



Learning from the Gentiles - the Gibeonites (Joshua 9)

Written for our learning

- A **whole chapter** devoted to the **only people** who made a treaty/covenant with Israel, during their conquest of Canaan
- As with the Rechabites, the Gibeonites **appear at key junctures thereafter**, showing the **covenant stood firm** e.g. times of Saul¹ (~400 years later) & return from captivity² (~1,000 years later)
- The tale of the Gibeonites comprises a **wonderful allegory...**

¹ 2 Samuel 21 v 1-9; ² Nehemiah 3 v 7 & 7 v 25

Some background

THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

JOSHUA 2:1 - 11:16

CENTRAL CAMPAIGN

- 1 JOSHUA SENDS SPIES TO JERICHO (2:1-24)
- 2 ISRAELITE CAMP IS ESTABLISHED AT GILGAL (4:13)
- 3 JERICHO FALLS OPENING THE WAY INTO CANAAN (6:1-27)
- 4 BATTLE OF AI - INITIAL ATTACK FAILS BUT AMBUSH DEFEATS THE CITY (8:1-26)

SOUTHERN CAMPAIGN

- 5 ISRAEL ATTACKS AMORITE COALITION AS PART OF TREATY WITH GIBEON (9-10:10)
- 6 AMORITES FLEE TO VALLEY OF AJALON WHERE THE SUN STANDS STILL (10:11-14)
- 7 CAPTURED AND DESTROYED THE CITY OF MAKKEDEH (10:16-28)
- 8 WARRED AGAINST THE CITY OF LIBNAH (10:29-30)
- 9 BESIEGED LACHISH & DESTROYED KING OF GEZER (10:31-33)
- 10 TOOK THE CITY OF EGLON (10:34-35)
- 11 WENT UP TO HEBRON & ATTACKED (10:36-37)
- 12 CONQUERED DEBIR (10:38-39)
- 13 JOSHUA DEFEATED THE CANAANITES FROM KADESH-BARNER TO GAZA (10:41)

NORTHERN CAMPAIGN

- 14 ISRAEL SURPRISES NORTHERN COALITION BY THE WATERS OF MEROM (11:7)
- 15 ISRAEL PURSUES RETREATING ENEMY TO SIDON AND THE VALLY OF MIZPAH (11:8)
- 16 JOSHUA TURNED BACK AND TOOK HAZOR (11:10)

SUMMARY OF LAND CONQUERED (11:16)

- JOSHUA TOOK THE HILL COUNTRY
- JOSHUA TOOK THE WHOLE SOUTHLAND
- JOSHUA TOOK THE WHOLE LAND OF GOSHER
- JOSHUA TOOK THE LOWLAND
- JOSHUA TOOK THE VALLEY
- JOSHUA TOOK THE HILL COUNTRY OF ISRAEL WITH ITS LOWLAND



- Three campaigns fought by Joshua and the children of Israel to subdue Canaan
- Sequentially, the Central, Southern & Northern lands were conquered
- Only one people saved from destruction, the Gibeonites, of the Hivites (Josh. 11 v 19)

CENTRAL CAMPAIGN

- 1 JOSHUA SENDS SPIES TO JERICHO (2:1-24)
- 2 ISRAELITE CAMP IS ESTABLISHED AT GILGAL (4:19)
- 3 JERICHO FALLS OPENING THE WAY INTO CANAAN (6:1-27)
- 4 BATTLE OF AI - INITIAL ATTACK FAILS BUT AMBUSH DEFEATS THE CITY (8:1-29)

SOUTHERN CAMPAIGN

- 5 ISRAEL ATTACKS AMORITE COALITION AS PART OF TREATY WITH GIBEON (9-10:10)
- 6 AMORITES FLEE TO VALLEY OF AJALON WHERE THE SUN STANDS STILL (10:11-14)
- 7 CAPTURED AND DESTROYED THE CITY OF MAKKEDEH (10:16-28)
- 8 WARRED AGAINST THE CITY OF LIBNAH (10:29-30)
- 9 BESIEGED LACHISH & DESTROYED KING OF GEZER (10:31-33)
- 10 TOOK THE CITY OF EGLON (10:34-35)
- 11 WENT UP TO HEBRON & ATTACKED (10:36-37)
- 12 CONQUERED DEBIR (10:38-39)
- 13 JOSHUA DEFEATED THE CANAANITES FROM KADESH-BARNER TO GAZA (10:41)

NORTHERN CAMPAIGN

- 14 ISRAEL SURPRISES NORTHERN COALITION BY THE WATERS OF MEROM (11:7)
- 15 ISRAEL PURSUES RETREATING ENEMY TO SIDON AND THE VALLY OF MIZPAH (11:8)
- 16 JOSHUA TURNED BACK AND TOOK HAZOR (11:10)

JOSHUA 2:1 -

SUMMARY OF LAND CONQUERED (11:16)

- JOSHUA TOOK THE HILL COUNTRY
- JOSHUA TOOK THE WHOLE SOUTHLAND
- JOSHUA TOOK THE WHOLE LAND OF GOSHER
- JOSHUA TOOK THE LOWLAND
- JOSHUA TOOK THE VALLEY
- JOSHUA TOOK THE HILL COUNTRY OF ISRAEL WITH ITS LOWLAND

