

## The Wiles of the Devil

Joshua Series: 12 of 18

**Text: Joshua 9**

**Aim: To show that we must always depend upon God and that Satan is devious in his attempts in thwarting our walk with God.**

### INTRODUCTION

**A**FTER ISRAEL CROSSED OVER THE JORDAN RIVER, under the leadership of Joshua, they quite easily, as they depended upon the Lord, took the city of Jericho. But, due to their prayerlessness and over-confidence in themselves, they sent just a few thousand men up to capture the city of Ai.

#### **A. Israel was soundly defeated**

Their failure resulted from **TWO FACTORS**: 1] there was a lack of dependence upon God's strength and 2] the fact that Achan had taken of the "*accursed thing*" in Jericho, stealing those things that were to be dedicated to God—these two things accounted for their defeat at Ai.

#### **B. The defeat greatly perplexed Joshua**

Throwing himself to the ground in prayer, he sought God's answer for this humiliation of defeat, as he had no idea for the reason. The Lord revealed that there was sin in the camp. Israel immediately set out to remedy the cause of their failure and to make things right with God.

After their defeat at Ai because of the hidden sin, in **CHAPTER 8** God gave them a **second chance** to do His will and said to Joshua in vs.1 "*Fear not, neither be thou dismayed ... I have given into thy hand the king of Ai!*" Once they removed sin from their lives and realized their necessity to fully depend on the Lord, they got down to the business of praying. **THEY LEARNED** that the victory was the Lord's and not solely from their efforts for it was God and He alone Who gave them victory at Ai.

The destruction of Jericho and the overthrow of Ai struck terror into the hearts of the neighbouring inhabitants of Palestine. They wondered, which city would be next?

The Canaanites were perplexed how could they defend themselves from Israel's threat?

Israel's move from East to West virtually divided the land in two. **CHAPTER 9:1-2** tells us that many of the Canaanite kings to the North reasoned that their safety lied in a united opposition to Israel, so they organized their forces for battle.

**DO NOTE:** they grouped themselves according to 3 geographical areas;

1] hill country of central Palestine; 2] valleys & lowlands of the western foothills;

3] coastal plains of the Mediterranean.

#### **C. Do You not think it is strange that God's people should find it more difficult to unite than their enemies do?**

During the siege of Jerusalem, the Jews were divided among themselves when Titus and his legions were at the city gates in 70 A.D. So today, Christians are quarrelling among themselves when Satan and his hoards are attacking the very foundations of Biblical Christianity. While we strive, the enemy of souls comes and carries off the prize for which we are contending. The heathen are a rebuke to us in their united stand against us.

#### **D. Let us remind ourselves that the Bible was written for our admonition and that the book of Joshua has practical lessons for believers today!**

1. The taking of Canaan by Joshua and Israel is a spiritual picture and type of believers engaging the foes, which face them in their quest for spiritual maturity and victory.

- a. In the path of believers there are a number of foes, which the Devil doesn't want us to have victory over nor to be on top of spiritually.
  - b. If he can't stop the unbelievers from becoming Christians, He wants the believers to live defeated lives as Christians. He will and does everything in His power to prevent us from living victoriously and to keep us from conquering sin in our lives.
2. All through the book of Joshua, we can clearly see the battle of believers in coming to that place of spiritual victory and maturity.
  3. Just as the nations of Canaan got concerned about the victories of the children of Israel, so too does Satan get concerned when you and I win a couple of battles.
    - a. You may be feeling on top of the world today because you have experienced getting the victory over something, BUT – I warn you—LOOK OUT!!
    - b. Just as Canaan in **Chap. 9** formed an alliance against Israel, so Satan is mobilizing all his forces to fight against you!
    - c. We'll find later in Joshua that Israel had little trouble with this alliance, BECAUSE God's people were united in their obedience to the Lord. They quite easily whipped this alliance.
  4. But Israel did have some problems and it came from the very next city on their agenda of conquests – Gibeon!
    - a. Gibeon lay southwest of Ai and was only 6 ½ miles away!
    - b. Gibeon was an important city according to **Josh. 10:2** and was also the name of an area that included THREE other Hivite cities (SEE 9:17).
    - c. These cities knew of Israel's victories and were terrified that they were to be next.

