Joshua 9

ISRAEL DECEIVED BY GIBEON

- Joshua 9: 3-27

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  I. Gibeon’s Deception

  A. The Gibeonites were Hivites (descendants of Canaan, the cursed son of Ham; Gen. 9:25).

  1. “Hivite” in Hebrew signifies serpents, one who uses wile, i.e., deceiving by telling lies: bread, bottles, clothes (12,13).

  2. Everything in the Gibeonites explanation was designed to appeal to Israel’s pride.

  B. Israel is now back in Gilgal, where God “rolled away the reproach of Egypt from” them (5:9).

  1. A constant part of the believer’s spiritual warfare is in maintaining dedication to God by mortifying our pride.

  2. That which made Israel and Joshua’s fall more serious is that they were initially cautious (7,8b).

  II. What was the failure of Joshua and of the princes of Israel?

  A. They failed to give God His proper place: they “asked not counsel at the mouth of Jehovah” (14b).

  1. God had commanded that “at His word shall they go out, and at His word they shall come in” (Num. 27:21).

  2. This is the second time after their entrance into Canaan that they failed to consult God first (first attack against Ai).

B. Israel “made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live” and the princes “sware unto them” (15).

C.The deception and folly are soon discovered when three days later the army advanced from Gilgal to the area of Gibeon.

III. It was Israel’s honor that they kept the covenant they swore with the Gibeonites and did not destroy them (21).

A. The fear of God overcame them.

1. They had taken an oath, a solemn appeal to Jehovah to observe and to judge the one making the oath.

2. God saw it as an oath: He severely judged Israel with 3 years of famine because Saul killed Gibeonites (II Sam. 21:1).

B. The Gibeonites were allowed to live, but their liberty was taken from them.

C.Israel’s folly was overruled by God for they were later given higher service (called Nethinim – Ezra 2:43,58; Neh. 3:7,26).

D.Though we belong to an accursed race, yet our lives are spared on the ground of a covenant made by oath.