

Sermon Study Guide



#8: Cloak-and-Dagger Deception

Series: *Courage in the Crucible*

March 14, 2021 | Dr. Stephen G. Tan

In this study on the book of Joshua, we learn how we can stand courageous when trials, difficult situations, opposition, and inevitable changes surround us.

Reflect

Have you ever been deceived? How did you react?

Read and Discuss

Scripture

Joshua 9:1-27

Discussion Questions

Since the fall of man, deception has been used to gain advantage, especially in times of war. As you live out your Christian life to please the Lord, your enemy uses the same method to try to trip you up. The Bible gives us seven warnings to take into account so that we are prepared for and are able to face deception with courage. Read Joshua 9:1-27.

1. **Warning #1: Be on guard. Many want to take advantage of you (v. 1-7).** Because of Israel's victories over the cities of Jericho and Ai, what did their enemies in the land of Canaan do? What did the inhabitants of Gibeon do instead of joining the group that opposed Israel? Why did they do it? What tricks do people employ to take advantage of Christians or to deceive them? What does Matthew 10:16 remind you to do as you engage this world? How can you show Christian love to those who may be taking advantage of you, but at the same time apply wisdom?
2. **Warning #2: Even the enemy can speak spiritual words (v. 8-10).** How did the Gibeonites use the name of God to deceive the Israelites? Discuss how non-Christians use Christian terms to deceive when in fact they really do not know the Lord. What do you think are their motives for doing so? What should you do in order to discern if a person is telling the

truth or trying to deceive you by using spiritual words?

3. **Warning #3: Appearances can be deceiving. Look beyond the facade (v. 11-13).** What evidence did the Gibeonites give to make their lies believable? Describe how appearances may deceive you into believing someone is a true believer? What should you do in order to know if that person's faith is real or a lie?
4. **Warning #4: Ask the Lord to reveal the truth to you when you are not sure what to do (v. 14).** What was the reason why the men of Israel were tricked? Why is it important to seek God's counsel in your life? Why can't you expect the Lord to reveal Truth into your life when you are living in disobedience? What practical things can you do to find out if someone is being honest with you or just tricking you?
5. **Warning #5: Taking time to decide minimizes mistakes (v. 15-18).** How did the Israelites handle the situation when they found out that they were tricked by the enemies? How do people usually react when they realize that their leader made a mistake? Why is it very important to take time before you make a big and important decision? What wisdom do Psalm 27:14 and Proverbs 3:5-6 give so that you will not fall into a big mistake?
6. **Warning #6: When deceived, do not retaliate with evil or sin (v. 19-23).** As a consequence, what did Joshua and the leaders decide to do with the Gibeonites? As Christians, why should you not repay evil with evil. Read Romans 12:17-21. What does the Bible teach us on how to handle the evilness done to you instead? Does it mean that you should allow others to take advantage of you? What does it mean then?
7. **Warning #7: God is gracious. He can redeem our mistakes (v. 24-27).** How did the Gibeonites accept the consequence of their deception? How do you see God's graciousness in this story? As a Christian, what hope do you cling to when you

fail to heed the Word of God and fall into mistakes? Does that give you license to intentionally fall? How much does God's graciousness mean to you?

Respond

In Walk: Examine your life:

- How are you on guard so that others cannot take advantage of you?
- How can you discern truth from lies?
- How can you differentiate facade from real motives?
- Do you ask the Lord to reveal to you the truth when you are not sure about it?
- Do you take time to think and pray before making important life's decisions?
- Do you agree that you should not pay evil with evil? If so, how should you handle it?
- What should you do so that you can experience God's graciousness and redeem you from your mistakes?

In Prayer: Heavenly Father, I definitely don't want to be deceived and make mistakes that I would regret later on. Please give me wisdom and the desire to know more and understand Your principles so that I can avoid being deceived. Thank You that You are my all-knowing and gracious God. Thank You that in You, I can have victory to overcome and correct my mistakes. In Jesus' name. Amen.