***E. NOW, PLEASE be aware! IF you have recently acquired victory over some sinful area of your Christian life the Devil more than likely knows of your victory and also knows about the other sins in your life that you are about to get out after and attack.***

1. Satan is fearful that you will win the victory over those things!
  - a. He is aware that God has given you and I the power to have victory in our lives and there is no way — i.e. no way once you have committed yourself to the task that ANY sin in your life can stand!
  - b. We have been given victory over every sin!  
Their days are numbered and so were the Gibeonites!
2. Gibeonites had every reason to be fearful because they knew they were next!
  - a. They knew Israel was not in the habit of sparing any of its enemies.
  - b. They knew what had happened to Jericho and Ai and they had every reason to assume that in the next couple of days the same thing would happen to them.
    - 1) **AND it should have! LOOK >> Deut. 7:1-5.**
    - 2) Note the 7 pagan nations mentioned **vs. 1** – Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and the Jebusites.
    - 3) Now in case it passed you notice in **Josh. 9:7 cp. 17** that the Gibeonites were Hivites **LOOK >> also in Josh 11:19. These people were all doomed!**
3. The four of the Northern nations in **Joshua 9:1** decided to form an alliance, but Gibeon in **vs. 3-4** determined to act otherwise.
  - a. They figured a direct encounter with Israel didn't work before, so why should they try that again?
  - b. They were convinced Israel couldn't be defeated by an all out war.

- 1) What Jericho could not do with their walls, or Ai with their weapons, the Gibeonites accomplished with *wililness*, i.e. deceit!
  - 2) *Satan* is not only a roaring lion, but also a *wilily serpent* – a sly fox.
4. **The Devil also knows** he won't whip us if he brings all the weapons of his arsenal and armies out into the open.
- a. As a believer, you'd quickly be able to repulse that kind of attack.
  - b. The most inexperienced believer would stiffen their resolve to stand by God and His Word and not be fooled by Satan's confrontation for one minute.
  - c. The devil knows this! So, he put a plan into the mind of the Gibeonites to deceive Israel.

In that plan, we learn a great deal ABOUT THE WILES OF THE DEVIL and his wisdom.

- Satan knows the best way to get at a Christian is to deceive him. **MARK IT DOWN!!**
- He knows the best way to bring you down is not by a frontal attack but by a sneaky trick! —He is both Lion and Serpent!
- A sneaky trick is exactly what Gibeon pulled. Let me repeat, what Jericho couldn't do with walls or Ai with weapons, the Gibeonites accomplished with wililness, i.e. deceit!

**Notice 3 things in this Chapter.**

1. The *SCHEME* of the Gibeonites.
2. The *SUCCESS* of the Gibeonites.
3. The *SEQUEL* of the Gibeonites.

**I. SCHEME OF THE GIBEONITES – VS. 3-5**

**A. The Gibeonites Knew Time Was Short.**

1. They had to act quickly if they were to survive for Israel was on the start of a winning streak.
2. The devil also knows he must act quickly to stop you, if you are experiencing victory.

**3. After a victory, it is the most dangerous time for Israel and for us as believers. —It is when we are prone to be over-confident and self-dependent.**

- a. Satan tries one device after another to Defeat God's people. We must constantly be on guard.
- b. It was after the victory at Jericho that Israel was defeated by Ai; AND it was after the victory at Ai that they were deceived.

**B. The Gibeonites Evidently Knew Israel's Plan To Deal With Nations SEE >> Deut. 20:10-18**

Apparently they were aware of this provision in the Mosaic Law permitting Israel to make peace with cities that were a considerable distance away, but required them to wipe out completely the cities of the 7 nearby Canaanite nations. REF >> **Joshua 9:24.**

1. Satan doesn't know everything—he is not omniscient (all-knowing). But realize this – Satan and his demons have been studying human nature since Adam and Eve.
2. The satanic horde watches what is a temptation to us as individuals. The movement of our eyes, how we react to situations, what we read and listen to—they know us! Probably, better than we know ourselves!

**C. Gibeonites knew they could make peace with Israel if Israel thought they were from afar off.**

1. Vs. 3-6 – They pretended to be from a far country.

2. Vs. 7-8 – Israel wondered, “Why should we make league with them, who were they & where did they come from?” **NOTICE:** though the text calls them Hivites, Israel didn’t know who they were.
3. Vs. 6-7, 9-10 – They said they wanted to make a *“league,”* i.e. covenant cooperative because having heard of the fame of God in His dealings with men they didn’t want to die.
  - a. Shrewdly, they never mentioned Israel’s victories over Jericho and Ai.
  - b. They knew that if they were to feign coming from a supposed “far country” they wouldn’t have heard of those recent battles.
4. Vs. 11-13 – Disguised themselves as ambassadors of peace, they wanted to make a pact with God’s people.

