



וַיִּקְחוּ
הָאֲנָשִׁים
מִצֵּידָם
וְאֶת-פִּי
דְּהוֹרָה,
לֹא
שָׁאֲלוּ.

Then the men of
took some of their
provisions;
but
they did NOT
ask counsel
of
the
LORD

ISRAEL

Joshua 9:14

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KALLERSON

Joshua 9:1-18 (We Are Your Servants, Part I)

The week before typing this sermon, it was my birthday. For my birthday, some special folks gave me a copy of the movie Leap of Faith. The main character is played by the comedian and actor Steve Martin.

The basic plot is that of a touring evangelistic ministry that exists pretty much for the sake of ripping people off through false miracles, false healings, and outright deceit. And yet, the evangelist, Jonas Nightengale, openly admits this to those who ask about it. Most don't, simply because they want to believe in the miraculous.

The ministry is so obviously pointing to the false healing ministries in the world today that one cannot help but identify one or more of them even if you have only watched a few minutes of Christian TV. They have a whole crew out doing what Jonas Nightengale's crew was doing. They are slick, they are showy, and they are sharks.

Text Verse: *"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. ¹⁴And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. ¹⁵Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works." 2 Corinthians 11:13-15*

As I watched the movie, I was literally upset at what I was watching. Not because Steve Martin was inaccurately portraying these people, but because he was accurately portraying them. They are shameless people who exploit the name of Jesus in order to get rich and famous.

What makes me even more upset is that the movie accurately portrayed the people who went to his revivals. Like those who fall for the false teachers of the church, they are just dumb, ignorant sheep that are taken in by such people. And the reason for this comes down to one thing: a lack of knowledge about the word.

Hosea, quoting the Lord, said of Israel, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." People are ripped off, led down the heresy highway, never given the truth about ten thousand points of proper doctrine, and lead miserable lives simply because they lack proper knowledge of the word.

Told to tithe? You've been duped. Mormon? You're following a false Christ. Accepting of homosexuality or some other perversion in your church? You are accepting what Christ openly and strongly condemns. Believe you can lose your salvation? You haven't been properly instructed on what the word "grace" means. Told you must be circumcised? Paul says that is anathema. You have fallen from grace, and you are (or will be) a debtor to the entire law.

We could go on and on and on. But instead, we will go on. Learn your Bible. Have discernment and forget “trust but verify.” Rather, trust no one until verified. In today’s passage, Israel will trust without full verification, even though they thought they had it. Why? Because they didn’t ask the Lord.

Be sure to ask the Lord about stuff. Great lessons such as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Perhaps You Dwell Among Us (verses 1-8)

¹And it came to pass when all the kings who *were* on this side of the Jordan,

Though obvious, the reference as to which side of the Jordan it is speaking of must be inferred: *vayhi kishmoa kal ham'lakhim asher b'ever ha'yarden* – “And it came to pass according to hearing all the kings who in side the Jordan.” It simply says, “in side the Jordan.” From there, one must know that it is speaking of Canaan proper.

The word got out very quickly that first Jericho and now Ai had been destroyed. Because of this, it is understood that a slow and methodical chipping away at the cities of the land is starting to take place. Unless something is done about this, each city stood on its own, and as such, could not stand. This included those kings...

^{1 (con't)} **in the hills and in the lowland and in all the coasts of the Great Sea toward Lebanon**

All of the locations are stated in the singular: in *the* hill-country, in the lowland, and in all *the* coastland *of* the Sea, the Great, toward against the Lebanon. The three areas mentioned would be the hill-country, meaning the mountains of Ephraim and Judah, but probably not the mountains of the northeastern area. Those will be dealt with later in Joshua.

Next is the *sh'felah* or lowland which is the plain area to the west of Jerusalem. It is also known as the Judean foothills. It comprises an area somewhat between Joppa and Gaza. The *khoph*, or coastland, probably would be the area in the north from Joppa to Tyre due to the words “toward against the Lebanon.” Of these locations, the people groups are...

^{1 (con't)} **—the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite—
heard *about it*,**

It is correct. Each is identified in the singular. Thus, each is set in opposition to the nation of Israel. Hence, taken together, they are six nations against one. Hittite means Terror, Terrible, Fearsome. Amorite means Talkers (active) or Renown (passive). Canaanite means Humiliated, or Humbled, or even Subdued. Perizzite means A Breach or Irruption. Hivite means Villagers,

or more specifically Tent Villagers. Jebusite means Treading Down (active) or Trodden Underfoot (passive). It is when these groups heard...

