

Courageous

Claiming Canaan, Lessons from the Book of Joshua

Lesson 12: Crafted (9:1-27)

Cloaked in deception, *"by their smooth and flattering speech, [they sought to] deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting"* (Romans 16:18, NASB). "We are your servants. We don't want to fight. We have the same objective. We'll subject ourselves to your stipulations. Tell us more about your God. Make a covenant with us." But *"even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light"* (2 Corinthians 11:14, ESV).

The enemy had one objective— to take from Israel and to protect themselves. And so, with cleverly crated lies, the Gibeonites sought to disarm and beguile God's people.

Without God's perspective, Israel would find themselves trapped in an alliance that God never intended.

"Lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:5b-6, NKJV).

Read Joshua 9:1-6.

1. Read Deuteronomy 20:16-18 and 7:1-2. What instructions were given to the Israelites regarding the inhabitants of Canaan?
2. How did Israel's enemies attempt to prevent this? (Joshua 9:1-2)
3. What did the inhabitants of Gibeon conclude that the other nations did not?
4. How did the Gibeonites (Hivites) intend to deceive Israel?

5. What were the Gibeonites counting upon to make their plan a success?

6. Return to Deuteronomy 20 and read verses 10-15. What knowledge did the Gibeonites seem to possess?

7. How does the enemy use the Word of God for his own purposes? (Luke 4:9-12)

Read Joshua 9:7-15.

8. Do you think the Israelites sensed something was askew? (v.7)

9. Why do we often ignore the feelings God provides for our discernment?

10. To what did the Gibeonites appeal? (vv.9-13) (Note the enemies' tactics in Ezra 4:1-5.)

Why is this an effective ploy of the enemy?

11. Return to Joshua 9. Which Israelite victories did the Gibeonites note? Which did they fail to mention? (vv.9-10)

12. Joshua and the rulers listened to their speech, examined the evidence, and came to a false conclusion. What did they presume?

13. What mistake was made? (v.15) For what reason were they easily beguiled and deceived? (v.14)

Alan Redpath said, "Never trust your own judgment in anything. When common sense says that a course is right, lift your heart to God, for the path of faith and the path of blessing may be in a direction completely opposite to that which you call common sense."ⁱ

14. Describe a time when you failed to seek God's counsel before making a decision or entering into an alliance. What occurred?

15. Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-16. List the reasons a believer shouldn't enter into a partnership with an unbeliever.

Keep reading: Joshua 9:16-21.

16. What was revealed three days and 25 miles later?

17. What reason did the congregation have to be angry? (v.18)

18. Why must the Israelites keep the covenant they had made?

19. What occurred when King Saul tried to break his alliance with the Gibeonites in 2 Samuel 21:1-2?

Finally, read verses 22-27 of Joshua 9.

20. What curse was pronounced upon the Gibeonites for their deception? (v.23)
21. What was the Gibeonites' motive? (v.24)
22. What tasks were given to the Gibeonites, later called the Nethinim, in exchange for their lives?

From this time forth the Gibeonites served Israel and its God. Like Rahab the harlot, they embraced the beliefs and customs of the Israelites.

David Guzik recounts their history:

- a. The Gibeonites became servants at the tabernacle, just as Joshua had commanded.
- b. Gibeon becomes a priestly city; the Ark of the Covenant stayed at Gibeon often in the days of David and Solomon (1 Chronicles 16:39-40 and 21:29).
- c. At least one of David's *mighty men* was a Gibeonite (1 Chronicles 12:4).
- d. God spoke to Solomon at Gibeon (1 Kings 3:4).
- e. Prophets such as Hananiah the son of Azur came from Gibeon (Jeremiah 28:1).
- f. Gibeonites were among those who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem with Nehemiah (Nehemiah 3:7 and 7:25).ⁱⁱ

"Ezra records that from the Nethinim, 392 returned from exile to Jerusalem (2:58) and performed the work in the rebuilt temple that had been done by their ancestors before the exile. Considered full members of the restored covenant community, the Nethinim devoted themselves to God (Nehemiah 10:28)."ⁱⁱⁱ

23. Although it seemed a harmless alliance, what did Israel's mistake cost them?

¹ Redpath, Alan. *Victorious Christian Living: Studies in the Book of Joshua*. (p. 142)

ⁱⁱ Guzik, D. (2000). *Joshua* (Jos 9:16-27). Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik.

ⁱⁱⁱ Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). In *Tyndale Bible dictionary* (p. 947). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.