

220817-4 Jos 9, The Deception of Gibeon–CThurman

Israel is presently encamped at a place called Gilgal. The place where the LORD said, *'This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.'* (Jos.5.9) It is from this place that Israel moves forward against the inhabitants of the land, the enemies of the LORD and Israel, to drive them out and to take possession of the land of Canaan. The first city to be destroyed was Jericho. As first things are the LORD's so the LORD claimed this city for Himself thus dedicating it to utter destruction except for the gold and silver and the vessels of iron and brass. These He dedicated to be brought into His treasury or storehouse. (cf. Jos.6.19) Everything else was accursed and to be destroyed. So Israel did as the LORD commanded and destroyed Jericho, but one man named Achan trespassed against the LORD by taking to himself that which the LORD had accursed. For this man's sin Israel suffered defeat when they went to fight against the next city, the city of Ai. The LORD said, in so many words, that as long as this sin is among you they could not stand before their enemies: *'neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. ... thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.'* (Jos.7.12b, 13b) So, only after Achan (אֶחָן, [g]ah-kan, the troubler) was judged for his sin and buried in the valley of Achor (אֶחָר, [g]ah-kar, trouble), The Valley of Trouble, Israel could fight against Ai and prevail. Chapter 8 is the account of the fall of Ai.

These things considered together, the LORD will not prosper the child of God or any church of Jesus Christ that will not live above reproach. Christ bore our reproach though He was righteous; He was treated as if He was a sinner and punished for our shameful, sinful behavior.

Ro 15:3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

Now we should bear the reproaches of Christ by conducting ourselves in the same holy manner as did our Lord Jesus Christ though we are sinners.

2Pe 3:14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

1Pe 4:14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

The Lord will bless the obedience of the child of God.

1Pe 3:10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

After destroying the city of Ai and taking the spoils of war, Israel probably returns briefly to the camp at Gilgal. Then Joshua leads the greater part of the nation up to the mounts of Gerizim and Ebal. The LORD had appointed this place to set up the two great stones covered with plaster so that they might have written upon them all the blessings and curses that shall be upon Israel according to their faithfulness to the Law given at Sinai and the Law of Moses. (Deu.29.1) After this Israel returns to Gilgal. And this is where the nation is presently located when the event of chapter 9 begin to unfold. (cf. Jos.9.6)

Chapter 9

1 ¶ And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan,

on this side Jordan – The same side that Israel is now on, meaning on the west side.

in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea

borders

Mediterranean Sea

over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof;

The Girgashites are not mentioned here. Except for the Perizzites, these are the families of the Canaanites. (cf. Ge.10.15-19; 1Chr.1.8-16)

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

In the order of the conflict we saw that Jericho stood alone against Israel and fell. Then there was Ai with all of the men of Bethel (cf. Jos.8.17). They too fell in the conflict against Israel. Now the nations, the Gentiles, form a much larger confederacy in an attempt to overthrow the advances of the nation of Israel. This will be the subject of the 10th chapter. But while this confederacy is forming the inhabitants of the city of Gibeon, representing the whole district possessed by the Hivites (v.7, *Hivites, 11, and all the inhabitants of our country, 17, Israel ... came unto to their cities, 18, and smote them not, because the princes ... had sworn ... by the LORD*), act swiftly in an attempt to save themselves.

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

4 They did work **wilily,** **and** **went**
with guile, with subtilty proceeded

wilily, is tss. from the fem. noun עֲרֻמָּה, gor-mah, which is prefixed with the preposition בְּ, b^e, to give this an adverbial sense. עֲרֻמָּה, gah-reyh-mah, is tss. [reflecting the prefixed preposition] *with guile, wilily*; without the prefix it is tss. *subtilty, wisdom, prudence*.

and made as if they had been ambassadors,

the entire clause is one Hebrew verb, צָרַח, tzah-yar, in Hithpael (reflexive) fut., which is only this once in the OT; see the masc. noun צָרַח, tzeer, tss. (birth) *pains or pangs, an ambassador, hinges (of a door), a messenger, sorrows*.

and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up; skins

old, the Hebrew adj. בָּלָה, bah-leh, tss. *old*, vss. 4, 5; the verb בָּלָה, bah-lah is tss. *to wax or become old (Jos.9.13), to consume, to spend, to long enjoy, to continue long.*

sacks, of the masc. noun שַׂק, sak, tss. *sack, sackcloth.*

bottles, בָּטָיִם, nōhd, a masc. noun which is always tss. with the English *bottle.*

rent, of the Hebrew verb קָצַץ, bah-qa[g], tss. *to divide, to rend, to rip, to cleave, to break, to breach; vss. 4, 13.*

Old, torn, and patched up bottles could have been of pottery, but for traveling it is much more likely that these containers were made of animal skins, which, with age, would lost their elasticity, and eventually crack, tear, and burst. (cf. Job 32.19; Mk.2.22)

