

Joshua Chapter 9: Failure to Seek the Lord's Counsel, Treaty with the Gibeonites

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Introduction

How often do you consult God? Do you ever ask yourself, "I wonder what God would do in this situation?" If you believe that the Bible speaks to all areas of life, do you live that way? One area into which God speaks has to do with your honor and integrity, your word. Are you a man/woman of your word or do you constantly break your promises? Is it serious if you don't do as you say? What does God think about this? Joshua 9 gives us an insight into God's thinking on the matter.

Israel's History Prior to Joshua Chapter 1

- God frees Israel from Egypt (Ex. 12:29-41).
- God leads Israel to the Promise Land, but they refuse to enter (Num. 13:1-14:12).
- Israel is cursed to wander in the wilderness for 40yrs (Num. 14:20-35).
- Moses is not allowed to enter the Promise Land (Num. 20:5-12, 24; 27:14).
- Joshua is appointed by God to replace Moses (Num. 27:15-23; Deut. 31:14).
- God delivers two Amorite kings into Israel's hands. (Num. 21:21-35; Deut 2:24-3:10).
- God brings Israel back to the Promise Land (Num. 33:40-56).

Joshua Chapter 1: *Victory before Entering the Promise Land*

Joshua Chapter 2: *The Two Spies Confirm God's Word about the Promise Land*

Joshua Chapter 3 & 4: *The Parting of the Jordan River, Israel's Crossing, and the Stones of Remembrance*

Joshua Chapter 5: *A Tuning Point in Israel's History*

Joshua Chapter 6: *The Lord Delivers Jericho into Israel's Hands*

Joshua Chapter 7: *Israel's Sin and their Subsequent Defeat at Ai*

Joshua Chapter 8: *Israel's Victory Over Ai*

Israel had experienced a terrible defeat against Ai because of Achan's sin. But Israel addressed his sin and the Lord gave them victory over Ai the second time they fought. After their great victory, the nation re-ratifies the Mosaic Law at Mt. Gerizim and Ebal, especially by reading the curses and blessings contained in the Law, which revealed the blessings for obedience and the severe punishment for disobedience—both of which they recently experienced: they were punished for Achan's sin and blessed after dealing with Achan's sin (they defeated Ai).

Joshua Chapter 9: *Failure to Seek the Lord's Counsel, Treaty with the Gibeonites*

9:1-2, these two verses introduce the wars that unfold in chs. 10-11. After hearing of Israel's victories over Jericho and Ai, all the kings of the Land (hill-country, lowlands, and coastlands) unite to attack Israel. Note that the fear of 2:11 and 5:1 is gone. Why?

9:3-6, while the kings are gathering to fight, the Gibeonites attempt to deceive Israel by pretending to be from a far country. Why? Because they know that those inside the Land are marked for dead, 9:24 (Deut. 20:16-18). They may've also known that Israel could not make treaties with nations inside the Land, Ex. 23:32-33; Deut. 7:1-4, but could with nations outside the Land, Deut. 20:10-15.

9:7-8, the Gibeonites were Hivites, one of the nations gathering to fight Israel, 9:1-2. So, not all Hivites wanted war with Israel. However, Israel is shy about making a covenant with them because of God's warnings, Ex. 23:32-33; Deut 7:1-4.

9:9-13, one might think that the Gibeonites want to worship Israel's God, but their real motive is survival, 9:24. Thus, they don't mention Ai or Jericho in order to convince Israel that they're from a far country and prove to them that they're from outside the Land.

9:14-15, Israel buys the Gibeonites' story and makes a covenant with them that includes: (1) the Gibeonites are allowed to live, 9:15, and (2) the Gibeonites will be their slaves (wood cutters and water carriers 9:21), which also means that Israel's obligated to protect them, 10:6-7 (cf. 2 Sam. 21:2). The key to Joshua chapter 9 is in verse 14: "**but they did not ask counsel of the Lord.**" It is also the key to the Christian life. When we don't inquire of the Lord, we will reap what we sow.

9:16-21, Israel discovers the Gibeonites' lie, but they cannot go back on their word; they must fulfill the oath they swore by the Lord, Lev. 19:12. If Israel attacks the Gibeonites, they will face God's wrath, 9:20 (2 Sam. 21:1-2).

Why does God take oaths so seriously? Because lying destroys trust in the thing promised and the one making the promise. Thus, your word is your honor; if you break it, you will suffer the consequences.

9:22-23, because they lied to Joshua, the Gibeonites are cursed to perform these menial tasks (Deut. 29:10-11) in perpetuity.

9:24-25, the Gibeonites knew of God's command to exterminate the people of the Land. Thus, they sought to save themselves via a treaty with Israel.

9:26-27, for lying, Joshua makes the Gibeonites slaves (wood cutters and water carriers) not only for the Temple, but for all the people of Israel.

Conclusion: Israel failed to consult God before an important decision, a mistake that cost them for generations to come; there was even a 3yr famine because of it, 2 Sam. 21:1-2. How often do you consult God? Do you believe that He has advice for every facet of your life? One area in particular He speaks to in Joshua 9 is your veracity. Will you be a man/woman of your word? Or will you reap the consequences of your lies?