² that they gathered together to fight with Joshua and Israel with one accord.

va'yitqabtsu yakhdav l'hilakhem im Yehoshua v'im Yisrael pe ekhad – “And gathered together to battle with Joshua and with Israel – mouth one.” The expression “one mouth” means that instead of placing the interests of their individual clan above the others, they united as if one person, speaking with one thought and expressing it with one voice. John Gill presents the thought well –

“...were unanimous in their councils and resolutions; they all confederated together, and agreed as one man to make a common cause of it, and oppose Israel with their united forces.”
John Gill

However, in contrast to these people groups, there is a portion of them that understands the gravity of the situation. Despite the magnificent force that could be mustered, if God was not on their side, they could not prevail. And because of their understanding about what the Lord had done to Egypt, including the crossing of the Red Sea, as well as the parting of the Jordan, it was clearly evident that He was with Israel. Therefore, it next says...

³ But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai,

v'yosheve giv'on shameu eth asher asah Yehoshua lirikho v'la'ay – “And dwellers Gibeon heard what had done Joshua to Jericho and to the Ai.” The name Gibeon, or *Giv'on*, comes from *gavia*, meaning a cup or a bowl. When upside down, it looks like a hill. As such, it means Hill Town or Hilly.

These are of the Hivite people group. Their city will eventually be granted to the tribe of Benjamin (Joshua 18:25), and it will become a Levitical city within Benjamin (Joshua 21:17). At this point, they have heard of the destruction that was brought against both Jericho and Ai, and they knew they would not be long for this world if they didn't act. Therefore...

⁴ they worked craftily,

va'yaasu gam hemah b'ar'mah – “And did also in cunning.” Here, the word *gam*, or also, is referring to Joshua of the previous verse where the same word, *asah* or “to do,” is used –

Asher asah [had done] *Yehoshua*

Va'yaasu [did] *gam hemah*

Joshua did this, and so they did that. And the “that” they have done is to act in a cunning or crafty way. That craftiness led them to...

4 (con't) **and went and pretended to be ambassadors.**

The words “pretended to be” are not correct. Being ambassadors is exactly what they are: *va'yel'khu va'yitstayaru* – “and went as ambassadors.” It is a word found only here in the Bible, *tsayar*. It signifies acting as an envoy, coming from *tsiyr*, an envoy.

These men were, in fact, sent out as envoys. Hence, the craftiness is not in who they are but in what they will do. If your Bible reads differently, such as, “and they took along provisions,” the change comes from substituting a single consonant in the Hebrew.

This is how the Greek and some other ancient translations make it. Thus, it would agree with the “moldy bread” that will be mentioned in verse 12. But that is dealt with in verse 5, so that seems less likely. Either way, as for the craftiness itself, that begins to be explained with the next words...

4 (con't) **And they took old sacks on their donkeys,**

va'yiqhu saqim balim la'khamorehem – “And took sacks worn out to their donkeys.” Here is a new word, *baleh*, or worn out. It will be seen four times in verses 9:4 and 9:5 and then only one more time in Ezekiel 23:43. At this point, we have no idea what the old sacks are for. But they are placed on the donkeys.

The word *khamor*, or donkey, comes from *khamar*, meaning to ferment or boil. The idea is that as a pot boils, it glows from redness. Therefore, the donkey gets its name from its red dun color. Next, it mentions...

4 (con't) **old wineskins torn and mended,**

v'nodoth yayin balim um'buqaim um'tsorarim – “and skins wine old, and burst, and bound up.” The word *nod*, or wineskin, is used here for the first of six times. It is a bag made of skin and used for fluids. In this case, it is for fermented wine.

It does not say the place where the skins burst is sewn. Rather, they are just bound up. The surest way to repair such a skin would be to put a patch on it and sew it. Instead, this gives the sense of them grabbing the skin to close the hole and then winding a string around it to tie it off as people would do on a journey.

It still isn't known what the items are used for, but it is getting intriguing as the narrative continues. One can see that whatever is coming, it is a deception given in contrast to Israel's warfare against Ai. Israel had set out a diversionary attack against the city which was then overtaken by the main force.

Now, we are seeing the inhabitants of Gibeon using their own trickery in order to overtake Israel in some unusual way. As such it explains the contrasting expression which began the

verse, “And did also in cunning.” Israel was cunning against Ai, and now Gibeon is being cunning against Israel. This crafty plan continues with...

