

# Joshua 9 Commentary

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LAND ALLOTMENTS  
(Joshua 13-21)  
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JOSHUA A BOOK ON SPIRITUAL WARFARE and REST HOW TO POSSESS YOUR POSSESSIONS		
CONQUEST OF THE PROMISED LAND	DIVISION OF THE PROMISED LAND	CLOSE OF JOSHUA'S LIFE
ACTION	ALLOCATION	APPEAL

Josh 1:1-5:15	Josh 6:1-12:24	Joshua 13:1-21:45	Josh 22:1-24:33
WARLORDS IN CANAAN		LANDLORDS IN CANAAN	
ENTERING CANAAN	CONQUERING CANAAN	DIVIDING CANAAN	
SECURING THE LAND		SETTLING THE LAND	
Preparation	Conquest	Possession	Consecration
ca. 1 Month	ca 7 Years	ca. 18 Years	

[See also more detailed Chart by Charles R Swindoll](#)

**Joshua 9:1** Now it came about when all the kings who were beyond the Jordan, in the hill country and in the lowland and on all the coast of the Great Sea toward Lebanon, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, heard of it,

- **all the kings:** Jos 10:2-5,23,28-39 11:1-5,10,11 12:7-24
- **on this:** Jos 1:15 3:17 5:1 22:4,7 De 4:49
- **of the great:** Jos 1:4 15:12 23:4 Nu 34:6
- **Lebanon:** Jos 11:17 12:7 13:5 De 3:25
- **Hittite:** Jos 24:11 Ge 15:18-21 Ex 3:17 23:23,31 34:11 De 7:1
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A CONFEDERACY AND A COVER-UP

Joshua 9-11 should be viewed in a sense as a unit, summarizing the conquest of the central, southern and finally the northern regions of the promised land. ([See map summarizing the central, southern and northern campaigns](#))

**Dale Ralph Davis** -Joshua 9–11 forms a fairly connected unit. We may briefly summarise it as follows:

Israel without Yahweh, 9:1–27

Yahweh with Israel, 10:1–11:15

**Southern campaign**, 10:1–43

Setting, 10:1–5

Summary, 10:40–43

**Northern campaign**, 11:1–15

Setting, 11:1–5

Summary, 11:12–15

Summary, 11:16–23 ([Joshua: No Falling Words](#))

**Don Anderson** - Joshua and the armies have just had a great victory at Ai, and we left them reading the Word together between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal at the end of chap. 8. This seems to be the time when we are most vulnerable .

With the victory goes vulnerability.

Elijah certainly experienced this on Mount Carmel when, having had a great victory over the prophets of Baal, we find him in just a few short verses running for his life because of a threat by Jezebel.

This ended the first part of the study "The Invasion of the Land." Beginning with chap. 6 we started on "The Subjection -of the Land."

What is sad is that Joshua 8 ends with a review of the Law of Moses, with blessings and cursings, and yet in this chapter Israel seems to have become a forgettor of the word and not doer and as a resulting were self-deluded and sorely deceived (cf James 1:22). Such is the ever present danger of complacency, that feeling of smug or uncritical satisfaction with oneself or one's achievements. Look out! A good title for this chapter might be "The Error of Walking By Sight."

**Wiersbe** introduces this chapter - An anonymous wit reminds us that a dentist's mistake is pulled out, a lawyer's mistake is imprisoned, a teacher's mistake is failed, a printer's mistake is corrected, a pharmacist's mistake is buried, a postman's mistake is forwarded, and an electrician's mistake could be shocking. The novelist Joseph Conrad wrote, "It's only those who do nothing that make no mistakes." In Joshua's case, however, doing nothing was his mistake; and this chapter explains what happened. It records the three stages in his second failure (after Ai) in the conquest of the Promised Land. It also tells us how Joshua turned his mistake into a victory. ([Be Strong - Joshua: Putting God's Power to Work in Your Life](#))

**Rod Mattoon** - Joseph Conrad wrote, "It's only those who do nothing that make no mistakes. In Joshua's case, however, doing nothing was his mistake. Chapter nine records the stages of Joshua's second failure and the error of walking by sight. It also records how Joshua turned his mistake into a victory. Ai is destroyed and the word spreads through the land. The kings unite to form an alliance against God's people. Battles have been against individual cities and now the resistance is more intense. **As you grow in your Christian life, you will find that spiritual battles become more intense. Your temptations will become more severe.** Satan does not give up easy. Sometimes we tend to be overconfident and neglect God's direction in our life. ([Treasures From Joshua](#))

In this chapter we see a description of two different strategies the pagans planned against Israel, a confederacy by one group of kings (Joshua 9:1-2) and a cover-up by the Gibeonites/Hivites (Joshua 9:3-27). Thus a good title of this chapter would be complacency, confederacy and coverup.

**Hess** comments - "The following chapters introduce the transition from a victorious people of God whose occupation of the land could have been the relatively simple matter of defeating those already discouraged to an unending history of battle, bloodshed, and idolatry that would haunt Israel throughout its history. As in the opening chapters of Genesis, so also in the opening chapters of Israel's dwelling in the Promised Land, a single transgression has cosmic ramifications." ([Joshua: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

One could subtitle this chapter **"If you can't beat 'em, join 'em!"** In other words, If you can't defeat your opponent, then you might as well work alongside them. This proved to be exactly what the Gibeonites would do (Joshua 9:8,9), even though their methods are less than laudable. This was not the first time the Second Generation had been duped by the pagans. However the first time had much more tragic consequences for Israel as recorded in Numbers 25:1-4,9+

While Israel remained at [Shittim](#) (INTERESTING THAT THIS IS WHERE THEY WERE JUST BEFORE CROSSING THE JORDAN RIVER!), the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab. For they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. 3 So Israel joined themselves to [Baal of Peor](#), and the LORD was angry against Israel. 4 The LORD said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of the people and execute them in broad daylight before the LORD, so that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel."....9 Those who died by the plague were 24,000 ([THE MIDIANITES ALSO WERE PUNISHED](#)).

**Now it came about when all the kings who were beyond the Jordan, in the hill country and in the lowland and on all the coast of the Great Sea toward Lebanon** - This describes the kings of the southern portion of the Promised Land who seek to form a confederacy against Israel.

Although the text does not state specifically, undoubtedly these kings normally were not **"buddy, buddy,"** but now that they were faced with annihilation, they came together. In short, they were proving true an ancient proverb that says **"The enemy of my enemy is my friend."** (cf Ps. 2:1-2; Luke 23:12).

**Uteley** - **Now it came about when all the kings**" Verses 1 and 2 form a general introduction to this entire section of Joshua 9-12. The phrase "all the kings" seems to imply that the majority of the Canaanites were organized into city states, much like ancient Greece. However, the fact that Gibeon is identified with several other cities (cf. 9:17) implies that it was a confederation, not a single city state. This united Canaanite army never came together to fight Israel.

**Uteley** - **beyond the Jordan**" This phrase is used several times in the book of Joshua in two different senses: (1) sometimes it refers to the east bank of the Jordan (cf. Joshua 1:14; 2:10; 9:10; 14:3) and (2) sometimes it is used of the west bank (cf. Joshua 5:1; 9:1; 12:7; 22:7). It is possible that the seeming discrepancy is due to the author/editor/compiler being with the group of Israelites who were on the plains of Moab but later moved into Canaan.

**Uteley** - **"in the hill country"** There seems to be three distinct geographical and topological sections of the Promised Land mentioned in verse 1: (1) the southern hill country; (2) the low, rolling hills which are often called the shephelah; and (3) the coastal plains. Numbers 2 and 3 are often seen as one.

**Hastings Bible Dictionary** on [hill country](#) - It is especially the description of the central mountainous tract of Palestine reaching

from the plain of Jezreel on the N. to the Negeb or dry country in the S.; the Shephalah or lowlands of the S. W.; the *midbar* or moorland, and the *'arabah* or steppes of the S. E.

**Hubbard** - Lists of the land's main regions and its six main peoples create a double image: They underscore how widespread is the awareness of Israel's presence and how formidable is the foe gathering to oppose them (v. 1; cf. Josh 12:8). ([Joshua NIV Application Commentary](#))

**the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, heard(*shama'*) of it** - God's reputation had spread to all the regions west of the Jordan River. Revelation of God always demands a response, and these choose war rather than rescue like Rahab. The more these kings heard about Yahweh's power, the harder their hearts became (cf Joshua 11:20). Is this not true of many we share Christ with -- they respond like these kings rather than like Rahab! This group is a mixed group that are descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham. the son of Noah. The only group left out in this listing are the Gergashites from the region west of the Sea of Galilee.

In Joshua 5:1 when the kings heard "their hearts melted, and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the sons of Israel." Now instead of fear they form a confederation. What was the difference? They heard about the defeat of Israel by Ai, and this gave them hope that Israel was not invincible.

**Kenneth Matthews** has an interesting observation - The word *shama'* ("to hear") occurs four times (Joshua 9:1, 3, 9, 16; also the noun *shoma'*, "report," 9:9), showing a chain of reactions: (1) the nations **hear** and plot to attack; (2) the Gibeonites **hear** and plot submission; and (3) the Israelites **hear** and admit their irrevocable oath. It is because of the Gibeonites' fear of the Lord that they concoct their plot, and it is because of Israel's neglect that the elders fall into the trap. Ironically, the Gibeonites acknowledge the power of God, whose name they revere (9:9), but Israel's sworn oath "by the LORD" (9:18, 19) misuses his name. ([Joshua Teach the Text Commentary](#))

**HCSB** - The sin of Achan had far-reaching effects just as all sin does (Ro 5:12-14; 8:9-20). If Achan had not sinned, perhaps Israel's advance into the promised land would have been much easier and far less violent.

**Utley** - "**the Hittite**" There are three groups of Hittites mentioned in the Bible: (1) we find one group of them early in the book of Genesis, which seems to be in the area of Mesopotamia; (2) later on we find another group in the Promised Land; and (3) there was a large developed civilization of Hittites (Anatolia) in central Turkey. See Special Topic: Pre-Israelite Inhabitants of Palestine at Josh. 3:10. (They are a mountain people in the highlands, west and east of the Dead Sea and the Jordan River. The armies of Israel dealt a real blow to the Amorites when they wiped out their holdings on the east side of the Jordan)

**Utley** - "**Amorite**" The term "Amorite" seems to have the implication of "highlander". It is sometimes used as a collective term for all of the tribes of Canaan (cf. Gen. 15:16). See Special Topic at Josh. 3:10.

**Utley** - "**the Canaanite**" The term seems to be used in the sense of "lowlander. It is also used to denote the collective tribes of Canaan. The geographical name for the Promised Land was "Canaan," derived from this collective use. (They settled about 50 miles west from Gilgal on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.)

**HIVITES**, and they reside about 20 miles northwest of Gilgal in the heart of the land. This is the group that we are going to be primarily concerned with today in our study. They represent the peaceful Gibeonites near Jerusalem.

**PERIZZITES**. The term means "a villager." They are a Canaanitish race dwelling in the mountains of Judah. They are associated with the Canaanites in the north.

**Utley** - "**Jebusite**" Jebusites (BDB 101) are the ancient inhabitants of the city of Jebus which was called Salem in Gen. 14:8, and later, Jerusalem (cf. Jdgs. 19:10). Sometimes these native tribal listings of Canaan have one, three, seven, or ten groups. We see another list of these tribes in 3:10, but there the Gergashites are omitted. (JEBUSITES are the warlike tribe that settled in and around Jerusalem about 15 miles southwest of Gilgal. They remained there even after the conquering of the land and were not defeated until the time of David when he defeats them and makes Jerusalem the capital of his united kingdom.)

#### **Related Resource:**

- [Pre-Israelite Inhabitants of Palestine](#)

**Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary** - Verses 1-2. Hitherto the Canaanites had defended themselves, but here they consult to attack Israel. Their minds were blinded, and their hearts hardened to their destruction. Though often at enmity with each other, yet they united against Israel. Oh that Israel would learn of Canaanites, to sacrifice private interests to the public welfare, and to lay aside all quarrels among themselves, that they may unite against the enemies of God's kingdom!

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## [George Bush - Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 9](#)

**1. On this side Jordan.** The west side; where the children of Israel now were, and where the writer was at the time of penning this narrative.

Heard thereof. That is, of the remarkable events which had transpired since the Israelites had entered Canaan; of the sacking of Jericho and Ai, and of their being now assembled together at Mount Ebal.

**Joshua 9:2 that they gathered themselves together with one accord to fight with Joshua and with Israel.**

- **gathered:** 2Ch 20:1-30 Ps 2:1,2 83:2-8 Pr 11:21 Isa 8:9,10,12 54:15 Joe 3:9-13 Ac 4:26-28 Rev 16:14 20:8,9
- **accord:** Heb. mouth
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **A CLASSIC FRONTAL ATTACK AGAINST ISRAEL**

**that they gathered themselves together with one accord to fight with Joshua and with Israel-** The southern kings clearly had heard of the utter destruction of the people of Jericho and Ai and this forced them to consider desperate measures, in this case forming an alliance against Israel. They were motivated by fear and since we now know Yahweh was against them, they clearly had reason to be fearful!

**Wiersbe** - The heathen tribes of Canaan were divided into many little “nations” (city-states) with key cities as their centers. They usually fought each other, but when God’s people arrived, these petty kings united to oppose Israel. It is amazing how enemies unite against God! ([Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament](#))

**Hubbard** - In self-defense, the kings join forces to battle Joshua, their leadership counterpart, and Israel (v. 2). Theologically, their war plans reveal a fateful decision—the rejection of Yahweh—and sharply contrast the alternative, conciliatory approach soon to appear. In Josh 5:1 the kings are terrified of Israel, but Josh 9:1–2 mentions no fear factor, as if these monarchs are no longer cowed by them. Perhaps, as Hess suggests, Israel’s defeat at Ai I has encouraged the Canaanite kings that Israel can be beat in battle. ([Joshua NIV Application Commentary](#))

**Stephen Grant** makes an excellent observation and application - The clearest illustration of this took place when the strange confederate of Sadducees, Pharisees, Herodians and Romans united to crucify the Lord Jesus. This unity, among previously opposing groups, was prophesied by the Psalmist (Ps 2:1–2), and referred to in prayer by the early Christians: “For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together” (Acts 4:27). United opposition to the Lord and His people will continue until the final chapter in the world’s history, when Satan gathers the nations together against Israel (Rev 20:8–9). Unity among the ungodly exists when they have a common enemy to oppose. Unity among saints should be different since it has its source from within. The apostle Paul describes it as the “unity of the Spirit” since “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph 4:4–6). ([What the Bible Teaches - Joshua Judges Ruth](#))

**Utley** - Because these city states had heard what Joshua had done to the Amorite kings of the eastern side of Jordan they decided to attempt a coalition, at least in the south, to thwart Israel’s invasion. The phrase translated “**with one accord**” is literally, “with one mouth.” Mouth (BDB 804) is used idiomatically in several ways: (1) “ask his mouth,” meaning “to ask personally” (cf. Gen. 24:57) (2) “mouth of the sword,” meaning “the cutting edge of a sword” (cf. Gen. 34:26)(3) “mouth to mouth,” meaning “face to face” (cf. Num. 12:8; 2 Kgs. 10:21; 21:16; Jer. 32:4; 34:3)

**The Believer’s Study Bible** - As the reader is further informed, although a unified opposition to the Israelites was attempted, it failed. After the capture of Jericho, then Ai and Bethel, Israel fought against a southern coalition (ch. 10), then a northern coalition (ch. 11). The story of Gibeon shows one way in which unified opposition failed. Gibeon, the head of an alliance of four Hivite cities (cf. 9:17; 10:2), preferred peace (11:19). They were survivors. El-Jib, ancient Gibeon, furnishes archaeological evidence of continuous occupation from the Exodus to the fall of Jerusalem, with no full destruction layer. Evidence also indicates that winemaking was a major occupation there (cf. v. 4).

**Bob Marcarelle** - When news went out about Jericho and Ai’s fall the southern tribes and city-states all over the south formed a military coalition to face Israel. The kings of these nations, like old African tribes, hated and fought each other, but this common enemy brought them all together. Put it down. When God is doing a work in us or in our church, all the forces of evil will rise up

against us. Do you know when demon activity was at the zenith of its power? It was when Jesus walked the earth. All the devils in hell and on earth will come out when God comes down. But the old devil is far too wise to limit his attack to direct assault. He loves to worm his way into the church and work destruction from within. That's why he planted Judas in the disciple band, a man who preached the gospel, cast out demons, looked so spiritual that no one suspected him of being the traitor, and sold out Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. And he did it with a KISS (Mt. 26:49)! The Bible describes Satan as a "roaring lion" in 1 Peter 5:8 but as an "angel of light" in 2 Corinthians 11:4. Sometimes his evil is obvious, as in the case of these kings, and he comes forth to TRAMPLE us, but most of the time it is subtle, it masquerades as spiritual, and comes to TRICK us. That's what we see in verses 3 and following, in the deception of the Gibeonites, and Joshua fell for the devil's trick hook, line and sinker. And he and Israel had to live with his mistake, but, thank God, God made something good come out of it.

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**Rich Cathers** - The book of Joshua is a book about taking the Promised Land.

- The Promised Land of learning to receive all that God has for us in our personal lives - victory over sin, experiencing God's peace, joy, love, power.
- The principles that governed the nation taking the Promised Land are the same principles that help us live in God's promises.

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**George Bush - Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 9**

**2. They gathered themselves together to fight.** Entered into a league, agreed to form a confederacy. It does not appear that they actually united their forces at this time, but they now consulted together and agreed to do it. Subsequent events, however, seem to have deranged their plans, and prevented a combined attack till some time afterwards.—In this conduct we see, as in a glass, the strange infatuation of the wicked! Though seeing and feeling that the hand of God is unquestionably against them, yet, instead of repenting and humbling themselves before him, these devoted kings, who, like Ahaz, 'in their distress trespassed yet more against the Lord,' madly seek by power and policy to counteract and defeat his designs! 'Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock.'

