

## Joshua 9

Written by K B Napier  
Tuesday, 29 August 2017 19:56

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Beware who you form friendships with, for they may be enemies in disguise... many traitors and enemies wear a benign smile and outward friendliness. Beware, too, of showing compassion to the enemies of God, when He does not show such compassion Himself. Also note how such enemies may not be given total freedom but must be subject to the people of God. That these things are not so today is to our shame and foolishness for allowing our enemies to gain ground, when, all along, they belong in a pit of evil, far away from God's good grace and truth, and His people.

### Verses 1&2

1.

And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof;

2.

That they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord.

The people of Canaan who had not yet been beaten, decided to gather against Israel. The reasons would have been twofold – a desire not to end up like those of Ai and Jericho, and a need to get rid of this new force in the land. It is happening today, as homosexuals and Islamists gather to eradicate believers, because believers have God on their side and in their statements, and sinners hate God.

But, gathering evil forces together as one makes no difference. God still rules and is still Lord of evil men also. They can rally and fight, but God only allows what agrees with His demands and aims. Evil men already know this, and their fear of God drives them to insane lengths to be wicked, as if increasing their wickedness will somehow displace God's will! Not so... their foolishness will drag them down and their many disputations make them appear to be what they are – stupid men with stupid aims.

### Verses 3-6

1.

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And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai,

2.

They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up;

3.

And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy.

4.

And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us.

Straightforward military foes are easy to deal with, but deceptive ones require more care. The people of Gibeon, afraid of the Israelites, drew up a lying plan...

The men of Gibeon, five miles from Jerusalem and only about five miles from where Joshua was camped, used stealth to win their position, having no stomach for fight. Gibeon was built on a hill and belonged at that time to the Hivites. The rulers devised a cunning plan to avoid being slaughtered. They dressed in torn, dirty clothes and put old sacks on the backs of their asses. They had props with them, such as old battered wine bottles, worn patched ('clouted') shoes, and mouldy bread, as if they had been travelling many miles.

Though coming from nearby they wanted to give the impression they had nothing to do with the Canaanite majority. The group entered Joshua's camp at Gilgal, which appears to have been east of Jericho. In reality, the false travellers came only a handful of miles over the mountains from the west. They lied, saying they had travelled for a long time from a "far country", wanting to form an alliance with Israel.

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Today, many Christians are offered help from unreliable sources, or even by unbelievers and heretics. There are even alliances formed between Christians and Islamists! In my time on this earth, I know from experience that such alliances are short-lived, ungodly and spiritually damaging.

### Verses 7-13

1.

And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you?

2.

And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? and from whence come ye?

3.

And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt,

4.

And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth.

5.

Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us.

6.

This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy:

7.

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And these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new; and, behold, they be rent: and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey.

Verse 7 says “...said unto the Hivites”, but the Israelites did not then know who these men were, or that they were from just over the mountain. Speaking deceptively, the Hivites asked to make a pact with the Israelites. Joshua questioned who they were and what they wanted. Again lying they said they had come from very far away because they had heard of the great God of Israel, and what He did through the Israelites to the Amorites, and wanted to be a part of the same victories. But, they did not say which country they came from, nor was their story investigated.

They continued – the elders of their country sent the group to meet with Joshua, giving them food to last on the journey. They were to greet Joshua and say they were his servants, who wanted to align with him. In reality, they simply wanted to avoid being killed as Canaanites. They might even have spied for the Hivites in an attempt to secure a battle victory. As evidence for their story they said, ‘Look at our bread. It was taken hot out of the oven on the day we left, but now it is hard and mouldy! And look at our shoes and clothing – all tattered by the long journey.’

### Verses 14-17

1.

And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD.

2.

And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.

3.

And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them.

4.

And the children of Israel journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities

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were Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjathjearim.

It is my view that Joshua should have been suspicious, because the men did not say what country they came from, and offered their 'evidences' to support their story. Why do so, if it was true? The Israelite questioners took the food off the travellers, and gave them fresh supplies. But, vitally, they did not check with God if the story and their responses were true.