⁵ **old and patched sandals on their feet,**

un’aloth baloth um’tulaoth b’raglehem – “And shoes old and spotted in their feet.” The word *tala* is elsewhere translated as “spotted.” As such, the idea is that they had shoes that needed patches, and the patches made them look mottled, or it could be that they were worn through or stained and thus they looked spotted. The word translated as “shoe” can mean sandal, but one patches a shoe while one mends a sandal. Also...

⁵ (con’t) **and old garments on themselves;**

u-s’lamoth baloth alehem – “and garments old upon them.” We still haven’t been told what is coming, but it’s starting to sound like a hobo convention in a Roger Miller song. Also...

⁵ (con’t) **and all the bread of their provision was dry and moldy.**

v’kol lekhem tsedam yavesh hayah niqudim – “and all bread provision dry had become speckled.” Here is another new word, *niqud*. It comes from an unused word meaning to mark by puncturing or branding. And so this means it is either 1) crumbly, thus falling apart and making speckles, 2) pierced by vermin that ate holes in it, or 3) moldy because it has spots.

The only other time it is used outside of this chapter is in 1 Kings 14:3 where it cannot mean moldy. Rather, there it speaks of a type of bread probably for dipping, as in honey. Hence, pierced or crumbly bread is surely what is meant here.

⁶ **And they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel,**

The translation is close enough to get the full sense. These Gibeonites have left with all of their old stuff and traveled a short distance from their city to the Gilgal by the Jordan. It is a distance that can be traveled in a single night as is seen in Joshua 10:9.

⁶ (con’t) **“We have come from a far country;**

me’erets r’khoqah banu – “From land far we have come.” This isn’t just a lie, but a blatant one. The word far can mean a lot of things, maybe even if they were from the border by Lebanon, but it cannot mean a distance of what is reckoned as 15 to 20 miles.

That might be a long walk for someone whose donkey is broken down on the side of the road, but not for a group of ambassadors who are coming to meet with another group of people about an important matter. The craftiness of the preparations has not yet been explained, but their cunning is perfectly evident from the lie.

6 (con't) **now therefore, make a covenant with us."**

v'atah kirtu lanu berit – "and now cut to us covenant." The meaning is that a sacrifice is made and those who make it invoke their God or gods, swearing allegiance to be faithful to the covenant that is made in connection with the cutting of the sacrifice.

It was, at times, accompanied by dividing the sacrificed animals in half and those who agreed to the stipulations would pass through the pieces. In this, it was a way of stating that the same end should come upon those who violate the covenant as that of the animal. In other words, it is an irrevocable matter.

Such a covenant can be fulfilled, but it cannot be arbitrarily revoked. Hence, when Jesus spoke of the Law of Moses, He said –

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.¹⁸ For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled." Matthew 5:17, 18

In the case of Israel, even to this day, it is an indication that they are still bound to the terms of the Mosaic covenant until they accept the terms of the New Covenant. As for the meeting between Israel and the Gibeonites...

7 Then the men of Israel said to the Hivites,

The Hebrew spoken form (sg.) is different from the written (pl.) to avoid a confusion in what is conveyed, but the subject and the object are singular. The written form is: *va'yomeru ish Yisrael el ha'khivi* – "And said (pl.) man (sg.) Israel unto the Hivite (sg.)."

Though confusing, it is essentially all of the men speaking with one voice. To make it a bit more understandable, it could be rendered, "And they said, the man of Israel, unto the Hivite." This would take us in thought back to verse 1 where all of the people groups spoke with one mouth. The same is being conveyed here.

There is a united voice that is being portrayed as the words of a single man (Israel) and it is conveying words to a single entity, the Hivite. As noted, the name Hivite means Tent Villager, but it is identical to *khavah* or "Life," the name of Adam's wife (Eve).

Abarim notes that the verb form *khavah* "means to lay out in order to live collectively, and describes investing one's personal sovereignty into a living collective like a symbiont. It's mostly translated as to prostrate, which is to submit oneself wholly and bodily to a collective or to the leader of that collective." That is, surprisingly, what they are now doing. The response to them by Israel is...

7 (con't) **"Perhaps you dwell among us; so how can we make a covenant with you?"**

ulay b'qirbi atah yoshev v'ek ekhroth l'kha berith – “Perhaps in my (sg.) midst you (sg.) dwell, and how I (sg.) make to you (sg.) covenant?” The entire point of what is being conveyed is that Israel has already made claim on the land of Canaan – “my midst.”