**With one accord.** Heb. כֹּף אֶחָד pēh ehâd, with one mouth; expressive of their entire unanimity in the measure. Though of different clans, having different interests, and doubtless heretofore often at variance with one another, yet they are ready to make common cause against the people of God, showing that the hatred of the righteous is one of the strongest bonds of union between wicked men. 'And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for before they were at enmity between themselves.' What an admonition to Christians to cease from dissension, to give up their petty feuds and animosities, to sacrifice party interests to the public welfare, and cordially unite against the common enemies of God's kingdom among men.

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**Joshua 9:3 When the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai,**

- **Gibeon:** Jos 9:17 10:2 2Sa 21:1,2
- **Jericho:** Jos 6:1-27 8:1-35
- **Joshua 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

Joshua 10:1-2 Now it came about when Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had captured Ai, and had utterly destroyed it (just as he had done to Jericho and its king, so he had done to Ai and its king), and that **the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel** and were within their land, 2 that he feared greatly, because **Gibeon was a great city**, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were mighty.

Site of Gibeon

**THE GIBEONITES  
HEAR AND FEAR!**

**When the inhabitants of Gibeon** ([Wikipedia](#)) **heard** (*shama'*) **what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai** - Bad news traveled fast in Canaan, even with email or texting! The Gibeonites/Hivittes saw the proverbial "[writing on the wall](#)," (from Da 5:5-31+) that they were doomed to utter destruction unless they could devise a ruse. As we will see later, apparently their hearts were not hardened as were the other kings (see Josh 11:20+). It is worth noting that the Gibeonites did not rely on the fact that they were a



**great city** (Josh 10:2), to lull them into a sense of security.

It is notable that not only is Gibeon a **great city** but **all its men were mighty!** (Joshua 10:2). And yet they come their senses and realize that opposition to Israel means sure defeat.

Israel's command from God was clear -

"Only in the cities of these peoples that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, you shall not leave alive anything that breathes. 17 "But you shall **utterly destroy** them, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite and the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, as the LORD your God has commanded you, 18 **so that** (NOTE THE PURPOSE) they may not teach you to do according to all their detestable things which they have done for their gods, **so that** you would sin against the LORD your God. (Dt 20:16-18)

**Utley** - Gibeon was a well fortified, raised site about six miles north of Jerusalem. We learn from Josh 8:17 that it was apparently in a league of cities. It later became a Levitical city (cf. Josh 21:17) and was located in the tribal allocation of Benjamin (cf. Josh 18:25). It was very significant because it was on the major road between Joppa and the Mediterranean. It later became a temporary home for the Ark of the Covenant (cf. 1 Chr. 16:39).

It is notable that the Tabernacle of the Lord was at Gibeon until Solomon built his temple...

1 Chronicles 21:29 For the **tabernacle of the LORD**, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering were in the **high place at Gibeon** at that time. ([Why did Solomon worship at high places?](#))

Now Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David, **except** he sacrificed and burned incense on the **high places** (SEE [bamah](#)) 4 The king went to **Gibeon** to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place; Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. 5 In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night; and God said, "Ask what you wish Me to give you." (1 Kings 3:3-5)

**Henry Morris** - Gibeon, a city of the Hivites, was a city between Bethel and Jerusalem. The inhabitants of Gibeon knew they were also under God's condemnation, like the inhabitants of Jericho and Ai, and thus were in imminent danger of destruction. Hence their stratagem of pretending they were from a distant land not under God's judgment.

**Stephen Grant** - The story of their deception is another lesson to be learned by Christians engaged in spiritual warfare. Satan not only uses blatant, outward hostility to weaken believers, but he is the master of deception and subterfuge and defeats many saints by subtlety. ([What the Bible Teaches - Joshua Judges Ruth](#))

**Bob Marcarelle** - First came THE DECEPTION (9:3–15). God told Israel in Deuteronomy 20:10–15, they could make peace treaties with nations outside of Canaan, and the Gibeonites must have known this, so they dreamed up a masterful lie. You know what a lie is? An American politician said it well, "A lie is an abomination to the Lord—and a very present help in time of trouble."

**A W Pink** - "In stirring up the kings of Canaan to fight with Joshua, Satan is relying upon the use of arms (cf 1Pe 5:8); but in moving the Gibeonites to cloak their character and pose to be what they were not, so that Israel might be deceived into making a league with them, we behold his craftiness, purposing to introduce his leaven into the meal (cf Ge 3:1ff)."

**Wiersbe** - After an experience of great blessing, God's people must be especially prepared to confront the enemy; for like Canaan, the Christian life is "a land of hills and valleys" (Deut. 11:11). But Israel's greatest danger wasn't the confederation of the armies of Canaan. It was a group of men from Gibeon who were about to enter the camp and deceive Joshua and the princes of Israel. Satan sometimes comes as a devouring lion (1 Peter 5:8) and sometimes as a deceiving serpent (2 Cor. 11:3), and we must be alert and protected by the spiritual armor God has provided for us (Eph. 6:10–18). ([Be Strong - Joshua: Putting God's Power to Work in Your Life](#))

**Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary** - Verses 3-13. Other people heard these tidings, and were driven thereby to make war upon Israel; but the Gibeonites were led to make peace with them. Thus the discovery of the glory and the grace of God in the gospel, is to some a savour of life unto life, but to others a savour of death unto death, 2 Corinthians 2:16. The same sun softens wax and hardens clay. The falsehood of the Gibeonites cannot be justified. We must not do evil that good may themselves to the God of Israel, we have reason to think Joshua would have been directed by the oracle of God to spare their lives. But when they had once said, "We are come from a far country," they were led to say it made of skins, and their clothes: one lie brings on another, and that a third, and so on. The way of that sin is especially down-hill. Yet their faith and prudence are to be commended. In submitting to Israel they submitted to the God of Israel, which implied forsaking their idolatries. And how can we do better than cast ourselves upon the mercy of a God of all goodness? The way to avoid judgment is to meet it by repentance. Let us do like these Gibeonites, seek peace with God in the rags of abasement, and godly sorrow; so our sin shall not be our ruin. Let us be servants to Jesus, our blessed Joshua, and we shall live.

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**Bob Marcarelle** - A young Navy pilot was part of a squadron engaged in maneuvers. The admiral in charge put them under orders for absolute radio silence. The young pilot forgot, pressed his button, cleared his throat to say something, remembered the order and was heard muttering, "Oh, no! Man, am I stupid!" Not knowing which pilot did it, the irate admiral grabbed his mike, ordered all channels opened and growled fiercely, "Will the idiot who broke radio silence identify himself immediately!" There was a time of silence. A radio clicked on and a small voice was heard on the airways, "I may be stupid but I AM NOT THAT STUPID." And all was silence again. That fellow knew what to do with a mistake.

We are all going to make mistakes. That's why they put erasers on pencils. Someone said, "The person who brags about never making mistakes married someone who did." Architects cover their mistakes with ivy, dentists pull theirs out, lawyers' are put in prison, doctors' in the ground, electricians' are shocking, and brides cover theirs with mayonnaise. Mistakes are going to be made by anyone who tackles any worth-while task, and success in life and in Christianity depends on what we do with them. We must be big enough to admit our mistakes, smart enough to learn from them and strong enough to correct them. The main difference between a wise man and a fool is that a fool's mistakes don't teach him anything. In 1849 the famous English preacher, F. W. Robertson, said, "Life, like war, is a series of mistakes and he is not the best Christian nor the best general who makes the fewest mistakes ... he is the best who wins the most splendid victories by the retrieval of mistakes." (Frederick W. Robertson, SERMONS PREACHED AT BRIGHTON, FIRST SERIES (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1898, p. 66).

Make mistakes? Yes! But make the most out of them. And that's exactly what we see in Joshua 9–10, the campaign which conquered the South of Canaan.

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**QUESTION** - [Who were the Gibeonites?](#) (See also Wikipedia article - [Gibeonites](#))

**ANSWER** - The Gibeonites were a group of people, descended from the [Amorites](#) (2 Samuel 21:2). They are described in Joshua 9 as people who deceived the Israelites in order to protect themselves. After the Israelites had defeated the cities of Jericho (Joshua 6—7) and Ai (Joshua 8), many of the nearby Canaanites united to form a large army to fight Israel (Joshua 9:1–2).

The Gibeonites, however, took a different approach: "They resorted to a ruse: They went as a delegation whose donkeys were loaded with worn-out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended. They put worn and patched sandals on their feet and wore old clothes. All the bread of their food supply was dry and moldy. Then they went to Joshua in the camp at [Gilgal](#) and said to him and the Israelites, 'We have come from a distant country; make a treaty with us'" ([Joshua 9:4–6](#)).

The Israelites did not consult with God before agreeing to the treaty and fell for the Gibeonites' scheme. The Israelites soon discovered they had been tricked and discussed how to respond. The leaders of Israel decided, "'We have given them our oath by the Lord, the God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now. This is what we will do to them: We will let them live, so that God's wrath will not fall on us for breaking the oath we swore to them.' They continued, 'Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers in the service of the whole assembly.' So the leaders' promise to them was kept" (Joshua 9:19–21).

The end of this account notes, "That day [Joshua] made the Gibeonites woodcutters and water carriers for the assembly, to provide for the needs of the altar of the Lord at the place the Lord would choose. And that is what they are to this day." (Joshua 9:27). In other words, the Gibeonites survived, yet they served as slaves to the Israelites for generations to come. The land of Gibeon would later be allotted to the tribe of Benjamin (Joshua 21:17).

King Saul later broke the treaty that Joshua had signed and attacked the Gibeonites. Later still, during the time of King David, a famine occurred in Israel. When David asked the Lord about the famine, God said, "It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death" (2 Samuel 21:1). To appease the Gibeonites and put an end to the famine, seven descendants of Saul were given to them to be put to death (2 Samuel 21:6). God healed Israel's land after that (2 Samuel 21:14).

Though the Gibeonites were enemies of the Israelites, they teach us some important lessons today. The Gibeonites' deception was effective because Joshua and his people did not first consult God for wisdom. Thus, Joshua 9 reveals the need for believers in Christ to pray concerning all major decisions and to seek His will before moving forward. Also, the fact that the Lord held the Israelites to their covenant with the Gibeonites shows that God requires faithfulness of His people. Breaking a covenant is a serious thing. Finally, the eventual incorporation of the Gibeonites into Israel shows the mercy and grace of God to all people. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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### [George Bush - Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 9](#)

**3. The inhabitants of Gibeon.** Gibeon was a city of the Hivites, probably its capital. In the division of the land it fell to the tribe of Benjamin, and was situated on a hill about six miles north of Jerusalem. At the present time, a small village called Geeb, occupies the site of the ancient city. The inhabitants of this place declined entering into the alliance offensive and defensive above mentioned.



This might have been owing to their form of government, which left more scope for the good sense of the people. Had they had a king, of which we nowhere read, he would probably have been induced, in the pride of his heart, to join the confederacy; but this city, with the three others mentioned v. 17, seem to have been governed by elders or senators, v. 11, who consulted the common safety more than their own personal dignity. In this case of the Gibeonites, we may see a striking instance of the different effects produced by the same tidings upon different minds. The news of the victorious progress of Israel excites the several kings to resistance, but moves the Gibeonites to think of making peace with their invaders. In the same manner the Gospel message is a savor of life to some, and of death to others. Some it irritates and provokes to deadly and self-destructive opposition, others it softens, melts, persuades to surrender, and brings to saving repentance. In such a difference Divine sovereignty must be acknowledged, though the obstinately impenitent are left without excuse.

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## **James Smith - THE ANXIOUS GIBEONITES Joshua 9**

Two sins were committed in connection with the Gibeonites. 1. Joshua judged according to his own wisdom instead of asking of God (v. 14, margin), and so made a league with them, contrary to the command of God. Let us beware of being flattered into disobedience. 2. The Gibeonites came with a false pretext. They did evil that good may come. Had they been humble and honest like Rahab they might have been saved all the same. Rahab was greatly exalted (Matt. 1:5). They were greatly humbled (v. 23). But laying aside the faults let us look at some of the facts in their life as illustrating the way of grace and salvation. We see them—

**I. Greatly Alarmed** (vv. 9, 10). And no wonder, when they believed that they were all under the condemnation of God, and that the sentence of death was passed upon them (Rom. 3:23). They were sore afraid (v. 24), just because they believed. The devil believes and trembles. The false peace of the sinner is founded on the sands of “I don’t believe it.” It is impossible for a man to believe God’s Word and remain unaffected thereby. Oh, that many had this deep sense of their own state before God! What concern, anxiety, sleeplessness, and sorrow it would create! Visit Gibeon, converse with the citizens, price their articles. What a change has come over the whole city, just such a change as comes into the heart when the conscience is truly convicted of sin.

**II. Pleading for Salvation.** “Make ye a league with us” (v. 6). We have not to do just now with the way they came, but with the object of their coming. They wanted saving grace. They were convinced that on this lay their only hope. Resistance was useless. When sinners are awakened they deeply feel that mercy is their chiefest need. Self-justification is out of the question. Their only refuge is in the grace of God (Eph. 2:8). They said, “Make a league with us.” They wanted the promise of Joshua as a guarantee of safety. This is what our Joshua gives to all that come to Him, so that they are assured of salvation, and can rest, like the Gibeonites, on the word of Him who will not lie. Go not away without the promise. What the Gibeonites feigned we can say in truth. “We be come from a far country” (v. 6), like the prodigal in Luke’s Gospel.

**III. Graciously Reconciled.** “Joshua made peace, and made a league with them to let them live” (v. 15). He might in justice have condemned them. He had the power and authority for it, but he let them live. It was purely a permission of grace; moreover, there was added to the peace the oath of confirmation, which is the end of strife (Heb. 6:16). Three things stand out in connection with this reconciliation: (1) The Acceptance, (2) The Covenant, (3) The Oath. The sinner in coming to Jesus is accepted through mercy. Then he enters into the covenant (or league) of grace, and then the seal of the promise of God makes the engagement eternally secure (Eph. 1:13).

**IV. Wholly Consecrated.** They said, “We are in thy hand, as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do” (v. 25). The effect of grace is not to make them proud and defiant. How beautiful when the soul, melted down by the mercy and love of God, yields so sweetly to its great Deliverer! This is the language of consecration: Thou hast saved us, we are Thine, just do Thy will in us and with us. We owe our life to Thee, it is Thine own, Thy will be done. This is the pure effect of the grace of God when truly enjoyed. If His love has not constrained you to yield all to Him it must be little of the love that you enjoy.

**V. Actively Engaged.** “Joshua made them hewers of wood and drawers of water” (v. 27). We must not only be humble and submissive, but willing and active. It is very humbling work they get to do. Some are willing, like Naaman, to do some great thing, but it is in doing the little things that our true character is seen. If we profess to be very humble God is sure to try us with some lowly service. But the true heart finds nothing too mean that is His will. An angel would sweep a street as heartily as proclaim “Time to be no more,” if sent. We have been saved to serve (Luke 1:74). Hewers of wood for the altar and drawers of water for the laver are still in great demand.

**VI. Bitterly Despised.** “Come and help me to smite Gibeon, for it hath made peace with Joshua” (Jos. 10:4). They were hated because of their peaceful connection with Joshua. They were despised for His sake (John 15:19). Those who have made peace with Jesus fare no better now. The world still hates the Christ of God as much as ever, but He shall gain the victory. Some are ashamed to confess their league with Jesus lest they should be despised by men. The Gibeonites did not seek to hide it, they rejoiced in it. What cowards, to be ashamed of being at peace with God!

**VII. Mightily Protected.** In the day of trouble and threatening danger they send unto Joshua, saying, “Come up quickly, and save

us, and help us" (chap. 10:6). What a friend they have in Joshua! He is able to save them to the uttermost. Their saviour becomes their protector. Is our Saviour less to us? The sun and moon stood still upon Gibeon, that the victory might be complete. What honour is now put upon the trusting Gibeonites! They call on Joshua, and he conquers for them. They looked unto him and were lightened. He put their enemies under his feet (v. 24). The Church of God, like Gibeon, seems about to be crushed with surrounding enemies, but He who is the Saviour King shall suddenly come (v. 9). Is your soul like this city, ready to perish? Let your cry be to the all-conquering Jesus. These Gibeonites who had taken the place of strangers now claim the privileges of servants. Their petition is, "Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us." Their prayer was speedily answered. "And shall not God avenge His own elect? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily" (Luke 18:7, 8; 2 Chron. 16:9).

**Joshua 9:4 they also acted craftily and set out as envoys, and took worn-out sacks on their donkeys, and wineskins worn-out and torn and mended,**

- **they also acted craftily:** Ge 34:13 1Ki 20:31-33 Mt 10:16 Lu 16:8
- **wineskins** These bottles being made of skin, were consequently liable to be rent, and capable of being mended; which is done, according to Chardin, by putting in a piece, or by gathering up the wounded piece in the manner of a purse; and sometimes by inserting a flat piece of wood. Ps 119:83 Mt 9:17 Mk 2:22 Lu 5:37,38
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Dt 20:10-12+ (**DID THE GIBEONITES SOMEHOW KNOW THIS TRUTH?**) When you approach a city to fight against it, you shall offer it terms of peace. 11 **"If it agrees to make peace with you and opens to you, then all the people who are found in it shall become your forced labor and shall serve you.** 12 "However, if it does not make peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it.

## THE GREAT PRETENDERS

One of my favorite secular songs from 1955 was [The Great Pretender](#), which could have been the theme song of the Gibeonites.

