

Major League Failures (Joshua 9)

league: A military, political, or commercial covenant or compact made between parties for their mutual protection and assistance against a common enemy; the prosecution or safeguarding of joint interests, and the like; a body of states or persons associated in such a covenant, a confederacy.

Intro.

- A. *Joshua* is the same name as *Jesus* (**ACT 7:45**); both mean “Jehovah is salvation.”
- B. Joshua was Moses' successor who brought natural Israel into their earthly inheritance, even as Jesus only could bring spiritual Israel (the elect of all nations) into their heavenly inheritance. **ROM 3:20-22; 8:3.**
- C. The Book of Joshua sets forth Joshua's second coming into earthly Canaan. c/w **NUM 14:6.**
 - 1. It was at this second coming when the enemies were destroyed.
 - 2. Christ's first coming *to earth* went unnoticed by the nations but it will not be so at His Second Coming. **MAT 24:30; 25:31-32.**
 - 3. Jesus Christ's first and second comings *into heavenly Canaan* bear similar marks.
 - a. Upon His death, the *soul and spirit* of Christ ascended to heaven. **LUK 23:43, 46.**
 - (1) At this point, the powers of darkness may have been troubled but not spoiled.
 - (2) The spoiling of the enemy would be reserved unto the resurrection of His *body*. **1PE 3:21-22; COL 2:15.**
 - b. Christ came *bodily* into heavenly Canaan TWICE after His resurrection. His first coming made no ripples in the Gentile nations.
 - (1) Christ ascended briefly to the Father immediately after His resurrection (**JOH 20:17**) to present Himself as the victorious God-man, *the firstfruits of them that slept* (**1CO 15:20**) and promptly returned to earth for a few weeks. **ACT 1:3.**
 - (2) Christ ascended bodily the second time into heavenly Canaan and by the sending forth of the Holy Spirit to advance His gospel, certainly made big ripples in the Gentile nations. **ACT 1:7-8; 17:6.**
 - c. A league of nations and devils will meet with sudden, total destruction at the return of Christ to earth. **REV 20:7-10.**
 - 4. Mind the irony of how central the Person and work of Jesus Christ figures in the bringing together of men of different nations.
 - a. *Unbelieving* Jews and Gentiles formed a league to destroy him. **ACT 4:26-28.**
 - b. Their action facilitated the bringing together of *believing* Jews and Gentiles to serve Him and promote His government. **1CO 12:13.**
- D. This chapter records the setting up of the “United Nations” of Canaan against God and His church, and the Gibeonites successful deceit and covenant of peace with Israel.
- E. The previous chapter (**JOS 8**) saw Joshua destroy Ai, make a faithful copy of God's law, and refresh Israel's covenant commitment with God.

Joshua 9.

- A. **vs. 1-2.** When the kings of the land heard about Joshua's success and Israel's progress into the land they formed a *League of Nations* to oppose the Lord's church. Not only had Israel invaded

the land but they were doing it in the name of their God Who tolerated the worship of no other gods and demanded that His law be obeyed.

1. Remember that an underlying purpose for United Nations type alliances is to oppose Jesus and destroy His church. **REV 20:8-9**.
 - a. Sin in its essence is revolt against God and a refusal to be in subjection to Him and to His law.
 - b. Depraved unregenerate carnal minded men such as these inhabitants of Canaan hate God and His holy law and that common hatred will unite them. **ROM 8:7**.
 - c. Interestingly, up to this point the kings of the land had been passive regarding Israel, but immediately after Israel's solemn renewal of their covenant with Jehovah, they were moved to unite together and fight against them.
 - d. Do not be surprised that when you are most determined to obey the LORD that the opposition from the adversaries of truth increases.
2. While in one sense, Jesus Christ, His church, and His gospel separate and divide men (**LUK 12:51-52**), they also unite discordant parties against them as their common foe. **MAT 16:1; LUK 23:12; ACT 4:26-27**.
 - a. Note how the adversaries abounded when God opened the door for the increase of His interests. **1CO 16:9; ACT 19:8-10; 22-29; 2TI 4:14-16**.
 - b. It matters not that the wicked unite and assemble themselves against the people of God and the truth of His word for God for in the end they will not be successful. **PSA 2; DEU 7:9-10; REV 20:8-9**.
 - c. On the other hand, it is a sad thing indeed when carnal men display more unity and accord than God's people. **MAR 3:25; 1CO 1:10**.

