

Israel had just learned a hard lesson when the town of Ai killed thirty-six of their soldiers. They learned another lesson when Joshua complained to God about the defeat. They had not listened to God before the attack on Ai, nor did they ask God the reason for their defeat. Once sin was cleared from the camp and they heard from God on how to proceed, they were victorious. But the lesson of hearing from God first was still not learned. Our passage today drives it home a third time. As we go over it, we should consider how mankind is so prone to acting without prayer or seeking God's direction.

<sup>1</sup> *As soon as all the kings who were beyond the Jordan in the hill country and in the lowland all along the coast of the Great Sea toward Lebanon, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, heard of this,* <sup>2</sup> *they gathered together as one to fight against Joshua and Israel.* Joshua 9:1,2 This is the first of two main coalitions that attempt to stop Israel from taking the land promised to them by God (11:1,2<sup>i</sup>). Remember that God held off His judgment of this land for 400 years until the cup of the iniquity of the Amorites was full (Genesis 15:16<sup>ii</sup>). That tells us the area was very wicked. They had the King of Righteousness in the days of Abraham who surely proclaimed the way of God. But over the 400 years they had become so wicked that their extermination was the only way to end the evil and keep it from infecting Israel. Because they were so attuned to evil, they were open to Satan's influence to try to stop Israel instead of a treaty. One could say they were only trying to protect their land, but we should not forget that they were determined to continue in their wickedness and were led by Satan as much as Israel was led by God. This spiritual battle with its long history (Daniel 10:13<sup>iii</sup>) manifests in our day as antisemitism.

We have already noticed that Israel's battle in the physical has many parallels to our battles in the spiritual realm. They began claiming the Promised Land by miraculously crossing the Jordan River and circumcising the men. That pictures the beginning of new life in Christ. Then they listened to the LORD's direction and started with the miraculous conquest of Jericho. That is our honeymoon time when it seems God takes such special care of us as baby Christians. Then compromise entered via Achan's greed, and they experienced defeat at Ai. That is our stumbling back into the old life and God's discipline. But after that, there is repentance and dependence on God again which brought victory. And so it is with us.

Once those initial lessons were learned, they rededicated themselves to the covenant. And in our parallel, we regularly partake of communion and vow to surrender our lives to the LORD who gave Himself for us (Titus 2:14<sup>iv</sup>). Then we are ready to take our spiritual heritage in Christ (Ephesians 2:6<sup>v</sup>). That is when the enemy of our souls really takes notice and coordinates an attack to stop our progress in Christ. This is where we are at in our study of Joshua.

The Gibeonites heard of the conquest of Jericho and Ai, so they sought to save their lives. <sup>3</sup> *But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai,* <sup>4</sup> *they on their part acted with cunning and went and made ready provisions and took worn-out sacks for their donkeys, and wineskins, worn-out and torn and mended,* <sup>5</sup> *with worn-out, patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes. And all their provisions were dry and crumbly.* <sup>6</sup> *And they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a distant country, so now*

*make a covenant with us.*” Joshua 9:3-6 Unlike the hard-hearted Canaanite coalition, the Gibeonites assessed the situation with reason. The Gibeonites, who were fierce warriors, realized that the God of Israel could not be defeated in war. Of all the people in the land, they were the only people group who, like Rahab, realized the God of Israel is undefeatable (2:11<sup>vi</sup>). They heard the amazing stories of the Israelite's deliverance from Egypt and their conquests. So, they relied on deception to save their lives. If the enemy cannot win by a frontal attack, he will try deception and compromise. He is subtle (Genesis 3:1<sup>vii</sup>). Why didn't the other groups come to the same realization? In this we can see that most people, even when faced with the evidence, will not surrender to the Lord even to save their lives (Matthew 7:13<sup>viii</sup>). Hardened hearts are without reason.

They prepared an elaborate deception by gathering everything they could find to give the appearance that they had come from a great distance, though they were really living nearby. It was a well-planned drama with all the right props. Every indication was they had made a long journey. The deception was acted out. They asked Joshua to enter a covenant with them.

<sup>7</sup> *But the men of Israel said to the Hivites, “Perhaps you live among us; then how can we make a covenant with you?”* Joshua 9:7 Initial concerns can come to mind because God brings them to mind. There was suspicion from the start that these people lived nearby. When we face important decisions, and we have a sense that something is not right, pray. Ask God for discernment. Take your time and check it out, especially when you desire a certain outcome. Our preferences can blind us to the truth. In the verses that follow notice how the leaders of Israel walk by sight and not by faith (Hebrews 11:6<sup>ix</sup>). See how flattery influences them to ignore their first concern.