**They also acted craftily** ([ormah](#); Lxx = [panourgia](#)) **and set out as envoys**- NLT = "They sent ambassadors to Joshua" "The Gibeonites, ingeniously, provide us with what might be termed an "Oscar winning performance" in deceiving the elders of Israel." ([Davis](#))

**Hubbard** - In v. 4, Heb. gam hemmah (lit., "they, too"; NRSV "for their part" NAS - "they also") also underscores this contrast (WITH THE KINGS), as if to say, "The Gibeonites responded, but along different lines." Their account describes their leaders as "our elders and all those living in our country" (v. 11). According to Hess (Joshua, 179–80), the rule by elders may point to the group's origin in Anatolia where, unlike among Canaanites, nonroyal government was typical of the Hittites. The Philistines, who probably came to Canaan from Mycenaean Greece, had a five-city federation ruled by "lords" (seranim [a non-Hebrew word]); cf. Josh. 13:3; Judg. 3:3; 1 Sam. 6:16–18. ...Notice the amusing irony: Israel, whose trick victimizes unsuspecting Ai (ch. 8), themselves soon fall victim to one. ([Joshua NIV Application Commentary](#))

**Matthews** on **craftily** ([ormah](#); Lxx = [panourgia](#)) - The related 'arum, "crafty," describes the serpent's scheme (Gen. 3:1). Coupled with "curse" (Josh 9:23; cf. Ge 3:14), this word describing the Gibeonite deception recalls the serpent's deceit of Eve. ([Joshua Teach the Text Commentary](#))

**Wiersbe** - What Jericho could not do with walls, or Ai with weapons, the Gibeonites accomplished with deceit. Satan tries one device after another to defeat God's people, and we must constantly be on guard. Note that it is usually after a great victory that Satan begins his subtle attacks. It was after the victory at Jericho that Israel was defeated by Ai, and it was after Israel's defeat of Ai that Joshua was deceived by Gibeon. We must beware of "judging after the flesh" (John 8:15) and depending on our own wisdom (Prov. 3:5–6). James 1:5 promises that God will give us wisdom if we ask for it. Christians must beware of worldly alliances (2 Cor. 6:14–18). (WEOOT)

**Alan Carr** applies this deception - What a picture of our enemy, the devil (**ED: SEE WORD STUDY ON [ormah](#) BELOW**)! The Bible tells us in Eph. 6:11 that we fight an enemy that uses "wiles" to get his way in our lives. The word "wiles" refers to "deceit, trickery, cunning arts." You see friends, Satan would like nothing better than to trip you up and cause you to fall into one of his traps.

**And took worn-out sacks on their donkeys, and wineskins worn-out and torn and mended** - Note the key word "worn-out" so

that they could dupe the prayerless Israelites. These are all items typically used on a long journey adding to the deceptive element! Note that the Gibeonites leave no stone unturned -- they even stitch up the wineskins to emphasize the woeful picture to Israel!

**THOUGHT** - Be careful in judging by appearances. Israel was taken in by their Oscar winning costumes before they even uttered a word. "Appearances can be deceptive and must not be the sole basis of any judgment formed by the people of God. The New Testament has many warnings about the danger of false teachers who gain entrance among gullible Christians, who accept people at face value (cf 2Co 11:13-15).....Care must be taken when people, who are unknown to the saints, approach the assembly and seek fellowship. Reception into the fellowship of an assembly based on outward appearance can lead to havoc, with unbelievers or those with strange doctrines being received among the saints (cf 1Jn 4:1)." (Grant)

**Rod Mattoon** - The Gibeonites lied about their ambassadorship, aliments (food). It was moldy and dry, apparel—old, torn garments, and shoes and area of residence—They said they were from a far country. It was 25 miles from Gilgal. They knew they couldn't defeat them so they set out to deceive Israel into a treaty with them. They got Joshua to walk by sight and human reasoning. The Gibeonites seem to be the only people in Canaan who had a republic governed by elders who represented the people instead of having a sovereign ruler. Their decision came from the input of many people. Evidently, they knew God's law too (**ED: CERTAINLY THIS IS POSSIBLE**). They knew Israel was to drive out the inhabitants of the land (Exodus 23:31–33). If they would be servants or tributaries of Israel, then a peace agreement could be reached. ([Treasures From Joshua](#))

**Utley** - "wineskins worn-out and torn and mended" Wineskins were usually made from the skin of an animal, with the hair shaved off, turned inside out and the neck became the place from which the liquid was poured. We still say the "neck" of a bottle. When wineskins are new, they are relatively elastic and can accommodate the expansion of fermenting wine. When the skins are old, they cannot expand and they will break. These wineskins were made to look like they had been in use for a long time (possibly patched).

**Alan Carr** introduces this section on the Gibeonite ruse with an interesting comment - There are certain kinds of ants have a passion for the sweet, glandular substance given off by the caterpillar of a species of large blue butterfly. They can become so "addicted" to it that they even seek out "the supplier" and carry him to their nest with delight. In doing so, they unwittingly bring home an enemy in disguise, because the caterpillar gorges himself exclusively on one food item: ant larva. Usually such a threat to the colony would be repelled with great vigor, but the adults enjoy the tasty secretions of the "guest" so much that they are oblivious of the fact that their young are being devoured in the process. The ants find out far too late that their enemy is A Little Too Close For Comfort. As I read this story of the foolish ants, I began to see a similarity between this story and what the Bible tells us about Joshua and Israel in Joshua chapter 9. In these verses, we see Israel becoming a little too cozy with their enemies.

**Rod Mattoon** adds "Satan uses two key methods of attack.

**1. He is as a roaring lion** (1 Peter 5:8). This is the open assault and is easy to identify. This may take the form of people who openly oppose your Christian life. They may attack the Bible, prayer, the Christian faith and principles, or even you. Under Nero and the Roman Emperors the Church flourished in spite of Roman persecution.

**2. He is also a subtle serpent** (Genesis 3:1). He will use deception, doubting, disbelief, and disguise. These methods are far more dangerous. Satan is described as an Angel of Light (2Corinthians 11:14, 15). He endeavors to have the appearance of good, but is rotten inside. He puts on a front in order to get something from us. Constantine made Christianity fashionable and popular in the Roman Empire. This ended up weakening Christians and the Church. ([Treasures From Joshua](#))

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**Craftily** (06195) **ormah** is derived from **arom** = be shrewd or crafty. **Arum** (06175) is the passive participle of 'arom (06191), a verb which means to be smooth, cunning, shrewd or crafty and **arum** is used in Genesis 3:1+ to describe the wiles devil which plunged the world into sin and death! **Ormah** can have a positive and a negative meaning. In Pr 1:4+, it speaks of good judgment or good sense. The **Septuagint** translates **ormah** with the noun **panourgia** which strictly speaking means capability for every work and in the NT is used primarily in a negative sense to describe cunning, craftiness, or trickery (Lk 20:23+; 1Cor 3:19+; 2Cor 4:2+; 2Co 11:3+; Eph 4:14+). **Panourgia** is also used in a negative sense with the nuance of craftiness or cunning of the Gibeonites in Joshua 9:4+ but is used with a positive nuance here in Pr 1:4+ and again in Pr 8:5.

**Ormah** - 5v - craftily(2), prudence(3). Exod. 21:14 = "so as to kill him**craftily**"; Jos. 9:4; Prov. 1:4; Prov. 8:5; Prov. 8:12

**Envoy** (ONLY OT USE) (06737)(**siyr/tsiyr**) Because of the noun tsîr (AMBASSADOR), many take the verb tsîyr to mean "to pretend to be an envoy." TSK adds "The word {tzir,} an ambassador, properly denotes a hinge; because an ambassador is a person upon whom the business turns as upon a hinge. So the Latin {Cardinalis,} from {cardo,} a hinge, was the title of the prime minister of the

### **George Bush - Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 9**

**4. They did work wilily.** Heb. 'they also did work wilily,' i. e. cunningly, shrewdly, craftily. The term 'also,' which is omitted in our translation, but occurs in the original, carries in it a reference to the course adopted by the Canaanitish kings. They adopted the measures which seemed to them the wisest and most politic, under the circumstances. In like manner the Gibeonites also determined to exercise their ingenuity in the present emergency, but they had recourse to a subtle stratagem, entirely different from the more open, straightforward, but ruinous course pursued by their neighbors. As to the moral character of this device of the Gibeonites, we can only say of it, as our Saviour said of the unjust steward, 'they acted wisely in their generation;' they did what the common maxims of mere worldly prudence dictated under the circumstances, and yet their fraud and prevarication cannot be justified, nor have we any reason to think they fared so well by employing it, as they would have done without it. A more simple and upright course would undoubtedly have secured to them far greater advantages. Some correct notions of the God of Israel they had certainly formed, v. 9, 10, and these should have prompted some other expedient than that of lying and deceit. They should have followed up the little light they had, and inquired into the procuring causes of God's severity against them. They should have acknowledged that it was their heinous sins which were at the bottom of all their troubles; and having humbled themselves in deep repentance, and trusting to Providence for the issue, should have come to the Israelites, and simply submitted themselves without opposition or fraud, and there is every reason to believe they would have been spared, as Rahab and her relations had been. Lying and hypocrisy always defeat themselves in the long run; their success is only temporary, while truth and honesty will always ultimately redound to the safety, prosperity, and happiness of those who adhere to them.

**As if they had been ambassadors.** The root of ציר tzir, ambassador, properly denotes a hinge; because an ambassador is a person upon whom the business of his embassy turns as upon a hinge. So the Latin cardinalis, cardinal, from cardo, a hinge, was the title of the prime minister of the emperor Theodosius; but it is now applied only to the Pope's electors and counsellors, though the original reason probably holds with equal force here too. They are the hinges upon which the vast and complicated interests of the Papacy turn. See Note on the 'lords' and 'princes' (Heb. axles) of the Philistines, ch. 13:3.

**Took old sacks.** 'Of course they profess to do what they would actually have done had they really come from a distant place. Hence we learn that at this time little accommodation except that of lodging, if that, was expected upon a journey, and that every one carried provisions and drink with him, as at present. This rendered necessary their sacks, doubtless for containing their provisions and baggage. All travellers now carry sacks with them for such purposes. If they can afford it, these sacks are large, containing a strange assortment of articles—of dress, bedding, food, and even of pots and pans for cooking the necessary meals. These are usually carried on animals hired for the purpose, or on the animal which the servant, if any, rides. A poorer traveller reduces his baggage to narrower limits, so that he wants but small bags, which, being thrown over the back of his ass or mule, he rides upon himself. Those who have but one ass to carry themselves and baggage, frequently dismount and walk a considerable part of the way to relieve their beasts. This may account for the manner in which the clothes and shoes of the Gibeonites were supposed to have been worn out by long travel, although they had asses on which to ride. The bags which travellers use are commonly of stout woollen cloth or carpeting, sometimes strengthened with leather to keep out the wet. Bags of hair cloth are also sometimes used for this purpose, and almost always for carrying the corn and chopped straw for the cattle.' Pict. Bib.

**And wine bottles, old, &c.** Pretending to have come from a very distant country, and that their sacks and the skins that served them for carrying their wine and water were worn out by the length of the journey. Sir John Chardin informs us that the Arabs, and all those who lead a wandering life, keep their water, milk, and other liquors in leathern bottles. They keep more fresh in them than in any other way. These leathern bottles are made of goat skins. When the animal is killed they cut off its feet and its head, and then draw it out of the skin, which is thus left nearly whole. They afterwards sew up the places where the legs and the tail were cut off, and when it is filled they tie it about the neck. These nations and the country people of Persia never go a journey without a small leathern bottle of water hanging by their side like a scrip. These bottles are frequently rent, when old and much used; but they are capable of being repaired. This they do sometimes by putting in a piece, sometimes by gathering up the wounded place in the manner of a purse; sometimes they put in a round flat piece of wood, and by these means stop the hole. Similar bottles are still used in Spain, and are called borrachas. See Burder's Orient. Cust., vol. i., p. 54.

**Joshua 9:5 and worn-out and patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and had become crumbled.**

**NET** they did something clever. They collected some provisions and put worn-out sacks on their donkeys, along with worn-out wineskins that were ripped and patched.

- **worn-out and patched sandals:** Jos 9:13 De 29:5 33:25 Lu 15:22
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## HOLEY SANDALS, SACKS & MOLDY BREAD!

**And worn-out and patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes on themselves-** The Gibeonites had studied the brochure entitled "[Appearances Can Be Deceiving](#)."

**Matthews** - Ironically, worn-out clothing and moldy bread are the opposite of God's provisions for Israel in the wilderness (Deut. 8:2–4; 29:5–6).([Joshua Teach the Text Commentary](#))

**Utley** - "**worn-out and patched sandals on their feet**" We learn from ancient literature and archaeology that sandals were made of leather and palm leaves, or papyrus reeds. "Patched" (Pual PARTICIPLE) is found only here in the OT. Its verbal form meant "spotted" or "variegated."

**And all the bread of their provision was dry and had become crumbled-** Moldy bread was an easy fix in the hot desert environment with no refrigeration or preservatives in baked goods.

**Utley** - **and all the bread of their provision was dry and had become crumbled'** Literally the word "crumbled" means "dotted over" in Hebrew which implies mildew (cf. NKJV, NRSV, TEV). In the ancient world people baked bread every day and it was edible for several days.

**Wiersbe** applies this passage to our lives as believers - Satan sometimes comes as a devouring lion (1 Peter 5:8) and sometimes as a deceiving serpent (2 Cor. 11:3), and we must be alert and protected by the spiritual armor God has provided for us (Eph. 6:10–18). Satan is a counterfeiter and "masquerades as an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14, NIV). He has his "false apostles" and "deceitful workmen" (v. 13, NIV) at work in this world, blinding the lost and seeking to lead believers astray. It's much easier for us to identify the lion when he's roaring than to detect the serpent when he's slithering into our lives. Satan is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44), and human nature is such that many people find it easier to tell lies than the truth. With tongue in cheek, the American political leader Adlai Stevenson said, "A lie is an abomination unto the Lord—and a very present help in trouble." The Gibeonites told several lies in their attempt to get out of trouble. ([Be Strong - Joshua: Putting God's Power to Work in Your Life](#))

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### [George Bush - Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 9](#)

**5. Old shoes and clouted.** This latter epithet, in the time of Shakespeare, when applied to shoes, meant such as had nails driven into the soles to strengthen them. (Cymb., Act IV., Sc 2.) In this sense it may be derived from the French word clou, a nail. But this does not seem to correspond well with the original, which is a derivative from a root signifying to spot, to patch, to spot with patches. For this reason it is supposed by Adam Clarke, with much plausibility, to come from the old Saxon clut, a clout, a rag, or small piece of cloth, used for piecing or patching. This makes our present version to express very precisely the spirit of the original. As their shoes or sandals were made of skins in those early ages, it means that those they now wore were in a miserable tattered condition, having been often patched, pieced, or mended.

**The bread of their provision was dry and moldy.** Heb. נִקְדִּים nikkūdim, pricked, i. e. spotted, speckled; bread marked with spots of mould, to which the original term is here applied. 'The bread commonly used in the East is calculated to last only for the day on which it is baked; in a day or two more it becomes exceedingly hard and unfit for use. This common bread could not therefore be that usually employed for daily food, for then its dry condition would not serve as an indication of the length of the journey they had taken. It must rather have been a sort of bread which will keep a considerable time, though it does ultimately become hard and mouldy. They have such bread in the East, the use of which is almost exclusively confined to travellers. It is a kind of biscuit, usually made in the shape of large rings, nearly an inch thick, and four or five inches in diameter. The bread is, when new, very firm, and rather crisp when broken; but, not being so well prepared as our biscuits, it becomes gradually harder, and at last mouldy from the moisture which the baking had left in it. In general it is seldom used till previously soaked in water. The bread of the Gibeonites may have been something of this sort. There is another kind of bread, which will keep as well, or better. This is the thin broad sheet of crisp wafer-bread, as thin as wrapping-paper, the preparation of which has been described in the note to Lev. 2:4. But this is seldom used for a journey, being speedily reduced to powder by the action in travelling.' Pict. Bib.

**Joshua 9:6** They went to Joshua the camp at Gilgal and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; now therefore, **make** a covenant with us."



- **the camp:** Jos 5:10 10:43
- **We:** Jos 9:9 De 20:11-15 1Ki 8:41 2Ki 20:14
- **make a covenant** : "cut or divide with us a covenant," or rather the covenant sacrifice offered on these occasions. De 29:12
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## LIAR, LIAR WORN OUT PANTS ON FIRE!

**They went to Joshua to the camp at Gilgal and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; now therefore, **make** ([karath](#)) a covenant ([berit/berith/beriyth](#)) with us** - This section could be subtitled "[Trick and Treaty!](#)" ([Hubbard](#)) Not only did they lie by their appearance but with their lips! The very **far country** in truth is only about 25 miles away from Israel's military base at Gilgal!

While it is unlikely they knew the Law of Moses, their ruse of claiming to be from a far country was actually covered in the "fine print" of the regulations in Deuteronomy (see especially verse 11 and 15)...

10 "When you approach a city to fight against it, you shall **offer it terms of peace**. 11 "If it agrees to **make peace with you and opens to you, then all the people who are found in it shall become your forced labor and shall serve you**. 12 "However, if it does not make peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it. 13 "When the LORD your God gives it into your hand, you shall strike all the men in it with the edge of the sword. 14 "Only the women and the children and the animals and all that is in the city, all its spoil, you shall take as booty for yourself; and you shall use the spoil of your enemies which the LORD your God has given you. 15 "Thus you shall do to all the cities that are very far from you, which are not of the cities of these nations nearby. (CLEARLY THESE THIS DID NOT APPLY TO ANY CITY IN THE PROMISED LAND) Dt 20:10-15+)

[Utley](#) - "they went to Joshua ... and said to him and to the men of Israel" It seems to be that in vv. 6–8 and 15 we see the three main types of authority among the people of God: (1) the central God-called leader, Joshua (cf. vv. 6, 8, 15); (2) the elders of Israel (cf. vv. 15, 21); and (3) the entire congregation (cf. vv. 18, 19). This same threefold type of polity structure can be seen in the New Testament: episcopal, presbyterian, and congregational (cf. Acts 15).