The story in an abridged form

Chapter 9

- All Canaanites **gather themselves** to battle vs. Israel (v. 1-2)
- The Gibeonites, however, hearing about Jericho/Ai, make plans to **pretend** that they are from a far away country (v. 3-5)
- Believing this, Joshua/people **make a league** (RV: 'covenant') with them, having failed to first ask counsel of LORD (v. 6-15)
- After 3 days **truth is discovered**, Joshua questions them and they explain their motives, now becoming servants (v. 16-27)

Chapter 10

- The Amorites try to destroy the Gibeonites, who ask Joshua and people to save them; the **Gibeonites are rescued** (v. 1-14)

“Wiser than the children of light”

Luke 16

⁸ And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. ⁹ And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

- What did the **unjust steward** do? Answer: He used the means at his disposal to **secure his future...**
- This has read-across to both the **Gibeonites** (“did work wilily”¹) and also **ourselves** (God willing)!

¹ Joshua 9 v 4, Heb. *ormah* found 5 times in OT, translated: ‘with guile’, ‘wilily’, ‘subtilty’, ‘wisdom’, ‘prudence’

The faith of the Gibeonites

- It would be **wrong** to picture them as a small, forlorn, group!

Joshua 10

¹ Now it came to pass, when Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them; ² That they feared greatly, because Gibeon was **a great city**, as **one of the royal cities**, and because it was **greater than Ai**, and **all the men thereof were mighty**.

- Rather than trusting in their own hand, **they sought peace...**

The five acts of faith

* v. 3 [RV]
“But...”

Act of faith	Passage
<p><u>Allegiance</u> With only Jericho/Ai conquered by Israel, the Gibeonites nevertheless sought a league with God’s people <u>rather than</u> countrymen* (including their family tribe, the Hivites)</p>	<p>Ch. 9 v. 1-6 Ch. 9 v. 7</p>
<p><u>Comprehension</u> They seemed to show a knowledge of Divine law, that treaties could be made with people from far away cities</p>	<p>Ch. 9 v. 6 cp. Deut. 20 v. 10-15</p>
<p><u>Meekness</u> They recognised the power of God and their own need for salvation, given what had been said by the LORD to Moses</p>	<p>Ch. 9 v. 24</p>
<p><u>Subservience</u> Having made the league, they then placed themselves fully in the hand of Joshua, to do to/with them as he saw fit (became servants, cp. prophecy Genesis 9 v 25-26)</p>	<p>Ch. 9 v. 25</p>
<p><u>Humility</u> They requested help when the Amorites came to attack them because of the peace treaty with Israel, which help God both sanctioned and supported</p>	<p>Ch. 10 v. 6</p>

The allegory of the Gibeonites

- What the Gibeonites did is a **prophetic template for the coming in of the Gentiles to t**

- **Key:** the **failure of the Israel** opened the way for the Gibeonites



- The Gibeonites **became part of the newly established nation** and were subsumed within Benjamin (*four principal cities: Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth and Kirjath-jearim*)

Expanding the allegory (1)

Joshua chapters 9 & 10 – the Gibeonites	Allegory/pattern – the salvation of the Gentiles
“Gibeon heard what Joshua had done...” (9v3)	Gentiles hear of the work of Jesus Luke 2 v 30-32 & Acts 15 v 7
“they did work wilily” [NET: “they did something clever”] (9v4)	They apply wisdom and prudence, striving to come into a covenant relationship Acts 13 v 42, 46-48 & Romans 15 v 18
“they went to Joshua” (9v6)	The Gentiles come to Jesus John 6 v 65
“from a far country” (9v6) “from a very far country” (9v9)	Appearing to be from a far country Ephesians 2 v 17, 19
“we are thy servants” (9v8) “we are your servants” (9v11)	They commit to becoming servants to Jesus / God Romans 6 v 22 & Galatians 1 v 10
“come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him” (9v9)	It is God’s name and glory at the centre of all things Romans 15 v 9 & 1 Corinthians 10 v 31

Expanding the allegory (2)

Joshua chapters 9 & 10 – the Gibeonites	Allegory/pattern – the salvation of the Gentiles
“asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD” (9v14)	The Jews cease seeking God, opening up the way for the Gentiles to come in Romans 11 v 11, 25
“Joshua made peace with them, and made a [covenant] ^{RV} with them, to let them live” (9v15)	A new covenant of peace is made through Jesus Ephesians 2 v 13-14
“we were sore afraid of our lives because of you” (9v24)	This enables salvation Acts 11 v 18 & Acts 28 v 28
“we are in thine hand: as it seemeth good and right... do” (9v25)	The Gentiles place themselves in position of subservience Romans 15 v 12
“made them... hewers... drawers... for the altar... in the place which he should choose” (9v27)	Access is permitted to the altar and also to Jerusalem Hebrews 13 v 10 & Revelation 3 v 12
“Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly” (10v9)	Jesus returns to the earth suddenly, to save Revelation 16 v 15

Our study's conclusions

- We must **show the same determination** to be a part of the covenant of peace with Jesus / God
- **Faith and action are critical** to securing this, not trusting in the arm of flesh for salvation
- We, once far away and threatened with destruction, have been made nigh through Jesus, becoming servants to God & **sharing the hope of being part of the 'new Jerusalem'!**