

# DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

*Our Mission: Reaching Out to Leaders Who Can Change the World.*

September 2012

## *Joshua: Hope for God's People*

### **Lesson #8: Covenant Matters**

Would you describe Christians' decision making more like "customers looking for options" or as "servants listening for orders"? How can you really know God's will? Jn 7:17; Prov 3:5-6; Ja 1:5

#### **OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION**

##### Read Joshua 8:29-35

*Note: Since Abraham had built an altar at Shechem, and Jacob had lived there a short time, the area had strong historic ties to Israel. Joshua's altar was built on Mt. Ebal, "the mount of cursing," because only a sacrifice of blood can save sinners from the curse of the law (Gal. 3:10-14). In building the altar, Joshua was careful to obey Exodus 20:25 and not apply any tool to the stones picked up in the field. No human work was to be associated with the sacrifice lest sinners think their own works can save them (Eph. 2:8-9). God asked for a simple stone altar, not one that was designed and decorated by human hands, "that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. 1:29). The priests offered burnt offerings to the Lord as a token of the nation's total commitment to Him (Lev. 1). The peace offerings, or "fellowship offerings," were an expression of gratitude to God for His goodness. By these sacrifices, the nation of Israel was assuring God of their commitment to Him and their fellowship with Him.<sup>1</sup>*

1. What did Joshua do after defeating Ai? Why? Dt. 11:29; 27:1-14
2. Why did they write the law in stone? Vs 32

*Note: The Law written on stones was external, not internal, and could instruct the people but could never change them. Paul makes it clear in Galatians that while the Law can convict sinners and bring them to Christ (Gal. 3:19-25), it can never convert sinners and make them like Christ. Only the Spirit of God can do that.<sup>2</sup>*

3. Why were children and aliens included in the assembly? Vs 35

##### Read Joshua 9

*Note: Gibeon was only 5 or 6 miles southwest of Ai, about 25 miles from the Israelite camp. With the subjugation of Gibeon Joshua had split Canaan in two. Joshua and the leaders remained faithful to the covenant promise with Gibeon even though Gibeon did not deserve it, just as God continues to remain faithful to His covenant promises with Israel.*

4. What were the Israelites supposed to do with the land they conquered? Why? Dt 20:10-18
5. Why was it significant that the Gibeonites convinced the Israelites that they lived far away?
6. Why were the Gibeonites successful in tricking the Israelites? v. 14, Matt 4:5-7; 2 Cor 11:14
7. Why did God (& the Israelites) honor their ruse? Gen 12:3; Vs 18; Eccl 5:1-7
8. Why did the Israelites blame Joshua for the deceit?
9. The Gibeonites are similar to Rahab because their faith led them to lie. Why are the Gibeonites *not* commended for their faith like Rahab? What do we learn from this about faith?

#### **APPLICATION**

- What can we learn from the Israelites' situation with Gibeon?
- In what areas are we tempted to make peace with a sinful world?

<sup>1,2</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Strong*. "Be" Commentary Series (101, 102). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.