**Matthews** - A city from afar may receive an offer of peace (Deut. 20:10–15), but those nations indigenous to Canaan are destined for destruction (Deut. 20:16–18). The severity of the policy assumes that idolatry is irreversibly corrosive to Israel's faith. ([Joshua Teach the Text Commentary](#))

[Utley](#) - "**make** ([karath](#)) a covenant ([berit/berith/beriyth](#)) with us" This VERB ([karath](#) Qal IMPERATIVE, cf. Josh 9:11) literally meant "to cut off" or "cut down." Here it is used in the sense of "cut a covenant" (BDB 136), which originally involved a sacrifice (e.g., Ge 15:10, 17–18; Jer. 34:18 = "I will give the men who have transgressed My covenant, who have not fulfilled the words of the covenant which they made before Me, when they **cut the calf in two and passed between its parts**").

[Believer's Study Bible](#): - Cf. Deut. 7:2-5; 20:10-18. The Gibeonites somehow knew that the inhabitants of the land were doomed (v. 24). They perceived their only option was to pretend to be foreigners in the land and to play on the Israelites' pride (vv. 9-11). Furthermore, the matter seemed so obvious (note the avoidance of reference to Jericho and Ai in v. 10) that Israel failed to ask counsel of the Lord (cf. James 4:2; Eph. 6:11). God's people need not only the power of God to overcome our obvious enemies; we need the wisdom of God to detect our subtle enemies.

**Henry Morris** - The Gibeonites apparently knew that the Israelites were commissioned by God to destroy all the inhabitants of Canaan, but were permitted to make treaties of peace with more distant tribes (see Deuteronomy 20:10–18).

**Gene Getz** - Joshua had just reviewed the law of God for all the children of Israel. Everything seemed to be in order to move forward victoriously. And then it happened. Joshua was caught off guard, failed to seek God's counsel, and fell prey to the Gibeonite deception. Satan at times camouflages his roar with gentle, sweet, and subtle words—a ploy that worked on Joshua. The Gibeonites knew God had instructed the children of Israel to be merciful to those people who lived beyond the borders of Canaan (Dt 20:10–12). This is why they feigned having come "from a far away land" (Jos 9:9). In this sense, they used God's words to deceive Joshua. We must all realize that Satan is a subtle enemy, and lying is one of his common tactics. One of his most deceptive schemes is to use God's Word to achieve his insidious goals. This is exactly the way he tempted Jesus in the wilderness (Mt 4:1–11).

When Jesus was confronting the unbelieving Pharisees, He described the Devil and his strategies (Jn 8:44) We must be on guard against Satan, the father of liars (Life Essentials)

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**Make** (cut make [a covenant]) ([03772](#)) [karath](#) literally means to cut, to cut off or to sever an object from its source or cut into parts



and implies a violent action. For example, Zipporah "cut off her son's foreskin." (Ex 4:25) or the Jews "cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes." (Nu 13:2-24, cf Dt 19:5, 20:19-20, Jdg 9:48-49, 1Sa 5:4, 17:51, 24:4-5, 11, 31:9, 2Sa 10:4, 2Sa 20:22) In another literal use as punishment to Israel for breaking the Mosaic covenant (cf Dt 29:25, 31:16), God says He will "cut down (karath) your incense altars" (Lev 26:30, cf Jdg 6:25-26, cf 1Sa 28:9). A sacrificial animal was not to be offered if it was "cut" (karath) (Lev 22:24). Karath means "chewed" (cutting food with teeth) in Nu 11:33.

**Covenant** (01285) [berit/berith/beriyth](#) means covenant, treaty, compact, agreement between two parties (first use in God's covenant with Noah - [Ge 6:18](#), [9:9](#), [11](#), [12](#), [13](#), [15](#), [16](#), [17](#)). As discussed more below **beriyth** describes a compact made by passing between pieces of flesh. Covenant is a solemn, binding arrangement between two parties and entails a variety of responsibilities, benefits and penalties depending on the specific covenant which is being studied. OT covenants were made between God and man (eg, God with Noah - Ge 6:18, with Abram - Ge 15:18) or between men (Abraham and Abimelech - Ge 21:27, Isaac and Abimelech - Ge 26:28, Jacob and Laban - Ge 31:44) (**For summary of covenants see - [Covenant in the Bible](#)**).

**Covenant** can be summarized as follows...

(1) Between two parties (sometimes equal, other times superior to inferior) -- (a) **nations** -- (peace) treaty, alliance of friendship (b) **individuals** -- a pledge or agreement with mutual obligations to each other (c) **monarch and subjects** (2Sa 3:21, 5:3, 1Chr 11:3) -- a constitution (d) **God and man** -- Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, New Covenants. **TWOT** adds that "Apart from blood ties the covenant was the way people of the ancient world formed wider relationships with each other The accounts of the relationship between David and Jonathan are the only unequivocal mention of a compact between two individuals in the Old Testament (1Sa 18:3; 20:8; 23:18). It is spoken of as "a covenant of the Lord" because the Lord witnessed the transaction and protected the legal order."

(2) Accompanied by (a) **signs** (also witnesses, memorials, shared meals) (b) **sacrifices**, (c) **solemn, binding oaths** -- sealing the relationship with promises of blessing for keeping the covenant and curses for breaking the covenant (d) Sometimes with written document on which the words of the covenant, its terms in the form of promises and stipulations were spelled out, witnessed to, signed and sealed. **Behm** (TDNT) notes that in ancient times

There is no firmer guarantee of legal security peace or personal loyalty than the covenant (e.g., Amos 1:9).

(3) Is depicted in the idiomatic phrase "**make (cut) a covenant**" in which there is was a blood sacrifice as part of the covenant ritual.

Almost 100 years ago, **Andrew Murray** motivated by a waning understanding regarding the truth and power inherent in the Biblical truth of **covenant** wrote that...

One of the words of Scripture, which is almost going out of fashion, is the word **Covenant**'. There was a time when it was the keynote of the theology and the Christian life of strong and holy men. We know how deep in Scotland it entered into the national life and thought. It made mighty men, to whom God, and His promise and power were wonderfully real. It will be found still to bring strength and purpose to those who will take the trouble to bring all their life (**Ed**: and their marriages) under control of the inspiring assurance that they are living in **covenant** with a God who has sworn faithfully to fulfill in them every promise He has given. ([Two Covenants - Index - Andrew Murray](#))

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### [George Bush - Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 9](#)

**6. And to the men of Israel.** Heb. איש ישראל ish Yisra'el, the man or manhood of Israel; collect. sing. for plur. Not to the whole body of the people, but to the heads, elders, or princes of the congregation, v. 15-21, who in all important matters acted in the name of the rest. In this sense, as a term of eminence or dignity, the original איש ish, man, is often used.

**Make ye a league with us.** Heb. כרתו ברית kirtho berith, cut a covenant with us; on which see Notes on Gen. 15:10. The assertion that they came from a far country, is made as a reason for the Israelites complying with their request. From v. 24 it appears that they were well acquainted with the Divine mandate in regard to the destruction of the devoted nations, and they may have heard of the exception mentioned Deut. 20:15 in favor of the cities which were very far off, and which were not of the cities of these nations. Of this exception they intended to take advantage.

**Joshua 9:7** The men of Israel said to the Hivites, "Perhaps you are living within our land; how then shall we make a covenant with you?"

- **Hivites:** Jos 11:19 Ge 10:17 34:2 Ex 3:8
- **how shall:** Ex 23:31-33 34:12 Nu 33:52 De 7:2,3 20:16 Jdg 2:2
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ISRAELITES MANIFEST SOME DOUBTS

**The men of Israel said to the Hivites** - In Joshua 3:10 the Hivites are on the "To Be Exterminated" list! In Joshua 9:1 recall the "Hivites" heard but whether this refers to the Gibeonites addressed as "Hivites" is unclear.

**Hubbard** - Gibeon is, in fact, home to a specific subgroup of Canaan, the **Hivites** (v. 7; cf. Josh 9:1), and a kind of capital city to a confederation of four small towns (cf. the list in v. 17). Hivites apparently also lived around Shechem (Gen. 34:2) and in the land of Mizpah at the foot of Mount Hermon (Josh. 11:3). For details on these cities, see Boling, Joshua, 266–67; Butler, Joshua 103. ([Joshua NIV Application Commentary](#))

**Holman Bible Dictionary** on [Hivites](#) - A name that occurs twenty-five times in the Bible though not in texts outside the Bible. Hivites are found in Gibeon (Joshua 9:7; Joshua 11:19 ), Shechem (Genesis 34:2 ), below Hermon in the land of Mizpah (Joshua 11:3 ), and in the Lebanon mountains (Judges 3:3 ). Most frequently the name appears in the list of nations God would drive out of the land during the Israelite conquest (for example, Deuteronomy 7:1 ).

**Hivites** 25v - Ge 10:17; Ge 34:2; Gen. 36:2; Exod. 3:8; Exod. 3:17; Exod. 13:5; Exod. 23:23; Exod. 23:28; Exod. 33:2; Exod. 34:11; Deut. 7:1; Deut. 20:17; Jos. 3:10; Jos. 9:1; Jos. 9:7; Jos. 11:3; Jos. 11:19; Jos. 12:8; Jos. 24:11; Jdg. 3:3; Jdg. 3:5; 2 Sam. 24:7; 1 Ki. 9:20; 1 Chr. 1:15; 2 Chr. 8:7

[Utley](#) - **Hivites** seem to be identified with Horites (cf. Gen. 36:2, 20–21 and the Septuagint). We are not sure of their exact relationship to the Hurrians, but it is obvious that they are a non-Semitic group living within the Promised Land.

**Matthews** - The Gibeonites are **Hivites** (Josh 11:19), who also inhabit regions north (Josh 11:3; Gen. 34:2; Jdg. 3:3). The identity of the Hivites is difficult to determine since they are not known from extrabiblical sources, and the Greek Old Testament has "Horites" instead of Hivites. The Horites, who were perhaps the ancient Hurrians originating in Mesopotamia, resided in Mount Seir and were later absorbed by the Edomites (Deut. 2:12).([Joshua Teach the Text Commentary](#))

**Perhaps you are living within our land; how then shall we make a covenant with you** - The wary Israelites address the cagey Gibeonites! Israelites express doubt about the "far land," so directly confront them on this lie (but not that forcefully). The rationalization for their doubt is the repeated command by God regarding cutting covenant with pagans in the Promised land...

Exodus 23:32+ "You shall make no covenant with them or with their gods. (**TO MAKE A COVENANT WITH THE PAGANS WAS DANGEROUS FOR IT WOULD IN EFFECT BE AGREEING WITH THEIR IDOLATROUS GODS!**)

Exodus 34:12+ "**Watch yourself** (ISRAEL BLEW THIS COMMAND IN THIS CHAPTER!) that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a snare in your midst (**NOTE RATIONALE FOR MAKING NO COVENANT = ENSNARING, EXACTLY WHAT WAS ABOUT TO TRANSPIRE!**).

Numbers 33:55+ (**REASON CANAANITE ASSOCIATIONS WERE SPIRITUALLY DANGEROUS**) 'But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come about that those whom you let remain of them will become as pricks in your eyes and as thorns in your sides, and they will trouble you in the land in which you live.

Deuteronomy 7:2+ and when the LORD your God delivers them before you (AS HE HAD JERICHO AND AI) and you defeat them (AS THEY HAD DONE), then you shall (1) **utterly destroy them**. (2) You shall **make no covenant** with them and (3) **show no favor** to them. (**NOTE THE 3 THINGS REGARDING WHICH ISRAEL WAS TO HAVE A "NO COMPROMISE POLICY"!**)

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### [George Bush - Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 9](#)

**7. And the men of Israel.** Heb. וְאִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל ve-ish Yisra'el, and the man of Israel; i. e. the elders or princes, as above.

**Said unto the Hivites.** Heb. 'the Hivite.' This is the first intimation of the particular nation to which the Gibeonites belonged. In Josh. 11:19 it is stated still more expressly.

**Peradventure ye dwell among us.** Heb. בקרבי bekirbi, 'dwell in my midst.' They speak, in the confidence of faith, as if they were already actual possessors and occupants, old settled inhabitants, of the region which God had covenanted to give them.

**And how shall we make a league with you?** Seeing God has expressly forbidden our forming any such alliance, Ex. 23:31; 31; 34, 12; Deut. 7:2. They speak as acting entirely according to orders, and as having no discretion in the case; and by putting their answer into the form of a question do virtually appeal to the consciences, the innate sense of right, of these heathen people, for the propriety of their conduct in refusing. A contrary course even the Gibeonites themselves knew was not even to be thought of. Some duties are so obvious that we may unhesitatingly take it for granted that the consciences of the worst of men do really side with us in regard to them.

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### Joshua 9:1-16 Can I Trust You?

The Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. — 1 Chronicles 28:9

Today's Scripture: Joshua 9:1-16

According to lie-detection experts, "Our natural tendency is to trust people." However, not everyone is trustworthy all the time. Signs that someone may be lying include fidgeting, lack of eye contact, and noticeable pauses in speaking. Even with these clues, experts warn that it is still quite tough to tell deceivers from honest people.

Joshua needed to know if he could trust the Gibeonites. When they discovered that God wanted him to get rid of some neighboring nations (Josh. 9:24), they pretended to be from a faraway land. They arrived in worn-out tunics and patched sandals, claiming, "Our garments and our sandals have become old because of the very long journey" (v.13). The Israelites were suspicious (v.7), but they "did not ask counsel of the Lord" (v.14); and Joshua unwisely made a peace treaty with the deceivers.

Many want to gain our trust: salespeople, financial advisors, or estranged family members. If we wonder: "Can I trust you?" we shouldn't decide quickly, based only on what seems right to us. It's better to seek counsel from God's Word (Ps. 119:105), godly people (Prov. 11:14), and God Himself (James 1:5). Wisdom from above will help us decide who to trust. By: Jennifer Benson Schuldt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Protect us from deceivers, Lord,  
Who lie and plot to take  
Advantage of us and confuse  
Decisions we must make.  
—Sper

A desire for discernment is God's call to prayer.

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### Related Resources:

- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Hivites](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Hivites](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Hivites](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Hivites The](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Hivites](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Hivite](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Hivites](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Hivite](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Hivites](#)

**Joshua 9:8 But they said to Joshua, "We are your servants." Then Joshua said to them, "Who are you and where do you come from?"**

- Jos 9:11,23,25,27 Ge 9:25-26 De 20:11 1Ki 9:20,21 2Ki 10:5
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**GIBEONITES SUBMIT**

## TO SERVANTHOOD

**But they said to Joshua, "We are your servants ('ebed)."** - The Gibeonites don't even address the doubt that they might be living near the Israelites. They take a submissive approach. The Hebrew word for servant ('ebed) is the same word used in the repeated phrase "Moses the **servant** of the LORD." (Josh 1:1, 13, 8:31, 33, 11:12, 12:6, etc) and typically describes an inferior party of a treaty. The Gibeonites are in essence humbling themselves before Israel, submitting or surrendering their will to the will of the Israelites.

The fact that they were **servants** fulfilled Noah's prophecy....

So he said, "**Cursed be Canaan** (GIBEONITES - SEE Josh 9:23); A servant of servants He shall be to his brothers." 26 He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, The God of Shem (ANCESTOR OF JEWS); And **let Canaan be his servant.** (Ge 9:25-26)

**Keil and Delitzsch on we are your servants** - We are at thy service, which, according to the obsequious language common in the East, was nothing more than a phrase intended to secure the favour of Joshua, and by no means implied a readiness on their part to submit to the Israelites ... they wished for a friendly alliance, by which their territory and also full liberty would be secured to themselves

**Then Joshua said to them, "Who are you and where do you come from** - When he should have been asking the Deity, instead he asks the deceivers

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**Servant (05650)('ebed** from 'abad = work in any sense) means a slave or bondservant, and is a title of humility for someone in a position of lower authority or stature (whether in relationship to people or to God). Slavery in Israel amounted to indentured servitude. A fellow Israelite could not be held indefinitely against his will. In fact, his time of service was limited to 6 yr (Ex 21:2). The master could be punished if evil intent against the slave was proven (Ex 21:14) or if the slave died (Ex 21:20). These types of servants held a position of honor (Ge 24:2ff; 41:12, 15:2). **Summary** - 1) slave, servant 1a) slave, servant, man-servant 1b) subjects 1c) servants, worshippers (of God) 1d) servant (in special sense as prophets, Levites etc) 1e) servant (of Israel) 1f) servant (as form of address between equals)

**Uses of ebed in Joshua** - Jos. 1:1; Jos. 1:2; Jos. 1:7; Jos. 1:13; Jos. 1:15; Jos. 5:14; Jos. 8:31; Jos. 8:33; Jos. 9:8; Jos. 9:9; Jos. 9:11; Jos. 9:23; Jos. 9:24; Jos. 10:6; Jos. 11:12; Jos. 11:15; Jos. 12:6; Jos. 13:8; Jos. 14:7; Jos. 18:7; Jos. 22:2; Jos. 22:4; Jos. 22:5; Jos. 24:17; Jos. 24:29;

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### George Bush - Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 9

**8. We are thy servants.** We are willing to make any concessions; do but grant our request, and we will submit to any terms you may see fit to propose. Fix your own conditions, even should they require us to become your tributaries and bondmen for life. They clogged their purpose with no reservations. They surrendered themselves unconditionally to the mercy of Joshua and the princes of Israel. Liberty, property, military renown, were all merged in the paramount desire for preservation from the edge of the sword. They did not appeal to the avarice of Israel, as the Shechemites and Samaritans, in after days, appealed to that of Ishmael, the son of Nehemiah, Jer. 41:8, 'Slay us not, for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey;' but they made an unlimited offering of themselves, and of their possessions, to be dealt with as Joshua might choose. 'All that a man hath will he give for his life.' How worthless then should any sacrifice appear, compared with the life of the soul! One thing is needful; that secured, the rest is of but little value.

**Who are ye?** and from whence come ye? Probably this very intimation of such unconditional submission tended to excite the suspicions of Joshua, especially as they were so backward to name the country from whence they came.

