

THE PLOY OF THE GIBEONITES AND THE FOLLY OF ISRAEL – PART ONE

This is your Friend and Minister, dr. Joshua Uhiara, bringing you healing word from the Master, a program of the Master's Vessel Ministry which lets you know that Jesus loves you as you are, but loves you so much that He will not leave you as you are.

I come to you again, friends, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Today, I want to speak on *The Ploy of Gibeon and the Folly of Israel*. And the text is taken from Joshua 9:3-8; 14-15

³ *But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, ⁴ they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, ⁵ old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and moldy. ⁶ And they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us."*

⁷ *Then the men of Israel said to the Hivites, "Perhaps you dwell among us; so how can we make a covenant with you?"*

⁸ *But they said to Joshua, "We are your servants."*

And Joshua said to them, "Who are you, and where do you come from?"

¹⁴ *Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the LORD. ¹⁵ So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them.*

Let us pray.

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for this time again when we can reason with You in Your Word, that we may be edified, that we may learn from You. Thank You, blessed Lord. We commit this moment into Your hands and ask that Your Spirit will lead us and guide us, in Jesus' Name. Amen!

Israel was under orders from God to drive the inhabitants of Palestine out of the territory with the reasons why they should do so.

Exodus 23:31-33

³¹ And I will set your bounds from the Red Sea to the sea, Philistia, and from the desert to the River. For I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you. ³² You shall make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. ³³ 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."

The same instruction was given to them in Deuteronomy 7:1-4. But before you yield to the temptation to second-guess God and question why you should deal thus with the inhabitants of Palestine or Canaan, I want you to know that God is loving, holy, gracious and merciful. He hates sin and has what somebody has called a legal limit for sin. Beyond this legal limit God has set for sin His judgment is inevitable. He said to Abraham in Genesis 15:15-16

¹⁵ Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

– The legal limit for sin. Jesus says to the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23:32

³² Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. Legal limit for sin.

Concerning the Jews who rejected Christ and the Gospel and persecuted those who believed, we read in:

1 Thessalonians 2:15-16

¹⁵ *who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, ¹⁶forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.*

That's the legal limit of sin which they exceeded and wrath or the judgment of God came upon them. Completing one's iniquity, filling up the measure of one's guilt or sins is reaching God's legal limit for sin. The Canaanites reached that legal limit and God used Israel as His instruments of punishment. Whatever you do, don't reach that limit. The Canaanites reached the legal limit that God has set, and God used Israel as His instrument of punishment.

Friend, why don't you pause and think about the way you have been living your life. Repent and turn or return to God, lest you reach God's legal limit for sin.

Let's go now to our discussion proper: The Ploy of Gibeon.

Israel had started executing God's judgment against the Canaanites, the Amorites, East of River Jordan, led by Sihon and Og, as well as Jericho and Ai on the western side of Jordan. These had already been vanquished.

The people of Gibeon, *Caphira*, *Beeroth*, and *Kirjath-jearim*, in verse 17 of our text, knew that they were next; and so their leaders thought of what to do to escape the fate that others had suffered. There were others in the same region who faced the same fate but took a different decision.

Joshua 9:1-2

¹*And it came to pass when all the kings who were on this side of the Jordan, in the hills and in the lowland and in all the coasts of the Great Sea toward Lebanon—the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite—heard about it, ²that they gathered together to fight with Joshua and Israel with one accord.*

That was the decision they took. That was what they decided to do. They gathered together to fight with Joshua and Israel with one accord.

Two people can face the same problem yet have different outcomes. Why? The choices or the decisions they make.

There were three friends, many years ago, who completed their studies in England. Their next task was how to return to Nigeria. Two of them chose to return by ship. That time that was the main mode of transportation – across the seas. And the other one returned by air and took a job before the rest came back. And he remained their senior on the job until they retired. The two friends in the same both hated him for that.

The Gibeonites chose not to fight with God; for it was He, God, who fought for Israel. They thought of a ploy. What I mean by a ploy...the dictionary says it is a cunning plan or action designed to turn a situation to one's own advantage. And that was exactly what they did. They had a ploy; and their ploy is stated in our text,

Joshua 9:3-6

³ But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, ⁴ they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, ⁵ old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and moldy. ⁶ And they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us."

That was their ploy.

What was the folly of Israel?

We have seen the cunning plan of Gibeon to turn their dangerous situation to their own advantage. But what is the folly or the foolishness of Israel? The folly of Israel was in entering into a covenant with the people that God had set apart for destruction.

Joshua 9:15

¹⁵ *So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them.*

This was actually the culmination of Israel's folly. Their folly is found in verses 7, 8 and 14.

- i. They dismissed their healthy skepticism easily and quickly; because in verse 7, they said, *"Perhaps you live among us.* They were skeptical. But they dismissed their skepticism very quickly.
- ii. They asked the right question from the wrong persons. They said, *who are you?* They were not the right persons to ask that question.
- iii. They engaged in an unhelpful scrutiny or examination. They took some of their food, in verse 14a and examined it – and examined it. And then, finally,
- iv. They failed...that is the *crops* of the matter. They failed to ask for God's involvement. And that is in verse 14b.

¹⁴ Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the LORD.

Whereas entering into a covenant with the Gibeonites was a culmination of Israel's folly, failure to involve God was the crowning of their folly.

Friend, failure to listen to God, failure to seek the face of God got Israel into a serious trouble.

What about you?

Let us pray.

PRAYER:

Father, we thank You for Your Word. Our prayer is that we do not fall into the folly of Israel, disregarding You in the decisions we make in life, in the choices we make in life. May it not be so for my friend, in Jesus Name. Amen!