**D. Satan is smart! Just as the worldly-Gibeonites disguised themselves to deceive Joshua into sparing them, so Satan disguises certain sins, pet sins.**

1. By concealing the true identity of certain sins, we don’t recognize them and therefore we spare them and they are alive and active in our lives.
2. Obvious sin is easy to detect and to get the victory over.  
BUT Deceptive sin, that lives on and on—it is allowed to grow.
3. God said that every individual in Canaan was to be destroyed – no one was allowed to live. So should every sin in your life be destroyed!  
Each and every one needs to be exterminated!
4. Satan should not be allowed to deceive us into letting one of these sins live – if he does, we are in danger of defeat or in the least of being hindered in our walk with God!
  - a. **Eph. 4:27** instructs us to give no place to the devil!
  - b. Do you know why on cold nights the caravan driver never lets his camel get his nose inside his tent? Because if you give him a nose, he’ll take over the tent!
5. God emphatically says we are to make no league with sin.
  - a. **Heb. 3:13** speaks of becoming hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.
  - b. **2 Cor. 11:13-15** speaks about Satan transforming himself as an angel of light as a deceiver.
6. Satan will successfully disguise:
  - Self-will as Holy zeal;
  - Anger and wrath as righteous indignation;
  - Impatience as being spiritually earnest;
  - Cruelty of parents with their children as being good disciplinarians;
  - Pride will be disguised as spiritual maturity – it is boastful;
  - Willful habit as a thorn in the flesh;
  - Gossip as fellowship.

## II. SUCCESS OF THE GIBEONITES

- “How was Joshua deceived,” you ask? *The same reason you get deceived.*
- “Why did He let them live,” you ask? *The same reason you hang on to your sin in your life.*

**A. Why were the Gibeonites successful and why was Israel deceived?**

**Vs. 14 – “The men took of their victuals.”**

1. First, they accepted as evidence things that should have been highly questionable.

- a. Joshua & the nation were deceived by what they saw – the judgement of their senses led them astray.
  - 1) PLEASE be aware that everything is not always as it appears.
  - 2) The old prospector warned a greenhorn gold-digger says, “I want you know that all that glitters isn’t necessarily gold. There is stuff called “fools gold” it is pyrite and is worthless to you.”
- b. The things Israel touched and viewed were real – but the error was in the conclusions drawn by them.
  - 1) Sure the bread was mouldy – but it wasn’t because of the long journey.
  - 2) Natural disasters don’t necessarily prove God’s anger, nor does it prove He isn’t a loving God.
  - 3) PROSPERITY isn’t conclusive evidence of God’s favour nor is ADVERSITY a sign of God’s displeasure.
  - 4) Religious experience doesn’t prove spirituality: tongues, apparitions, etc.

### ***I once heard a charismatic priest...***

...On a T.V. station (CBN in Va.) profess that he was born again because he saw a vision of a cross and lamb on the Chesapeake Bay. He gave not one Scripture, there was no testimony of ever having repented of sin nor did he expose any errors of the Roman Catholic Church. The audience cheered and clapped, while the programme moderator praised Jesus for this wonderful event!

2. The second reason why the Gibeonites were successful in deceiving Israel is found in vs. 14 – they *“asked not counsel at the at the mouth of the Lord.”*
  - a. You would have thought they’d learned their lesson at Ai – *they didn’t pray then and there and they didn’t pray here and now!*
  - b. Israel resorted to human wisdom & reasoning, relying upon their senses. **James 1:5** – *“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”*
    - 1) They accepted the evidence presented to them beyond question.
      - a) They must have reasoned there was no need to seek the advice from Jehovah.
      - b) Maybe they thought that the matter was too routine or too trivial to bother God with?
    - 2) Whatever the cause, it was a mistake to trust their own judgement and make their own plans without consulting their heavenly Father. This holds true for believers of all ages >> **SEE James 4:13-15.**
  - c. We ought to pray about every decision! —If we would, we’d never be deceived by the Gibeonites!

### ***B. Israel had every means available to them not to be deceived!***

1. They had the RESOURCE of the “Power of Prayer.” They had the privilege to communicate with the Captain of the Host at any time day or night and so do you, if you are a believer.
2. They could have RECALLED the law that was just read to them prior to this incident in *Joshua 8:34-35*.
3. They could have REMEMBERED God’s instructions and promises concerning of the land of Canaan in *Ex. 23:20-33*. Here they were told to destroy everybody and not to make a covenant or league with them.

