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Joshua 9

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Joshua 9.

Topics.

- Six nations of Canaan gather together to fight against Israel.
- The inhabitants of Gibeon ask Joshua to make a covenant with them.
- Hivites lie and deceive the men of Israel, because they feared them.
- Joshua and the elders of Israel make a covenant with the Hivites.
- Israel discovers they made a covenant with people in Canaan.
- Joshua makes the Hivites servants of Israel.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION: the first five books of Moses anticipated the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham concerning the Promised Land. Moses is now dead. Joshua crosses the River Jordan (about 1400 B.C.) and after a string of military victories apportioned the land according to the twelve tribes. These battles shine a brilliant spotlight upon the truth that God fights for His people when they are faithful and courageous and put their full trust in Him. (Josh. 1:6-9). At the close of the book Joshua says that he and all his house will serve the LORD and invites the people to choose whether they will serve the gods of their fathers or the gods in whose land they dwell or the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob. The people choose to serve their God. (Josh. 24:15). Although anonymous the book appears to contain eyewitness testimony, some of which may have been written by Joshua himself.

JOSHUA 9:1-2

Six Nations of Canaan Gather together to Fight against Israel.

- **Joshua 9:1-2:** As soon as all the kings who were beyond the Jordan in the hill country and in the lowland all along the coast of the Great Sea toward Lebanon, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, heard of this, ²they gathered together as one to fight against Joshua and Israel.

The previous chapter ended with the utter destruction of the city of Ai and Joshua hanging and burying their king. The following verses of this chapter show that that the people in the land of Canaan had heard that:

- Joshua had utterly destroyed the city of Jericho and Ai. (v3).
- God had delivered Israel from Egypt by mighty miracles (i.e., the ten plagues and the parting of the Red Sea). (v9).
- Israel had utterly destroyed Sihon and Og the two powerful kings of the Amorites. (v10).
- The LORD the God of Israel had not only promised to give Israel all the land of Canaan, but also promised to destroy all the inhabitants dwelling in it. (v24).

Added to these it is certain that the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and the Jebusites had clearly heard of the following promise God gave to Israel:

- Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. ⁴From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory. (Joshua 1:3).

With these facts in mind it is easy to understand the great terror and fear the inhabitants of the land of Canaan would have had of the people of Israel and their God and why they gathered together against them.

JOSHUA 9:3-6

Inhabitants of Gibeon ask Joshua to Make a Covenant with Them.

- **Joshua 9:3-6:** But when the inhabitants of Gibeon (the Hivites) heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, ⁴they 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, ⁵with worn-out, patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes. And all their provisions were dry and crumbly. ⁶And they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a distant country, so now make a covenant with us."

The Hivites (the inhabitants of Gibeon) (Josh. 11: 19) are certain that the armies of Israel will utterly destroy them they have such great fear of Israel and their God that they go to extreme measures to deceive Joshua and the elders of Israel into making a covenant with them. They acted with such deception and cunning by deliberately using worn-out and torn and mended sacks for their donkeys and wineskins. They deliberately wore worn-out sandals, patched clothes and took dried out food to evidence their lying and deceptive story that they have travelled from a country outside of the land of Canaan. The following verses show that God had told Israel they could not make any covenants with the nations that lived in the land of Canaan:

- You shall make no covenant with them and their gods. (Exodus 23:32).
- When the LORD your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. (Deut. 7:2).

Though Israel could make no covenant with the nations dwelling in the land of Canaan they were permitted to make covenants with the people who lived outside the land of Canaan. This is why the Hivites (the inhabitants of Gibeon) (Josh. 11: 19) went to such extreme cunning to deceive Joshua that they did not live in the land of Canaan. The Hivites lie to deceive Joshua by telling him that they have come from a country outside of the land of Canaan and ask him and the elders of Israel to make a covenant with them.

JOSHUA 9:7-13

Hivites Lie and Deceive Men of Israel, because they Feared Them.

