—as a Person who is willing to be torn asunder rather than break his promise? Spend some time thanking God for the astonishing measures he took to keep his promises to us.