**Joshua 9:9** They said to him, "Your servants have come from a very far country because of the fame of the LORD your God; for we have heard the report of Him and all that He did in Egypt,

- **from a very far country:** De 20:15
- **for:** 1Ki 8:41 2Ch 6:32,33 Ne 9:5 Ps 72:19 83:18 148:13 Isa 55:5 Ac 8:7
- **we have heard:** Jos 9:24 2:9,10 Ex 9:16 15:14 Nu 14:15 Isa 66:19
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE FAME OF YAHWEH

## BROUGHT FEAR ON GIBEONITES

**They said to him, "Your servants have come from a very far country because of the fame (reputation - NET) of the LORD your God** - They repeat the lie of being from a **very far country** when in fact they are only 25 miles away. Notice they do not answer Joshua's question (**Who are you and where do you come from?**) They continue to refer to themselves deferentially as "**your servants**." (which they do again in Josh 9:11 and Josh 9:24). They assiduously avoid stating their nationality or place of residence! They shift focus to **the fame of the LORD your God** which would have served to distract Joshua! **Fame** is literally "name" ([shem](#)) and in context refers Yahweh's renown or reputation (cf Dt. 10:8; 1Sa 17:45; 2Sa 6:18; 2Ki 2:24))

**For we have heard ([shama](#)) the report of Him and all that He did in Egypt**- Like Rahab they had seen the news clippings from the Canaanite Gazette some 40 years earlier and had not forgotten how a puny people group defeated a powerful Pharaoh. Dread of the Israelite God motivated them to disguise who they were, something Rahab did not do.

**Utley** - The confession of the Gibeonite representatives (which reflected the discussions of all of the leadership) is similar to Rahab's confession (cf. 2:9–11). It involves (1) an affirmation of YHWH's greatness and power (2) knowledge of Israel's supernatural victories with YHWH's presence and help (3) an element of fear and self preservation This is also true of Rahab and all conversions

**HCSB** on the declaration of the Gibeonites - The confession of the Gibeonites most closely resembles that of Rahab in Josh 2:9-11. Their expression of faith in God was based on God's historic acts of redemption toward His people. The Gibeonites mentioned the same acts of redemption as Rahab did—the work of God in Egypt and against Sihon and Og.

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### [George Bush - Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 9](#)

**9. Because of the name of the Lord thy God.** Because of what we have heard of that name; because of the reverence with which it has inspired us; and because we are convinced that it is above every name. They pretend to have been moved mainly by religious motives in taking this journey, which was in part doubtless true, but it was truth mixed with both falsehood and hypocrisy. This pretence, however, was one well calculated to prevail with the Israelites, for those who are guileless themselves are least suspicious of guile in others, and nothing wins more upon the simple-heartedness of good men than the appearance of piety and devotion where it was little or not at all expected.

**All that he did in Egypt.** They artfully confine themselves to the mention of events that happened a long time ago, avoiding any allusion to those of more recent occurrence, such as the dividing of Jordan and the destruction of Jericho and Ai, as if willing to have it believed that they lived so far off that the tidings of them had not yet reached their ears.

**Joshua 9:10 and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon and to Og king of Bashan who was at Ashtaroath.**

- **two kings:** Nu 21:24-35 De 2:30-37 3:1-7
- **Ashtaroath:** Jos 12:4 De 1:4 1Ch 6:71
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## REPORTS FROM EAST OF THE JORDAN ALSO CAUSED FEAR

**and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon and to Og king of Bashan who was at Ashtaroath** - Notice that the Gibeonites do not mention Israel's victories over Jericho and Ai which is a smart move, for had they mentioned these cities the Israelites would have been suspicious. It would have suggested that the Gibeonites lived closer than they claimed and were among the tribes that Israel was to utterly destroy and definitely not to cut covenant!

**Ashtaroath** in some contexts referred the Canaanite female goddess of fertility (Jdg 2:13, 10:6; 1Sa 7:3, 7:4, 12:10, 31:10; 1Ki 11:5,33; 2Ki 23:13) and in other contexts it referred to a city (Dt. 1:4; Jos. 9:10, 12:4, 13:12,13:31; 1Chr. 6:71). In this passage it refers to east of the Jordan, in the area that was allotted to Manasseh. Undoubtedly it was a city that was named for the fertility goddess (cf Ashterah and Astarte; see [Fertility Worship of the Ancient Near East](#)).

### Related Resources:

- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Ashtaroath](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Ashtaroath](#)

- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Ashtaroth](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Ashtaroth](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Ashtaroth](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Ashtaroth](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Ashtaroth](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Ashtaroth](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Ashtaroth](#)

Joshua 9:11 "So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, **Take** provisions in your hand for the journey, and **go** to meet them and say to them, "We are your servants; now then, **make** a covenant with us."

- **our elders:** Es 8:17
- **Take:** Jos 1:11 Mt 10:9,10 Lu 9:3
- **in your hand,** Ge 43:12
- **We are your servants:** Jos 9:8 Es 8:17
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GIBEONITES SPIN A LIE

**So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us** - Note there is not evidence that Gibeon was ruled by a king but by elders.

Saying, '**Take** provisions in your hand for the journey, and **go** to meet them and say to them, "We are your servants (['ebed](#)); now then, **make** ([karath](#)) a covenant ([berit/berith/beriyth](#)) with us' - They spin their tale. Their story is a total fabrication calculated to catch the Israelites and convince them to cut a covenant with them. **Take provisions** would be what was expected for a long journey. The declaration that they are their **servants** is a sly move to keep the Israelites from thinking they had any hostile intent.

**Mattoon** - They wanted Joshua to make an agreement quickly lest they be discovered. Be careful about making rash decisions before you have a chance to investigate a matter.

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### [George Bush - Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 9](#)

**11. Wherefore our elders.**—spake to us. Another evidence that they did not live under a king but a popular form of government.

**Go to meet them.** Had they deferred till the Israelites came to the gates of their cities, it would have been too late; their yielding themselves up would have been of no avail. So the way to avoid a judgment is to meet it by repentance. Sinners should imitate the example of these Gibeonites, and while God, who is coming to make war against them, 'is yet a great way off, should send an ambassage and desire conditions of peace.' We have as clear evidence of God's determination to destroy all the ungodly, as the Gibeonites had of his purpose to root out the Canaanites. Let us learn then of these heathens; learn to come to Jesus ere it be too late. Let us not stay till besieged by sickness and death. Nor let us come covering our design with falsehoods, but confessing the whole truth. In the old and tattered garments of our native vileness we may come. Christ, the true Joshua, will receive us and make with us a league of life and peace; but let us come saying at first as they did after their imposture was discovered, 'Behold, we are in thine hand: as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do.'

Joshua 9:12 "This our bread was warm when we took it for our provisions out of our houses on the day that we left to come to you; but now behold, it is dry and has become crumbled.

- **our bread:** Jos 9:4,5
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ANOTHER LIE "THICKENS THE PLOT!"

**This our bread was warm when we took it for our provisions out of our houses on the day that we left to come to you; but**



**now behold, it is dry and has become crumbled** - The lies of the Gibeonites [thicken the plot](#) (A situation or set of circumstances has become more complex, mysterious, interesting, or difficult to understand.)

**Joshua 9:13 "These wineskins which we filled were new, and behold, they are torn; and these our clothes and our sandals are worn out because of the very long journey."**

- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE RUSE CONTINUES WITH WORN OUT WINESKINS

**These wineskins which we filled were new, and behold, they are torn; and these our clothes and our sandals are worn out because of the very long journey** - Wineskins are made of leather and when new are flexible and can be distended with liquid. For wineskins to go from new to old would suggest a lengthy journey that may have taken weeks or months. The Gibeonites are extremely crafty!

**Joshua 9:14 So the men of Israel took some of their provisions, and did not ask for the counsel of the LORD.**

- **did not ask** Ex 28:30 Nu 27:21 Jdg 1:1 Jdg 20:18,28 1Sa 14:18,19 22:10 23:9-12 1Sa 30:7,8 2Sa 2:1 5:19 1Ch 10:13,14 Ezr 8:21 Pr 3:5,6 Isa 30:1,2 Jas 1:5
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Exodus 28:30 "You shall put in the breastpiece of judgment [the Urim and Thummim](#), and they shall be over Aaron's heart when he goes in before the LORD; and Aaron shall carry the judgment of the sons of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually.

Numbers 27:21+ (**THIS IS WHAT THEY SHOULD HAVE DONE!**) "Moreover, he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before the LORD. At his command they shall go out and at his command they shall come in, both he and the sons of Israel with him, even all the congregation."

Isaiah 30:1-2 (**HOW TRUE THIS WAS OF JOSHUA AND THE LEADERS**) **Woe to the rebellious children,** declares the LORD, **"Who execute a plan, but not Mine, And make an alliance, but not of My Spirit,** In order to add sin to sin; 2 Who proceed down to Egypt Without consulting Me, To take refuge in the safety of Pharaoh And to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!

James 4:2+ You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have **because you do not ask**.

## DECISIONS WITHOUT PRAYER CAN HAVE COSTLY CONSEQUENCES

How do you spell "trouble?" **"N-O P-R-A-Y-E-R!"** This is a timeless principle for every follower of Jesus! May the Spirit enable us to **pray** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) without ceasing (1Th 5:17+)

**So the men of Israel took some of their provisions** - NLT = "So the Israelites examined their food." NET Note adds "This probably means they tasted some of the food to make sure it was stale." Note that there is no mention of Joshua in these initial negotiations. Joshua and the men of Israel trusted in their sight, what they could hear, see and taste, walking by sight and not by faith or by prayer (cf 2Co 5:7).

Our prayerlessness destroys our discernment.  
-- Rod Mattoon

They needed to read James' NT exhortation

"But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.." (James 1:5+)

**And did not ask for the counsel of the LORD**- Literally the Hebrew says "but they did not ask the mouth of the LORD." In other words they did not seek the Lord's will and wisdom. One would think after the "Ai - Part 1" Debacle (Joshua 7:4-5), Joshua and the elders would have become dedicated prayer warriors to guide their physical wars. But sadly that was not to be the case. It is interesting that this passage is one of the few where failure to pray is actually called out.

**THOUGHT** - Beware and be wary of making big (even little) decisions without taking it to the Lord in prayer! The consequences can be serious and lasting (as in this case). We are all guilty of doing many things without consulting God, but this chapter is a good reminder to ramp up our prayers to our Father for His guidance and wisdom. Recall Paul's wise words to the saints at Corinth...

1 Corinthians 10:6, 11+ Now these things happened as **examples** for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.....11 Now these things happened to them as an **example**, and they were written for our **instruction**, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Rash decisions and commitments can have untoward consequences.

"Take it to the Lord in prayer" is a good motto!

As **Wiersbe** quips "The leaders of Israel took the "scientific approach" instead of the "spiritual approach." They depended on their own senses, examined the "facts," discussed the matter, and agreed in their conclusion. It was all very logical and convincing, but it was all wrong. They had made the same mistake at Ai (chap. 7) and hadn't yet learned to wait on the Lord and seek His direction....Like Joshua and the nation of Israel, God's people today are living in enemy territory and must constantly exercise caution. When you believe the enemy instead of seeking the mind of the Lord, you can expect to get into trouble." ([Be Strong - Joshua: Putting God's Power to Work in Your Life](#))

**Spurgeon** - Joshua thought the matter so clear that he had no need to seek divine direction. It is usually in such cases that we err.

**Hubbard** - Suddenly, a sense of foreboding overshadows the story, for the last time Israel followed human sense the disastrous defeat at Ai resulted (Joshua 7:1-5). Is history repeating itself here? Will the treachery of Gibeon put Israel at risk as did the treachery of Achan? Or might Yahweh's providence actually be behind the conversation? ([Joshua NIV Application Commentary](#))

**Rod Mattoon** - Our **prayerlessness destroys our discernment**. The neglect of prayer suggested pride in Israel's judgment and it gets them into trouble. The I Don't Need God Syndrome ruins our life and leads to bad decisions. We can learn from Joshua's mistakes and failures. Pray about your decisions and for God's direction in your life! Be alert of decisions made under pressure. Be leery of decisions made without consulting the Lord. Learn to wait on the Lord for direction. He won't let an opportunity go by that He wants us to have. If you are called upon to act and have no time to pray, don't act. If you are called upon to go a certain direction and can't wait for the peace of God, don't move. Dare to wait upon God. Those who wait upon the Lord shall never be ashamed. God will give direction through His Word, the Holy Spirit, prayer, godly counsel, and parents. ([Treasures From Joshua](#))

**Mattoon** adds an interesting thought - If Joshua had thought things through, he would have realized the deception. A genuine delegation would bring more supplies. They would have brought a bigger group for security purposes. The servants would have baked fresh bread. Proper attire would have been brought for the best impression they could make. The bread showed age but the other food did not because they ate the other victuals.

**Madvig** comments that "'Ironically, of all people, Joshua failed to inquire of the Lord. Joshua had gone up the mountain of revelation with Moses (Ex 24:13-14); and in his preparation for leadership, he had been trained in the use of the Urim and Thummim for determining the will of God (Nu 27:18-21). How easy it is even in the service of the Lord to take God's guidance and blessing for granted! ([The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**George Bush** writes that "no proposed course of conduct can be so clear to a Christian as to excuse him from the duty of seeking direction from above."

**Ralph Davis** - How Israel needed wisdom, yet how Israel neglected wisdom! Whether verse 14a alludes to participating in a covenant meal is not so crucial. We catch the main concern when we hear verse 14b bemoaning Israel's folly: but the mouth of Yahweh they did not ask (the mouth of Yahweh carries the emphasis in the Hebrew text). Joshua and his men should have inquired of Yahweh through Eleazar the priest (see Nu 27:21). Yahweh's direction was available but was ignored. Now it was not that Joshua and the elders did not ask the right questions; they were suspicious at just the right points (v8). It was not that they were sloppy in their investigation but that they were alone in their decision. It wasn't that they didn't think but that they didn't pray. They did not have because they did not ask (James 4:2). This episode raises pertinent questions for God's people. Do we need the guidance of God

only when we are in doubt? Do we not need to be careful when we begin to think, There is no need to consult the Lord on this matter it's quite clear No proposed course of conduct can be so clear to a Christian as to excuse him from the duty of seeking direction from above. Not that you have to ask the Lord whether you should get a haircut at four o'clock. The Scriptures do not require wilting in the everlasting arms, only leaning on them. But we must beware of that subtle unbelief that assumes I have this under control. Joshua 9 warns God's people against such cocky independence. In the context of our various trials we need wisdom to know how to function in those trials and circumstances; it is available from a giving God, and we are to ask for it (James 1:5). Our need is no different from Israel's. We need not only the power of God to overwhelm our obvious enemies but also the wisdom of God to detect our subtle enemies. Unfortunately, the church too often craves God's power while it ignores God's wisdom. (Focus on the Bible: Joshua)

**Disciple's Study Bible-** This is one of the few cases in the Bible where failure to pray is pointed out. Not inquiring of God's will leads to wrong decisions which have lasting effects in our lives and in the lives of others. 1Chr 10:13-14 Isa 30:1-2

**SCOFIELD** - Though Israel had found that obedience was necessary for victory at Jericho and Ai, they had yet to learn their need of divine guidance at every step. The Gibeonites brought only trouble to Israel (Josh 10:4 - 15; 2 Sam 21:1 - 14). Furthermore, the presence of the Gibeonites across the center of Canaan tended to isolate the tribes in the north from those in the south, led to sectional feeling, and ultimately had its share in the dividing of the kingdom in Rehoboam's day (1 Ki 12).

**Utlley** has an interesting note - "so the men of Israel took some of their provisions, and did not ask the counsel of the LORD" In the MT the phrase "of Israel" is missing. The implication is that we are not sure which men took these provisions. Some say it was the Gibeonites, who showed the Israelites their provisions to prove their point. Others say it was the men of Israel who took these provisions. Possibly, the reason that Israel took these provisions was (1) to eat the bread, which would have signified a covenant (e.g., Gen. 31:54) or (2) to sample them (NJB) to see if they were old. It is interesting that they based their decision on physical evidence without asking the Lord (usually by Urim and Thummim, cf. Num. 27:21; also note the VERB is a technical term for counseling with YHWH, cf. Isa. 30:2; 65:).

**Matthew Henry** - The Israelites, having examined the provisions of the Gibeonites, hastily concluded that they confirmed their account. We make more haste than good speed, when we stay not to take God with us, and do not consult him by the word and prayer. The fraud was soon found out. A lying tongue is but for a moment. Had the oath been in itself unlawful, it would not have been binding; for no obligation can render it our duty to commit a sin. But it was not unlawful to spare the Canaanites who submitted, and left idolatry, desiring only that their lives might be spared. A citizen of Zion swears to his own hurt, and changes not, Psalm 15:4. Joshua and the princes, when they found that they had been deceived, did not apply to Eleazar the high priest to be freed from their engagement, much less did they pretend that no faith is to be kept with those to whom they had sworn. Let this convince us how we ought to keep our promises, and make good our bargains; and what conscience we ought to make of our words.

**David Holwick:** Human wisdom has its limits.

1. The Jews are suspicious.
  - a) They suspect the Gibeonites might live nearby. Joshua 9:7
  - b) They ask for more details. Joshua 9:8
  - c) They check out the moldy provisions. Joshua 9:14
2. Our wisdom is superficial.
  - a) We tend to look on outward appearances.
  - b) Do you look at life that way? "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." Prov 14:12
3. They should have sought God. Joshua 9:14

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### **George Bush - Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 9**

**14. And the men took of their victuals.** Chal. 'And the men assented to their words, and consulted not the oracle of God.' By the 'men' are meant those who are elsewhere termed the princes of the congregation, v. 18, 19. They took the victuals into their hands not to eat of them, but to satisfy themselves of the truth of their statement. Some suppose the meaning to be that they ate together with the Gibeonites in token of friendship, as is still common in the East, but this is less likely, especially as the words may be rendered, 'they received the men by reason of their victuals.'

