**THE MEN OF ISRAEL DID NOT INQUIRY OF THE LORD**

Joshua 9:1-27

Key Verse 14

 The Israelites sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the Lord.

**Introduction**



 In chap. 8, we learned the victory against the city of AI as the Israelites followed God’s instructions carefully by taking the whole army, setting an ambush and Joshua’s holding out the javelin. In particular, Joshua and all the Israelites renewed their hearts to obey all the words of the Lord from now on. Today’s passage is not about the real battle but one clan’s deceiving strategy over the Israelites. We will learn spiritual lessons about asking God’s direction through prayer and keeping the promise with God. May God give us His revelation through this passage.

1. Read 9:1-13. What did all the kings west of the Jordan do? (1-2) Describe the ways that the people of Gibeon tricked the Israelites? (3-13)

1-1, Read 9:1-13.

 Now when all the kings west of the Jordan heard about these things—the kings in the hill country, in the western foothills, and along the entire coast of the Mediterranean Sea as far as Lebanon (the kings of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites)— **2** they came together to wage war against Joshua and Israel.

**3** However, when the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, **4** they resorted to a ruse: They went as a delegation whose donkeys were loaded[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua+9&version=NIV#fen-NIV-6042a)] with worn-out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended. **5** They put worn and patched sandals on their feet and wore old clothes. All the bread of their food supply was dry and moldy. **6** 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.” **7** The Israelites said to the Hivites, “But perhaps you live near us, so how can we make a treaty with you?” **8** “We are your servants,” they said to Joshua. But Joshua asked, “Who are you and where do you come from?” **9** They answered: “Your servants have come from a very distant country because of the fame of the Lordy our God. For we have heard reports of him: all that he did in Egypt, **10** and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan—Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth. **11** And our elders and all those living in our country said to us, ‘Take provisions for your journey; go and meet them and say to them, “We are your servants; make a treaty with us.”’ **12** This bread of ours was warm when we packed it at home on the day we left to come to you. But now see how dry and moldy it is. **13** And these wineskins that we filled were new, but see how cracked they are. And our clothes and sandals are worn out by the very long journey.”

1-2, What did all the kings west of the Jordan do? (1-2)



 ***Now when all the kings west of the Jordan heard about these things—the kings in the hill country, in the western foothills, and along the entire coast of the Mediterranean Sea as far as Lebanon (the kings of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites)— 2 they came together to wage war against Joshua and Israel.***

* Up to this point, Israelites attacked Canaanite cities one by one and conquered them. But the news spread quickly to the whole western cities in Canaan.
* They learned that the Israelites’ army was too strong for one local city to defend. All kings realized that they had to unite mobilize a large army against Israel.
* Their slogan was “United we win, scattered we lose.” The enemy army size was getting bigger and bigger. All 6 clans got united forming an army coalition.
* So far to Israelites, one to one battle was OK. But now, the Israelites’ army would face the united countries of the whole southern Canaanite cities.

1-3, Describe the ways that the people of Gibeon tricked the Israelites? (3-13)

 ***However, when the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, 4 they resorted to a ruse: They went as a delegation whose donkeys were loaded[***[***a***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua+9&version=NIV#fen-NIV-6042a)***] with worn-out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended. 5 They put worn and patched sandals on their feet and wore old clothes. All the bread of their food supply was dry and moldy. 6 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.” 7 The Israelites said to the Hivites, “But perhaps you live near us, so how can we make a treaty with you?” 8 “We are your servants,” they said to Joshua. But Joshua asked, “Who are you and where do you come from?” 9 They answered: “Your servants have come from a very distant country because of the fame of the Lordy our God. For we have heard reports of him: all that he did in Egypt, 10 and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan—Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth. 11 And our elders and all those living in our country said to us, ‘Take provisions for your journey; go and meet them and say to them, “We are your servants; make a treaty with us.”’ 12 This bread of ours was warm when we packed it at home on the day we left to come to you. But now see how dry and moldy it is. 13 And these wineskins that we filled were new, but see how cracked they are. And our clothes and sandals are worn out by the very long journey.”***