4. Their action of disobeying God’s Word in accepting the Gibeonites is the same as when the preacher tells you something on Sunday that you ought not to do so and so and as soon as you leave the service, you go out and conduct yourself as if you never heard different.

### III. SEQUEL OF THE GIBEONITES

#### A. *Because of the success of the Gibeonites DECEPTION, Joshua & Israel entered into a league with them – Vs.15.*

1. Israel yoked themselves in an unholy alliance with unholy people.
2. There is no evidence that Gibeonites were ever converted – they came as idol worshippers and immoral people and they continued to be the same.

#### B. *Vs. 16,17 – Israel Discovered Their Scheme.*

1. Israel was tricked into an alliance which they couldn’t break because they made a sacred vow **cp. vs. 15, 18.**
2. They were bound to live in peace with the Gibeonites and even protect them, as will be seen in our study of Chapter 10.
3. In just 3 short days after their alliance Israel learned they had been “had.” They learned that Gibeonites lived only 25 mi. from Gilgal – not in some far country!
4. LESSONS on lying and deceit.
  - a. **Prov. 12:19** – *“A lying is but for a moment.”*
    - 1) Sooner or later trickery & deceit are exposed. **Num. 32:23** warns *“be sure your sin will find you out.”*
    - 2) **Pro. 20:17** instructs us that *“Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.”* We never truly gain ground by lying or living a life of deceit.
  - b. We can learn also that nations need to be aware whom they make league with.
  - c. Christians need to be aware whom they make league with in their marriages, business partnerships, and religious endeavours (2 Cor. 6:11-18).

#### C. *Decision Of Israeli Leaders Vs.18-19*

1. Israel was provoked to anger because of their leaders indiscretion.
2. Unwittingly, they created a sacred treaty that protected the Gibeonites. To break it would bring down the wrath of God, as it later came during David’s reign because of Saul >> **2 Sam. 21:1-6.**
3. Though Joshua & the princes kept their integrity and did not go back on their pledge this was one decision they wished they could go back on – **Josh. 9:20-27.**
4. For us, there will be crucial, life-shaping decisions that if we make hastily, relying on our own wisdom we’ll wish we could take back, but won’t be able to.

**NOTE:** Instead of freedom, the Gibeonites were made slaves of the Israelis and in order to keep them from practising their idolatry and completely defiling the nation, Israel had them carry out work in connection with the tabernacle where they would be exposed to the worship of the one true God. For some this proved to be a blessing.

In **Josh. 10:10-14** God worked a great miracle in defence the Gibeonites against the Amorites; in **2 Chron. 1:3** the tabernacle ended up being pitched at Gibeon; and in **Neh. 3:7** some Gibeonites freely volunteered to help Nehemiah rebuild Jerusalem’s walls. But for all of them, the very thing the Gibeonites hoped to attain they lost—their freedom!

**D. Israel Received The Displeasure Of Almighty God – Josh. 23:12-13 cp. Jdgs. 2:1-3**

1. Oh, now how Israel regrets not having spent time in prayer and gaining God's insight and wisdom.
2. This very sin prevented them from obtaining total victory in the land.
  - a. This sin will continue to be with them until the end of time.
  - b. Because they failed to pray, and then failed to obey in **Jdgs. 1:28-36**, God's covenant was no longer valid when said in **Jdgs. 2:3** "*I will not drive them out*" – the inhabitants would continue to be pricks in their sides – drawing Jewish blood even today.
3. If you are fooled by sin and have been deceived, realise that very deception will prevent you from becoming a victorious Christian.
4. REMEMBER, Satan does not want you to have victory – BUT Listen up! God does!

**IV. HOW CAN WE AVOID BEING DECEIVED?**

1. Saturate yourself with the Word of God.
2. Take time to begin each day with personal devotions and let God guide the coming hours and events that unfold.
3. Discipline yourself to read the Bible through at least once a year.
4. See that you attend all the preaching & Bible study times, BUT understand that nothing replaces the time you take to personally to study God's Word.
5. We must refrain from "*judging after the flesh*" (Jn. 8:15) and depending upon our senses.
6. We need to spend much time on your knees in prayer asking for God's wisdom & protection.

26 Aug. 1984 – Lifegate Bible BC – Dublin

1 Dec. '91 - Calvary B.F. – Cork

19/26 Jan., 03 – River Valley BC – Leixlip, Co. Kildare

30 August 2009, Eve – River Valley BC – Leixlip, Co. Kildare

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