



The Treaty with Gibeon

FAMILIES IN TRUTH

Joshua 9 - 10



The people of Gibeon were afraid of the Israelites. They had heard about the mighty works of God. The Gibeonites deceived Joshua and the Israelites because Joshua and his leaders trusted their eyes and ears instead of first asking God what they should do. They were wrong to trust our own judgment, instead of seeking God's wisdom. We should always ask for God's wisdom.

Day #1: The Gibeonites

The Bible tells us that when the kings of the other cities in Canaan heard how the Israelites destroyed Ai and Jericho, they came together to make war against Joshua and the Israelites. However, there was one city that did not want to go to war with them. It was the city of Gibeon. It was not far from Ai. Gibeon was a large city - larger than Ai, and the men of Gibeon were great fighters (Joshua 10:2). Still, the Gibeonites were afraid of the Israelites, because they had heard that God had instructed His people to destroy all the people in the land (Joshua 9:24).

God had given very specific instructions to the Israelites about going to war. As for the cities OUTSIDE the land of Canaan, God said to offer them peace. If the people accepted the peace treaty, those people would become slaves of the Israelites (Deuteronomy 20:11, 12, 15). This peace offering was ONLY for the cities far, far away.

As far as all the cities INSIDE the land of Canaan, God said, *"Kill everything in those cities that breathes. Completely destroy them. Wipe out the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. That's what the Lord your God commanded you to do. **If you don't destroy them, they'll teach you to follow all of the things the Lord hates. He hates the way they worship their gods. If you do those things, you will sin against the Lord your God.**"* - Deuteronomy 20:16b-18

God knows everything. He knows the hearts of all people. And He had a very good reason to command that His people kill all of the people inside of the land of Canaan. The people who lived in Canaan worshipped false gods. He knew that if the Israelites lived in Canaan **along side** those who worshipped false gods, soon the Israelites would follow the false gods also. The Israelites had already proven they were very quick to leave the one true God and worship false gods (Exodus 32:1). Following false gods keeps people from following the true, living God (2 Kings 21:21-22). God wanted His people to be pure and set apart (Deuteronomy 7:6).

Gibeon was INSIDE the land of Canaan. The Gibeonites had heard about God's rules. They knew that if the Israelites obeyed God, they were doomed. The Gibeonites believed God was powerful enough to do what He said He would do! Tomorrow we will learn about the desperate plan the Gibeonites used to keep from being killed.

In the land of Canaan, God wanted His people completely separate from the wicked people around them. Today, we certainly live along side people who do not follow God, and those who worship other things. We are commanded to love those people and share God's truth with them, but we **MUST** stay far away from sinful behavior (1 Peter 2:11).

Day #1 continued:

God has equipped us with His grace and with the Holy Spirit. God's grace gives us the desire and ability to do what is right (Titus 2:11-12). And God has given His Holy Spirit to live inside each believer (Acts 2:38). The Holy Spirit shows us what is sinful (John 16:8), and He leads us to live a pure life (Romans 8:5-6).

Day #2: Trickery

Have you ever tricked someone just for fun? Maybe your mom or dad came to wake you up in the morning. You were already awake, but you pretended to be asleep. Then you giggled, and they knew the truth. That is all done in fun. But, today we will see the Gibeonites decided to trick the Israelites. It was not in fun. This deception was a matter of life and death.

Because the Gibeonites feared for their lives, they came up with a plan to deceive Joshua and the Israelites. They sent a group of men to Joshua. But, first, they put on worn out clothes. They wore worn out sandals. They put worn-out sacks on their donkeys. They even brought dried-out, moldy bread with them! The Gibeonites made it look like they had been traveling for a REALLY long time from a VERY far away place. Actually, the trip was only two or three days, downhill.

Then they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and the men of Israel, "We have come from a distant country; make a treaty with us." - Joshua 9:6 (NIV)

The men of Israel weren't sure if they should believe the men. Again, Joshua asked them where they were from. The Gibeonites said they had come from "a very distant city." They said they came because they had heard reports of how powerful the Israelites' God was. They heard what He did for the Israelites in Egypt and in the land of Canaan. Then the Gibeonites *really* poured on the deception. They showed the moldy bread and said it was still warm when they left for their trip! They said their clothes and sandals were all worn out because their trip was so long. Joshua and his leaders had a big decision to make. They had to decide whether the men were lying or telling the truth. Read the following verse to see how they made this decision.

*The men of Israel looked over the supplies those men had brought. **But they didn't ask the Lord what they should do.*** - Joshua 9:14

The men of Israel used their own eyes to look things over. Everything looked right to them. They heard the men's explanation. Everything sounded right to them. They may have even smelled the bread and the dirty men! Everything smelled right to them. The Israelite men trusted their own senses. But they did not pray and ask God. Can you guess what decision the men will make?

The Bible tells us it is our pride that keeps us from seeking God. Our pride makes us think we know what is best.

In his pride the wicked does not seek Him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God. - Psalm 10:4 (NIV)

Just as Joshua and his leaders had an important decision to make, we face decisions every day. Remember to **SEEK** God first! No matter how things look to us, we do **NOT** know what is best. God knows far better than we do (Romans 11:33).

