

**Joshua**  
*God's Long Game*  
 Joshua 9

Jesus promised us trouble in this world (**John 16:33a**)

Besides the world and our flesh, we have an enemy—the prince of the power of the air (**Ephesians 2:2**), the god of this world (**2 Corinthians 4:4**), the evil one (**1 John 5:19**), who, because we handed him the reins of power in **Genesis 3**, has a lot of rope to play with at this present time.

The devil's schemes (**Ephesians 6:11**) come as two basic strategies: 1) like a roaring lion to frighten and devour us (**1 Peter 5:8**) and 2) like an angel of light to deceive and destroy us (**2 Corinthians 11:14**).

In **Joshua 9**, we see both schemes at work at the same time! It's a graphic picture of today's trouble dressed in the ancient garb of Israel's experience.

Jesus provides us with peace in this world (**John 16:33b**)

Our Savior has overcome the world. This peace-instilling truth is illustrated in this portion of **Joshua**, as well.

The whole point of **Joshua 9** is to encourage us. God specializes in turning stupid into splendid.

Before the main plot of **chapter 9** unfolds, the biblical writer sets the stage in **v. 1** for what will happen in **chapter 10**.

The devil's scheme as a roaring lion is seen in the alliance forming between several Canaanite kings who are determined to combine forces and destroy Israel.

The devil's scheme as an angel of light is seen in another coalition of Canaanites, who take an entirely different tact.

The Gibeonites were residents of a mountain stronghold in Canaan, just a few miles up the road from Ai

Their disguise was an attempt to convince the Jews they had come from far away and there would be nothing wrong with their being treated as allies rather than as enemies.

In the face of the Canaanite alliance forming in the land, a friend outside the land was a welcome opportunity.

**10:2** - Gibeon, was a great city and all its men were warriors. Three other cities made up the Gibeonite nation—Kiriath-Jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth.

What Satan wanted to do through the Gibeonites was pure evil—infiltrate Israel with Canaanite filth and destroy them from within.

However, the devil couldn't see the Gibeonites' hearts. Not every nation in Canaan was pure evil.

After witnessing firsthand what Israel did to Ai, the Gibeonites knew "for a certainty" (**v. 24**) that Yahweh was good for his word. The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom.

What Israel did to Ai, Gibeon now did to Israel. You can't help but see the humor in this passage.

Along with the visual deception came verbal flattery - "We are your servants," (**vv. 8, 9**) inspired by the fame of Yahweh Elohim (**vv. 9, 10**; cp. Rahab)

Nobody asks God what to do (**Proverbs 3:5-6**). Joshua had two options:

1) Prayer! (**Philippians 4:5-7**; **James 1:5-6**)

2) Urim! **Numbers 27:21** – *Stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before Yahweh.*

**v. 14** - The men of Israel take (sample) the moldy bread, but fail to take counsel with Yahweh.

### **Ephesians 6:10–18**

We are at war—spiritual warfare requiring spiritual armor and a spiritual mind.

We protect ourselves from the arrows of the devil's schemes by putting on God's truth, righteousness, knowledge of the gospel, and faith.

Our one offensive weapon is the word (*rhema*) of God—one-liners (verses) from the Scripture for use at a moment's notice when tempted by the enemy (**Matthew 4**).

At all times, we are to pray for God's direction and strength.

Foolishly, Israel entered into covenant with the Gibeonites with the most solemn of oaths. **v. 15** *And Joshua "made" peace with them and "made" a covenant with them.* The 1<sup>st</sup> "made" = brought about. The 2<sup>nd</sup> "made" = to cut.

To "cut" a covenant referred to a blood covenant (cp. **Genesis 15**).

Two parties sacrifice animals, divide their carcasses and walk together through the carcasses making promises to each other. If either breaks their promise, it would cost them their life.

When it was discovered the Gibeonites were actually Canaanites, the congregation murmured against their leaders.

Nonetheless, the blood covenant, though based on false pretenses on the Gibeonites' part, must be kept at all costs on Israel's part. Integrity before God demanded it.

Two wrongs do not make a right. After having made a commitment, is it right to break a commitment because it was a mistake?

Examples: Marriage & Business. Sometimes believers enter into covenants/contracts with Gibeonites.

Every effort must be made to honor our oaths, even if it costs us.

The cost of keeping a foolish covenant is great, but breaking it can be even greater.

The cost of breaking a blood covenant meant death (e.g., **2 Samuel 21** King Saul tried to annihilate the Gibeonites).

The Gibeonite's lives would be spared, but their future was one of servitude.

Joshua makes the Gibeonites woodcutters and water carriers, specifically in the service of the Tabernacle.

Joshua made the most of a foolish covenant. We can too.

The very thing the devil planned to destroy is actually enhanced by God's overruling grace.

Their servitude gave them the opportunity to turn their primitive fear-based faith into a personal grace-based faith.

God reveals his glory in turning stupid into splendid.

God plays the long game. God will leverage every one of our short-term failures to set up his long-term success, and a beautiful example is seen in the Gibeonites.

Like Rahab, they were devoted to destruction, but survived the conquest and became part of the covenant community of Israel. By hook or by crook, God was accomplishing his eternal will through Israel—to bless the nations.

God leveraged the Gibeonite treaty to give Israel victory over the nations controlling the entire southern end of the land!

The city of Gibeon became a center of worship in Israel. The Tabernacle was located there after Shiloh (**1 Chronicles 16:39-40**).

One of the leaders of David's 30 mighty men of valor who fought for and with David when he was banished by Saul was a Gibeonite (**1 Chronicles 12:4**).

Solomon went to Gibeon to worship and asked God for wisdom as he began his reign (**2 Chronicles 1:1-13**).

In the time of Zerubbabel, the genealogies of the Jews who returned from exile included a list of Gibeonites (**Ezra 2:25**).

In the days of Nehemiah, the Gibeonites were mentioned as being among those who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem (**Nehemiah 3:7**).

The Gibeonites came among God's people. Hundreds of years later, they were still there.

The story of the Gibeonites reminds us how Yahweh our Elohim creates something out of nothing, brings good out of evil, life out of death, order out of chaos, victory out of defeat, splendid out of stupid.

Our God cannot be outmaneuvered by human or demonic cunning or hindered by the gullibility of his own people. He turns curse into blessing.

This amazing power and grace leads us back to the Cross of Christ.

Like Rahab's story, the story of the Gibeonites parallels our own stories, if we are Gentiles who came to faith in the God of Israel through our Jewish Savior, Jesus Christ.