* The clan Gibeonites belonged to Hivites. But they didn’t join the other united Canaanite cities.
* They sent their ambassadors to Joshua. They wore worn-out sacks, worn sandals, and old clothes. They brought dry and moldy bread and said to Joshua, “We have come from a distant country; make a treaty with us.”
* According to Exodus 34:15, the Israelites should be careful of making a treaty with those who live in the land because they might entice the Israelites to worship their gods. On the other hand, God allowed the Israelites to make treaties with distant nations.
* Somehow the Gibeonites used a trick to deceive the Israelites. The Gibeonites asked Joshua and the Israelites to make a treaty with them.
* That’s why the Gibeonites emphasized the long distance many times by saying “from a distant country, from a very distant country and by the very long journey.”
* In verse 7, “The Israelites said to the Hivites, ‘But perhaps you live near us, so how can we make a treaty with you?’” They answered, “We are your servants.”
* They avoided to answer the question directly, rather gave the Israelites an irrelevant answer. Joshua asked, “Who are you and where do you come from?” V 9 says, “They answered: ‘Your servants have come from a very distant country.”
* The reason for the Gibeonites to make a treaty was the fame of the Lord God. They heard the news about God’s mighty work in Egypt and the battles over Heshbon and Bashan in the east Jordan. They realized that they couldn’t win the war against Israel because the Almighty and Living God was with them.
* According to chap 10, Gibeon was an important city which was one of the royal cities. It was larger than Ai. It had a larger population and the Gibeonite men were strong warriors. But they didn’t join other Canaanite cities to fight against Israel.
* But it was not easy decision for the Gibeonites to surrender to the Israelites because they had to betray their own kingdom—Hivites.
* They could be annihilated completely by their own people. It was a risky decision. That is why later the Gibeonites were attacked by neighboring countries.
* One thing we notice here is that what the Gibeonites said about God is almost same as what Rahab had said to the two spies.
* The Gibeonites believed the mighty work of God in Egypt and victory over the two kings on the east side of the Jordan. They chose to stay on the side of Israel by surrendering to Israel.
* Although at first, the Israelites were suspicious of the Gibeonites who told they came from a distant country. But eventually the Israelites believed what they said because of their appearance and evidence.

2. Read verses 14-21. What led Joshua and the Israelites to be deceived by the Gibeonites? (14-15) What did the Israelites do when they discovered the truth? (16-21)

2-1, Read verses 14-21.

The Israelites sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the Lord. **15** Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath. **16** Three days after they made the treaty with the Gibeonites, the Israelites heard that they were neighbors, living near them. **17** So the Israelites set out and on the third day came to their cities: Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth and Kiriath Jearim. **18** But the Israelites did not attack them, because the leaders of the assembly had sworn an oath to them by the Lord, the God of Israel. The whole assembly grumbled against the leaders, **19** but all the leaders answered, “We have given them our oath by the Lord, the God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now. **20** 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.” **21** 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.

2-2, What led Joshua and the Israelites to be deceived by the Gibeonites? (14-15)

***14 The Israelites sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the Lord. 15 Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath.***

* The Israelites sampled the bread, bags, wineskins, sandals, clothes and checked them thoroughly through smelling, touching, and seeing.
* Their final conclusion of sampling was “True”. The Israelites only relied on what they heard and saw in making their decision.
* But they did not inquire of the Lord. It clearly points out the great mistake of the absence of prayer in decision making.
* The critical mistake was not seeking counsel from the Lord. They should have asked direction from the Lord.

Proverbs 3:5-6 reads,

 “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”

* In our life, we are to make so many decisions daily for our family and church. We can have many discussions and good plannings.
* But prior to all these activities, kneeling down and inquiring of God must be precedent.
* We are called to build up a church as a body of Christ. As we pray first, God will leads us in his guidance.
* May God raise many praying people among us that God may lead our community in his guidance and blessings!

2-3, What did the Israelites do when they discovered the truth? (16-21)

 ***Three days after they made the treaty with the Gibeonites, the Israelites heard that they were neighbors, living near them. 17 So the Israelites set out and on the third day came to their cities: Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth and Kiriath Jearim. 18 But the Israelites did not attack them, because the leaders of the assembly had sworn an oath to them by the Lord, the God of Israel. The whole assembly grumbled against the leaders, 19 but all the leaders answered, “We have given them our oath by the Lord, the God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now. 20 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.” 21 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.***

* Soon the Israelites found out that they had been deceived by the Gibeonites. The whole assembly grumbled against the leaders.
* But the leaders answered, “We have given them our oath by the Lord, the God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now.” They answered that if they broke the oath, God’s wrath would fall on them.
* Why couldn’t they touch the Gibeonites after swearing an oath by the Lord? The Israelites could have attacked them in fury because of their lies. But since they took an oath by God, it was no longer a matter between the Israelites and the Gibeonites, but between God and the Israelites.
* They made the oath in the name of God. They made a promise to God. They acknowledged that a covenant was a covenant.
* The Israelites’ oath was well kept for many years. But when King Saul put the Gibeonites to death out of his own zeal, the wrath of God fell on Israel and a famine struck the land for 3 years during King David’s reign.
* David sought the face of the Lord and God told him that it was because Saul had broken this oath.
* When David gave the Gibeonites their request and the famine stopped. Even though 400 years passed God didn’t forget the oath.
* We see how much God honors an oath even if it was made in hasty. Because God is faithful to keep his promise we can put our faith in his promises. God honors promises we make for him and others and wants us to keep them.