**And asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord.** That is, instead of asking as they ought to have done at the lips of the high priest, whose duty it was to inquire through the medium of the Urim and Thummim, Ex. 28:30; Num. 27:21; 1 Sam. 30:7, 8. It is by no means certain, if they had sought the Divine direction, that they would have been commanded to reject the suit of the Gibeonites and show them no mercy. The probability is, that upon any of the devoted nations voluntarily coming forward, professing repentance,

renouncing idolatry, and embracing the true religion, the Israelites would have been authorized by God to spare their lives. See on ch. 11:19. But the circumstance is mentioned here as a severe reflection upon the princes of Israel for neglect of duty, for rashness, credulity, and impolicy. They rushed precipitately into an alliance which they had no right to form without the express sanction of Jehovah, and their 'lips became a snare to their souls.' In like manner how often do men now involve themselves in dangers and difficulties, and hedge up their own way with troubles, because they ask not counsel at the mouth of the Lord. They listen with a yielding ear to plausible representations, hurry forward in their chosen schemes, and enter heedlessly into doubtful connexions without weighing the consequences. But sooner or later we shall find that no business or interest truly prospers in which we engage without the counsel and approbation of Heaven, and with shame and sorrow shall seek to him to retrieve the evils which our rashness has procured. Let it then be engraven upon the tablets of our hearts, that no proposed course of conduct can be so clear to a Christian as to excuse him from the duty of seeking direction from above.

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### **Joshua 9:14-15 Moldy Bread**

They did not ask counsel of the Lord. So Joshua made peace with them. — Joshua 9:14-15

Today's Scripture: Joshua 9:1-16

Joshua had just won two astounding victories, destroying both Jericho and Ai through the power of the Lord. The Gibeonites knew they would be next, so in fear they resorted to trickery to save their lives. They put on old clothes, took moldy bread with them, and made their way to the camp of Israel.

Joshua and the elders were completely taken in by the ruse. Without consulting the Lord, they entered into a covenant with the enemies of Israel whom God had told them to destroy.

I see several spiritual lessons in this account. If we put human reasoning before divine guidance, walking by sight rather than by faith, we are sure to err! We should dread the "moldy bread" of Satan's deceptive strategies much more than the "lion's roar" of his frontal attacks. Even though we have met the more obvious assaults of the enemy with victories like those of Jericho and Ai, overconfidence can lead us into a trap. If we are governed by the authority of the Word and put our total dependence in the power of the Spirit, we will not be easily caught in Satan's web.

Remember to "put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11). And watch out for moldy bread! By: Henry G. Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Leave no unguarded place,  
No weakness of the soul,  
Take every virtue, every grace,  
And fortify the whole.  
—Wesley

To avoid sin's tragedy learn Satan's strategy.

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### **Related Resource:**

- [Why is a multitude of counselors valuable \(Proverbs 15:22\)?](#)

**Joshua 9:15 Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live; and the leaders of the congregation swore an oath to them.**

- **made peace:** Jos 2:12-19 6:22-25 11:19 De 20:10,11 2Sa 21:2 Jer 18:7,8
- **and the:** 2Sa 21:2
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **Related Passages:**

2 Corinthians 6:14+ **Do not be bound** together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?

## JOSHUA "SIGNS" A PEACE TREATY

**Joshua made peace with them** - God did sanction this act in Dt 20:10-11+, but the stipulation (which Joshua missed) was that the nation had to be distant from the Israelites. Obviously God's reasoning was that distance would serve as a buffer between the practices of the pagans which otherwise would defile the Israelites if they were living nearby.

The command regarding covenant with the pagans was clear

“You shall **make no covenant** with them or with their gods. (Ex 23:32+)

**And made ([karath](#)) a covenant ([berit/berith/beriyth](#)) with them, to let them live; and the leaders of the congregation swore an oath to them** - Remember that in the ancient world they did not have notaries to notarize and authenticate agreements but had to rely on "cutting covenant." While the details are not stated, it is likely they cut an animal into two halves and the parties entering the covenant walked between the two pieces of the animal symbolizing that their fate would be the same as the animal should they fail to keep their part of the covenant. In short, cutting covenant was the most solemn and binding transaction one could carry out. Sadly Joshua is duped into this solemn arrangement. In this case the leaders of Israel "sealed" the deal with **an oath** to the Gibeonites. They could not renege for they believed such agreements were irreversible much like Isaac's agreement with Jacob which Isaac kept despite Esau's protests and Jacob's clear deceitfulness (Ge 27:34–37).

**THOUGHT - Leaders** is a keyword in this section (6x in 4v - Josh 9:15 Josh 9:18 Josh 9:19 Josh 9:21). What is the clear lesson, when leaders do not pray, "look out" because very likely trouble is not far behind their prayerlessness! Woe!

**Utley** "**swore an oath to them**" For the Israelites to swear an oath in YHWH's name, even if under false pretenses, was a binding obligation (cf. vv. 19, 20; Gen. 25:27–34; 27:30–40; Lev. 19:12; Num. 30:2; Deut. 23:21–23). Notice that Joshua's covenant had to be ratified by the leaders of the congregation.

**Stephen Grant** - On this occasion the agreement was entered into unwittingly, as a result of deception. It is a lesson to all believers to be on their guard, lest they be permanently weakened in their spiritual conflict with the devil, through a compromising agreement that cannot be undone. ([What the Bible Teaches - Joshua Judges Ruth](#))

**ILLUSTRATION** - After the rest of his team was killed in a fierce battle in Afghanistan, Navy Seal Marcus Luttrell was rescued and protected by a small group of Pashtun villagers in Afghanistan, who protected him until he could be brought to safety by friendly forces. Luttrell's story is found both in his eyewitness account of the battle, Lone Survivor, and in a movie of the same name. Because of their choice to help Luttrell, the people of this village have been the target of reprisals by the Taliban. The villagers saved and protected Luttrell out of obedience to the ethnic-Pashtun tradition known as Pashtunwali, an ancient code that obliges Pashtuns to help and protect anyone in need, friend or enemy. They recognized the danger this decision would bring to their village, but they have never regretted their decision.<sup>9</sup> Do we take our obligations and oaths as seriously? Are we living faithfully to the oaths we took on our wedding day? Are we living faithfully to the oaths with which we joined our church? Are we willing to lay our lives and possessions on the line in order to stand firm for our obligations and for the Lord? ([Joshua Teach the Text Commentary](#))

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### [George Bush - Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 9](#)

**15. Joshua made peace with them, &c.** Agreed to receive them into a friendly connexion with the Israelites, and to respect their lives and property. It has been doubted by some whether the Israelites were bound by an oath that had been obtained from them by means of a gross imposition. But it is plain that they thought themselves solemnly bound by it, and were apprehensive that the wrath of God would fall upon them if they broke it. That they were right in this, and that their adherence to their oath was acceptable to God, is to be inferred, (1) From his expressing no displeasure at the time, and from the subsequent tenor of his dealings towards them, which was kind, and favorable, not implying rebuke, nor savoring of disapprobation. (2) From the fact that he long afterwards severely avenged the wrong done by Saul to the Gibeonites in violation of this treaty. Let us learn from this the binding nature of an oath. It lays a bond upon the soul from which we cannot be released. Even when an oath has been taken which it is unlawful to keep, still we are not to consider that it is a light matter to dispense with it, or that we stand in the sight of God just where we did before it was taken. We have in fact laid upon ourselves a load of obligation which he only can take off. It is he only who, in view of our unfeigned repentance for having taken it, can relieve the conscience of the awful burden which rests upon it. How much more then ought we to feel the force of those compacts and promises which are wholly lawful and right! How religiously and scrupulously should every promise be performed!

**Joshua 9:16** It came about at the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they were neighbors and that they were living within their land.

- **that they heard:** Pr 12:19
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## TOO LITTLE TOO LATE!

**It came about at the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard(*shama'*) that they were neighbors and that they were living within their land** - They heard, but it was as we often say "**too little, too late!**" The text does not say how Israel **heard** (*shama'*) this shocking news that they were actually neighbors with the deceivers with whom they had entered into a binding covenant.

**THOUGHT** - There are times we must live with our mistakes, accepting the fact that we cannot correct something we did wrong by making another wrong decision. Two wrongs never make a right!

**Rod Mattoon** - Three days pass and the deception is discovered. Sooner or later our lies come out into the open. You can't cover up or hide sin. The person who covers his sin will not prosper. God wants us to confess them, forsake them, and go forward. Joshua's error was discovered in three days but he would have to live with his mistake for the rest of his life and also future generations of Israel. Their mistake drove them to prayer. The Gibeonites were a constant reminder to them of their failure to pray. Joshua does not make this mistake again. Israel still went forward. God is able to overrule our sin and turn our curses into blessings. This is what He did with Gibeon and Israel. ([Treasures From Joshua](#))

**Hubbard** quips "The treaty is only three days old, and Israel learns that their new "foreign" partners are in fact Gibeonites, a people on the *herem* (*charam*) hit-list" ([Joshua NIV Application Commentary](#))

**Grant** - It is ironic that the Gibeonites had come to the children of Israel because of what they had heard; it was now the turn of the children of Israel to approach the Gibeonites on the same basis. ([What the Bible Teaches - Joshua Judges Ruth](#))

**Wiersbe** - Joshua and his associates teach us an important lesson: If you make a mistake, admit it; and then make your mistake work for you! The leaders put the Gibeonites to work hauling water and fuel for the service of the tabernacle, where both water and wood were used in abundance. In later years the Gibeonites were called the Nethinim ("given ones" = given to assist the priests) and labored as servants in the temple (1 Chron. 9:2; Ezra 2:43, 58; Neh. 3:26). In Joshua 10, we shall see that God overruled Joshua's mistake and used it to give him a signal victory over five kings at one time....There's no evidence in Scripture that the descendants of the Gibeonites created any problems for the Jews. It's likely that their service in the tabernacle, and later in the temple, influenced them to abandon their idols and worship the God of Israel. The fact that over 500 hundred Nephilim returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonian Captivity (Ezra 2:43-58; 8:20) suggests that they were devoted to the Lord and His house. ([Be Strong - Joshua: Putting God's Power to Work in Your Life](#))

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### [George Bush - Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 9](#)

**16. That they dwelt among them.** Heb. בקרבו *bekirbo*, dwelt in his midst, collect. sing., the very thing which Joshua feared, and of which he hinted his suspicion. v. 7. 'They that suffer themselves to be deceived by the wiles of Satan, will soon be undeceived to their confusion, and will find that to be near, even at the door, which they imagined was very far off.' Henry.

**Joshua 9:17** Then the sons of Israel set out and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon and Chephirah and Beeroth and Kiriath-jearim.

- **Gibeon:** Jos 10:2 18:25-28 1Ch 21:29 2Ch 1:3 Ezr 2:25 Ne 7:29
- **Kirjath-jearim:** Jos 15:9,60 18:14 1Sa 7:1 1Ch 13:5,6 2Ch 1:4
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE GIBEONITE CONFEDERATION

**Then the sons of Israel set out and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon and Chephirah and**



**Beeroth and Kiriath-jearim** (Baalath in Josh 15:9) - This sounds like the sons of Israel had thoughts of taking vengeance on the Gibeonites and the cities they were confederated with. Presumably all four cities were under the protection of the peace treaty the Gibeonites had cut with Israel. Notice again there is never a mention of a king over Gibeon or the confederacy. This was part of the inheritance given to the tribe of Benjamin (Joshua 18:25–26).

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### [George Bush - Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 9](#)

**17. And the children of Israel journeyed and came unto their cities, &c** This might better be rendered, 'For when the children of Israel journeyed, they came unto their cities.' According to the present translation they learnt the fraud practised upon them some days before they arrived at their cities. The contrary supposition seems the most probable, and we presume the 17th verse is intended to inform us how they became possessed of the information mentioned in the 16th.

**Joshua 9:18 The sons of Israel did not strike them because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD the God of Israel. And the whole congregation grumbled against the leaders.**

- **sworn:** 2Sa 21:7 Ps 15:4 Ec 5:2,6 9:2
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **ISRAEL HAD SWORN NOT TO STRIKE THEM**

**The sons of Israel did not strike them because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD the God of Israel** - The leaders who had entered the covenant had to honor their oaths and therefore could not harm the Canaanites in the covenant. Note also that Israel's leaders failing to consult the Lord produced discord in the congregation.

**THOUGHT** - Dear pastors, elders, church leaders, may the Spirit spur you on to pray, pray, pray!

Name **the LORD the God of Israel** occurs 66x in 66v - Exod. 5:1; Exod. 32:27; Jos. 7:13; Jos. 7:19; Jos. 7:20; Jos. 8:30; Jos. 9:18; Jos. 9:19; Jos. 10:40; Jos. 10:42; Jos. 13:14; Jos. 13:33; Jos. 22:24; Jos. 24:2; Jos. 24:23; Jdg. 4:6; Jdg. 5:3; Jdg. 5:5; Jdg. 6:8; Jdg. 11:21; Jdg. 11:23; Ruth 2:12; 1 Sam. 10:18; 1 Sam. 14:41; 1 Sam. 20:12; 1 Ki. 1:30; 1 Ki. 1:48; 1 Ki. 8:15; 1 Ki. 8:17; 1 Ki. 8:20; 1 Ki. 8:23; 1 Ki. 8:25; 1 Ki. 11:9; 1 Ki. 11:31; 1 Ki. 17:1; 2 Ki. 9:6; 2 Ki. 10:31; 2 Ki. 14:25; 2 Ki. 18:5; 2 Ki. 19:15; 2 Ki. 19:20; 2 Ki. 21:12; 1 Chr. 16:36; 1 Chr. 28:4; 2 Chr. 2:12; 2 Chr. 6:4; 2 Chr. 6:7; 2 Chr. 6:10; 2 Chr. 6:14; 2 Chr. 6:16; 2 Chr. 6:17; 2 Chr. 34:23; Ezr. 1:3; Ps. 41:13; Ps. 106:48; Isa. 17:6; Isa. 24:15; Isa. 37:21; Isa. 45:3; Jer. 11:3; Jer. 13:12; Jer. 25:15; Jer. 30:2; Jer. 42:9; Jer. 45:2; Mal. 2:16

**And the whole congregation grumbled (lun) against the leaders** - The people of Israel did the "[deja vu](#)" two step, taking the approach to the leaders that their ancestors had so frequently done with Moses in the wilderness (e.g., Ex 15:24). In fairness to them, in this case they did have some justification, because their leaders had failed to seek the counsel of God. The Hebrew word for **grumbled (lun)** is translated in Greek by the verb [diagogguzo](#) (**d i a** = intensifies meaning of [gogguzo](#) = grumble), an [onomatopoeic](#) word that means to express dissatisfaction complain, grumble (aloud), mutter.

**Grumble** in English dictionaries - a loud low dull continuous noise, a complaint uttered in a low and indistinct tone, to make a low, growling or rumbling noise, like a hungry stomach or certain animals, to make complaining remarks or noises under one's breath, to utter or emit low dull rumbling sounds, to utter (complaints) in a nagging or discontented way, to complain about something in a bad-tempered way.

Below is a brief review of some of the highlights (better "*lowlights*") of **Israel's desert grumbings** (cf Paul's strong warning in 1 Cor 10:10,11, 6+)...

Exodus 15:24+ So the people **grumbled at Moses**, saying, "What shall we drink?"

Exodus 16:2+ The whole congregation of the sons of **Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron** in the wilderness.

Numbers 14:2+ All the sons of **Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron**; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!

Numbers 16:11+ "Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the LORD; but as for Aaron, who is he that you grumble against him?"

**Guzik** - The rulers of Israel were wise in not allowing one sin (wiping out the Gibeonites) follow another sin (making the oath without seeking the LORD), especially in light of public pressure to do otherwise. ([Joshua 9 Commentary](#))

**Madvig** - "The 'oath' was made in the name of the Lord. Consequently fidelity was owed, not to the Gibeonites, but to the Lord. The form of the oath called on the Lord to punish the Israelites if they failed to keep their agreement (cf. vv. 18–20). This explains why Israel felt bound to the treaty even though it had been made under false pretenses (cf. Gen 27:35; Ps 15:4)." ([The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**Utley** "and the whole congregation grumbled against the leaders" The basic attitude of the people of God toward her leaders had not changed from the wilderness wandering period (Niphal IMPERFECT). Here, however, they are afraid of the consequences of breaking YHWH's covenant (cf. v. 24; Deuteronomy 7, 27–28).

**Believer's Study Bible** - Although the covenant was made under false pretenses, it was inviolable (cf. 2 Sam. 21:1; Ezek. 17:16–20; Ps. 15:1–4).

**Henry Morris** - Even though the Gibeonites had deceived them, the Israelites felt bound by their oath, sworn in the name of the Lord God of Israel (see Leviticus 19:12).

**Robert Robb**: As a result of this impetuous decision that was based solely on carnal reasoning they in effect not only allowed an enemy battalion that should have been destroyed of the hook but also allowed the enemy into their camp. It was a mistake, a foolish mistake, and Joshua and the people had to live with the consequences of their mistake and all because they didn't seek guidance from God on the matter. They took a hasty decision about an important matter, based solely upon their own powers of human reasoning and without seeking clear guidance from God, and they got it wrong. If only they had taken the time to bring the matter before God. . .

**Robert Massey**: Here is a little story that shows how dangerous compromise is. Winter was coming on and a hunter went out into the forest to shoot a bear out of which he planned to make a warm coat. By and by he saw a bear coming toward him and raised his gun and took aim. "Wait," said the bear, "why do you want to shoot me?" "Because I am cold," said the hunter. "But I am hungry," the bear replied, "so maybe we can reach an agreement, or a compromise." In the end, the hunter was well enveloped with the bear's fur and the bear had eaten his dinner. We always lose out when we try to compromise with the devil and sin (Heb 3:13, Heb 11:25). It will consume us in the end.

