



John Battaglia, D. Min.
PO Box 891, Jefferson City, MO 65102
573-355-4161//Twitter @johnabattaglia
John.battaglia@capitolcom.org

“When God is Your Consultant”

Weekly Bible Study Schedule

Tuesday, May 1, 7:00-7:55 AM in HHR #4

(hot breakfast provided)

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Marching onward toward Israel’s next conquest. From victory over the small army in Ai to threats by the kings beyond the Jordan (Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and the Jebusites). These Canaanite settlements combined into a large army to fight Israel.

Joshua, chapter 10, contains one of the most notable happenings in the Bible. It relates directly to the attack by 5 kings beyond the Jordan, against the Gibeonites for desertion from the Canaanite people groups. Israel, more important, the LORD God, came to the Gibeonites rescue in a supernatural way.

In spite of the Gibeonites deception to Joshua and Israel’s leaders, the LORD remained faithful to His covenant to the Gibeonites (to not defeat and drive them out of the Promised land). A covenant Joshua made that bound Israel, and God, by the name of the LORD. As we will see, God instructed Israel to not make any covenants with other nations because if they did Israel could not drive them out of the land because of God’s commitment to covenant. God’s plan was to drive out all the inhabitants of the Promised Land and give the land to Israel, just as He said to Abraham that He would do.

Joshua did not consult the Lord and it changed the game. The Lord is our consultant. Life goes best when we consult him before we make important life decisions: marriage, finances, careers, etc.

Before we get to chapter 10, Let us enter the narrative of God’s covenant faithfulness to the Gibeonite in chapter 9.

But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai...

Gibeon was 6 miles Northwest of Jerusalem and 4 miles from Bethel. Its descendants are the Hivites and the Amorites, and they are one of descendants from Ham’s sons.

Rooted in deception and desperation to prevent defeat and removal from their land, the Gibeonites made a league with Israel. They did not want to be destroyed with the other Canaanites. They deserted their descendants, the Hivites and Amorites in anticipation of defeat. They strategized a cunning plan.

...they on their part acted with cunning and went and made ready provisions and took worn-out sacks for their donkeys, and wineskins, worn-out and torn and mended, with worn-out, patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes. And all their provisions were dry and crumbly. (9:3-5)

Joshua asked: **“Why have you deceived us?”**

Because of the name of the Lord your God. For we have heard a report of him, and all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites. Because it was told to your servants for a certainty that the Lord your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you—so we feared greatly for our lives because of you and did this thing. (9:9-10, 22, 24)

Gibeonites understood the Lord's command to Israel to drive out inhabitants in the Promised Land. Possession of the Land was God’s promise to Israel.

Similar words from Rahab when she encountered the Israeli spies, recorded in chapter 2.



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I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12:3)

God is affirming His purpose to bless all people on earth through Israel.

Again, and again, God fought Israel’s battles defeating enemy armies. The fame of the LORD was known.

The Gibeonites deception was successful.

And Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live, and the leaders of the congregation swore to them. (9:15)

Three days later deception is revealed, and truth surfaced. They did not drive Gibeonites out of the land because they made a peace treaty with them. The covenant was made in the name of the LORD God of Israel”.

You shall make no covenant with them and their gods. They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against me; for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.” (Ex. 23:32-33)

Gibeonites’ lessons for our learning:

- Consult God for wisdom to know what to do.

Israel was deceived because they did not consult the Lord.

Israel’s defeat at Ai was the result of failing to consult the Lord. Once again, failure to discern the deception of the Gibeonites was to rely on their own judgment. The wisest thing we can do before making any decisions is to pray. Avoid assumptions. Refrain from self-reliance. Stop and ask God His thoughts before you act.

Prayerlessness places us at risk to miss the direction of the Lord. God’s voice that directs can arrive in a variety of ways: passage of Scripture, unexpected circumstance, message from a friend, and His whisper in your heart, to mention a few. He will choose His own way to speak, we simply need to listen.

- God requires faithfulness of His people.

Israel wanted to drive Gibeonites out like directed by the Lord, but Israel’s leaders said, no: “*We have sworn to them by the LORD; the God of Israel...*”. Israel murmured because of the covenant made with Gibeon, however, they honored their oath. God takes covenants seriously. The covenant was made in the name of the LORD – it represents God’s character.

400 hundred years later, God was mad at king Saul and his sons for killing Gibeonites.

“Now the Gibeonites were not of the people of Israel but of the remnant of the Amorites. Although the people of Israel had sworn to spare them, Saul had sought to strike them down in his zeal for the people of Israel and Judah...” (2 Sam. 21:1-2)

Saul breaking the covenant Joshua made with the Gibeonites resulted in a famine during King David’s reign. God’s name was on the line. The covenant must stand.

The way in which we live our life, talk our talk, follow God’s will represents the Lord to those around us.

Finally, the eventual incorporation of the Gibeonites into Israel shows the mercy and grace of God to all people.

Today, Gibeon city is the place where El-Jib stands. Some believe, the descendants of the dark-skinned Gibeonites or Hivites are called Falashas. At the time of Israel’s forced exit out of Palestine the Falashas journeyed to Ethiopia.



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