

## Deception of the Gibeonites

08/28/2022

Hymns: 40 He Leadeth Me! 52 Leaning on the Everlasting Arms  
59 Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

Scripture: Psalm 27:1-6, 11-14

Big idea: Seek the LORD

Our scripture text for today is: **Joshua 9:1-27**

### Introduction

An annual Gallop poll was taken the end of last year. It has to do with honesty and integrity. They're trying to find out what people think. Who's honest and maybe who's not so honest? Whom can you trust?

The answers may surprise you, but likely are in line with how you feel. From most trusted to least trusted (some of these categories have been sort of summarized), here's what the poll said:

1. Nurses (81%) came out on top as most trustworthy.
2. Medical doctors (67%) and Grade-school teachers (64%) and Pharmacists (63%)
3. Police officers (53%)
4. Judges (38%)
5. Clergy (36%)
6. Bankers (27%)
7. Lawyers (19%) and Business executives (15%)
8. TV reporters (14%)
9. Advertisers (11%)
10. Members of Congress (9%) and Car salespeople (8%)

Hence, we have the term: *corrupt politician*. Did that sound about in line with how you thought? Today we are going to look at an incident in the Bible where Joshua encountered politicians of a sort as he entered into negotiations with ambassadors from what they said was a very far country. Two sessions back we witnessed Joshua's descent to a low point in his record as he resorted to ritual to influence the LORD and questioned the LORD's nature. That was pretty bad.

In today's study, we will see Joshua fail again -- but not as badly. We'll start again by getting our bearings with a brief recap. Seventy of the family of Jacob -- called Israelites -- went to Egypt and end up spending four hundred years in slavery there. Then Moses arose and rescued them from slavery taking them across the Red Sea over dry land. After they crossed over safely on dry land, the pursuing Egyptian army was destroyed by the waters returning. These slaves, that had no army at all, defeated the mighty Egyptian army. Of course, it wasn't the Israelites doing. It was the LORD's doing.

They proceeded up from the south to head for the Promised Land. What is the Promised Land? Canaan. They sent up spies. Ten of them came back and said it was a great land, fertile and wonderful. But the people are mighty, and they are giants. We cannot defeat them. Only two, Joshua -- the same Joshua named in the title of the book -- and Caleb, said that they could. They only needed to trust the LORD. But the people were convinced by the other ten, and the LORD decided to punish them by sending

them to the wilderness to wander for forty years until all of the adults died because of their unbelief. They wandered south to Sinai where Moses climbed the mountain and received the Law from the LORD.

After all of the adults died, Moses led the Israelites to the Promised Land. Instead of coming in from the south as before, Moses led them around Edom and around the east side of the Dead Sea. They started conquering people along the way. They had requested peaceful passage, but the people there refused. That's when Moses resorted to military action. They conquered all of the land along the east side of the Dead Sea up east of the Jordan River up to the east side of the Sea of Galilee. They took all of that land.

Moses was not allowed to cross over into the Promised Land because he sinned against the LORD. And from a symbolic standpoint, Moses represented the Law. The Law cannot save. Joshua's name means the LORD is salvation. It's the same word as Jesus name – savior. He then represents a savior who will save. He's the one who will take you into your rest, and take you into the Promised Land. That's what Jesus did. By the way, despite being in slavery, the people multiplied from seventy to two million. But when they wandered in the wilderness, their numbers remained the same.

They crossed the Jordan River in flood stage the LORD parted the river. The crossing place was about ten miles north of the Dead Sea at a place called Gilgal which was a suburb of Jericho. They re-instituted circumcision. They observed the Passover celebration. They got their hearts right with the LORD. That was the primary thing they had to do. The LORD is giving them this Promised Land.

Then they followed the LORD's direction to march around Jericho. The LORD brought down the walls. The Israelites went in and destroyed the city along with all of the people. From there, they went twenty miles west to Ai and destroyed that city. That's where they are. They're still camped out at Gilgal. That's where

*Josh.9*

*[1] And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan,*

*That's the west side of the Jordan River, in Canaan, in the Promised Land.*

*in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon,*

*The great sea is the Mediterranean. The Promised Land sits between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea, Jordan River, Sea of Galilee. That's where the Promised Land is. Lebanon is on the coast, north of Israel.*

*the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard ...;*

*heard of all of these conquests.*

*[2] ... they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord.*

The best way to create an alliance is to have a common enemy. These Canaanites saw this huge Israelite army of a half million men was on the march. They took the invincible city of Jericho. They took Ai. We're next. They're coming for us next. As we will see shortly, the Gibeonites knew that the LORD told them the Israelites to take this land.

[3] *And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done [ ]to Jericho and ... Ai,*  
[4] *They did work [sly]ly, and went and made as if they [were] ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their donkeys, and wine bottles, old, and [torn], and [tied] up;*  
[5] *And old shoes [patched and tied] [ ]on their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy.*

This was a big production here. This city was just the next one over from Ai. By the way, we learn in chapter 10 that Gibeon was called a *royal city*. That means it was a capitol, a place where politicians and political leaders were located and all of the men there were mighty men. So they had a good army. But they're coming and trying to thwart the Israelites with a scheme here.

[6] *And they went to **Joshua** unto the camp at Gilgal,*

Gilgal is about twenty miles east of Gibeon. So the Gibeonites had to travel twenty miles to the east to meet with Joshua – *three days journey* (v. 17).