<sup>8</sup> *They said to Joshua, “We are your servants.” And Joshua said to them, “Who are you? And where do you come from?”* <sup>9</sup> *They said to him, “From a very distant country your servants have come, because of the name of the LORD your God. For we have heard a report of him, and all that he did in Egypt,* <sup>10</sup> *and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon the king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth.* <sup>11</sup> *So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country said to us, ‘Take provisions in your hand for the journey and go to meet them and say to them, “We are your servants. Come now, make a covenant with us.”’* <sup>12</sup> *Here is our bread. It was still warm when we took it from our houses as our food for the journey on the day we set out to come to you, but now, behold, it is dry and crumbly.* <sup>13</sup> *These wineskins were new when we filled them, and behold, they have burst. And these garments and sandals of ours are worn out from the very long journey.”* Joshua 9:8-12 They began by declaring to Joshua that they were his servants. So, Joshua asked them what people group they were of and where they came from. Notice how they never really answer his question specifically. They just said far away.

The only truth they told was the history of God's mighty acts on behalf of Israel. But they used this truth to back their lie. Deceit is often mixed with facts that are true. We think if one part is true it must all be true. But me thinks thou doth protest too much when they show the dry bread and cracked wineskins. It was a preplanned effort to try to convince Joshua they were telling the truth. "Look at our worn-out sandals!"

<sup>14</sup> *So the men took some of their provisions, but did not ask counsel from the LORD.* Joshua 8:14 The men of Israel looked at the falsified evidence like Eve looked at

the fruit (Genesis 3:6<sup>x</sup>), like their parents looked at the giants (Numbers 13:33<sup>xi</sup>), and like Joshua first looked at Ai (7:3<sup>xii</sup>). **They did not ask counsel from the LORD.**

How did they cross the Jordan? How did they defeat Jericho? How did they defeat Ai? They asked counsel of the LORD. But this is different isn't it? They say they fear the name of the LORD. Even the demons fear the name of the LORD (James 2:19<sup>xiii</sup>). Not everyone who tells you they honor Jesus is a follower of Jesus. I have met people who told me Jesus was their spirit guide. But that spirit did not guide them to the Word of God. Jesus is the Word incarnate (John 1:14<sup>xiv</sup>). He consistently quoted and referred to Scripture. He chose the men who were to convey His message, and they quoted Scripture. He even said He was the fulfillment of all Scripture (Luke 24:44<sup>xv</sup>). So, if the Jesus you follow does not lead you to the Word of God, you are entertaining a spirit as deceptive as the Gibeonites (1 Timothy 4:1<sup>xvi</sup>; Matthew 24:5<sup>xvii</sup>).

Moses had told Joshua how to make important decisions. Numbers 27:18-21 <sup>18</sup> *So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him. <sup>19</sup> Make him stand before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation, and you shall commission him in their sight. <sup>20</sup> You shall invest him with some of your authority, that all the congregation of the people of Israel may obey. <sup>21</sup> And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before the LORD. At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he and all the people of Israel with him, the whole congregation."*

He was to go to the high priest and inquire of the LORD. But this situation appeared to be so obvious. Look at their clothes and provisions. Instead of listening to their first concerns, they listened to the Gibeonites well thought out deception and flattery. Did God not have them annihilate the people of the land because they were so evil? Then why would Joshua expect someone who might be from the land to tell the truth? Can you ask a liar if he or she is lying?

<sup>15</sup> *And Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live, and the leaders of the congregation swore to them. <sup>16</sup> At the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them, they heard that they were their neighbors and that they lived among them. <sup>17</sup> and the people of Israel set out and reached their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim.* Joshua 9:15-17 Surprise! We fooled you. The cities were just a few days away. The covenant could not be broken. Because they did not inquire of the LORD these people would remain in the land. The territory would not be taken. But we will see how God graciously redeemed the situation.

<sup>18</sup> *But the people of Israel did not attack them, because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel. Then all the congregation murmured against the leaders. <sup>19</sup> But all the leaders said to all the congregation, "We have sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we may not touch them. <sup>20</sup> This we will do to them: let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath that we swore to them." <sup>21</sup> And the leaders said to them, "Let them live." So they became cutters of wood and drawers of water for all the congregation, just as the leaders had said of them.* Joshua 9:18-21 The congregation rightly complained to the leaders, but it was too late. The sin of not getting counsel from God could not be made right by the sin of breaking their oath (Psalm 15:4<sup>xviii</sup>). They had to keep their word, for their word represented the God of Israel. He does not break His covenants, so they should not break

theirs even if it was made with deception. **For better or worse, the world sees our actions as representing our God.** Besides that, Moses had commanded that if any city opened their gates to Israel, the people could live but would become servants of Israel (Deuteronomy 20:10,11<sup>xix</sup>). The Gibeonites did fear the God of Israel.