In our day, Christians are far too eager to align with enemies, and with those who spin a good yarn about their intentions! There is an unwritten modern rule in the churches, that we should just accept the first words given, and accept men as our friends and brethren on their own say-so. This is utter foolishness, as I have discovered time and again throughout my life. But, with no heart for truth, many of my brethren are far too quick to accept others as fellow believers just because they say 'Glory to God' or something similar! And they believe implicitly if someone claims to be a 'friend' or 'saved'. Personally, I need proof!

Even recently there was talk of unbelievers infiltrating local churches and undermining the word of God. Jihadi Muslims do the same thing, as did communists in Russia, etc. Becoming a Christian does not mean we can dump our sense and minds at the door!

So, without seeking God's word on the matter, Joshua made a big mistake and agreed peace with the secretive Hivites. Worse than that, he and the elders made a covenant with them and let them live. Just as modern Christians form quick alliances with all manner of unbelievers and heretics. Three days later, the Israelites discovered the truth - that the Hivites lived next door to them and were neighbours.

The Israelites marched three days until they reached the cities of Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth and Kirjathjearim. These were all Hivite towns in the mountains.

### **Verses 18-25**

1.

And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes.

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2.

But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them.

3.

This we will do to them; we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto them.

4.

And the princes said unto them, Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation; as the princes had promised them.

5.

And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, We are very far from you; when ye dwell among us?

6.

Now therefore ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God.

7.

And they answered Joshua, and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the LORD thy 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 sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing.

8.

And now, behold, we are in thine hand: as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do.

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Once again, the people spoke amongst themselves of the folly of their leaders. They had jumped in without checking the truth, or waiting to see what God would say. You might ask why God did not warn them beforehand, but why should He? The need to do only what *God* wanted Man to do was imprinted on their hearts and minds. The leaders failed and there would be repercussions in the history of Israel.

Now, we have a similar situation, where leaders have given enemies freedom to act against us. The children of Allah conspire openly against those who befriend them. The end will be bad, and is to come. This is the fault of leaders who act ignorantly and without God. We are now locked on a path that will end in violence and despair. And, again, God will look on, for His warnings have been repeated many, many times, only for them to be ignored.

We must look at this matter in more depth. Are we obliged to honour a promise or even a vow, when it is based on the lies of the other party? My opinion is, I do not think so. But, this is how the Israelite leaders saw it. Perhaps it was a penalty from God for not obeying to the letter. And because the vow was made in God's name, they felt unable to alter it, though it came about through deception.

Though not put to the sword, the Hivites were instead made servants, if not slaves, and they would serve God's tabernacle as gatherers of wood and water, as well as the Israelites. Joshua told the enemy that because they tricked their way into keeping their lives, they were now cursed (verse 23). This meant they were as nothing, to be despised and detested, forever to be slaves.

The Hivites said something modern men should notice – they admitted to lying, saying they did so because they feared the fact that God gave Moses the land they now lived in, and thought the Israelites had come to kill them. Indeed, they were correct, for God HAD ordered all the Canaanites to be put to death. The Hivites then accepted their fate and placed their lives in the hands of Israel.

### **Verses 26&27**

1.

And so did he unto them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not.

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2.

And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose.

Joshua must have had a heavy heart, realising his grave error, and protecting the enemy because of the vow made in God's name. As was said earlier, this was to prove a future thorn in the side of Israel, but it was a penalty from God for not precisely following His commands and will. In return the Hivites remained alive, as slaves to both the tabernacle and the people. Because they remained alive they grew in hostility to their captors, and instead of living in peace the Israelites were plagued by continuous attacks from enemies.

Today, the wicked followers of Allah threaten the very existence of peace and godliness. Instead of recognising them as enemies, and ridding our land of them, we allow them to live in our midst. Our reward will be enslavement to their will and purpose, as they kill or mistreat all who obey the one true Lord.

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