B. **vs. 3-15**. The citizens of Gibeon prudently foresaw the evil that was about to befall them and devised a clever plan to get Israel to make a league with them in an attempt to avoid their total destruction. **PRO 22:3**.

1. The Gibeonites were desperate and would be living proof of the truth of **JOB 2:4**.
2. They had counted the cost of resistance and had wisely determined that seeking a treaty of peace was their best option.
 - a. This principle is the basis of true Christian commitment. **LUK 14:31-33**.
 - b. The coming of Joshua/Jesus in judgment is the ultimate incentive for men to repent and to align themselves with Him. **ACT 17:30-31; 24:25**.
 - c. There is no better thing for the sons of men to do than to yield themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ and align themselves with His church and thus enter His kingdom.
 - d. All men may realize certain benefits by even an external submission to Christ and application of Scriptural principles in their lives. **DAN 4:27; 1KI 21:27-29; DEU 4:5-6**.
3. The Gibeonites portrayed themselves as ambassadors from a distant nation with all the necessary props to support their story. **vs. 4-5**.
 - a. They cunningly made mention of only the much earlier conquests of Israel, not the recent ones of Jericho and Ai (**vs. 9-10**) to give further credibility to their story.
 - b. They cunningly avoided naming a country of origin (**vs. 6, 9**) lest they give themselves away by admission or omission.
 - c. This is the way that lies are best sold: by giving them the maximum outward appearance of credibility.
 - d. This is the way that Satan takes advantage of us by getting us to yield to temptations to sin through *deceitful* lusts (**EPH 4:22**). He makes them credible by

- dressing them up as our friends or servants, substitutes for God's sufficiency, means of satisfying legitimate needs, appeals to our good side, etc.
4. When they first approached Joshua in his camp at Gilgal and sought a league of peace with Israel, they were viewed with suspicion. **vs. 6-8.**
 - a. Israel had not only just used deceptive tactics to defeat Ai (**JOS 8:15-16**) but fresh upon their minds was also the troubles that preceded the victory at Ai because of disobedience to God's word. **JOS 7:1-5.**
 - b. The wise Christian warrior who may use godly guile (**2CO 12:16**) knows the power of guile and will not assume the adversary to be guileless.
 - (1) The Gibeonites were *wily* characters. **v. 4.**
 - (2) *wily*: Full of or characterized by wiles; crafty, cunning, sly, artful.
 - (3) We should not be ignorant of our adversary's devices. **2CO 2:11.**
 - (4) We are to guard against *cunning craftiness*. **EPH 4:14.**
 - (5) We are to "...stand against the WILES of the devil..." (**EPH 6:11**).
 - c. God had told Israel to extend offers of peace to distant cities when they waged war in Canaan. **DEU 20:10-15.**
 - (1) But God had also told them that this was not to be done to the nearer cities whom God had determined were to be utterly destroyed; no covenant was to be made with them. **DEU 20:16-17; 7:1-2.**
 - (2) This distinction is characteristic of mature Christian discernment as touching *sins* and *liberties* (both of which can destroy us). We may have *no peace* with sin but only seek its destruction (**COL 3:5-6**) and *cautious peace* with liberties. **1CO 6:12; GAL 5:13.**
 - d. They were right to question these "ambassadors." c/w **MAT 3:7.**
 - (1) Potential converts should be taught and queried. **ACT 8:30-38.**
 - (2) We do well to question those unfamiliar "opportunities" which come upon us, for not everything that purports to have our well-being at heart is so. **ROM 16:17-18; 2PE 2:18-19.**
 - e. The Gibeonites seem to have had some knowledge of God's law concerning Canaanite cities and their inhabitants in their devising of this ruse for they were both near neighbors and also Hivites (**v. 7**) and thus clearly slated for destruction. **v. 24.**
 5. The Gibeonites reply saying, "...We are thy servants..." thus presenting themselves as those that were both humble and willing to be subservient and useful to Israel rather than being viewed with suspicion as possible enemies. **v. 8.**
 - a. This was their bait to entrap Israel. c/w **EZR 4:1-3.**
 - b. Again, remember that temptations often come in the form of things that may serve us or help us. **GEN 3:5.**
 6. Joshua was not satisfied with their vague and indefinite statement but asked them to clearly identify themselves concerning their nation and place. He was on his guard, but not sufficiently so. **v. 8.**
 - a. Remember that a key issue in contending for the faith is to not let evasiveness, vagueness or ambiguity slide by you. Demand specific details.
 - b. As Joshua made inquiry here as to where they had come from, so we do well to find out some background of those to whom we witness to get a better idea as to *where they are coming from*.
 - c. After hearing their explanation (in which they still avoided naming their people or country, **v. 9**) Joshua and the princes made peace with them without seeking counsel