5 And old shoes and clouted upon their feet,
beaten, patched & faded

shoes, נַעֲלַיִם, nah-[g]al, tss. *shoe, dryshod.*

clouted, Pual (intensive pass.) part. of the verb טָלַח, tah-lah, tss. *spotted, divers colors, and clouted.*

and old garments upon them; and all the bread
le-chem (food)

of their provision was dry and mouldy.
food supplies (v.11) withered crumbs

provision, tss. from the masc. noun צִיד, tzah-yeed. See also *hunter*, *venison*, *provision*, *victuals*, *food*.

dry, the verb יָבֵשׁ, yah-veysh, tss. *to be dry, to be withered*; **vss. 5, 12.**

mouldy, a masc. pl. noun, נִקְדָּיִם, nik-qud-deem, tss. *mouldy* (cf. Jos.9.5, 12), *cracknels* (a hard, brittle biscuit [1Ki.14.3]), perhaps meaning ‘crumbs’; see the only fem. pl. use of נִקְדָּוֹת, n’qu-dōth, tss. *studs* (Song. 1.11).

Dict.: *mold* **1.** crumbling soft friable earth suited to plant growth;

friable, easily crumbled or pulverized; *syn.* fragile.

moldy **2.** being old and moldering : CRUMBLING.

The English *mouldy* is an adjective which describes the bread or food that the men of Gibeon employ as evidence to support their deceptive scheme. It is only twice in the Scriptures and both times in Joshua chapter 9. However the Hebrew, נִקְדָּיִם, is found once more in the OT and tss. *cracknels* (see *mouldy* above). It does not refer to the growth of the mildew that we generally call mold today. This kind of mold is referred to as a plague of leprosy (צִרְעָת, tzah-ra-[g]ath, a fem. noun) in the Scriptures and can be found particularly in things made of skins and cloth materials as well as in houses (the materials). (cf. Lev.13.47-59 [v.49]; 14.34-53 [v.37]) The priest was called upon to examine whether this was a hazardous growth to the people or not.

6 And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal,

For some time the camp, probably the place of safekeeping for the women and children, is at Gilgal. (cf. Jos.5.10; 9.6; 10.6; 14.6)

and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far אֶרֶץ **country:**
off land

far, the Hebrew adj. רַחֹק, rah-chōq, tss. *afar off, far off, a great while to come, long ago, far abroad, far, very far; vss. 6, 9, far, 22, very far.*

now therefore make ye a league with us.

covenant

7 And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites,
(in their ignorance)

So, the people living in and around the city of Gibeon are the Hivites.

Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you?

Perhaps

At the end of Exodus chapter 31 the LORD had just given to Moses the Law, particularly the Law of Commandments written upon two tables of stone. In chapter 32, while Moses is in the mount, Aaron and Israel have reared up a golden calf and began worshipping it. The LORD apprises Moses of their sin and he intercedes in their behalf. Then Moses descends the mount with the two tables of stones in his hands, and seeing the people naked and dancing around the calf he casts the tables out of his hands and breaks them there. Moses solicits men that are on the LORD's side to go and slay, probably any still engaged in worshipping this golden calf. To this the sons of Levi come forward slaying 3,000 men that day. Moses then beseeches the LORD for forgiveness and the LORD plagued the people, meaning that He chastened them for their sin, though forgiven. At chapter 33 the LORD would have the people go up into Canaan without Him, but again Moses intercedes for Israel that the LORD might continue to lead them into Canaan. And the LORD said, *I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.* (Ex.33.17) Moses then immediately turns the conversation to beseeching the LORD to show him His glory. So coming to chapter 34, after Moses makes two tables of stone like the first set which he had broken, he ascends Sinai once again and the LORD shows him the *back parts* of His glory, the *afterness*, the remnant parts of His glory. It is at this time and place when the LORD warns Israel to take heed against making a covenant with the inhabitants of

the land. Read now Ex.34.10-16 and of the terrible, lasting, cumulative effect that disobeying the LORD on this point can have upon the nation.

Making a covenant with the nations leads to the intermingling of two peoples that should have remained distinct, and intermarrying of two people that should have remained separated. And in both cases it leads to idolatry.

how shall we make a league with you? – Clearly Joshua and the chiefs of the tribes of Israel know that the LORD commanded them NOT to make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land.

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

Two questions the men of Gibeon never answer but in general terms. They did not tell them that they were Hivites that were living in Canaan.

אָרְצָא

9 And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come land

very, אָרְצָא, m'ōhd, a masc. noun tss. *very, fast, great, greatly, exceeding, exceedingly, mighty, louder, diligently, mightily, fast, etc.*

Not just, we *be come from a far country*, but *from a very far country*. The answer implies that they lived beyond Canaan.

because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt,

A report of what the LORD did for Israel 40 years ago. A report that still causes fear among.

10 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.