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**Grumbled** (murmured) ([03885](#)) **lun** means "to murmur." In the Niphal, the verb carries the thought of being "obstinate" or "stubborn," from the idea of "remaining" or "persisting" in a negative sense. Hence, there is a resultant definition of "grumbling" or "complaining." The contexts of the occurrences of **lun** in Exodus cover the period between the parting of the Red Sea and the receiving of the Ten Commandments. Even after witnessing the plagues and the destruction of Pharaoh's army, the former slaves "murmured" against Moses because they were without water for three days and because the **water found at Marah was bitter** (Ex 15:24). Two and one-half months after their exodus from bondage, the people again grumbled against Moses and Aaron, because food was scarce. They wished that they had never left Egypt, saying, "We sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted" (Ex 16:3NIV). God heard their murmuring and sent manna, but Moses rebuked the people, saying, "Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord" (Ex 16:8). The pattern of unbelief and murmuring thus continued. Having arrived at the southern border of Canaan, Moses sent twelve men to spy out the Promised Land. In spite of the miraculous guidance, provision, protection and presence of the Lord, unbelief prevailed. After ten of the spies gave a negative report, the Israelites shouted and wept all night, again grumbling against Moses and Aaron, even threatening to stone both of them (Nu 14:1ff, 10). God's response was more severe. Because Moses and Aaron interceded for the Lord to be merciful with the rebellious people, God forgave them; however, no one who participated in this rebellion entered the Promised Land. God referred to those who murmured as "an evil congregation" (Nu 14:27). ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

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### [George Bush - Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 9](#)

**18. The congregation murmured.** Principally, no doubt, because they were deprived of the spoils of the Gibeonites. Though they did submit to the restraints laid upon them by this league, yet it was with an ill grace; they were vexed to have their hands thus tied by their rulers, and vented their disaffection in the most unequivocal manner. Some of them, however, might have honestly resented what they deemed a flagrant breach of the Divine commandment. There is often, nay generally, more conscience and principle among the common class of the people, than among those placed in authority over them, although this remark is not to be construed to the disparagement of Joshua.

**Joshua 9:19** But all the leaders said to the whole congregation, "We have sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we cannot touch them.

- **We have:** Jos 9:20 Ec 8:2 9:2 Jer 4:2
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **GIBEONITES ARE UNTOUCHABLE BECAUSE THE COVENANT IS INVIOABLE**

**But all the leaders said to the whole congregation, "We have sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we cannot touch them** - The leaders showed integrity in holding firm on the covenant peace treaty and would not violate it because they had sworn **by the LORD, the God of Israel**

John Calvin said, "The sacred name of God is more precious than the wealth of a whole world."

**Guzik** - It is a mark of godliness to hold to an oath, even when it is difficult. But he honors those who fear the LORD; he who swears to his own hurt and does not change. (Psalm 15:4) It is refreshing to see that going back on their word was not even really a possibility for the rulers of Israel. This was a simple matter, not even up for debate: we may not touch them ([Joshua 9 Commentary](#))

**Rod Mattoon** - The princes were men of their word. There use to be a day when a man's word was his bond, but not any more. Christians keep your word! Keep your word! Keep your word! If you tell someone you are going to do something, then do it! If you are to be at a place at a certain time, then be on time! When we don't keep our word, we lose credibility. God's people need to be people of integrity. They need to be people who keep their word. Christians should be people that can be counted upon, not people who create frustration for others from their apathy and sloppiness. ([Treasures From Joshua](#))

**Spurgeon** - An oath is never to be lightly treated, nor a promise either, indeed the Christian man's word is his bond, and is everyway as binding as an oath.

**Stephen Grant** - The swearing of an oath in the Old Testament was a serious step and had significant consequences. It was the unbreakable word of a person, which invoked the authority of the name by whom the oath was sworn. To swear an oath by the name of the Lord God was to swear by the greatest of all authority. All the authority and character of the Lord was invoked by the oath and the consequences of breaking it were accepted as coming from the Lord: "When God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself" (Heb 6:13). In the Old Testament the Lord condemned those who swore falsely (Zech 5:3-4; Mal 3:5). In the New Testament James instructs the believer, "Swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation" (James 5:12). The Christian should not have to call upon a greater authority to lend weight to his word. As a believer his word should be true. ([What the Bible Teaches - Joshua Judges Ruth](#))

**Utley** "we cannot touch them" This is a Qal IMPERFECT NEGATIVE and a Qal INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT used in a metaphorical sense for harm (cf. Ge 26:11; 2 Sa 14:10; 1 Chr 16:22; Ps 105:15).

### **Related Resources:**

- [What does it mean to let your yes be yes and your no be no? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does the Bible say about keeping your vows / oaths? | GotQuestions.org](#)- **Excerpt** - Because of the greatness of the name of God, any use of God's name that brings dishonor on Him or on His character is taking His name in vain. The third of the [Ten Commandments](#) forbids taking or using the Lord's name in an irreverent manner because that would indicate a lack of respect for God Himself. A person who misuses God's name will not be held "guiltless" by the Lord (Exodus 20:7). In the Old Testament, bringing dishonor on God's name was done by failing to perform an oath or vow taken in His name (Leviticus 19:12). The man who used God's name to legitimize his oath, and then broke his promise, would indicate his lack of reverence for God as well as a lack of fear of His holy retribution. It was essentially the same as denying God's existence. For believers, however, there is no need to use God's name to legitimize an oath as we are not to [take oaths](#) in the first place, letting our "yes be yes" and our "no be no" (Matthew 5:33-37).
- [Is saying 'OMG' or words like geez still taking the Lord's name in vain? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How should Christians respond when people use God's name as a curse word? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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### **[George Bush - Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 9](#)**

**19. We have sworn unto them.** Chal. 'We have sworn to them by the Word of the Lord.' They plead neither the lawfulness nor the

prudence of the oath, but only its obligation when taken. Although they had been deceived in the business, and the covenant had been made on a supposition which was afterwards proved to be false, yet having sworn by Jehovah, they did not feel at liberty to break their compact. It has been suggested that Joshua might have taken advantage of their own words to annul the treaty, and said to them, 'Ye are come, according to your own statement, from a far country; but these cities are near at hand; their inhabitants therefore are not the people with whom we have covenanted, and ye have nothing to do to interfere with or prevent their destruction.' But he would not resort to any shifts or quibbles to elude the oath. Like the good man of the Psalmist, though he had sworn to his own hurt, he would not change. Having made a solemn compact, he would abide by it at all events. If he had now broken his covenant the whole people of Canaan would have represented him as a violator of his engagements; it was therefore better to fulfil his agreement, however hasty and ill-advised, than by departing from it to give occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme. His answer takes it for granted that the sentiments of the people accorded with his own as to the solemn obligations now resting upon them.

**May not touch them.** May not hurt or injure them. For this sense of the word see Gen. 26:11; Ruth 2:9; Job 1:11; Ps. 105:15; Zech. 2:8. Chal. 'May not give them damage.'

**We will even let them live.** Chal. 'We will make them to survive.'

**Joshua 9:20 "This we will do to them, even let them live, so that wrath will not be upon us for the oath which we swore to them."**

- **wrath:** 2Sa 21:1-6 2Ch 36:13 Pr 20:25 Eze 17:12-21 Zec 5:3,4 Mal 3:5 Ro 1:31 1Ti 1:10
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **DANGER OF BREAKING COVENANT - GOD'S WRATH**

**This we will do to them, even let them live, so that wrath will not be upon us for the oath which we swore to them** They leaders had a healthy fear and respect for Jehovah. They knew that God would stand behind this covenant and to break it would guarantee the outpouring of His wrath. Years later King Saul broke his vow to the Gibeonites and God punished the entire nation with a famine.

Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David sought the presence of the LORD. And the LORD said, "**It is for Saul and his bloody house, because he put the Gibeonites to death.**" 2 So the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them (now the Gibeonites were not of the sons of Israel but of the remnant of the Amorites, and **the sons of Israel made a covenant with them**, but Saul had sought to kill them in his zeal for the sons of Israel and Judah). 3 Thus David said to the Gibeonites, "What should I do for you? And how can I make atonement that you may bless the inheritance of the LORD?" 4 Then the Gibeonites said to him, "We have no concern of silver or gold with Saul or his house, nor is it for us to put any man to death in Israel." And he said, "I will do for you whatever you say." 5 So they said to the king, "The man who consumed us and who planned to exterminate us from remaining within any border of Israel, 6 **let seven men from his sons be given to us, and we will hang them before the LORD in Gibeah of Saul**, the chosen of the LORD." And the king said, "I will give them." (2Sa 21:1-6)

### **Related Resource:**

- [Was the killing of Saul's descendants a just response to Saul's killing of the Gibeonites? | GotQuestions.org](#)

And so not only was there a 3 year famine on Israel, there was the death of seven sons related to Saul to atone for Saul's breaking the covenant made by Joshua several hundred years before! God has a long memory when it comes to solemn covenants and oaths!

**Matthews** - If the leaders rescind the agreement, they transgress the third commandment (Ex 20:7), subjecting the camp to judgment. Their compromise appeases the congregation (Josh 9:26). ([Joshua Teach the Text Commentary](#))

**Uitley** adds that "Oathtaking was a very serious matter to the Jews (cf. Lev. 27 and 2Sa 1:1–14 for a very specific reference to this account) because it involved a promise in YHWH's name (cf. v. 9).

**Joshua 9:21** The leaders said to them, "Let them live." So they became hewers of wood and drawers of water for the whole congregation, just as the leaders had spoken to them.

- **let them:** Jos 9:23,27 De 29:11 2Ch 2:17,18
- **as the leaders:** Jos 9:15
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Deuteronomy 29:11 **(THIS PASSAGE IMPLIES ALIENS IN ISRAEL HAD CERTAIN ROLES TO FILL)** your little ones, your wives, and the **alien who is within your camps**, from the one who chops your wood to the one who draws your water,

Deuteronomy 20:11 "If it agrees to make peace with you and opens to you, then all the people who are found in it shall become your forced labor and shall serve you.

### DECISION: LET THEM LIVE!

**The leaders said to them, "Let them live."** - The leaders in Israel stood firm and would not let the people avenge the deception of the Gibeonites in making the covenant. A covenant under false pretenses was still a solemn, binding agreement before Yahweh. The leaders held fast.

**So they became hewers of wood and drawers of water for the whole congregation, just as the leaders had spoken to them-**

While Israel could not kill the Gibeonites they could justifiably make them their servants performing menial labor which would give Israel some degree of control over them. Of course they were still pagan idolaters and could potentially be a spiritual snare for the Israelites (which is why God wanted to utterly destroy them in the first place.) This reminds me of the old saying that used to be on our refrigerator door - "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade!"

**Matthews** - The penalty for the Gibeonites is subservience to the Israelite community (cf. 9:27); however, as resident aliens, they are accepted participants in the covenant (Deut. 29:11).([Joshua Teach the Text Commentary](#))

**Utley** They became servants (the phrase, "hewers of wood and drawers of water" can be metaphorical of menial service [i.e., Deut. 29:11] or literal because this is exactly the tasks the Gibeonites performed) of all the tribes and for the tabernacle (cf. v. 27).

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**21. And the princes said unto them.** Rather 'said concerning them,' as the original for 'unto' often signifies. See on Gen. 20:2.

**Let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water.** Let them be taken at their word, v. 8, and made public servants, to be employed in the most menial offices and drudgeries which the service of the sanctuary might require. The expression is proverbial for the lowest and most servile employments of whatever kind, as appears from Deut. 29:10, 11, where Moses thus recites the order of the different classes of the people, 'Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood, unto the drawer of thy water.'

**Unto all the congregation.** To all the congregation considered as one great worshipping body, whose religious rites were concentrated at one place, and not to all the several families in their private capacity, as residing in their tents. They were to be made public and not private servants.

**According as the princes had promised them.** Rather, Heb. 'had purposed, ordained, fixed upon concerning them;' that is, in a previous consultation. The whole verse, however, as it stands in the original, is exceedingly intricate, and commentators are very much divided as to its true construction. It would seem from the next verse that nothing had as yet been said directly to the Gibeonites.

**Joshua 9:22** Then Joshua called for them and spoke to them, saying, "Why have you deceived us, saying, 'We are very far from you,' when you are living within our land?"

- **Why have you deceived us:** Ge 3:13,14 27:35,36,41-45 29:25 2Co 11:3
- **We are:** Jos 9:6,9,10
- **when you are living within our land:** Jos 9:16
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JOSHUA ACKNOWLEDGES HE HAS BEEN HOODWINKED

**Hoodwinked** ([note](#)) means to deceive by false appearances.

**Then Joshua called for them and spoke to them, saying, "Why have you deceived us, saying, 'We are very far from you,' when you are living within our land** - One has to be surprised by Joshua's question. He knew that the fate of the Gibeonites was divinely sanctioned genocide.

**Utley deceived"** This VERB'S (Piel PERFECT) basic meaning is "to deal treacherously with deceit." It is used in

1. Gen. 29:25—Laban and Jacob
2. Josh. 9:22—Gibeonites and Joshua
3. 1 Sam. 28:12—Saul and the witch of Endor
4. 2 Sam. 19:26—Shimei and Mephibosheth
5. Prov. 26:19—man and neighbor

**Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary** - Verses 22-27. The Gibeonites do not justify their lie, but plead that they did it to save their lives. And the fear was not merely of the power of man; one might flee from that to the Divine protection; but of the power of God himself, which they saw engaged against them. Joshua sentences them to perpetual bondage. They must be servants, but any work becomes honourable, when it is done for the house of the Lord, and the offices thereof. Let us, in like manner, submit to our Lord Jesus, saying, We are in thy hand, do unto us as seemeth good and right unto thee, only save our souls; and we shall not repent it. If He appoints us to bear his cross, and serve him, that shall be neither shame nor grief to us, while the meanest office in God's service will entitle us to a dwelling in the house of the Lord all the days of our life. And in coming to the Saviour, we do not proceed upon a peradventure. We are invited to draw nigh, and are assured that him that cometh to Him, he will in nowise cast out. Even those things which sound harsh, and are humbling, and form sharp trials of our sincerity, will prove of real advantage.

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**22. Wherefore have ye beguiled us?** The mode of their treatment having been previously resolved upon in a council of the elders or princes of the nation, Joshua now summons them into his presence and acquaints them with the result. 'He does not load them with ill names, does not give them any harsh, provoking language, does not call them, as they deserved to be called, base liars, but only asks them, "Why have ye beguiled us?" Under the greatest provocations it is our wisdom and duty to keep our temper and to bridle our passion; a just cause needs not anger to defend it, and a bad one is made never the better by it.' Henry.

**Joshua 9:23 "Now therefore, you are cursed, and you shall never cease being slaves, both hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God."**

- Ge 9:25,26 Lev 27:28,29
- **cursed:** This may refer to the original curse pronounced against the descendants of Canaan: both of them seem to have implied nothing else than perpetual slavery. The Gibeonites were brought, no doubt, under tribute; performed the meanest offices for the Israelites; being in the same condition as the servile class of Hindoos, called the {Chetrees;} had their national importance annihilated, and yet were never permitted to incorporate themselves with the Israelites.
- **none of you be freed:** Heb. not be cut off from you
- **hewers:** In the East, collecting wood for fuel, and carrying water, are the peculiar employment of females. The Arab women of Barbary, and the daughters of the Turcomans, are thus employed. Hence Mr. Harmer concludes, that the bitterness of the doom of the Gibeonites does not seem to have consisted in the labouriousness of the service enjoined them, but its disgracing them from the characteristic employment of men, that of bearing arms, and condemning them and their posterity for ever to the employment of females. Jos 9:21,27
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GIBEONITES CURSED



## TO BE SLAVES

**Now therefore, you** (plural) **are cursed** ([arar](#); Lxx = [epikataratos](#)), **and you shall never cease being slaves, both hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God** - Note the curse is neverending! While they were cursed, they were servants in duties related to the **house of God** (the tabernacle at this time). As noted earlier, this in a sense fulfilled Ge 9:25-26

So he said, “**Cursed be Canaan**; A servant of servants He shall be to his brothers.” 26 He also said, “Blessed be the LORD, The God of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant. (Genesis 9:25-26)

**Campbell** - So the very thing the Gibeonites hoped to attain they lost. They desperately wanted to remain free men; in the end they became slaves. But the curse became a blessing. It was on behalf of the Gibeonites that God worked a great miracle (cf. Joshua 10:10–14)(**ED: CF Romans 8:28!!!**). Later the tabernacle was pitched at **Gibeon** (2 Chr 1:3); still later some **Gibeonites helped Nehemiah rebuild Jerusalem’s wall** (Neh. 3:7). **Such is the grace of God. He is still able to turn a curse into a blessing.** Though it is usually true that the natural consequences of sin must run their course, the grace of God can not only forgive but also overrule mistakes and often bring blessings out of sins and failures. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

**Hubbard** - the curse destines the Hivites to support the worship of Yahweh with a steady supply of wood for sacrificial fires and water for ritual washing. That is the penalty they bear for their perfidy, but again it beats the alternative! From another angle, to work at the sanctuary represents something of a promotion—from great distance from Yahweh to close proximity to his presence. Surely, there are blessings to be had from working up close and personal with him (cf. the case of Obed-Edom [2Sa 6:11]). ([Joshua NIV Application Commentary](#))

**Utley** **both hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God’** From the immediate context it is uncertain whether these people would be servants of the whole congregation (cf. v. 21), or simply of the sanctuary (cf. v. 23). It does become obvious that they will become the lowest servants of the community. Some have related this account to Noah’s cursing of Canaan (cf. Gen. 9:25), but the Hivites have no relationship at all to Ham. It is also interesting that this same group may have become the “Nethinim” (Ezra 2:43; 7:7, 24; 8:20); they have foreign names and are assigned the most menial tasks in the Temple. One way to try to minimize the influence of these Canaanites was to put them in the service of the tabernacle where they would be exposed to the worship of YHWH. These tasks were usually assigned to women (e.g., 2 Sam. 3:29; Jer. 50:37), therefore, they may have functioned as a means of humiliation, as well as servitude (cf. Deut. 29:11).

