

# A COSTLY LESSON

Joshua 9



The ninth chapter of Joshua emphasizes the need for every believer to be on his guard at all times. He must be careful how he walks, never knowing what may be around the next corner.

The Israelites are deceived into making a covenant with the Gibeonites in Joshua, chapter 9, a covenant they would never have made had they “inquired of the Lord’.” All of us are prone to deception. All of us need to walk carefully, depending on the Lord.

- *The formation of the Confederacy (9:1-2)*
- *The Gibeonite deception (9:3-15)*
- *The Discovery of the Gibeonite deception (9:16-27)*

## What does it say?

Joshua 9:1-27



<sup>1</sup> Now when all the kings west of the Jordan heard about these things -- those in the hill country, in the western foothills, and along the entire coast of the Great Sea as far as Lebanon (the kings of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites) -- <sup>2</sup> they came together to make war against Joshua and Israel.

<sup>3</sup> However, when the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, <sup>4</sup> they resorted to a ruse: They went as a delegation whose donkeys were loaded with worn-out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended. <sup>5</sup> The men put worn and patched sandals on their feet and wore old clothes. All the bread of their food supply was dry and moldy. <sup>6</sup> Then they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and the men of Israel, "We have come from a distant country; make a treaty with us."

<sup>7</sup> The men of Israel said to the Hivites, "But perhaps you live near us.

## What does it mean?

Read verses 3-15. How did the Gibeonites deceive Joshua and the Israelites?

### "Deceit":

*Deceit is that which gives a false impression, the deliberate misleading or beguiling of another. Some synonyms for deceive are: mislead, defraud, beguile, take advantage of.*

*Satan is the master deceiver. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11:14 that Satan masquerades as an angel of light. Jesus called him the father of lies in John 8:44.*

Read Genesis 3:1-7. What similarities do you notice between Satan's deception of Eve and the Gibeonite deception?

What could Joshua have done to avoid such deception?

## What does it say?

How then can we make a treaty with you?"

<sup>8</sup> "We are your servants," they said to Joshua.

But Joshua asked, "Who are you and where do you come from?"

<sup>9</sup> They answered: "Your servants have come from a very distant country because of the fame of the LORD your God. For we have heard reports of him: all that he did in Egypt, <sup>10</sup> and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan -- Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth. <sup>11</sup> And our elders and all those living in our country said to us, 'Take provisions for your journey; go and meet them and say to them, "We are your servants; make a treaty with us." <sup>12</sup> This bread of ours was warm when we packed it at home on the day we left to come to you. But now see how dry and moldy it is. <sup>13</sup> And these wineskins that we filled were new, but see how cracked they are. And our clothes and sandals are worn out by the very long journey."

<sup>14</sup> The men of Israel sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the LORD. <sup>15</sup> Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath.

<sup>16</sup> Three days after they made the treaty with the Gibeonites, the Israelites heard that they were neighbors, living near them. <sup>17</sup> So the Israelites set out and on the third day came to their cities: Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth and Kiriath Jearim. <sup>18</sup> But the Israelites did not attack them, because the leaders of the assembly had sworn an oath to them by the LORD, the God of Israel.

The whole assembly grumbled against the leaders, <sup>19</sup> but all the lead-

## What does it mean?

What were the four cities of the Gibeonites?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.



Why couldn't the Israelites just wipe out the Gibeonites after they found out the truth?

### "Oath"

*An oath was an appeal to God to witness the truth of a statement. Swearing was done by the life of the person addressed (1 Sam. 1:26), by the life of the king (1 Sam. 17:55), by one's own head (Matthew 5:24), by the angels, by the temple (Matt. 23:16), by Jerusalem (Matt. 5:35), and by God.*

*By the time of Christ the old Testament law regarding oaths (Exodus 22:11) was much perverted by the Scribes, and our Lord therefore condemned indiscriminate and light taking of oaths, saying that men should be so transparently honest that oaths between persons are unnecessary (see Matt. 5:33-37).*

*Zondervan Bible Dictionary*

Read 2 Samuel 21:1-6. What was the consequence of Saul's breaking the oath made with the Gibeonites?

Why is breaking an oath made in the name of the Lord so serious?

*"One who swears in the name of God, even if he swears to his own hurt, must keep the oath in order to represent God's character. God is a holy God, and to break an oath made in His name is to transgress, to blaspheme, to caricature the God in whose name the oath is made."*

*Francis Schaeffer*

## What does it say?

ers answered, "We have given them our oath by the LORD, the God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now.<sup>20</sup> This is what we will do to them: We will let them live, so that wrath will not fall on us for breaking the oath we swore to them."<sup>21</sup> They continued, "Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers for the entire community." So the leaders' promise to them was kept.

<sup>22</sup> Then Joshua summoned the Gibeonites and said, "Why did you deceive us by saying, 'We live a long way from you,' while actually you live near us?<sup>23</sup> You are now under a curse: You will never cease to serve as woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God."

<sup>24</sup> They answered Joshua, "Your servants were clearly told how the LORD your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you the whole land and to wipe out all its inhabitants from before you. So we feared for our lives because of you, and that is why we did this."<sup>25</sup> We are now in your hands. Do to us whatever seems good and right to you."

<sup>26</sup> So Joshua saved them from the Israelites, and they did not kill them.<sup>27</sup> That day he made the Gibeonites woodcutters and water carriers for the community and for the altar of the LORD at the place the LORD would choose. And that is what they are to this day.

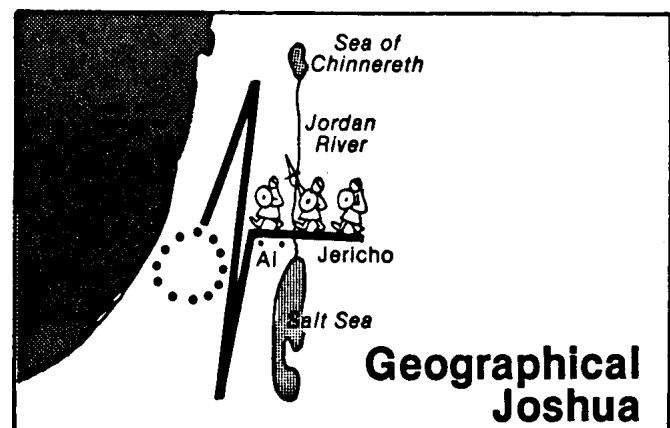
## What does it mean?

Read verses 22-25. What was it that the Gibeonites believed?

Re-read Joshua 2:8-13. How are Rahab and the Gibeonites similar to each other?

What do you think would have happened if others had believed like Rahab and the Gibeonites?

(The judgment of Nineveh was lifted when its people repented through the preaching of Jonah.)





**APPLICATION -  
So What Does  
This Mean in My  
Life?**

1. Truth and deception are sharply contrasted in this chapter. Think through the way you relate to other people. Is it hard for you to be open, transparent and truthful with people?
2. The Israelites were deceived by the Gibeonites because they failed to “inquire of the Lord”. What does this teach us about the place of prayer in the Christian life?
3. Write down some of the things you learned about God from this chapter.
4. How would your life/our world be different if people did what they said they would do?
5. What things do we do that aren't “outright lies,” but are deception just the same?