As this is so, the question is obvious – “How can I, Israel, make a covenant with you (people group) if you live in my midst?” Added to that would be the implied thought, “Because you do not belong here any longer!”

Of these confusing words, and specifically the term “in my midst,” Keil says, “which is to be explained on the ground that only one of the Israelites (viz., Joshua) was speaking as the mouthpiece of all the rest. The plural ויאמרו [*va'yomeru* – “and they said”] is used, because Joshua spoke in the name of the people.”

I would argue it is exactly the opposite. The people are speaking as a single entity in the previous clause (“Then said (pl.) the men of Israel ... perhaps in my (sg.) midst you dwell”) rather than Joshua being referred to in the plural.

Israel is saying that anyone in the land does not belong there any longer because Israel, the single entity comprised of many, has moved in. Obviously, such could not be the case and so Israel could never agree to such a thing. Hence, the Gibeonites continue...

⁸ **But they said to Joshua, “We are your servants.”**

The translation is now correct. It is plural, and they are addressing the leader of Israel alone. But more, it completely blows off the people’s questions as if they were never asked. Instead, they masterfully speak in the customary way found elsewhere in Scripture to indicate courteous fellowship with a hint of subordination – “We are your servants.”

They have come to make a covenant, and thus, they are – at this time – subordinating themselves to Joshua in order to secure it, showing that they are willing to accept reasonable terms. Despite this, Joshua remains unsatisfied...

⁸ (con’t) **And Joshua said to them,**

Again, it is correct. Joshua alone speaks now to them all. The people have spoken, they have conveyed the fact that they are united and that the land belongs to Israel. Joshua now prods further to determine their people group and their land with direct questions...

⁸ (con’t) **“Who are you, and where do you come from?”**

The verb is imperfect: *mi atem u-me'ayin tabou* – “who you and from where you coming.” They represent a people group. As such, for them to come means that the people group is coming and will continue to come.

In other words, if a group of emissaries was to go from Israel to Iran today, they would be representing Israel. If they form an alliance by cutting a covenant, then it would be that from then on, Israel could come to Iran and Iran would come to Israel. The new bond would be formed.

With that understood, the Gibeonites will now speak out their answers to his questions, and as Adam Clarke says, they will “do it very artfully by a mixture of truth, falsehood, and hypocrisy.”

*For sure we are telling the truth
We wouldn't deceive you and that's no lie
We are honest Injun, even since our youth
And we shall be that way till the day we die*

*Here is the proof that we are honest men
These things will validate our story is true
If we have to, we will repeat it again and again
We would never do anything to deceive you*

*Trust in us, we are faithful to our word
We are the straightest of shooters, that is for sure
You can trust every word you have heard
We are honest, upright, clean, and pure*

II. Make a Covenant with Us (verses 9-18)

⁹ So they said to him: “From a very far country your servants have come,

In full crafty mode, they completely ignore the first question which would ruin any chance of an agreement. Instead, they launch directly into answering the second question while using a perfect verb: *me'erefs rekhoqah meod bau avdekha* – “from land far very have come your servants.”

The “your servants” is singular. They are emissaries who have arrived to make an alliance with Joshua on behalf of their people. The perfect verb in essence means, they are not “coming;” they “have come.” They are here to make a covenant, and to them, it is a done deal in regard to their submission to it. Hence, they subordinate themselves to him. And this is...

^{9 (con't)} because of the name of the Lord your God;

I'shem Yehovah elohekha – “to name Yehovah your God.” The meaning of “to” equates to “for.” They acknowledge that Yehovah, Joshua's God (because Joshua stands as representative of all Israel), is the reason for their coming. And more...

^{9 (con't)} for we have heard of His fame, and all that He did in Egypt,

The same word, translated as “His fame,” is used of the Lord now which was used in verse 6:27 when referring to Joshua. It signifies a report and thus fame. They have heard the report of the Lord based on all that He had done in Egypt. But more...

¹⁰ **and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan—**

It is singular: *ha'emori* – “the Amorite.” They speak of the two kings as one people implicitly in opposition to Israel, the people under the Lord. They then continue by stating their specific knowledge of these two kings.

As such, it implies that they were great kings to have been renowned even in a land “very far” away. Therefore, it conveys the idea of the greatness of the Lord on behalf of Israel concerning what He did...