**Spurgeon** - The poor Gibeonites were glad to escape even on these terms. If the Lord Jesus will but spare us, we also shall be only too glad to hew wood or draw water for him, and for his people.) The passage shews us that the desire of self-preservation makes men use their wits, and it leads us to wonder how it is that so few persons appear to use common judgment and ordinary care as to the salvation of their souls.

**Grant on house of my God** - They would do the menial manual tasks that were necessary for the functioning of the camp of Israel and the maintenance of the house of the God of Israel. At this point in the history of Israel this would be the tabernacle and then the house of the Lord that was present in Shiloh (18:1; 1 Sam 1:7) until Solomon established the temple in Jerusalem. ([What the Bible Teaches - Joshua Judges Ruth](#))

**Believer’s Study Bible** - By this means the Gibeonites were placed in an environment where they would be exposed to the knowledge of God. God’s judgment in this case was an act of grace by which many were brought into a relationship with the Lord (cf. 11:19, 20; 21:17; 1 Kin. 3:4, 5; 1 Chr. 12:4; 21:29; 2 Chr. 1:5; Jer. 28:1; Neh. 3:7; 7:25).

**Matthews** - God exhibits mercy to those who honor his name and his word (Exod. 33:19). Both the Gibeonites and the Israelites sin, but the Lord does not inflict retribution. The invocation of a divine curse may imply the Lord’s judgment, but there is no direct condemnation in the narrative. The narrative has no word spoken by the Lord directly. His silence suggests his absence, but Joshua appears to stand in for the divine voice, since his actions recall God’s response to the serpent’s deceit in the garden. Joshua interrogates the Gibeonites (Josh 9:22), as God does Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:9–13), and he inflicts a curse (Josh 9:23), as God does against the serpent (Gen. 3:14). The Mosaic command to destroy all the inhabitants is evidently not absolute (Deut. 7:2), as the exceptions of Rahab and Gibeon show. **What differentiates Rahab and Gibeon from the rebellious nations is their humility toward Israel.** The Canaanite kings are hostile enemies, seeking to destroy Israel. Furthermore, the Gibeonites ultimately exhibit in this incident the character required of Israel itself. The narratives compare the Gibeonites to the Israelites largely in a better light. Although the Israelites reunited into one community at the recitation of the covenant (Josh 8:30–35), they now splinter between the leadership and the community (cf. Josh 1:17). But the Gibeonites are united, expressing the one mind of their four cities (Josh 9:11). The Gibeonites’ deception results from their acceptance of Moses’s words (Josh 9:24). The Gibeonites function more cohesively around God’s word than do the Israelites themselves. Nevertheless, there are solemn consequences. The Gibeonites become slaves to the Israelites, and the Israelites because of their new covenant with Gibeon subsequently face a formidable coalition of enemies (10:1–5). ([Joshua Teach the Text Commentary](#))

**Cursed** (0779) **arar** which refers principally to exclamations, or imprecations, uttered by one person against another. It bears the idea of people reviling one another. **Gilbrant** adds it "carries the idea of being bound or banned from something. Therefore, God's **original curse to Satan** in Ge 3:14, 17, "cursed are you above all cattle and cursed is the ground for your sake," means you are banned from all the other animals and condemned to be the soil on your account. Likewise, God's curse upon Cain, "you are cursed from the earth" (Gen. 4:11, 12), means Cain is banned from enjoying the productivity of the earth's soil. Furthermore, the curse pronounced upon Jezebel by Elijah (1 Ki. 21:23) barred her from a proper burial (2 Ki. 9:34). Balaam was hired by King Balak to curse the Israelites (Num. 22:6ff). Although his efforts were unsuccessful, Balak desired Balaam to disable the Israelite forces. The Israelites, however, eventually brought the curse of God upon themselves through idolatry and its accompanying immorality (Num. 25:1-9). Most of the curse sayings are within proclamations of laws (Deut. 27:15-26; 28:16-19) or pronouncements of threats (Jer. 11:3; 17:5). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Only used twice in Joshua - Joshua 6:26, Joshua 9:23

#### [George Bush - Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 9](#)

**23. Now therefore ye are cursed.** Ye shall be subjected to a severe calamity. Ye shall pay a bitter penalty for your deception. Ye shall subject yourselves and your children to the curse of a degrading bondage, and thereby shall the ancient denunciation against your ancestor be fulfilled;—'Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be.' Had they dealt fairly and ingenuously with Israel, their lives would no doubt have been spared on more favorable and honorable terms. As it was, however, it cannot be doubted that their punishment was overruled and turned to a signal blessing to them. They were hereby brought into a situation where they would naturally acquire the knowledge of the true God and of his revealed will, were made to dwell in the courts of the Lord's house, were honored with near access to him in the services of the sanctuary, and thus placed in circumstances eminently favorable to their spiritual and eternal interests. If David could say, 'I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness,' surely these poor benighted heathen may well have esteemed their lot a blessing, hard and toilsome and humble as it was. They are supposed to have been afterwards called Nethinim, i. e. persons given, dedicated, consecrated to the service of the sanctuary and the assistance of the Levites. See v. 27; 1 Chron. 9:2.

**There shall none of you be freed from being bondmen.** Heb. לא יכרת מכם עבד *lō yikkārēth mikkem ʾōbēd*, there shall not be cut off from you a servant; i. e. the line of servitude shall be kept up; a sentence by which the bondage imposed upon them should be entailed upon their posterity. Mr. Harmer undertakes to show from Shaw and other travellers, that these were the employments of females in the East, and that consequently the bitterness of their doom consisted not so much in being subjected to a laborious service, as in being degraded from the characteristic employments of men to those of women. There may be some force in this remark as applied to domestic civil life, but here the case is different; it is certain that these menial services, if they had not been performed by the Gibeonites, would have devolved upon the Israelites, and that too upon the men, and not the women of the congregation, for only males were employed about the sanctuary.

**For the house of my God.** Chal. 'For the sanctuary of my God,' spoken primarily of the tabernacle, which was at that time the seat of worship, but with an ulterior reference to the temple which should be afterwards erected.

**Joshua 9:24** So they answered Joshua and said, "Because it was certainly told your servants that the LORD your God had commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land before you; therefore we feared greatly for our lives because of you, and have done this thing.

- **the LORD your God:** Ex 23:31-33 Nu 33:51,52,55,56 De 7:1,2,23,24 20:15-17
- **we feared greatly for our lives:** Ex 15:14-16 Job 2:4 Mt 10:28
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passage:**

Exodus 23:27 "I will send My terror ahead of you, and throw into confusion all the people among whom you come, and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you.

### **THE GIBEONITES' TRUTHFUL RESPONSE**

**So they answered Joshua and said, "Because it was certainly told your servants that the LORD your God had commanded**

**His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy ([shamad](#)) all the inhabitants of the land before you; therefore we feared greatly for our lives because of you, and have done this thing** - Now the Gibeonites give a well reasoned, probably truthful answer to Joshua. In a sense they almost seem to express belief in the Abrahamic Covenant (See [comment by Guzik](#))

**Woudstra** - "Servants should be taken in the most pejorative sense here. As woodcutters and water carriers the Gibeonites will perform only menial services (see Deut. 29:11)." ([The Book of Joshua The New International Commentary](#))

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**Destroy** (demolish, exterminate) ([08045](#)) **shamad** is a verb meaning "be destroyed, decimated, perished, overthrown, exterminated, i.e., pertaining to being in a totally ruined state, which can include death of a person or extinction of an entity." The destruction depicted by **shamad** usually involves a rather sudden catastrophe such as warfare or a mass killing. For example in Dt 6:15 God says He will "**wipe**" Israel off the face of the earth, so great was His anger against them! It is worth noting that the last OT use of **shamad** is one of the greatest for the nation of Israel, the prophet **Zechariah** recording "And in that day (WHAT DAY - Read Zechariah 12:1-14<sup>+</sup>) I (JEHOVAH/YAHWEH HIMSELF) will set about to destroy all (HOW MANY?) the nations that come against Jerusalem." (Zechariah 12:9<sup>+</sup>) **Anti-Semitism** will be obliterated! The prophet Isaiah gives a prophecy that should startle every person who is not a believer in the Messiah - "**Behold**, the day of the LORD is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it." (Isa. 13:9<sup>+</sup>)

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### [George Bush - Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 9](#)

**24. And they answered, &c.** The words in which they make reply are well weighed. It is a delicate and very cogent appeal to the humanity and piety of Israel. They offer the best excuse for themselves which their conduct would admit. They attempt not to justify their prevarication, but in effect beg pardon for it; pleading that it was purely to save their lives that they had recourse to it. No one who feels the force of the law of self-preservation but must make great allowances for them, especially as they were not prompted by the fear of man, but of God himself, whom nothing can resist.

**Joshua 9:25 "Now behold, we are in your hands; do as it seems good and right in your sight to do to us."**

- **we are:** Ge 16:6 Jdg 8:15 2Sa 24:14 Isa 47:6 Jer 26:14 38:5
- **as it seems:** Jdg 10:15 1Sa 3:18 Mt 11:26
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **GIBEONITES SUBMIT TO JOSHUA**

**Now behold, we are in your hands; do as it seems good and right in your sight to do to us-** To be in Joshua's hands means to be under his (and all the Israelites') power, authority and supervision.

One is reminded of the words of David in Psalm 84...

For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand outside. I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly. (Psalm 84:10-11)

**Utley** "good and right" These two NOUNS) are synonymous in this context. The Gibeonites are throwing themselves on the covenant promises made in YHWH's name and Joshua's sense of appropriate mercy.

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### [George Bush - Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 9](#)

**25. We are in thine hand.** Chal. 'We are delivered into thine hand.' In thy power, at thy disposal, having nothing more to say for ourselves.

**As it seemeth good and right unto thee—do.** Whatever justice and mercy dictate to thee to do unto us, that perform. They expect justice because they deceived the Israelites; yet they hope for mercy because they were driven to this expedient for fear of losing their lives. This willing submission of the Gibeonites may be improved by us. They accounted it no great matter to cede their cities, and to spend their days in servitude, seeing God had spared their lives. And shall we think much of sacrificing any temporal interests, or of performing any self-denying duties, when we have reason to think that God has spared the life of our souls? If we look for mercy at the hands of Jesus, all that we have and are must be the Lord's. We must be willing to be anything and do

anything that he appoints for us.

**Joshua 9:26 Thus he did to them, and delivered them from the hands of the sons of Israel, and they did not kill them.**

- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SNATCHED FROM JAWS OF DEATH

**Thus he did to them, and delivered them from the hands of the sons of Israel, and they did not kill them-** Joshua whose name means Jehovah is salvation, came to the rescue of the Gibeonites!

**Guzik** - The Gibeonites were not thrilled so much at being wood cutters and water carriers, but in knowing they could be those things for the LORD—and in knowing where they would be if they were not serving the LORD. Do we have the same heart? Can we rejoice in any kind of service, if we see we are in the presence of the LORD as we do it? ([Joshua 9 Commentary](#))

**Delivered** (Lxx - [exaireo](#))([05337](#)) [natsal](#) means primarily to deliver, often by the power of one entity overcoming another. Deliverance from the hand or power (Ge 32:11, Hos 2:10). Idols and human might cannot deliver (1 Sa 12:21, Ps 33:16). **Vine** - Essentially the word means "to remove or seek to remove someone from a burden, oppression, or danger."

**Uses of natsal in Joshua** - Jos. 2:13; Jos. 9:26; Jos. 22:31; Jos. 24:10;

### [George Bush - Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 9](#)

**26. And so did he unto them.** That is, he dealt with them according to justice and mercy, he delivered them out of the hands of the people, who would fain have slain them, and yet he doomed them to servitude as a just retribution for their offence.

**Joshua 9:27 But Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, to this day, in the place which He would choose.**

- **made them:** Jos 9:21,23 1Ch 9:2 Ezr 2:43 8:20 Ne 7:60 11:3, Nethinim
- **in the place:** Jos 18:1 De 12:5 16:2,6,16 2Ch 6:6 Ps 78:68 132:13,14 Isa 14:32
- [Joshua 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GIBEONITES SERVING AT THE ALTAR OF YAHWEH

**But Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, to this day, in the place which He would choose** - This is an amazing end to the story that began with deception and lying, that the perpetrators would actually serve before Jehovah.

**HCSB** - The deliverance of a people such as the Gibeonites is not unique to Joshua. In the ancient world, many peoples offered themselves as slaves rather than face extinction at the hands of a superior army.

**Matthews** - Although as Hivites the Gibeonites should be devoted to destruction (Deut. 20:17), they escape when Joshua devotes them to the sanctuary (cf. Lev. 27:18). Wood and water are essentials for the daily operations of the sacrifices (Lev. 1:7, 9). ([Joshua Teach the Text Commentary](#))

**Utley** **“in the place which He would choose”** This is a Deuteronomic phrase which refers to the place that God would designate for the location of His tabernacle and later the Temple (cf. Exod. 20:24; Deut. 12:5, 11, 14, 18, 21, 26; 14:23; 26:2). This later came to be Jerusalem (cf. 1 Kgs. 8:16, 44, 48; 11:13, 32, 36).

**Rod Mattoon** - The Gibeonites would live and be servants of Israel. They were cursed because they took the course of the serpent. They would be drawers of water and hewers of wood for the house of God. The Gibeonites were servants called the Nethinim (given ones). They were assistants to the priests. They would be close to spiritual matters on a regular basis. They caused the altar flame to burn and were used to purify the worship of God's people. Did the Gibeonites ever defect or cause problems for Israel? No, they

never defected to their enemies or created any problems. In later years when the Jews went after false gods, the Gibeonites still served at the altar. They were devoted to the Lord and the Temple. After the Babylonian captivity, 500 return to Jerusalem. Four hundred years after this covenant, David erects the tabernacle in Gibeon. One of David's mighty men was from Gibeon. The Gibeonites helped Nehemiah rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. When Solomon was king, he offered a burnt offering at Gibeon. God took a blunder and made it into a blessing. Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds. The Gibeonites were liars, deceivers, and under the judgment and wrath of God. So are we beloved. Their hope was in a covenant. Our hope is in God's covenant. We are sinners and go to a greater Joshua, Jesus Christ for deliverance. We are dependent upon His covenant of salvation by grace through faith in Him. ([Treasures From Joshua](#))

**Bob Marcaurelle** - the Gibeonites, like Rahab, became an honored and helpful part of Israel. There is not one Bible word about Gibeon pulling Israel away from God. Gibeon became the home of Aaron the High Priest (Josh. 21:17). David stored the Tabernacle there (1 Ch. 16:39; 21:29). One of David's mighty men was from there (1 Ch. 11:31). The Gibeonites helped Nehemiah rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 3:7). Gibeon was the land of giant men—the Nephilim—like Goliath and more than 500 of them went back to rebuild Israel after the Babylonian Captivity (Ezr. 2:43–58; 8:20). But closer at hand, they inadvertently helped Israel win the southern campaign and brought down what is perhaps the greatest miracle in the Old Testament.

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### [George Bush - Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 9](#)

**27. And Joshua made them, &c.** Heb. יתנם yittenâm, gave them, whence the epithet נתינים nethinim, given, Lat. dediti or deodati, applied to them Ezra 2:43, 58; 8:20; Neh. 3:26. See on v. 21.

**In the place which he should choose.** That is, the place which he should choose for his sanctuary, whether it were the tabernacle or temple; for here were their services more especially, though not exclusively, to be bestowed. They were not to keep possession of their cities, for we afterwards find that three of them fell to the lot of Benjamin, and one to that of Judah; nor were they to be at their own disposal, but were most of them probably dispersed through the cities of the priests and Levites, and came up with them in their courses to serve at the altar, out of the revenues of which they were doubtless maintained.

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**Guzik** ([Joshua 9 Commentary](#)) has an interesting comment (BUT BE A BEREAN AS THERE IS NO DIRECT STATEMENT IN SCRIPTURE THAT GIBEONITES BECAME GENUINE BELIEVERS) - The Gibeonites find salvation in the God of Israel much like Rahab did in Joshua 2. Both Rahab and the Gibeonites came to the God of Israel as sinners, Rahab as a harlot, and the Gibeonites as liars. Both Rahab and the Gibeonites were willing at risk to forsake their former associations and be counted among God's people.. The risk of Gibeon is explained in Joshua 10:4, where they are a target of attack for their dealings with Israel. Both Rahab and the Gibeonites, after they found salvation through the God of Israel, had a rich history. **The Gibeonites after Joshua 9**

1. The Gibeonites became servants at the tabernacle, just as Joshua had commanded.
2. Gibeon becomes a priestly city; the Ark of the Covenant stayed at Gibeon often in the days of David and Solomon (1Chr 16:39–40 and 1Chr 21:29).
3. At least one of David's mighty men was a Gibeonite (1Chr 12:4).
4. God spoke to Solomon at Gibeon (1Ki3:4).
5. Gibeonites were among those who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem with Nehemiah (Neh 3:7 and Neh 7:25).
6. Prophets such as Hananiah the son of Azur came from Gibeon (Jer 28:1).
7. **These are examples of the great things God can do with people who are sinners, but come to Him in humility and love.**

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### **Ray Scott: LESSONS:**

1. Your Enemy Will Surprise You - Satan is a master of disguise – 2 Corinthians 11:14, 2:11
2. Don't Jump To Conclusions - That's how rumors get started – John 8:44 - Don't assume everything you hear is the truth.
3. Don't Be Flattered Into Sin Or Disobedience - Flattery is used to manipulate or control y ou ... to get you to let your guard down.
4. Seek Counsel From God – 9:14 - Appearances are deceiving – John 7:24 - What is obvious isn't always best – Proverbs 14:12
5. Bad Decisions Have Consequences – 9:16-21 - God expected them to honor an oath made in His Name. - They had to live with the consequences of a bad decision.
6. Deception Will Ultimately Be Exposed – 9:16 - Lies will find their way back home – Proverbs 12:19
7. Bad Actions Have Consequences  
<> For the Gibeonites – 9:22-23, 25-27

<> For Joshua – 9:18 -

Take your problem with someone to that someone first – Matthew 18:15 -

When someone admits their mistake & repents, forgive them and go on.