- of the Lord. **vs. 9-15.**
- (1) Joshua was at Gilgal which was Israel's encampment (**v. 6 c/w JOS 5:10**) where the ark of the covenant and the High Priest would have been.
 - (2) He should have asked counsel at the Urim as he had been directed. **NUM 27:21.**
 - (3) We are also encouraged to seek counsel from God when we need wisdom concerning situations that arise in our lives. **JAM 1:5 c/w PRO 3:5-6.**
 - (4) It is for the lack of godly counsel that many bad decisions are made. **PSA 119:24; PRO 15:22; 24:6.**
 - (5) It is sometimes a matter of one not wanting to hear godly counsel lest it oppose what is already determined in the heart. **1KI 22:8.**
- d. In retrospect, Joshua should have stopped their mouths after **v. 9** since they were still being evasive.
- (1) Allowing them to speak after that only gave them opportunity to further befuddle Joshua.
 - (2) Sometimes the most charitable thing to do when defending the faith is to stop the mouth of the person who is not dealing uprightly. **TIT 1:11.**
 - (3) Hindsight is so much clearer than foresight!
7. One must give them credit for their wit and wisdom as they proceeded to outwit Israel and Joshua. Christ even used an example of a wise unjust steward to provoke His disciples to faithfulness in everyday things. **LUK 16:1-12.**
- a. There is no indication that they had any other design than to avoid their own destruction. This is prudence. **PRO 27:12.**
 - b. They were cautious to not reveal all that they knew about Israel and their God (**vs. 9-10 c/w v. 24**). This is serpent wisdom. **MAT 10:16.**
 - c. They appealed directly to Joshua as ambassadors from a *far* country.
 - (1) There is an element of flattery and appeal to one's pride to be known and courted by those from far away.
 - (2) King Hezekiah was flattered by the attention and friendly overtures given him by the king of Babylon and he let down his guard and showed them all his treasures. **ISA 39:1-2.**
 - (3) When Isaiah took him to task for his unwise actions, Hezekiah said, "...They are come from a far country unto ME, even from Babylon" (**ISA 39:3**).
 - (4) Beware those that fawn over you and flatter you with their lips. **PRO 29:5.**
 - d. Their appearance was one of reduced circumstances, which could invoke sympathy. How often have churches and church leaders been snared by this ploy!
 - e. They constantly forwarded the sentiment that they were willing to be Israel's *servants* (**vs. 8-9, 11**), that there was a benefit for Israel in making a league with them.
 - f. They even gave a show of religion, "...come because of the name of the LORD thy God..." (**v. 9**).
 - g. They reinforced the impression that they were truly ambassadors from a far country by intimating that the leaders and inhabitants of their country were of one accord with them in their fear of the Lord God of Israel and their desire to serve Israel.
 - (1) They presented themselves as those that were backed by reliable authorities and popular opinion and were given the authority to make peace with Israel for their nation. **v. 11.**
 - (2) There is wisdom in presenting yourselves to others as their equals in station

or as the ambassadors of such. Equals will tend to listen and work with those of equal station or position. Appearances can be very important in this world.

- h. They got the covenant they sought after!
- i. Sadly, this is not unlike the way some marriage covenants are struck.