¹⁰ (con't) **to Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who was at Ashtaroth.**

The battle against these two foes was recorded in Numbers 21. The name Ashtaroth, however, has only been seen in Deuteronomy 1. It is believed to signify Union of Instructions, and thus One Law. The emissaries openly speak about these as obviously great victories. Thus the report, or fame, of the Lord had come to their knowledge because of these.

What is notable is that this is where they stop their words on this line of thought. They prudently mention nothing about the crossing of the Jordan or of the battles of Jericho and Ai.

This would give the sense that these recent deeds had not yet reached their ears. And yet, ironically, they might possibly have even heard the sounds of battle and smelled the smoke of the burning if the wind was in the right direction.

With that large gap in their supposed understanding of recent events, they then bolster this as they continue speaking...

¹¹ **Therefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying,**

All the pronouns in the verse are plural. The superlative nature of the statement is given to add icing to the cake they have already baked up. They note the elders but mention no king. Thus, they are a people that is small and without power, or they are a people that would not have a threatening system of power under a single ruler.

As such, mentioning the elders would be expected, but they add in, “all the inhabitants of our country.” Their unity of thought is the great, mutually agreed upon idea in this non-threatening country.

It is as if the nation was stirred up with the success of the Lord working on Israel’s behalf, and so they came flooding forward agreeing that something needed to be done. And so...

11 (con't) **'Take provisions with you for the journey,**

The word "provision" is singular: *qehu b'yedkhem tsedah la'derek* – "take in your hands provision to the way." Everything they loaded up is taken as a single provision. The reason for this is that it was all comprised of things that were supposedly suitable for sustaining them as a single group as they departed. "You have a load of provision. Everything you need is provided, head out..."

11 (con't) **and go to meet them, and say to them, "We are your servants;**

The plural of the pronouns continues. The whole nation of people told them to go, and they are to meet the whole nation of people in Israel. "You are great! We are your servants." The appeal is from people group to people group, one subordinating themselves to the other. And so...

11 (con't) **now therefore, make a covenant with us."**

v'atah kirtu lanu berit – "and now cut (you all) with us covenant." They are a friendly people that agree among one another, they don't have a king over them, and they are awed by the fame of the Lord over Israel. They have subordinated themselves to the people they desire to covenant with. There are no negatives to raise doubts as to what should be done.

And, certainly, their story must be true. The evidence of it is right in front of them...

12 This bread of ours we took hot for our provision from our houses on the day we departed to come to you.

The translation is close enough. They pull out their old bread that was either crumbled or insect eaten and show it to them, claiming that it was hot the day they left. The word *kham*, or hot, is introduced here. It will only be seen again in Job 37:17. It signifies warm or hot, just as one would expect with bread that is freshly made and handed to the travelers...

12 (con't) **But now look, it is dry and moldy.**

v'atah hineh yabesh v'hayah niqudim – "And now, behold! Dry and become crumbled (or insect eaten)." It is a nice touch if you think about it. Like in a Columbo movie, there is always some small thing that the bad guy overlooks. Well, in this case, it sure isn't the bread.

One can see them having gone out behind the local baker's place and picking up pieces of bread that had been gnawed on by rats or that had been stepped on by the feet of passersby. It was a totally convincing argument because bread is what sustains. Who would travel without food that was satisfactory for a trip? And more...

13 And these wineskins which we filled were new, and see, they are torn;

This is not an improbable thing. Wineskins that are filled have weight. When they rub long enough, they will split. If they are pulled out at a stop and the people drink, they may get put down on a rock that will puncture them.

If the travelers do a bit of extra drinking after a long day, they are bound to be handled even a bit more roughly. A bit more drinking and... you get the point. Hence, after a while, they would bear the marks of their overuse. However, it still takes a lot to wear through skins, and so a long journey easily explains the matter. Columbo hasn't found a clue yet...

¹³ (con't) **and these our garments and our sandals have become old because of the very long journey.”**

The words should more appropriately read “from the exceeding greatness of the way” (YLT). It refers to the route itself and the distance that was traversed.

Again, this is what one would expect, especially in the dry, rocky area of the Mideast. A donkey would get tired if ridden too long, and so there would be plenty of walking next to it. If it was heavily loaded for a long journey, walking would be all that occurred. Everything is satisfactorily straight in this regard.

