

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

Turn with me to the book of Ephesians 6,

I have repeatedly reminded you that the book of Ephesians is the book of Joshua in the New Testament.

**[Eph 6:11 NKJV] 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.**

Now, we really don't use the word "wiles" in our vocabulary.

The word wiles means schemes or deceptions.

Tricks.

Through the use of these schemes, is how Satan attempts to trip us up.

These wiles are the tools that Satan uses in causing us to walk away from the path that the Lord has set for you and me.

And this has been going on since the Garden of Eden.

Eve gave in to the wiles of the devil.

You will not surely die Eve – go ahead and take a bite.

Did the serpent know what he was doing all along – of course.

However, Paul tells us that by putting the entire armor of God, we may be able to discern the schemes of the devil.

Through prayer, through His word we can be prepared to counter Satan's strategy.

However, when we rely on our own understanding to combat Satan's schemes - that is when we are deceived and do things contrary to the Word of God.

This is exactly what is going to happen to Joshua and the Children of Israel in our text this morning.

Let's pray...

**[Jos 9:1-27 NKJV] 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], 2 that they gathered together to fight with Joshua and Israel with one accord.**

The Children of Israel are back on track.

After their humiliating defeat against Ai in chapter 7, we saw them return to adhering and trusting the word of God and they easily conquered Ai in chapter 8.

So now, they have a victory over Jericho and Ai and the inhabitants – all of the cities are worried because they know that it is only a matter of time before the Children of Israel conquer all of Canaan.

Not only are the Children of Israel conquering the cities, they are taking no prisoners. They are killing everyone.

Every man, woman and child was killed in both Jericho and Ai.

And the reason that they killed everyone was that God commanded it.

**[Deu 7:1-2 NKJV] 1 "When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, 2 "and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them [and] utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.**

There will be many people that will say, "What kind of God would order the extermination of an entire group of people?"

And the answer, a merciful and gracious God.

Because God gave them four hundred years to repent from their debauchery and depravity. And they chose not to repent.

So the kings of all these ites come together to come up with a plan to defeat the Children of Israel militarily – on the field of battle.

**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."**

The city of Gibeon was part of the Hivites.

They were one of the seven "ites" that were on the list for judgment that we just read in Deuteronomy.

However, they are going to take a different strategy in combatting the Children of Israel.

They don't want to fight them in the battlefield so they come up with a way to deceive the Israelites into making a peace treaty with them.

I asked you to make note of the word – craftily – because the word that is used here in Hebrew is the same Greek word that Paul uses Ephesians 6:11.

The Gibeonites are scheming on how to deceive the Israelites.

They give the impression that they are no threat to the Children of Israel by their appearance – old sacks, old wineskins, old and patched sandals and dry and moldy bread

And they also tell the Israelites that they come from a far-away land.

Now, the Children of Israel were only commanded to take no prisoners when it came to those that dwelled upon the Promised Land.

There were other rules of engagement for those nations that resided outside the Promised Land.

Turn to Deut 20,

**[Deu 20:10-15 NKJV] 10 "When you go near a city to fight against it, then proclaim an offer of peace to it. 11**

**"And it shall be that if they accept your offer of peace, and open to you, then all the people [who are] found in it shall be placed under tribute to you, and serve you. 12**

**"Now if [the city] will not make peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it. 13**

**"And when the LORD your God delivers it into your hands, you shall strike every male in it with the edge of the sword. 14 "But the women, the little ones, the livestock, and all that is in the city, all its spoil, you shall plunder for yourself; and you shall eat the enemies' plunder which the LORD your God gives you. 15 "Thus**

**you shall do to all the cities [which are] very far from you, which [are] not of the cities of these nations.**

So the Israelites were allowed peace treaties – however, it could only be with cities that were not on the list.

**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."

As the Gibeonites come before the Israelites, the Israelites are skeptical at first.

They don't know that they are being deceived.

They don't know that Gibeonites reside within the Promised Land.

So the Israelites start asking questions.

Who are you again?

And when the Gibeonites see that the Israelites are asking all these questions – they resort to greater deception to distract them from having to answer their objections.

And they do this through false humility.

We are your servants Joshua.

We come from far away Joshua.

We come because we heard of what your God did in Egypt and to the two Amorite kings.

Notice that they didn't mention Jericho or Ai?

Why?

Because they want to keep the appearance that they are from a far distant country.

Notice that they also acknowledge God's work – but they still fail come with a repentant heart.

When we studied Rahab in chapter, she stated the same thing but demonstrated faith.

The Gibeonites are not demonstrating faith, they want to save themselves through their own means.

**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.**

I asked you to underline the word “took” –

The indication of this word is that the Israelites took some of their provisions not for themselves but to examine them.

They wanted to look at the moldy bread and make sure it was moldy. They wanted to examine the wineskins and verify that they were old.

They want to verify the story that Gibeonites have brought before them.

However, all they are relying upon is their senses.

Does it look legit, does it smell legit???

However, their senses cannot provide them with the intentions of the Gibeonites.

God would have provided the Israelites with the intentions of the Gibeonites -

But they did not ask council of the Lord.

Church, think of all the decisions we make – and how many of those we make without seeking the council of the Lord.

Choosing our mate – what is our criteria?

Do they live in their mother's basement? No – good

Do they have a job?

Do they have a criminal record?

Do they have addictions?

But how many of us seek the council of the Lord???