This is a picture of the Lord's conquest of our hearts. If we resist His offer of peace, we will be conquered. If we accept it, we will serve Him. But serving Him is a wonderful gift for His yoke is easy and His burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30<sup>xx</sup>). The title servant of the Lord is an honorary title applied to prophets and kings.

Later in Israel's history, Israel will be judged by God because King Saul broke the covenant with the Gibeonites by attacking them. King David had to make reparations by handing over seven sons of Saul to be hung (2 Samuel 21:5,6<sup>xxi</sup>). The Gibeonites did live as servants, just as they proclaimed.

*<sup>22</sup> Joshua summoned them, and he said to them, "Why did you deceive us, saying, 'We are very far from you,' when you dwell among us? <sup>23</sup> Now therefore you are cursed, and some of you shall never be anything but servants, cutters of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God." <sup>24</sup> They answered Joshua, "Because it was told to your servants for a certainty that the LORD your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you—so we feared greatly for our lives because of you and did this thing. Joshua 9:22-24 "Why did you expect them to tell the truth?", would have been a better question for Joshua. Now the lesson of getting God's perspective, of walking by faith and not by sight is reinforced again (2 Corinthians 5:7<sup>xxii</sup>). If Joshua is going to take all the land and win against the coalitions that gather against Israel, he must learn this crucial lesson.*

If we are to lay up our treasures in heaven and fight the good fight of faith, we need to learn the same lesson (Matthew 6:19-21<sup>xxiii</sup>; 1 Timothy 6:12<sup>xxiv</sup>). We have a great high priest whose name is Jesus (Hebrews 4:14<sup>xxv</sup>). He is always ready to guide us in our decisions so that we will be fruitful for the kingdom of God. He wants us to be victorious and not be deceived. That is why He gave us His Word and the Holy Spirit. These things happened to them as examples for us (1 Corinthians 10:6<sup>xxvi</sup>). Learn from their mistakes.

*<sup>25</sup> And now, behold, we are in your hand. Whatever seems good and right in your sight to do to us, do it. " <sup>26</sup> So he did this to them and delivered them out of the hand of the people of Israel, and they did not kill them. <sup>27</sup> But Joshua made them that day cutters of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, to this day, in the place that he should choose. Joshua 9:25-27 The Gibeonites fear of the LORD caused Israel to accept their people including the future generations that would serve Israel. It is amazing to me that the Gibeonites remained a distinct people group even through the captivity in Babylon. When Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, among the builders listed we find "Melatiah the Gibeonite and ... the men of Gibeon" (Nehemiah 3:7<sup>xxvii</sup>).*

I think the Gibeonites did not have to use their elaborate deception. They could have opened their gates and pleaded for mercy and the outcome would have been the same. But Joshua and the leaders needed to learn a lesson that we all need to learn. *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding"* (See Proverbs 3:5,6<sup>xxviii</sup>). Walk by faith and not by sight. Do not judge with the sight of the eyes (Isaiah 11:3<sup>xxix</sup>). Man looks on the outward appearances (1 Samuel 16:7<sup>xxx</sup>). All these expressions we find woven throughout Scripture because we are so prone to leaning on

our own understanding and judging by appearances (John 7:24<sup>xxxvi</sup>). **We need to learn to become God reliant instead of self-reliant.**

Though the Gibeonites seem to be inspired by the subtle deceiver to infiltrate Israel with Canaanite idol worship, we see that God can take what the enemy means for evil and use it for good (Genesis 50:20<sup>xxxvii</sup>). They end up serving the temple with its need for fuel for the sacrifices and water for cleansing. Instead of detracting from the worship of God, they assisted in it. Even generations later, at least one of them was among David's mighty men (1 Chronicles 12:4<sup>xxxviii</sup>). His name meant Yahweh hears, which indicates the conversion of the Gibeonites to the God of Israel. The Ark of the Covenant was even hosted in Gibeon for a time (2 Chronicles 1:3<sup>xxxix</sup>). The Gibeonites were also part of rebuilding and fortifying Jerusalem so the worship of God could be done safely.

King Saul's zeal to cleanse Israel of Canaanites by forsaking the covenant Joshua made with them was as misplaced as making the covenant in the first place. In the New Testament we see that wonderful promise that God works all things together for good to those who love God (Romans 8:28<sup>xxxv</sup>). He even takes our mistakes and the enemy's tactics and turns them around to help us. Sometimes it is growth through testing. At other times, like in this account, it is a blessing that we did not deserve or even see coming. What a wonderful and gracious God we serve! Everything is for His glory.

In the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, ninety-five sons of Gibeon assisted. They no longer seem to be mere servants, but a part of the Israelite nation. Their association with the temple seems to have brought about a full conversion and inclusion into the nation.

