**THE DECEPTION OF THE GIBEONITES**

*Wandering in the Wilderness*

SS Lesson 27

7/13/2025

Joshua 9-10

**Lesson Review:** Last week, we looked at the sin of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. First, we considered that Achan’s decision showed us the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of sin. He took of the accursed thing even though he had been warned of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. His sin brought trouble not only to himself, but to the entire \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Israel. We also noted that Achan’s decision showed us the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of sin. He took things he could never use and tried to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ them from God. Then, we saw how his decision showed us the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of sin. His actions led to the loss of life, the defeat at Ai, and the judgment of God on his entire \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. From there, we examined Joshua’s decision, which showed us the danger of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. He did not seek God’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ before sending the men to battle, and as a result, he was unaware of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the camp. Finally, we looked at Joshua’s reaction, which showed us the danger of spiritual \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Joshua, in his discouragement, spoke words that sounded like the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Israelites who had died in the wilderness. Joshua had to deal with the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that came when the Lord showed him his foolishness and ignorance. While we noted last week that this was Joshua’s key failure, we are going to see today that Joshua did follow up this incident with one more situation that should have been dealt with differently. Sadly, it revolves around the same key issue for Joshua – rushing to make a decision without God’s direction.

1. **THE GIBEONITES’ ACTIONS SHOW US THE STRATEGY OF THE ENEMY.**
2. **Notice that the Gibeonites used lies and flattery to gain acceptance.** *Joshua 9:4–5 They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up; And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy.* The enemy is not always violent or aggressive in appearance. Sometimes, the enemy comes subtly, dressed in rags and covered in compliments. They created an entire act to manipulate God’s people into letting their guard down. The devil often uses this same approach today—a mix of deception and disguise. Satan is more dangerous when he pretends to be harmless. When we are not spiritually alert, we can mistake manipulation for humility. The Bible has many warnings about deception and flattery, and this should show us how often it is used as a tool by the enemy. Unlike the Lord, we are not able to see the inside. This is why it is so important to have the Lord’s guidance and wisdom when trying the spirits. Many believers are tricked into spiritual compromise not by obvious sin, but by causes and decisions that appear innocent or even noble on the surface. The Gibeonites didn’t come with weapons; they came with a story.
3. **Notice that the Gibeonites disguised their true identity to avoid the consequences.** *Joshua 9:6 And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us. Joel 2:13 And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.* They didn't want to change who they were; they only wanted to avoid judgment. Many today approach religion the same way. They desired protection but not transformation. This reminds us of how important it is to truly deal with the heart of the issue. When we wrong God, we ought to have Godly sorrow. That’s the object that works true repentance toward God. Not everyone who asks for peace is seeking God. Sometimes the request is to escape the consequences rather than embrace the truth. The Gibeonites knew the truth about God; in fact, they confessed that they had heard what God had done to Egypt and to Jericho. Despite this knowledge, they were not willing to repent and humble themselves before the Lord.
4. **ISRAEL’S CHOICE SHOWS US THE DANGER OF CARELESSNESS.**
5. **Notice that Joshua and the leaders failed to ask God for counsel.** *Joshua 9:14 And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD. Philippians 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.* This single sentence in the chapter is the turning point of the entire story. Israel examined the evidence, listened to the words of the Gibeonites, and even sampled their food—but they failed to do the one thing that would have spared them from error: they did not ask God. The Gibeonites may have fooled the leaders, but they never could have fooled the Lord. If Israel had taken even a moment to pray and seek God’s counsel, they would have discovered the truth. But in their haste and self-confidence, they chose to act without divine direction. This is a powerful reminder that spiritual failure often begins not with rebellion, but with neglect. Many Christians today walk into dangerous partnerships, decisions, or teachings simply because they trust their judgment more than God’s leading. If we truly prayed without ceasing, we would avoid many moments of poor judgment.
6. **Notice that their decision was based on logic, not faith.** *Proverbs 3:5–6 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.* The leaders of Israel leaned on what they could see, touch, and reason out. They trusted their instincts and the appearance of the situation, but they failed to trust the Lord. The moldy bread and tattered clothes told a convincing story, but they weren’t the truth. In the same way, we often find ourselves swayed by what looks good, sounds reasonable, or feels urgent, and we move forward without waiting on God. Faith requires that we submit our understanding to God’s wisdom, even when it seems unnecessary or inconvenient. When we make decisions in the flesh, we are blind to spiritual realities that only God can see. The Lord calls us to walk by faith and not by sight because our eyes can deceive us. We must learn that good reasoning is no substitute for godly direction. What seems right to man often ends in destruction.
7. **THE OUTCOME SHOWS US THE CONSEQUENCES OF COVENANTS.**
8. **Notice that Israel was bound by their oath, even after discovering the truth.** *Joshua 9:18–19 And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes. 19 But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them.* Even after the truth came out, Israel was stuck. They had made an oath before the Lord, and they understood that they could not break it without sinning further. This was not just a casual agreement. It was a binding covenant made in the name of the Lord. The people were frustrated, but the leaders rightly held to their word, even though it had been made in poor judgment. This teaches us the seriousness of spiritual commitments and reminds us to think carefully before we make them. Too many today make promises to God or others in moments of emotion or pressure, only to regret or abandon them later. God expects His people to be people of their word.
9. **Notice that Israel had to work around their mistake rather than simply undoing it.** *Joshua 9:27 And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose.* Joshua could not undo the treaty, but he could limit its effect. He placed the Gibeonites under service to the tabernacle, where their presence would serve God’s purposes rather than compromise Israel’s purity. This was a redemptive response to a damaging situation. While the deception still brought lasting consequences, Israel did what they could to bring order out of the chaos. This is a model for us when we’ve made decisions that can’t be reversed. God does not always erase the outcomes of our failures, but He can still work through them if we respond with humility and wisdom. The key is not in erasing the past, but in honoring God in the present. Look at the life of King David as an example.
10. **Notice that Israel even had to protect the Gibeonites from battle.** *Joshua 10:6 And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us.* The moment Israel made peace with Gibeon, they became responsible for them, and that responsibility quickly turned into a burden. When five kings gathered to attack Gibeon, Joshua and the entire army of Israel had to march to their defense. This wasn’t Israel’s war, and Gibeon wasn’t even an honest ally. Yet, Israel was now obligated to protect them because of the covenant they had sworn. That’s the danger of binding ourselves to people or situations without prayer and discernment. Those attachments can drag us into conflicts that aren’t ours. Sinful or careless alliances never stay contained; they come with strings that tug at our time, our energy, and our testimony. Joshua may have honored his word, but the cost was real. They had to risk the lives of their soldiers for a people who had manipulated them. This reminds us that decisions made outside of God’s will often have long-term consequences that affect more than just ourselves.