Is this the person that You have selected for me????

Our senses tell us that he/she is perfect and then months later we find ourselves in an unequally yoked relationship and our Christian walk is compromised.

Choosing a job – what is our criteria?

How much does it pay?

How far is it from my house?

Will I get traffic?

But do we seek council of the Lord???

Is this Your will or my will???

Our senses will fail us.

But God will never fail us.

**[Phi 4:6 NKJV] 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in  
everything by prayer and supplication, with  
thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;**

God wants us to come to Him with everything – no thing is too small for Him.

**Church, when we neglect prayer – it suggests pride in our  
own judgment – and that church is always fatal.**

This is the biggest mistake that Joshua makes.

He relies on his own understanding and proceeds to make a peace treaty with the Gibeonites – going against the will of God.

This is the second time Joshua has failed to pray –  
remember after Jericho, he relied on his own understanding

and on the report from the spies on how they were going to attack Ai – and they lose bigtime.

We thought he learned his lesson in the last chapter – but he fails the test once again.

**16 And it happened at the end of three days, after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they [were] their neighbors who dwelt near them.**

Three days – that is all it took for the Children of Israel to realize that they had been deceived.

The Gibeonites didn't live far away like they claimed they lived not too far from where the Children of Israel were.

Again, this could have all been prevented if they had sought the council of the Lord.

**17 Then the children of Israel journeyed and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities [were] Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath Jearim. 18 But the children of Israel did not attack them, because the rulers of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the congregation complained against the rulers. 19 Then all the rulers said to all the congregation, "We have sworn to them by the LORD God of Israel; now therefore, we may not touch them.**

The Children of Israel had made a promise to the Gibeonites that they wouldn't attack them.

So despite them finding out that they had been deceived, the rulers still honored their promise to the Gibeonites.

And the reason for that is that God expects us to keep our promises, even if we don't seek His council when we make them.

Whether it is our marriage – God expects us to honor our marriage

Our debt – yes, we still have to pay our debt even if we accumulated our debt while being carnal.

And even the promises that we make to our children. If we can't keep our promises, then we shouldn't be making them in the first place.

The Children of Israel will see the effects of not honoring their promises years later.

Turn with me to 2 Samuel 21

**[2Sa 21:1-6 NKJV] 1 Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, "[It is] because of Saul and [his] bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites." 2 So the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them. Now the Gibeonites [were] not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; the children of Israel had sworn protection to them, but Saul had sought to kill them in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah. 3 Therefore David said to the Gibeonites, "What shall I do for you? And with what shall I make atonement, that you may bless the inheritance of the LORD?" 4 And the Gibeonites said to him, "We will have no silver or gold from Saul or from**

**his house, nor shall you kill any man in Israel for us." So he said, "Whatever you say, I will do for you." 5 Then they answered the king, "As for the man who consumed us and plotted against us, [that] we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the territories of Israel, 6 "let seven men of his descendants be delivered to us, and we will hang them before the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, [whom] the LORD chose." And the king said, "I will give [them]."**

Apparently when Saul had been king, he had gone on a military mission to wipe out these same Gibeonites.

Because of Saul's attack on the Gibeonites, they had cried out to God, and the result was that God brought a famine on the land until David came along to resolve the issue.

That is when the Gibeonites asked David to put to death some of Saul's sons as retribution,

And it wasn't until the Gibeonites were satisfied that justice had been served that the famine and drought ended and the rains came.

**20 "This we will do to them: We will let them live, lest wrath be upon us because of the oath which we swore to them." 21 And the rulers said to them, "Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers for all the congregation, as the rulers had promised them."**

The rulers had to find out what to do with the Gibeonites – they could kill them because they made a treaty with them. So they decided to control them by making them servants in the tabernacle.

They would be the ones that would have to gather the wood for the offerings and bring in the water to wash the altars – that was going to be their job.

**22 Then Joshua called for them, and he spoke to them, saying, "Why have you deceived us, saying, 'We [are] very far from you,' when you dwell near us? 23 "Now therefore, you [are] cursed, and none of you shall be freed from being slaves--woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God." 24 So they answered Joshua and said, "Because your servants were clearly told that the LORD your God commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you; therefore we were very**

**much afraid for our lives because of you, and have done this thing.**

Here in verse 24, after Joshua confronts them about their deception, the Gibeonites come clean and confess.

They believed God's judgment was going to come – they feared for their lives and that is why they lied.

The consequences for their deception –

- They lose their freedom – as they will always be slaves
- They lose their free will

**25 "And now, here we are, in your hands; do with us as it seems good and right to do to us."** 26 So he did to

**them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, so that they did not kill them. 27 And that day**

**Joshua made them woodcutters and water carriers for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, in the place which He would choose, even to this day.**

The Gibeonites are not happy that they will be wood cutters and water carriers for their rest of their lives.

However, they understand the alternative - had they chosen to battle the Israelites in the battlefield.

Even though they came with the wrong intentions, even though they were the deceivers – not only did they find salvation - their humiliation resulted in bringing glory to God.

Their humiliation resulted in the altar flame to continue to burn – as they are the ones that brought the wood.

And they also contributed in purifying the worship of God's people as they brought the water.

Church, thank God that He is able to overrule our sin and our mistakes, even to cause a curse to be turned into a blessing.

May we give Him the glory He truly deserves and may we seek His council in every decision that we make.

Amen

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.