

**Title: Judge Jury And Executioner – Joshua 8 16-27**

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**Read:**

<sup>16-18</sup> And then, three days after making this covenant, they learned that they were next-door neighbours who had been living there all along! The People of Israel broke camp and set out; three days later they reached their towns—Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath Jearim. But the People of Israel didn't attack them; the leaders of the congregation had given their word before the God of Israel. But the congregation was up in arms over their leaders. <sup>19-21</sup> The leaders were united in their response to the congregation: "We promised them in the presence of the God of Israel. We can't lay a hand on them now. But we can do this: We will let them live so we don't get blamed for breaking our promise." Then the leaders continued, "We'll let them live, but they will be woodcutters and water carriers for the entire congregation." And that's what happened; the leaders' promise was kept. <sup>22-23</sup> But Joshua called the Gibeonites together and said, "Why did you lie to us, telling us, 'We live far, far away from you,' when you're our next-door neighbours? For that you are cursed. From now on it's menial labor for you—woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God." <sup>24-25</sup> They answered Joshua, "We got the message loud and clear that God, your God, commanded through his servant Moses: to give you the whole country and destroy everyone living in it. We were terrified because of you; that's why we did this. That's it. We're at your mercy. Whatever you decide is right for us, do it." <sup>26-27</sup> And that's what they did. Joshua delivered them from the power of the People of Israel so they didn't kill them. But he made them woodcutters and water carriers for the congregation and for the Altar of God at the place God chooses. They still are.

**Think:**

If I was Joshua I would have said deal, what deal? You lied to me. But it seems that is not the Joshua way. No he keeps his end of the bargain. Interestingly enough, the other leaders didn't get away with lying. No they still had to deal with the consequences of their actions. Joshua may have kept the peace with them, but they had to cut wood and fetch water for Joshua's people. How do you feel, when you get lied to? If someone tells you they are your mate, and then they go off and talk about you behind your back? What do you want to do, when you find out that someone has been lying to you? I know my first thought is to get my revenge. There are consequences to our actions and there should be consequences to them lying to me. Just like there were consequences for these guys in the passage. Not only that, I am the one who can deliver those consequences. The problem with that, is the fact that I'm not the right one to judge those guys who lie to me. No, all through our instruction book The Bible, we are told to leave the judgment up to God. There are consequences to our actions and we all must face them, but there are also consequences to judging people when we are not perfect ourselves.

**Pray:**

Lord I know I am not perfect. Please help me give other people the grace that I would want you to give me. Amen.

**Action:**

If you are anything like me you will find it really hard not to judge people. How about every time you catch yourself judging someone this week you stop and think of something you like about them instead. Bye.