*and said unto **him, and to the men of Israel**, We be come from a **far** country: now therefore make ye a league with us.*

It really looks like they know the scriptures because the scripture says the Israelites are permitted to make a treaty with people outside the Promised Land, but the people in the Promised Land are to be driven out and destroyed. Why? They were wicked and evil. This is the evidence that they knew the truth, but they didn't repent; they didn't turn. They were wicked people. That's why the LORD was getting rid of them.

[7] *And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites,*

Here we learn that these Gibeonites are ethnically Hivites, which is a tribe of Canaanites.

*Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you?*

The LORD has told the Israelites to destroy the people living in Canaan.

[8] *And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? and from whence come ye?*

[9] *And they said unto him, From a **very far** country thy servants are come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have **heard** the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt,*

They heard about the parting of the Red Sea and their destruction of the mighty Egyptian army.

*[10] And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon,*

That's east of the Dead Sea towards the south.

*and to Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth.*

That's up north in the area of the Sea of Galilee and again on the east side – outside the Promised Land.

*[11] Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take [food] with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us.*

That's their trick. They want to make a **treaty** for peace.

*[12] This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go [ ]to you;*

It was really just three days journey.

*but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy:*

*[13] And these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new; and, **behold**, they be [torn]: and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey.*

These guys are lying and making a really big story. Next, verse fourteen is the key verse of this passage.

*[14] And the men*

These are the princes of the congregation of Israel (vv. 6, 15).

*took of their [food], and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD.*

They had the ability to go to the high priest and have him inquire of the LORD, Are these people of the Promised Land, or are they as they say from a very far country? We need to know this in order to know whether to destroy them or make a treaty with them. They didn't do that. They just looked at the physical evidence and went with that.

*[15] And Joshua*

both the men of Israel **and Joshua** made this blunder.

*made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the **princes of the congregation** swore unto them.*

There are twelve tribes of Israel. Each tribe has a representative, called princes.

*[16] And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their **neighbours**, and that they dwelt among them.*

*[17] And the children of Israel journeyed,*

They went to investigate this. Heard that they were their neighbors. Obviously, they heard where these people lived.

*and came unto their cities on **the third day**. Now their cities were Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim.*

*[18] And the children of Israel*

(referring to their army)

*smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had **sworn unto them** by the LORD God of Israel.*

God says do not make an oath **in my name** and not expect consequences if you break it (Numbers 30:2, 15; Joshua 9:20). They're afraid to break the oath, although they already broke a commandment of the LORD unknowingly by making this treaty.

*And all the congregation murmured against the princes.*

*[19] But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have **sworn** unto them **by the LORD God of Israel**: now therefore we may not **touch** them.*

*[20] This [is what] we will do to them; we will even let them live, lest **wrath be upon us**,*

Why?

*because of the **oath** which we swore unto them.*

They were between a rock and a hard place. They made one mistake. Will they now make another mistake?

*[21] And the princes said unto them, Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation; as the princes had promised them.*

*[22] And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye **beguiled** us, saying, We are **very far** from you; when ye dwell among us?*

Why did you do this?

[23] Now therefore ye are **cursed**, and there shall **none** of you be freed from being **bondmen**,

He's making them slaves.

*and hewers of wood and drawers of water*

This is hard labor.

*for the house of my God.*

[24] And they answered Joshua, and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the LORD thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you **all the land**, and to **destroy** all the inhabitants of the land from before you,

They knew all of this. They knew plenty. They could have repented and turned to the LORD. They never did. This is why they're being judged. They are wicked people.

*therefore we were **sore afraid** of our lives because of you, and have done this thing.*

That explains their motive. They didn't want to die.

[25] And now, behold, we are in thine hand: as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do.

Basically they're saying, yes, we are your slaves. We're falling down at your mercy. We're happy not to be killed, and we will be your slaves.

The problem with this, if you look at it, there's **consequences** for disobeying the LORD. It sounds like things are going to work out here to make them slaves. But what's going on in Israel today? They never drove these people out. They're still living with the result. This is the first instance where they messed up and didn't drive the people out. And now they're a thorn in their side just like the word God said would happen. They sort of resolved this, but it's not God's best. That's for sure.

[26] And so did he unto them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel,

The soldiers wanted to kill them. The leaders prevented that because of the oath that they made.

*that they slew them not.*

[27] And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD, even unto this day,

again, referring to the day when the book of Joshua was written.

*in the place which he should choose.*

He will direct where this work will be done.

### **Application**

What can we learn from this? Number one: people take solemn oaths before the LORD and then just break it. Think of all of the people getting married. They make this oath before the LORD. There's consequences for that if you break it. There's many other examples. That's just what happens.

*Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

That certainly happens. We'll see it as we go on in our study of the Word.

But from the book of Proverbs we have the following familiar wise thoughts:

*[5] Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.*

*[6] In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

Joshua didn't have those words of wisdom because they weren't written yet, but we do today. We have access to the Creator of the universe through studying His word, through walking daily with His indwelling Holy Spirit, and through prayer. Yet often we, like Joshua, look first to solve our problems ourselves by *leaning on our own understanding*. It's only when we reach the end of our rope that we look to God. As Christians, we would be well served to look up more often and receive the guidance and grace that our loving Father is waiting to freely give.

### **Benediction**

*The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:*

*The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:*

*The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)*