- **Joshua 9:7-13:** But the men of Israel said to the Hivites, "Perhaps you live among us; then how can we make a covenant with you?" ⁸They said to Joshua, "We are your servants." And Joshua said to them, "Who are you? And where do you come from?" ⁹They said to him, "From a very distant country your servants have come, because of the name of the LORD your God. For we have heard a report of him, and all that he did in Egypt, ¹⁰and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon the king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth. ¹¹So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country said to us, 'Take provisions in your hand for the journey and go to meet them and say to them, 'We are your servants. Come now, make a covenant with us.' ¹²Here is our bread. It was still warm when we took it from

our houses as our food for the journey on the day we set out to come to you, but now, behold, it is dry and crumbly. ¹³These wineskins were new when we filled them, and behold, they have burst. And these garments and sandals of ours are worn out from the very long journey."

The Hivites (the inhabitants of Gibeon) (Josh. 11: 19) were utterly fearful of being wiped out by the armies of Israel ask Joshua and the elders of Israel to make a covenant with them. The stories of Israel's triumphant victories and the wonders of their God have spread throughout the land of Canaan. This is why the Hivites are in survival mode and gone to such enormous lengths to deceive Joshua and the elders of Israel.

JOSHUA 9:14-15

Joshua and the Elders of Israel make a Covenant with the Hivites.

- **Joshua 9:14-15:** So the men (of Israel) took some of their provisions, but did not ask counsel from the LORD. ¹⁵And Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live, and the leaders of the congregation swore to them.

Concerning the matter of the Covenant with the Hivites the greatest error the elders of Israel made was not to seek the counsel of the LORD had they done this it is certain He would have revealed to them the Hivites lie and deception and they would have saved themselves from much future trouble.

JOSHUA 9:16-18

Israel Discovers they made a Covenant with a People in Canaan.

- **Joshua 9:16-18:** At the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them, they heard that they were their neighbors and that they lived among them. ¹⁷And the people of Israel set out and reached their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim. ¹⁸But the people of Israel did not attack them, because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel. Then all the congregation murmured against the leaders.

Imagine Israel's horror when three days after making the covenant with the Hivites they realised their lie and discovered that they were actually a nation dwelling in the land of Canaan. The Hivites succeeded in their mission in that the armies of Israel could not attack their people or devote them to destruction because of the covenant they had made with them. It is interesting to notice that even though the Hivites lied and deceived Israel into making a covenant it still stood, Israel could not break it.

The entire congregation murmured against the leaders: the elders brought this strife and contention toward them upon themselves by not seeking the will of God before making the covenant with the Hivites.

JOSHUA 9:19-21

Hivites became Cutters of Wood and Drawers of Water for Israel.

- **Joshua 9:19-21:** But all the leaders said to all the congregation, "We have sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we may not touch them. ²⁰This we will do to them: let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath that we swore to them."²¹And the leaders said to them, "Let them live." So, they became cutters of wood and drawers of water for all the congregation, just as the leaders had said of them.

A covenant holds the same bond as an oath and a promise, as much as Israel may have desired to invade the land of the Hivites to cleanse the land of all other gods and pagan corruption they could not because of the

covenant. The Hivites are basically made labours for the people of Israel. This is not such a bad deal since had they not lied and deceived Israel it is certain the armies of Israel with God on their side would have utterly destroyed the cities of the Hivites and them to waste.

JOSHUA 9:22-24

Joshua Asks the Hivites Why they Deceived Them.

- **Joshua 9:22-24:** Joshua summoned them, and he said to them, "Why did you deceive us, saying, 'We are very far from you,' when you dwell among us? ²³Now therefore you are cursed, and some of you shall never be anything but servants, cutters of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God." ²⁴They answered Joshua, "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.

These verses shine a brilliant spotlight upon the following two things:

1. How much terror and fear the inhabitants of the land of Canaan had of Israel and their God.
2. How the promise and word of God had spread throughout the land of Canaan.

JOSHUA 9:25-27

Joshua makes the Hivites Servants of Israel.

- **Joshua 9:25-27:** ²⁵And now, behold, we are in your hand. Whatever seems good and right in your sight to do to us, do it." ²⁶So he did this to them and delivered them out of the hand of the people of Israel, and they did not kill them. ²⁷But Joshua made them that day cutters of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, to this day, in the place that he should choose.

Even though Joshua told the Hivites (the inhabitants of Gibeon) (Josh. 11: 19) that they will forever be Israel's servants, they tell him they will accept and do whatever seems good and right in his sight so Joshua stopped the armies of Israel invading their land and laying their cities and land waste and instead made all the people in the land of the Hivites servants of Israel.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