Whether you relate to the Gibeonites or the leaders who failed to seek God's direction or perhaps the complaining people, the message here is that we serve an amazing God of grace and mercy. He is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9<sup>xxxvi</sup>). Though the sins of the Gibeonites deserved death, God not only saw the heart of Rahab and her family, but that of the whole tribe of Gibeon and welcomed their conversion. This reminds me of a passage in Ephesians about us. *"As for you, you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you used to live, when you followed the ways of this world, and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. (Just like the entire Canaanite region.) But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-- it is by grace you have been saved.* Ephesians 2:1-5 (NIV)

We were all Gibeonites - destined for destruction, but we heard of the mighty works of God. The fear of the LORD grew in our hearts, and we too became His servants. We serve a temple of living stones. The cornerstone of this glorious temple is Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:20<sup>xxxvii</sup>). Instead of sacrifices we present ourselves as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reasonable act of worship (Romans 12:1<sup>xxxviii</sup>).

Questions: 1 What lesson is being driven home? 2 What spiritual parallels have we seen so far? 3 What motivated the Gibeonites? 4 What was their method of deceit? 5 What verse declares Israel's big mistake? 6 What was Joshua supposed to do? 7 What parallel do we see in offering peace to a city? 8 How do we go about fighting the good fight of faith? 9 Why do we so often misjudge our situation? 10 How are we like Gibeonites?

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<sup>i</sup> **Joshua 11:1-2 (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup> When Jabin king of Hazor heard of this, he sent word to Jobab king of Madon, to the kings of Shimron and Acshaph, <sup>2</sup> and to the northern kings who were in the mountains, in the Arabah south of Kinnereth, in the western foothills and in Naphoth Dor on the west;

<sup>ii</sup> **Genesis 15:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

<sup>iii</sup> **Daniel 10:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia,

<sup>iv</sup> **Titus 2:14 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

<sup>v</sup> **Ephesians 2:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

<sup>vi</sup> **Joshua 2:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.

<sup>vii</sup> **Genesis 3:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”

<sup>viii</sup> **Matthew 7:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.

<sup>ix</sup> **Hebrews 11:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

<sup>x</sup> **Genesis 3:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

<sup>xi</sup> **Genesis 3:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

<sup>xii</sup> **Joshua 7:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> And they returned to Joshua and said to him, “Do not have all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not make the whole people toil up there, for they are few.”

<sup>xiii</sup> **James 2:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!

<sup>xiv</sup> **John 1:14 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

<sup>xv</sup> **Luke 24:44 (ESV)**

<sup>44</sup> Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

<sup>xvi</sup> **1 Timothy 4:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons,

<sup>xvii</sup> **Matthew 24:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray.

<sup>xviii</sup> **Psalms 15:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who fear the LORD; who swears to his own hurt and does not change;

<sup>xix</sup> **Deuteronomy 20:10-11 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> “When you draw near to a city to fight against it, offer terms of peace to it.

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<sup>11</sup> And if it responds to you peaceably and it opens to you, then all the people who are found in it shall do forced labor for you and shall serve you.

<sup>xx</sup> **Matthew 11:28-30 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

<sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

<sup>xxi</sup> **2 Samuel 21:5-6 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> They said to the king, “The man who consumed us and planned to destroy us, so that we should have no place in all the territory of Israel, <sup>6</sup> let seven of his sons be given to us, so that we may hang them before the LORD at Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of the LORD.” And the king said, “I will give them.”

<sup>xxii</sup> **2 Corinthians 5:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> for we walk by faith, not by sight.

<sup>xxiii</sup> **Matthew 6:19-21 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, <sup>20</sup> but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

<sup>xxiv</sup> **1 Timothy 6:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

<sup>xxv</sup> **Hebrews 4:14 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

<sup>xxvi</sup> **1 Corinthians 10:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.

<sup>xxvii</sup> **Nehemiah 3:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> And next to them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah, the seat of the governor of the province Beyond the River.

<sup>xxviii</sup> **Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. <sup>6</sup> In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

<sup>xxix</sup> **Isaiah 11:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear,

<sup>xxx</sup> **1 Samuel 16:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.”

<sup>xxxi</sup> **John 7:24 (ESV)**

<sup>24</sup> Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”

<sup>xxxii</sup> **Genesis 50:20 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> **1 Chronicles 12:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> Ishmaiah of Gibeon, a mighty man among the thirty and a leader over the thirty; Jeremiah, Jahaziel, Johanan, Jozabad of Gederah,

<sup>xxxiv</sup> **2 Chronicles 1:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> And Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon, for the tent of meeting of God, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness, was there.

<sup>xxxv</sup> **Romans 8:28 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> **2 Peter 3:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> **Ephesians 2:20 (NIV)**

<sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

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xxxviii **Romans 12:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.