And more, everything here is given in complete contrast to Israel since they had left Egypt –

“And I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn out on your feet. ⁶You have not eaten bread, nor have you drunk wine or *similar* drink, that you may know that I *am* the Lord your God.” Deuteronomy 29:5, 6

Israel would have heard their words, considered their own situation in light of that, and concluded that the Lord's miraculous provision for them was in complete contrast to these people now coming to seek the fame of the Lord. Everything passed the Columbo test in their eyes, thus far...

¹⁴ **Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions;**

It's obvious that the NKJV translator of this passage simply copied someone else. The words “of Israel” are not in the text and yet they are not italicized: *va'yiqhu ha'anashim mitsedam* – “And took the men from their provision.” Maybe the translator was too busy sampling the “provision” himself.

Despite that, it is debated whether “the men” are the emissaries who simply take out their provisions to show Israel (which has already been noted above), or if it is Israel who took of them, meaning tried them. The answer is obvious based on the next clause. The men of Israel took and sampled.

The verse reveals a careful attention to detail by Israel. They tried whatever was packed to see if it was fresh or not, and what they tried obviously passed the smell test. That is the last note of their inquiry into the matter...

¹⁴ (con't) **but they did not ask counsel of the Lord.**

v'eth pi Yehovah lo shaalu – “And mouth Yehovah no they did ask.” This shows that the previous clause was referring to those of Israel. It also obviously shows a great failing on behalf of the people. But the text is careful to remove Joshua from the overall responsibility for the matter by leaving out his name.

It is an indication that there is typology being conveyed for us to consider. Israel did not do the one thing that is most important of all in this matter.

And yet, we have to consider it from both directions. Not only did Israel not seek the counsel of the Lord, but the Lord did not speak to Joshua as He has already done at least a dozen times so far in the book.

This pretty certainly tells us that the Lord was willing to allow them to make their own mistakes, but they are mistakes that are 1) not going to lead to a permanent disability in the plan of redemption, 2) will (hopefully) teach Israel a lesson, 3) will actually have some benefit in the redemptive narrative, and 4) will typologically show us something concerning the future.

Some find this an actual violation of the Mosaic law –

“And the Lord said to Moses: ‘Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom *is* the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; ¹⁹ set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. ²⁰ And you shall give *some* of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. ²¹ He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire before the Lord for him by the judgment of the Urim. At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel with him—all the congregation.” Numbers 27:18-21

There is nothing to say that Joshua was required to go before the Lord in all instances. It simply notes that this was something that was available for him to do. And there are already recorded times where the Lord clearly speaks directly to Joshua. Hence, this cannot be considered a violation of the law.

¹⁵ **So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live;**

Joshua is the one highlighted here. “So made (sg.) with them, Joshua, peace and cut (sg.) to them covenant to live - them.” It isn’t just that Israel wouldn’t kill them, but that they are covenanted to preserve them as when nations are attacked by other nations. This is an important point that is not long in being brought forth. They made the appropriate sacrifices, and the covenant is cut...

¹⁵ (con’t) **and the rulers of the congregation swore to them.**

Not only did Joshua make peace with them and cut a covenant with them, but it is acknowledged by the rulers in an oath as well. With this now done, it cannot be undone. And yet...

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.**

Rather than “made a covenant,” it more precisely reads, “cut a covenant.” Other than that, the translation is fine. Nothing is said about how Israel found this out. It could be as simple as the men getting back on their donkeys, going back to Gibeon and telling them the news, and then Gibeon sending the men, or others, back to Israel to tell them the truth.

Whatever the situation was, it was enough to cause Israel to respond with a display of their displeasure...

¹⁷ **Then the children of Israel journeyed and came to their cities on the third day.**

In using the term, “the children of Israel,” it appears that the entire army went out, just in case there was any trouble to arise. Hence, it took till the third day to reach them. With that noted, it next says...

¹⁷ (con’t) **Now their cities were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath Jearim.**

This shows that it was no small number of people involved in the treaty. For reference, Gibeon means Hill Town or Hilly. Chephirah means Village. Beeroth means Wells. Kirjath Jearim means City of Forests or City of Honeycombs.

The first three cities will eventually be allotted to the land grant of Benjamin. The last will be allotted to Judah. It explains why there will be trouble with something that Saul will do in the future which will cause great distress for Israel. Saul will kill many of the Gibeonites, thus breaking this treaty.

Despite showing up in force, the text notes how Israel’s hands are tied in the next words...