This is the first mention of the city of Ashtaroth, which is evidently one of two cities from which Og reigned. (cf. Jos.13.12) The other city from which he reigned is called Edrei. (cf. Nu.21.33; Deu.3.1, 10; Jos.13.31) Now, not only was Og a giant, but the cities of Ashtaroth and Edrei used to be renowned for the giants that lived there. (cf. Jos.12.4)

אָרֶץ

11 Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us,

An answer that implies that they are a people other than those that dwelt in Canaan.

דֶּרֶךְ

saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them,
provision (v.5) way

and say unto them, We are your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us. covenant

Why would this people, that supposedly lives beyond Canaan, need a covenant with Israel? Israel's concern does not go beyond the land of Canaan.

12 This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day

hot, חֹם, chōhm, masc. noun tss. hot, warm, heat; so fresh-baked bread and hot food.

we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy:
withered crumbs
cf. v.5

13 And these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new; and, behold, they be rent:

rent, of the Hebrew verb בָּקַע, bah-qa[g], tss. to divide, to rend, to rip, to cleave, to break, to breach; vss. 4, 13.

and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey.

14 And the *men* took of their victuals,

(refers to Joshua & the princes of Israel, v.15)

and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD.

The men, Joshua and the chiefs of Israel took the things that the Hivites presented to authenticate their claims and believed them. The only touchstone for the truth is the word of God. The revealed will of God for Israel was that they were not to make a covenant with the people of the land. Israel's only recourse to prove whether what the Hivites are saying is true is to seek an answer from the mouth of the LORD, which they did not do.

The child of God has only one place where he can authenticate the truth and that is the word of God. We must not go beyond what it written in the word of God for authenticating the doctrine of God and Christ.

**15 ¶ And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them,
covenant**

to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.

princes, נְשִׂיָּם, nah-see, a masc. noun tss. princes, rulers, captains, chiefs, governors; vss. 15, 18, 19, 21.

Covenants made are binding. It doesn't matter if the other party lied, deceived, cheated, etc. (cf. Ps.15)

Mt 5:33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all ...

16 And it came to pass at the end of three days

at the end, קצה, a masc. noun tss. *the end of, the quarter, the edge, to border, to brink, to the brim, the uttermost part, the outside; cf. Jos.3.2, after; 3.8, the brink of; 3.15, the brim of; 4.19, in the border of; 9.16, at the end of; 13.27, the edge of; 15.1, the uttermost part of; 15.2, from the shore of; 15.5, the end of, the uttermost part of; 15.8, at the end of; 15.21, the uttermost; 18.15, from the end of, 18.16, the end of; 18.19, at the end.*

after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them.

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

on the third day – So at some point on the third day Israel arrived to the place where the cities of the Hivites were located.

Now their cities were Gibeon, and Chephírah, and Beeroth, and Kirjathjearim.

According to the Oxford Bible Atlas these cities are located just a little further southwest of Gibeon, all in the hill country.

Kirjathjearim – *Jos 15:9 And the border was drawn from the top of the hill unto the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, and went out to the cities of mount Ephron; and the border was drawn to Baalah, which is Kirjathjearim...*

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

Nu 30:2 If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth. (see Mt.5.33, 34 above at v.15, Thou ... shall perform unto the Lord thine oaths.)

And all the congregation murmured against the princes.

murmured, the Hebrew verb לָלוּן, loon or לָלַעַן, leen, tss. *to lodge, to remain, to tarry, to abide, to lie all night, to continue, to dwell, to endure, to harbor, and to murmur*. The idea is that the congregation of Israel *dwelt* on what their princes had done; it festered in their thought.

19 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.

touch, the Hebrew verb נָגַעַן, nah-ga[g], tss. *to touch, to smite, to reach, to strike, to beat, to plague*.

20 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.

While we cannot change what we have done by making a covenant with them let us make good use of the situation.

21 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.

as the princes had promised them – Joshua’s narrative remarks.

22 ¶ And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them,
(the Hivites of these cities)

saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, We are very far from you;
deceived

beguiled, Piel (intensive act.) pret. of the Hebrew verb רָמָה, rah-mah, tss. *to throw, to carry, to beguile, to deceive, to betray*.

when ye dwell among us?

23 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.

And the answer that the Hivites (v.7) of Gibeon returned to Joshua is simple: they didn't want to die.

24 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, feared much for our lives (Green's Interlinear Bible)

and have done this thing.

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

26 And so did he unto them, and delivered them out of the hand
rescue

delivered, Hiphil (causative act.) fut. of the Hebrew verb נָצַל, tss. *to deliver, to escape, to spoil, to take, to recover, to rescue, to save, to without fail.*

of the children of Israel, that they slew them not.

(because they were bound by the covenant they made)

27 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,

Again, notice the phrase 'even unto this day' which means at the close of Joshua's life and the time of the closing narration of this book it was so.

in the place which he should choose.

So, the spoils of these cities could be divided up among the nation, but this area shall become the tribe of Benjamin's lot in Canaan. (cf. Jos.18.11)