



# CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

AUGUST 26 2023

**Scripture Story:** Joshua 9; 10.

**Commentary:** *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 47.

## oops!



Photo by Bill Wolf

## flashlight

"It was no light humiliation to those citizens of a 'royal city,' 'all the men whereof were mighty,' to be made hewers of wood and drawers of water throughout their generations. But they had adopted the garb of poverty for the purpose of deception, and it was fastened upon them as a badge of perpetual servitude. Thus through all their generations their servile condition would testify to God's hatred of falsehood" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 507).

## keytext

"The Israelites sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the LORD. Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath."

(Joshua 9:14, 15, NIV)

# what do you think?

How can you tell when someone is lying to you? What signs do you usually look for?

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## did you know?

**D**id you know that God is a military strategist? As the five Amorite kings fled from Joshua and the Israelite army, God gave Joshua some “air support.” Read about it in

Joshua 10:11. God showered the Canaanite armies with large hailstones and He kept it up on the “long day” when time stood still.

“This entire passage provides a striking illustration of the interplay between the human and divine factors in achieving victory. Verses 7-11 alternate between Joshua (and Israel) and the LORD. They all played important parts in the conflict. The soldiers had to fight but God gave the victory.”—*Bible Knowledge Commentary*.

## INTO THE STORY

“Now when all the kings west of the Jordan heard about these things—the kings in the hill country, in the western foothills, and along the entire coast of the Mediterranean Sea as far as Lebanon (the kings of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites)—they came together to wage war against Joshua and Israel.

“However, when the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, they resorted to a ruse: They went as a delegation whose donkeys were loaded with worn-out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended.”

“The Israelites sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the LORD. Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath.

“Three days after they made the treaty with the Gibeonites, the Israelites heard that they were neighbors, living near them. So the Israelites set out and on the third day came to their cities: Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth and Kiriath Jearim. But the Israelites did not attack them, because the leaders of the assembly had sworn an oath to them by the LORD, the God of Israel.

“The whole assembly grumbled against the leaders, but all the leaders answered, ‘We have given them our oath by the LORD, the God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now. This is what we will do to them: We will let them live, so that God’s wrath will not fall on us for breaking the oath we swore to them.’ They continued, ‘Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers in the service of the whole assembly.’ So the leaders’ promise to them was kept.”

“The Gibeonites then sent word to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal: ‘Do not abandon your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us! Help us, because all the Amorite kings from the hill country have joined forces against us.’

“So Joshua marched up from Gilgal with his entire army, including all the best fighting men. The LORD said to Joshua, ‘Do not be afraid of them; I have given them into your hand. Not one of them will be able to withstand you.’

“After an all-night march from Gilgal, Joshua took them by surprise. The LORD threw them into confusion before Israel, so Joshua and the Israelites defeated them completely at Gibeon. Israel pursued them along the road going up to Beth Horon and cut them down all the way to Azekah and Makkedah. As they fled

# punch lines

before Israel on the road down from Beth Horon to Azekah, the LORD hurled large hailstones down on them, and more of them died from the hail than were killed by the swords of the Israelites.”

(Joshua 9:1-4, 14-21; 10:6-11, NIV)

## OUT OF THE STORY

Who is seeking to deceive whom in this story? Why?

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Place a *check mark* by the points in the story where Israel should have consulted with God. Place an *X* where they did consult with God.

*Underline* the deceptive words spoken by the Gibeonites.

Which parts of this story grab your attention?

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Who are the main characters making important decisions for Israel?

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Why did the Israelites decide to honor a treaty that was signed through deceptive means?

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In the last paragraph, place an *up arrow* at the places where Joshua or Israel are doing something. Place a *down arrow* where God is doing something.

Notice the participation on both sides in winning the victory.

“**Truthful lips endure forever**, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment” (Proverbs 12:19, NIV).

“**The heart is deceitful** above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9, NIV).

“**You have heard that** it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:43, 44, NIV).

“**Who may ascend the** mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god” (Psalm 24:3, 4, NIV).

“**But the king will** rejoice in God; all who swear by God will glory in him, while the mouths of liars will be silenced” (Psalm 63:11, NIV).

## further insight

“**The men of prayer are the men of power.**”—Ellen G. White,

*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 509.

“**The humble worker who obediently responds to the call of God may be sure of receiving divine assistance.**”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 354.

# connectingtolife

## Sabbath

Read Joshua 9:19.

The *What Do You Think?* exercise focused on the physical cues people give off when attempting to mislead or tell an untruth. Obviously, Joshua and the Israelite princes missed the cues that the Gibeonites were exhibiting.

From today's reading we notice that the Israelites got very upset with their leaders for making a treaty with a deceptive nation. Share a time in your life when you did something good for someone who had done you wrong.

Has someone ever extended kindness to you after you had done wrong?

## Sunday

Read Joshua 9:3-6.

Ellen White's comments on Israel's decision to honor its treaty with the Gibeonites is worth a closer look: "The Gibeonites had pledged themselves to renounce idolatry, and accept the worship of Jehovah; and the preservation of their lives was not a violation of God's command to destroy the idolatrous Canaanites" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 506).

It's obvious that the Gibeonites converted to serving God out of fear for their lives. Does God desire forced worship, worship from folks who are scared of Him or His people?

## Monday

Read Joshua 9:21; 10:1-4.

The *Key Text* this week states clearly that Israel's leaders failed to consult God before entering into their treaty with the Gibeonites. Israel honored its word, but a fearful punishment was pronounced on the Gibeonites.

The Israelite failure to seek God's guidance started a chain reaction throughout the region. What did the king of Jerusalem decide to do following the humiliation of the Gibeonites?

What was the response of Joshua and the Israelites?

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## Tuesday

Read Proverbs 12:19.

Ellen White shines her *Flashlight* on the punishment meted out to the Gibeonites because of their deception. They came to Israel dressed like poor slaves. Because of their sin, they would remain poor servants forever. What a high price to pay for deception!

Do you think this was a fair punishment? Prepare an answer to share with the class.

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In spite of the punishment for deception, how did God honor the relationship between the Israelites and the Gibeonites? Read the last three paragraphs of *Into the Story*.

## Wednesday

The final selection in the list of *Punch Lines* reads: "Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god" (Psalm 24:3, 4, NIV).

What do you think is meant by "clean hands"? What do you think it means to have "a pure heart"?

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## Thursday

Read Joshua 10.

This is perhaps one of the most violent chapters in the Bible. God had given His people a clear directive to destroy all the heathen nations of Canaan because of their sin and disobedience. But God's sixth commandment says, "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13, NIV).

We do not now, and may never, fully understand the reason for everything God chooses to do or not do in regard to sin and evil on this earth. We are, however, assured that "the Spirit of God inspired Joshua's prayer, that evidence might again be given of the power of Israel's God. . . . Joshua had received the promise that God would surely overthrow these enemies of Israel, yet he put forth as earnest effort as though success depended upon the armies of Israel alone. He did all that human energy could do, and then he cried in faith for divine aid. The secret of success is the union of divine power with human effort" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 509).

## Friday

Read Matthew 7:7, 8.

This week's study challenges us to be people of truth, honesty, and integrity; to honor the oaths we make even when others are less than honest with us. But, on a deeper level, this week's lesson asks a far more challenging question: What are some of the consequences of failing to seek God's guidance in every area of life?

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Reflect on this question as you thank God for His grace, His willingness to still work with us though we sometimes forget about Him.

## this week's reading\*

*Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 47.

\**Beginning of the End* is a special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at [www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rB09s](http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rB09s). By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.