Deuteronomy 23:21 says,

 “If you make a vow to the Lord your God, do not be slow to pay it, for the Lord your God will certainly demand it of you and you will be guilty of sin.”

3. Read verses 22-27. What did Joshua decide to do with the Gibeonites? (22-23, 26-27) How did the Gibeonites defend themselves? (24-25) What can we learn from the passage?

3-1, Read verses 22-27.

Then Joshua summoned the Gibeonites and said, “Why did you deceive us by saying, ‘We live a long way from you,’ while actually you live near us? **23** You are now under a curse: You will never be released from service as woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God.” **24** They answered Joshua, “Your servants were clearly told how the Lord your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you the whole land and to wipe out all its inhabitants from before you. So we feared for our lives because of you, and that is why we did this. **25** We are now in your hands. Do to us whatever seems good and right to you.” **26** So Joshua saved them from the Israelites, and they did not kill them. **27** That day he 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.

3-2, What did Joshua decide to do with the Gibeonites? (22-23, 26-27)

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* Joshua summoned the Gibeonites and said, “Why did you deceive us by saying, ‘We live a long way from you, while actually you live near us?’ ‘You are now under a curse…’”
* Joshua allowed the Gibeonites to live but assigned them to be woodcutters and water carriers for the house of God all their life.

3-3, How did the Gibeonites defend themselves? (24-25)

***24 They answered Joshua, “Your servants were clearly told how the Lord your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you the whole land and to wipe out all its inhabitants from before you. So we feared for our lives because of you, and that is why we did this. 25 We are now in your hands. Do to us whatever seems good and right to you.”***

* The Gibeonites knew God’s specific commands to Moses. The Gibeonites, Gentile people hung on to the promise of God.
* When Joshua assigned them to be woodcutters and water carriers they didn’t complain or grumble.
* Water carriers and woodcutting jobs are labor work. It is hard to carry water containers even for short distance not to mention cutting woods without tools.
* But the Gibeonites were willing to become menial servants in order to live among the people of God.
* They said, “We are now in your hands, Do to us whatever seems good and right to you.”
* Once they were good fighters and lived in one of royal cities in Canaan. However, when they believed God’s command to Moses, they feared for their lives.
* They became very humble and offered themselves as servants for life. Whenever the Gibeonites answered to the Israelites, they introduced themselves as “your servants”.
* They also mentioned God as “the Lord your God.” They respected the name of the God of Israel.
* Then, the Gibeonites were not only saved but also getting the privilege to serve the house of God.
* According to Israel’s history, the Gibeonites seemed to become a part of Israel participating in rebuilding the wall in Jerusalem and becoming faithful servants.

3-4, What can we learn from the passage?

***And that is what they are to this day.***

* Today’s passage ends with a comment in verse 27b, “And that is what they are to this day.”
* Their identity was changed from slaves of sinful nature to servants of God’s house. They escaped from the perishing city. It was their new identity, a people belonging to God.
* 1 Peter 2:10 says, “Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”
* Like the Gibeonites, we were also doomed to die and perish because of our sins. But God saved us through his son Jesus and gave us the privilege to serve the house of God.
* We need to remember how we were saved and offer ourselves to the service of building the house of God. That is what we are today.

Romans 8:14-17 reads,

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. **15** The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship.And by him we cry, *“Abba,* Father.” **16** The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. **17** Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

* May the Lord richly bless our Spring Bible Academy in LBCC based on Romans 8, so that many Gibeonites like young students may know who God is and remember who they are before God and turn into God’s precious children!

**Conclusion**

 Through this passage we learned how important it is to pray before God. May the Lord help us to pray in all matters so that we may not be deceived. Although lying is not good, we may learn from the Gibeonites to respect God and His servants. Help us to keep our oath to the Lord so that we may continue to serve His grand salvation work. May the Lord bless our prayer for Bible academy as well as Spring Bible conference with the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**One word: Inquire of the Lord!**