Day #3: Wrong Decision

Have you ever gone to a corn maze? It is a giant maze that you walk around in. You can get really confused because all you can see is big bales of hay in every direction. Now, imagine there was someone in a tall tower who could see every part of the maze. What if he they could shout down directions to you? It be wise to follow his instructions because he could see the beginning and the end. He could see every right move and every wrong move. Similarly, God can see everything in our lives. God certainly knew the Gibeonites lived only a short distance from the Israelites. God saw the Gibeonites while they were packing moldy bread and putting on old clothing. Joshua and his men should have asked God about the Gibeonites, but they did not.

Did you guess what would happen with the Gibeonites and the Israelites? Joshua made a peace treaty with the men. Joshua promised that they could live. All of the Israelite leaders agreed and made an oath, in the name of the Lord, that the visiting people could live. Three days later, the Israelites found out that the Gibeonites lived near them. The Israelites were very angry with their own leaders for making the peace treaty with them. They knew this was not what God had commanded.

However, the Israelites did not want to make God angry by going back on the oath they had made, so they did not go to war with the Gibeonites. Instead, they made the Gibeonites to be their slaves. This may seem like a good solution, but it was not what God had commanded. Remember, God told the Israelites to destroy all of the people in the land of Canaan, because if they lived, the Israelites would eventually follow their false gods and sin against God. We see in the next book of the Bible, Judges, that this is exactly what happened (Judges 2:11-13).



Today, with computers, television, and books on every subject it is very easy to believe we have all the answers. But the Bible warns us about thinking we know everything (Proverbs 3:7).



Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take. - Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT)

Remember, God is INFINITELY smarter than we are (Isaiah 55:9). He has always existed (Genesis 1:1) and He can see everything in our lives (Psalm 33:13-14). And, God only wants what is BEST for us (Jeremiah 29:11). Isn't it wise to let Him instruct us and guide us? The Bible says God will reward those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

Day #4: The Sun Stood Still

Today, when we hear the name "Jerusalem," we automatically think of an important city for the Israelites in Jesus' day and even for the Jewish people today. However, way back when the Israelites entered the Promised Land, there were other people living in Jerusalem. The king of Jerusalem had heard about how Joshua and the Israelites had destroyed Jericho and Ai. This king also heard about the Gibeonites making a treaty with the Israelites. The king and his people were very alarmed because Gibeon was a great city with a great army. The king was afraid that the Gibeonites would now help the Israelites.

The king of Jerusalem asked five other kings to join him and attack Gibeon. So the armies of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon all joined together and attacked Gibeon. The men of Gibeon sent an urgent message to Joshua asking him to send help right away.



So Joshua and his entire army, including his best warriors, left Gilgal and set out for Gibeon. "Do not be afraid of them," the Lord said to Joshua, "for I have given you victory over them. Not a single one of them will be able to stand up to you." - Joshua 10:6-8 (NLT)

Joshua and his army marched uphill all night long to reach Gibeon.

Day #4 continued:

They arrived early in the morning and took the kings by surprise. God gave the Israelites great victory in fighting by confusing the enemy armies. Then, as the armies tried to run, God hurled large hailstones down at them. This killed even more of the enemy soldiers than those who died while battling. Then Joshua asked for something VERY unusual. He asked for the sun to stand still in the sky!

The sun stopped in the middle of the sky. It didn't go down for about a full day. There has never been a day like it before or since. It was a day when the Lord listened to a mere man. You can be sure that the Lord was fighting for Israel! - Joshua 10:13b-14

Darkness did not fall until Joshua and the Israelites destroyed all of their enemies. God had promised victory. God ALWAYS keeps His promises!



God confused the armies, sent hail, and even stopped the sun in the sky to keep His promise to deliver the enemy into Joshua's hand! Surely, God will go to amazing lengths to keep His promises and glorify His name (John 12:28). The Bible is FULL of God's promises. If God would stop the sun in its tracks to keep His promise, is there anything that could stop Him from keeping His promises to you? No!

Day #5: God's Promises

We have seen time and time again that God ALWAYS keeps His promises. He kept His promises to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses, and to Joshua, just to name a few. We have seen that God will go to amazing lengths to keep His promises. He has divided an ocean, and even stopped the sun in the sky! God's word contains hundreds of promises for His children **today**. Let's look at a few of the wonderful promises God has made to all those who have put their trust in Jesus.

- God promises that everyone who puts his or her trust in Jesus has been given ETERNAL LIFE:



I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. - 1 John 5:13 (NIV)

- God promises that NOTHING can separate us from His love:

I am absolutely sure that not even death or life can separate us from God's love. Not even angels or demons, the present or the future, or any powers can do that. Not even the highest places or the lowest, or anything else in all creation can do that. Nothing at all can ever separate us from God's love because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done. - Romans 8:38-39

- God promises that He will NEVER leave those who trust in Him:

The Lord himself will go ahead of you. He will be with you. He will never leave you. He'll never desert you. So don't be afraid. Don't lose hope. - Deuteronomy 31:8

- God promises that He hears the prayers of believers (Proverbs 15:29).

- God promises that the things believers do for Him will last (John 15:16).

- God promises that the devil cannot touch believers (1 John 5:18).

- God promises that all believers will one day live in heaven (Philippians 3:20; John 14:2-3 and Luke 24:51).



These are just a few of the many promises God makes to those who follow Him. God ALWAYS keeps His promises! Whenever you read the Bible, or hear the Bible being taught, listen for God's promises. Write them down in a notebook or on note cards so you can remember them. Use God's promises to encourage others (1 Thessalonians 5:11).