¹⁸ **But the children of Israel did not attack them,**

v'lo hikkum bene Yisrael – “And no did strike them sons Israel.” There is a never-ending supply of speculation as to why they did not strike them, as if the entire text has no meaning and people need to try to discover some unintelligible reason.

But the answer has already been given, and it will be given again in the next clause. A covenant was cut, an oath was made, and that is the end of it. There is no need to speculate beyond that. As it next clearly says...

^{18 (con't)} **because the rulers of the congregation had sworn to them by the Lord God of Israel.**

ki nishbeu lahem n'sie ha'edah b'Yehovah elohe Yisrael – “for had sworn to them rulers the congregation in Yehovah God Israel.” As just noted, a covenant was cut, and the elders of Israel had sworn an oath. This was in the name of the Lord, and it was absolutely binding. Despite this...

^{18 (fin)} **And all the congregation complained against the rulers.**

The word *lun* signifies to lodge, as in staying overnight. However, it also means to complain or murmur. It is possible that our term “to lodge a complaint” is derived from this thought. For now, one can see that Israel is upset at what has transpired.

They see four cities that would increase their own wealth through plundering, and they care less about their agreement than they do about enriching themselves. But the agreement has been made, so all they can do is moan about it against the rulers.

Unfortunately, it is time to end the verses for the day. We'll have to finish things up next Sunday. A few simple lessons to learn from the account are obvious. Even though there is nothing prescriptive in here for us today, it is always wise to consult the Lord before making any type of binding agreement.

Our means of consulting the Lord is two-fold. One is to read, know, contemplate, meditate on, and apply the word. If we do this, then we will not do what is contrary to the word. That is obvious. The second is to not neglect what Israel neglected, which is to speak to the Lord.

Not everything we do or want to do is laid out in Scripture. As such, we have decisions that must be made that are up to us. But it is the imprudent soul who will fail to talk to the Lord about the important things, and – indeed – even the minor things that we encounter in our daily lives.

When we tell him what our plans are, we should then ask Him to favor the decision if it is in His will, and to keep them from coming about if it is not. We can then assume that even if catastrophe results from our decision, that the Lord determined that it was the right thing to happen.

The other thing we can learn from today's passage is that not everything people present to us is as it appears. Even those who seem convincingly honest often have an ulterior motive. Hence, I would ask you to consider who you believe and why you do so.

Have you checked out the facts to the fullest extent possible? There is always a Jonas Nightengale ready to pull the wool over your eyes. So watch out concerning what you accept.

Closing Verse: *"till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting."* Ephesians 4:13, 14

Next Week: Joshua 9:19-27 *Being slaves is what they deserveants, yes it is true...* (We Are Your Servants, Part II) (19th Joshua Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who has defeated the enemy and who now offers His people rest. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

We Are Your Servants, Part I

And it came to pass when all the kings
Who were on this side of the Jordan, as the line is drawn
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 – yes, that word
That they gathered together to fight
With Joshua and Israel with one accord

But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard
What Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai
They worked craftily
And went and pretended to be ambassadors – gee, I wonder why

And they took old sacks on their donkeys
Old wineskins torn and mended
Old and patched sandals on their feet
And old garments on themselves, but the story isn't ended

And all the bread of their provision
Was dry and moldy. Being sneaky was their decision

And they went to Joshua at 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 so that things go well

Then the men of Israel said to the Hivites
“Perhaps you dwell among us
So how can we make a covenant with you?”
That would be a big minus and not a plus

But they said to Joshua
“We are your servants. Come, come!”
And Joshua said to them
“Who are you, and where do you come from?”

So they said to him: “From a very far country
-----your servants have come
We walked and walked but happily no one tripped
Because of the name of the LORD your God
For we have heard of His fame, and all that He did in Egypt

And all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites
Who were beyond the Jordan. Yes, we heard that note
To Sihon king of Heshbon
And Og king of Bashan, who was at Ashtaroth

Therefore, our elders and all the inhabitants of our country
Spoke to us, saying, (and making a bit of a fuss)
‘Take provisions with you for the journey, and go to meet them and say
“We are your servants; now therefore, make a covenant with us”’

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. See how it has gotten that way!

And these wineskins which we filled were new
And look, they are torn – see the proof! No need for an attorney
And these our garments and our sandals have become old
Because of the very long journey

Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions
-----according to their word
But they did not ask counsel of the LORD

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
Their vow to them they did give

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, those rascally men

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
To them, they had strong words to say

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
-----of the nation

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...