

Sunday Night Message

January 28, 2018

Joshua 9 – *The Deception of the Gibeonites*

Series – Joshua

Text – Joshua 9

Introduction

In this chapter, we will see Joshua and the Leaders of Israel tricked into an agreement by the Gibeonites who were living in cities within the land of Canaan, and who were supposed to be completely destroyed eventually by the Israelites:

"When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly." (Deuteronomy 7:1-4)

"But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee: That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God." (Deuteronomy 20:16-18)

Sometimes, we get bogged down discussing why a loving God would give such an order, but in doing so we miss the stronger point that God was adamant about the fact that He didn't want His people infected with the sin from these idolatrous and immoral people. He knew that if the Israelites would allow them to live with them, they would eventually become friendly with them and be influenced by them.

Practical Point

God has a different plan for us today. He wants us to live among them geographically but not spiritually. He wants us to reach them with the gospel, but He doesn't want them to reach us with their godless philosophies and lifestyles.

God loves the people of the world and wants to see them saved, but He hates their sin, and He hates that they have fallen prey to the devil and his philosophy of worldliness.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:1-2)

We were saved to become citizens of Heaven and God wants to walk as citizens of Heaven.

Illustrate: The Epistle to Diognetus, written sometime in the second century – attributed by some to Justyn Martyr who was a Greek philosopher who was converted and became one of the earliest apologists for the Christian faith. He was martyred in 166 A.D.

For Christians are not distinguished from the rest of mankind either in locality or in speech or in customs. ²For they dwell not somewhere in cities of their own, neither do they use some different language, nor practice an extraordinary kind of life. ³Nor again do they possess any invention discovered by any intelligence or study of ingenious men, nor are they masters of any human dogma as some are. ⁴But while they dwell in cities of Greeks and barbarians as the lot of each is cast, and follow the native customs in dress and food and the other arrangements of life, yet the constitution of their own citizenship, which they set forth, is marvelous, and confessedly contradicts expectation. ⁵They dwell in their own countries, but only as sojourners; they bear their share in all things as citizens, and they endure all hardships as strangers. Every foreign country is a fatherland to them, and every fatherland is foreign. ⁶They marry like all other men and they beget children; but they do not cast away their offspring. ⁷They have their meals in common, but not their wives. ⁸They find themselves in the flesh, and yet they live not after the flesh. ⁹Their existence is on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. ¹⁰They obey the established laws, and they surpass the laws in their own lives. ¹¹They love all men, and they are persecuted by all. ¹²They are ignored, and yet they are condemned. They are put to death, and yet they are endued with life. ¹³They are in beggary, and yet they make many rich. They are in want of all things, and yet they abound in all things. ¹⁴They are dishonored, and yet they are glorified in their dishonor. They are evil spoken of, and yet they are vindicated. ¹⁵They are reviled, and they bless; they are insulted, and they respect. ¹⁶Doing good they are punished as evil-doers; being punished they rejoice, as if they were thereby quickened by life. ¹⁷War is waged against them as aliens by the Jews, and persecution is carried on against them by the Greeks, and yet those that hate them cannot tell the reason of their hostility.

We are to be “in the world, but not of the world”. These Israelites, however, were commanded by God to go into their land, which was currently occupied by a bunch of godless heathens, and drive out and destroy if need be all of the inhabitants. They were not supposed to live with them.

McGee said that this non-battle with the Gibeonites represents the a battle with the devil, because he is the father of lies.

I The Partnership of the Inhabitants of Canaan (vs. 1 – 2)

In these first verses, we see that the leaders of these cities, or perhaps these people groups, decided to join together in order to fight off this invading Israelite army. Humanly speaking, this plan made sense. There is strength in numbers. In Genesis 14, we see the kings of Canaan confederating with each other in battle. Even Abraham had joined forces with some friendly neighbors in order to defend himself and his family.

Of course, we also know that the real strength for God’s people is reliance upon and a right relationship with God.

Remember when David got in trouble for numbering the people. Joab told him that God increases the strength of His people “an hundredfold” (2 Samuel 24:3)

Here, these heathen nations were actually gathering together to fight against God:

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." (Psalm 2:1-4)

This is a picture of the Antichrist gathering together all of the nations of the world against God.

II The Pretense of the Gibeonites (vs. 3 – 13)

The Gibeonites were a little bit shrewder than the other people in the land. They recognized that God was blessing the people of Israel. With the exception of the “glitch” at Ai, the Israelites were undefeated. The Gibeonites knew that that trying to fight against Israel was futile. They only had two options:

- 1 Leave their land and find somewhere else to live.
- 2 Make some kind of agreement with the Israelites, which the Israelites were not permitted to do.

They use choose to use guile and lie to the Israelites about where they are from. Gibeon was only about 7 miles or so from Ai but they pretended to be from a very far country.

They must have known God’s Law, because God permitted the Israelites to spare the cities that were far away:

"When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found

therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it: And when the LORD thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword: But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the LORD thy God hath given thee. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations." (Deuteronomy 20:10-15)

III The Promise of the Joshua and the Princes (vs. 14 – 21)

Notice how sad verse 14 is:

"And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD." (Joshua 9:14)

You would have thought that Israel would have learned the lesson regarding asking counsel of God, after the debacle at Ai. They were fairly new at walking by faith. We need to learn to walk by faith as well.

They should have checked with God, but instead they make a covenant with these people, and God expects them to keep their covenants.

See Numbers 30 regarding oaths.

IV The Penalty of Servitude (vs. 22 – 27)

Their punishment for lying was servitude, not death. God expected the Israelites to honor their agreement with the Gibeonites, even though they were tricked. They would not have been tricked had they just checked with God first.

God held Israel accountable, not the Gibeonites.

In fact, God expected to continue to honor their covenant with the Gibeonites.

The Gibeonites continued to be servants of the Lord in the Temple, and may have even returned with the Levites voluntarily after the captivity.

Turn to 2 Samuel 21:1 – 9.

Conclusion – Practical Points

- 1 Don't make any agreements or major decisions without checking with the Lord first:
Check the Bible.
Pray about it.
Get counsel.
Wait – don't be rushed into any decision.
- 2 Once you do make an agreement, don't go back on it. Keep your word.