

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

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.

We are back to the message we started last week: The Ploy of Gibeon and the Folly of Israel, from the Book of Joshua 9:1-15. But we are going to read from verse 3.

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?"

⁹ So they said to him: "From a very far country your servants have come, because of the name of the LORD your God; for we have heard of His fame, and all that He did in Egypt, ¹⁰ and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan—to Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who was at Ashtaroth. ¹¹ Therefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, 'Take provisions with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say to them, "We are your servants; now therefore, make a covenant with us."' ¹² This bread of ours we took hot for our provision from our houses on the day we departed to come to you. But now look, it is dry and moldy. ¹³ And these wineskins which we filled were new, and see, they are torn; and these our garments and our sandals have become old because of the very long journey."

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 [swore that they would not be destroyed].

PRAYER:

Dear Lord, open our understanding this moment, that we may comprehend the wonderful things out of Your Word, in Jesus Name. Amen!

We observed last time the command that God gave to His people Israel to destroy the people who lived in what was known then as Canaan. In Deuteronomy 7, and then of course before...then Exodus 23, God gave them the instruction to destroy the inhabitants. And one may say, but this is not fair. How can God destroy a whole group of people? And we said it's simply this fact that God has a legal limit for sin. And when people go beyond it God does not have any choice but to judge them.

Way back in Genesis 15 God told Abraham that the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet complete. That is, they have not reached the legal limit for sin. And whenever anybody or any group of people continue persistent sin, and cross that line – God must surely judge. And so, that is why the safest thing to do is to listen to God when He says, repent, turn away from your sin, and embrace the Saviour – the Lord Jesus Christ.

But a number of men and women, boys and girls do not want to listen to God. They continue. And none of us knows when we will cross that line. The people living in the land of Canaan had crossed that line, and God's judgment was going to come through His people Israel.

And we saw that the people of Gibeon were wise. They heard what the God of Israel was already doing with their fellow inhabitants of the land. He had already dealt with Og and Sihon; He had already dealt with Jericho and Ai. And when they heard the terrible things that happened to these people they decided to protect themselves.

But on the other hand there was another group, in Joshua 9:1-2 who gathered together to fight Joshua and Israel. And they did it with one accord – but they lost eventually.

The ploy. By ploy we said last time that it is a cunning plan or action designed to turn a situation to one's own advantage. That was what the Gibeonites did. They turned the situation to their advantage by *cunning*. They pretended they came from a faraway land. Because God said to Israel those who lived faraway you could make peace with them if they agreed to make peace. But those within the territory that you are supposed to occupy you must destroy. So they came pretending to have come from far away country. But they lived next door as it were.

But then the folly of Israel we saw was the fact that they made covenant with the people they were supposed to destroy. And the reason why this ploy succeeded was because:

- i. Israel dismissed their healthy skepticism very easily. They were skeptical in verse 7, ⁷ *Then the men of Israel said to the Hivites, "Perhaps you dwell among us; so how can we make a covenant with you?"* But they did not pursue that skepticism. They dismissed it very quickly.
- ii. They asked the right question but from the wrong persons. In verse 8 Joshua asked them, *who are you, and where do you come from?* These are the wrong people to ask such a question. The Person they should have asked such question was God. Who are these people; where have they come from? But they did not do that.
- iii. They engaged in an unhelpful scrutiny or examination. In verse 14a, ¹⁴ *Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions to examine them.* But they did not get anything out of it. But the serious thing was that they failed to ask God.
- iv. Joshua 9:14b, *but they did not ask counsel of the LORD.*

And we said last time that whereas entering into a covenant with the Gibeonites was the culmination of Israel's folly, failure to involve God was the crowning of their folly.

Now let's go quickly to the lessons from this text.

Our main concern is not with the ploy of Gibeon, but with the folly of the people of God then and with the folly of the people of God now. From Israel's folly, we learn the following lessons:

1. Never take the commands of God lightly.

Whatever God devotes for destruction must be destroyed. What have you done with the *canaanites* in your life, friend? No wonder Jesus says, if your

eye will cause you to stumble, pluck it out. If your hand will cause you to offend God, cut it off. He's not talking about mutilation. He's talking about dealing drastically with those things God frowns at.

2. The decisions you make today you will live with tomorrow. So choose wisely.

Two parents pampered their only son. Any time he did something that the community would expect him to discipline him for they will take him into the room, lock the door, and will be hitting the bed, and ask him to cry. And the neighbors were deceived. They thought they were disciplining their child. This only son became useless, spent his time in and out of jail – prison.

3. Make the right decisions in life. You must not dismiss your healthy skepticisms lightly and quickly, for they can save you from making a wrong choice. Healthy skepticism has this maxim, if any thing sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
4. Ask the right questions from the right sources; for they are the stuff of which good decision are made. Two heads are still better than one, though not two cocoyam heads.
5. Do not waste your time in unhelpful endless analysis of people: the way they greeted me, the way they looked at me, the way they smiled at me, the way they frowned at me, and the way they sat before me, the way they stood behind me
6. – Do not engage in endless analysis of situations – either. Over analysis will lead you to paralysis. You will not do anything.
7. Do not say I do until you hear God say – do. If you do not listen to God, if you do not hear from God, you will likely lick the dust of misery and pain.

Friend, can you learn from the folly of Israel? To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Let us pray

PRAYER:

Father, we thank You again for the time You've been with us as we reasoned in Your Word. I commit my friends into Your hand. Dear Lord, I pray for those who have made wrong choices in life and are suffering the effect. I pray that You deliver them, in the Name of Jesus. And I pray for those who have not yet fallen into error that You keep them away from making bad choices, in Jesus Name. Amen!