

Gibeonite Deception & Rescue

Joshua 9:1–10:15

Main Street



bible verse

COMMITTING TO MEMORY

Psalm 9:10

Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you.



story lesson

BIBLE STORY

The military success of the people of Israel were causing a lot of uneasiness and worry to the current inhabitants of the land. They were down right scared to death! And no wonder; Israel had the Lord God of heaven and earth on their side, while the people of Canaan worshipped false gods and did bad stuff. Kings and peoples conspired and strategized how they would meet this oncoming threat. Well, the people of Gibeon were rather shrewd about how they handled the unstoppable Israelite invasion force.

The leaders of Gibeon resorted to a ruse; a deception. They packed donkeys with worn out stuff—old, moldy bread; worn-out sacks; old wineskins, cracked and mended; and old sandals and old clothes. Upon arrival, the leaders of Gibeon told Joshua that they had come from a distant country to seek a treaty with them. They said that they had heard of the fame of the Lord their God and they desired peace. “The men of Israel sampled their provisions, *but did not inquire of the Lord*. Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it with an oath” (Joshua 9:14-15 emphasis mine).

Well, three days later, the Israelites heard that the people of Gibeon were actually neighbors and that they had deceived them. The whole

assembly of Israelites grumbled against the leaders (rightfully so) and yet they did not attack because of the oath they had sworn before the Lord their God. “This is what we will do to them: We will let them live, so that wrath will not fall on us for breaking the oath we swore to them” (Joshua 9:20). So the Israelites did not kill the Gibeonites because of their oath that they swore to them. The Gibeonites explained to Joshua:

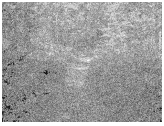
“Your servants were clearly told how the Lord your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you the whole land and to wipe out all its inhabitants from before you. So we feared for our lives because of you, and that is why we did this. We are now in your hands. Do to us whatever seems good and right to you” (Joshua 9:24-25).

As a result of the Israelite treaty that was sworn with Gibeon, the five kings of the Amorites got together and attacked Gibeon. The Gibeonites sent word to Joshua—help!! “Do not abandon your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us! Help us, because all the Amorite kings from the hill country have joined forces against us” (Joshua 10:6).

Joshua mustered up a force and marched up to save Gibeon. Along the way, the Lord reassured him: “Do not be afraid of them; I have given them into your hand. Not one of them will be able to withstand you” (Joshua 10:8). Joshua took the Amorite kings by surprise and the Lord threw them into confusion which resulted in a great victory at Gibeon. Those five armies fled before the Israelites who pursued them. “As they fled before Israel on the road down from Beth Horon to Azekah, the Lord hurled large hailstones down on them from the sky, and more of them died from the hailstones than were killed by the swords of the Israelites” (Joshua 10:11).

Furthermore, on the day that the Lord gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua prayed that the sun would stand still, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies (Joshua 10:12-13). So, “the sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day. There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the Lord listened to a man. Surely the Lord was fighting for Israel” (Joshua 10:13-14).

It is argued whether or not the sun actually stood still for “about a full day.” Some say yes...some say no. Most people who say that it did not literally happen argue how it could possibly happen. The people who say that the sun did stand still in the sky, do not speculate *how* it happened, they just believe it. Either way, the words “the sun stood still” is a stumbling block to all kinds of people—scientists, literalists, allegorical interpretivists, etc. But just because you cannot figure out *how* it was done, does not negate the fact that it did or did not happen. *How*, is not a question of factuality; only one of speculation or theorizing. The Word of God does not depend on the *how* of the events as much as the *what* and the *obedience* of them.



life application

MAKING IT REAL

Ask God Ahead of Time

Always inquire of the Lord. No matter what. Even if you think you are 100% positive... the Lord is even more than 100%.

The Lord lets us make bad choices

It is telling that when the Gibeonites deceived the Israelites and when the people of God did not consult with Him, the Lord did not intervene. He let them make a bad choice. He watched them do it. Why didn't He stop them? Probably because He wants our hearts to be devoted to him in obedience, not just our actions. Our actions come out of where our heart is at. Just to save them from making a bad choice, the Lord does not seem to intervene because he does not want just right actions, but right hearts. Good behavior just for good behavior sake is not noteworthy. Good behavior resulting from a deep heart desire to please and respect and obey the Lord is noteworthy. Making bad choices is human. Continuing to make bad choices is still human. Always making bad choices reveals that the heart is bad and is in need of redemption.



questions

REMEMBERING

- 1. Who deceived the Israelites into thinking they were from far away?**
Gibeonites
- 2. How did the Gibeonites deceive the Israelites? What did they bring to make it look like they were from far away?** worn out stuff—old, moldy bread; worn-out sacks; old wineskins, cracked and mended; and old sandals and old clothes
- 3. Did the leaders of Israel seek the Lord before they signed a treaty with the Gibeonites?** No
- 4. Who attacked the Gibeonites?** The five kings of the Amorites
- 5. What did the Lord hurl down on the Amorites from the sky?** Hailstones
- 6. Why is it important to ask God before making a decision?**



coloring sheet

ON THE NEXT PAGE



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