

Heaven and Earth at Our Command

Did you think to pray?

Joshua 9–13

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • September 1, In the year of our Lord, 2013

Scripture Reader and Reading: Michael Crisp – Philippians 4.6–7

Prelude:

I. Think on a failure you have experienced.

- A. Did you think to pray before or during the event?
- B. If not, do not let that discourage you from praying, but
 - 1. let the experience teach you
 - 2. that the God of heaven has made promises to you, and
 - a) He wants you to consult Him about the affairs of life.
 - b) Why exclude Him?

II. The Lord promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Land of Canaan, but

- A. that did not mean
 - 1. He then abandoned their descendants in the land, nor
 - 2. that they should abandon Him,
 - a) thinking they had the land regardless of their disobedience.
- B. If they failed to consult Him about matters along the way,
 - 1. they would suffer for it, but
 - 2. if they consulted Him,
 - a) they would do things, and
 - b) have things done for them,
 - (1) that would cause both them and us
 - (2) to wonder at the Lord's work.

III. Whatever troubles you,

- A. whatever challenges you face,

B. whatever issues confound you,

1. learn from Israel in Joshua 9–13
2. of the power of prayer.

Persuasion:

I. Joshua 9 – Failing to Consult the Lord

A. The news of Israel's defeat of Jericho and Ai, and

1. how they did it,
2. spread throughout the Land of Canaan.

B. However, the kings and people of the land did not respond as Rahab did,

1. confessing the Lord and Israel's unstoppable power, and
2. so pled for her life and the life of her family.

C. No, the kings and people of Canaan gathered to fight Israel (Jos 9.1, 2).

D. However, there was one exception, but

1. they did not approach the matter as Rahab did,
2. using deceit instead,

3 But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, 4 they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, 5 old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and moldy (Jos 9.3–5).

E. Then the Gibeonites approached Joshua and the leaders of Israel,

1. saying that they had come from a far country,
2. asking Israel to make a covenant with them (9.6).
 - a) The Israelite leaders objected, saying,
 - b) perhaps the Gibeonites dwelt among Israel, that is, in Canaan (9.7).

- (1) The Gibeonites merely answered that they were servants of Israel.
- (2) Joshua questioned them further (9.8).

F. The Gibeonites answered, and see whether you can detect anything wrong,

9 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, 10 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. 11 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.” 12 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. 13 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” (Jos 9.9–13).

1. When someone oversells his case,
 2. he may very well be lying to you.
 - a) The thing about their provisions says too much.
 - b) Look at verses 12 and 13.
 - (1) Their claim grew in outlandishness.
 - (2) Their bread was dry and moldy?
 - (a) Okay.
 - (b) But the bread you took hot at the beginning of your journey,
 - i) you still had, after your wineskins were torn and
 - ii) your sandals had become old?
 3. How did the bread last that long?

G. The next thing the Bible reveals shows the serious mistake of the leaders,

14 Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask

counsel of the Lord (Jos 9.14).

1. Therefore, Joshua
 - a) made peace with them,
 - b) made a covenant to let them live, and
 - (1) the rulers of Israel backed Joshua completely (9.15).
 - (2) Big mistake!
2. Three days later, Israel found out the truth, and
 - a) immediately Israel went to the cities of the Gibeonites (9.16–17).
 - b) Israel could not attack them because of the covenant.
 - (1) Centuries later God cursed Israel because
 - (2) Saul broke this covenant by attacking the Gibeonites (2Sa 21).

H. Not only that but Israel had to defend the Gibeonites

1. when the other Canaanites sought to attack Gibeon (9.18).
2. Joshua and the leaders told Israel,

21 “Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers for all the congregation, as the rulers had promised them” (Jos 9.21).

II. Joshua 10.1–27 – Consulting the Lord

A. The king of Jerusalem, Lord Zedek, united the kings of the land, and

1. they went to attack Gibeon (10.1–7).
2. Joshua and Israel went to rescue Gibeon, and
 - a) the Lord reassured Joshua that Israel would win,

8 And the Lord said to Joshua, “Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you” (Jos 10.8).

- b) Verse 11 says that the Lord cast down large hailstones,
- (1) killing the attackers of Gibeon.
 - (2) However, this did not destroy all the enemy, and
 - (a) they were running out of time.
 - (b) Therefore, Joshua spoke to the Lord and now
 - i) see the awesome power of prayer,

12 Then Joshua spoke to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel:

“Sun, stand still over Gibeon;
And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon.”

13 So the sun stood still,
And the moon stopped,
Till the people had revenge
Upon their enemies.

Is this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. **14** And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the Lord heeded the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel (Jos 10.12–14).

B. Heaven and Earth are at our command, brethren!

1. In Revelation 8, the Bible shows heaven and Earth at our command,

3 Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. **4** And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. **5** Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunders, lightnings, and an earthquake (Rev 8.3–5).

2. Later, I will tell you of Elijah.

III. Joshua 10.28–13.33 – The Result of Consulting the Lord

A. The writer in verses 28–39 reported on the attacks of Israel,

- i. then summed it up, starting at verse 40,

40 So Joshua conquered all the land: the mountain country and the South and the lowland and the wilderness slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel had commanded. 41 And Joshua conquered them from Kadesh Barnea as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even as far as Gibeon. 42 All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel (Jos 10.40–42).

B. Amazingly, others in the Land of Canaan heard of Israel's relentless victories,

- i. leading the Canaanites not to give in, but
2. to think they could defeat or needed to defeat Israel.
 - a) They created an alliance as numberless as the sand on the seashore, but
 - b) the Lord knew this could frighten Israel and said,

11.6 But the Lord said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid because of them, for tomorrow about this time I will deliver all of them slain before Israel. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire" (Jos 11.6).

C. After the writer listed still more land that Israel conquered,

- i. he then showed what happened to those whom they formerly feared,

21 And at that time Joshua came and cut off the Anakim from the mountains: from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. 22 None of the Anakim were left in the land of the children of Israel; they remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod (Jos 11.21–22).

- a) Israel had feared these giants, yet,
 - b) this text makes it sound routine that Israel destroyed them.
 - (1) The ones they let live,
 - (2) plagued Israel for a long time, and
 - (a) you will note that the places left
 - (b) is the area from which Goliath came.
- D. The writer noted something in chapter 13 that was not insignificant,

13 Nevertheless the children of Israel did not drive out the Geshurites or the Maachathites, but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day (Jos 13.13).

- 1. That became a huge problem for Israel in the years to come.
- 2. Psalm 106 comments on this failure and the consequences,

35 But they mingled with the Gentiles
And learned their works;
36 They served their idols,
Which became a snare to them.
(Psa 106.35–36)

Exhortation:

I. Remember why the Bible tells us these things.

- A. We need to know that all the spiritual blessings we have in Christ,
- B. come because of the promise God made to Abraham.
 - 1. That promise included giving his descendants the Land of Canaan
 - 2. that it might be set aside to show the world
 - a) the need for salvation,
 - b) what God requires, and so on.

II. Do you know the power of a Christian praying for you?

A. Do you know the power of a Church praying for you?

B. James said something

1. that shows the power of a Christian praying for you, and
2. that shows Heaven and Earth at our command,

16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit (Jam 5.16–18).

III. What is keeping you from reaching the goal?

A. What is keeping you from praying?

B. Joshua and the elders made a mistake in not consulting the Lord, but

1. when they did consult Him,
2. magnificent things happened.

C. Therefore, start praying today.

1. Compile a list.
2. Add Scriptures that have prayers.

IV. Go home and decide to have regular times for prayer.