

# Deception by the Gibeonites

by Chuck Smith

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*Pastor Chuck Smith discusses the deception by the Gibeonites and the importance of seeking God's counsel in decision-making.*

**Duration:** 25:05

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 7:2

**Topics:** "Deception"

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## Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith discusses the deception by the Gibeonites as described in Joshua chapter 9. He emphasizes the importance of heeding the warnings that God gives us, even when we may have doubts. The compromise and ungodly alliance made by the Israelites with the Gibeonites led them to sin and turn away from God. Pastor Chuck encourages listeners to stay committed to their convictions and to be cautious of compromising their faith.

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## Transcript

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you With His Spirit and His love Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul  
Oh, let Him have the things that mold you And His Spirit and His love We'll descend upon your life And  
make you whole Welcome to The Word for Today. The broadcast ministry of Pastor Chuck Smith of  
Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California. Pastor Chuck is currently leading us on a verse-by-verse study  
through the entire Bible.

And on today's edition of The Word for Today we'll be focusing on the deception by the Gibeonites. As we  
pick up in Joshua, chapter 9, verse 1. And now, with today's message, here's Pastor Chuck Smith. In  
Deuteronomy, the Lord had commanded Moses that when they came into the land, they were not to make  
a league or a covenant with any of the people of the land, but that they were to utterly drive them out.

The reason for this command is that the religious practices of the Canaanites were so vile, so licentious,  
that they would have a polluting influence upon anyone. And so, to keep His people from the pollution,  
God ordered that the land be taken, the inhabitants utterly destroyed, all of their altars, their places of  
worship completely obliterated, in order that there would not be any remembrance of these things. God  
knew that if the people made a league or a covenant, then within their midst, they would have these  
continuing polluting influences.

And He wanted to purify the land. It was actually because of the degraded religious practices that God was actually using the children of Israel as His instrument to bring judgment against these people. A lot of times, people have difficulty with God ordering their complete extermination.

It's because the same people have difficulty with a God who judges sin. Later on in history, God used other nations as His instruments of judgment against Israel. God oftentimes uses one nation as His instrument to bring His judgment upon another nation.

So, the children of Israel were instruments of God's judgment against the corrupted religious practices of the Canaanites. God wanted His judgment to be complete. It must be severe.

And thus, He ordered no covenants, no treaties. Drive them all out. So, it came to pass, chapter 9, when all the kings which were on this side of Jordan, that is on the West Bank, and in the hills and the lowland and all of the coast of the Great Sea toward Lebanon, the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites heard of it.

That is, heard of how Ai had fallen also with Jericho. 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.

Now, the other kings decided to federate together to try to withstand the armies of Israel. But the Gibeonites decided on another ruse. Rather than to fight them, they decided to deceive them.

So, they worked craftily. And they pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, old and parched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves.

And all of the bread of their provision was dry and moldy. And they went to Joshua to the camp at Gilgal. And incidentally, this is probably a different Gilgal than we find when Joshua first entered into the Promised Land.

The first place, as they entered the Promised Land, you remember they had the right of circumcision and they called the name of the place Gilgal. For there the reproach of Egypt was rolled away, and Gilgal means rolled away. And then from there they conquered Jericho and then they moved on up into Ai, which they also conquered, and Bethel.

And then, if you'll remember, they came to the area in the central part of the land, of the area of Shechem. And there they had the ceremony on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal where they pronounced the blessings and the curses. Now, in your Bible maps, you will see that there is also a Gilgal located in that area.

And so that is probably the Gilgal that is referred to here. The Gilgal that is more in the central part of the country near Shechem, rather than the Gilgal down by the Jordan River. It doesn't make sense that Joshua and all the people go way on back down to the Jordan River because they're moving from the central part of the country to take the entire land.

So they came to the camp of Israel there at Gilgal. And they said to Joshua and to the men of Israel, we have come from a far country. Now, therefore, make a covenant with us.

Exodus 34.12, you're not to make a covenant. But the men of Israel said to the Hivites, perhaps you dwell among us. Now, it does seem that they were suspicious.

How do we know that you don't dwell among us? Perhaps you do. So how can we make a covenant with you? A little suspicious here. You know, I have found that so often the Lord does give you warnings.

We don't always heed them. Later we wish we would have listened. You know, you had that little still small voice that was saying, watch out, be careful.

And somehow we sort of sublimate it. We set it aside. And I think that the Lord was trying to speak to Joshua here.

Joshua shows that he has a little bit of doubt here. Just who are you guys? Where do you come from? So they said to him, Oh, from a very far country, your servants have come. Because the name of Jehovah 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 are on the other side of Jordan, to Sihon, the king of Heshbon, and to Og, the king of Bashan, who was at Ashteroth. Therefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us saying, take provisions with you for the journey and go and meet them and say to them, we are your servants. Now therefore make a covenant with us.

This bread of ours we took hot out of the oven for our provision from our houses on the day we departed to come to you. But now look, it's dry and it's moldy. These wineskins which we filled were new and look, they are torn and these garments and our sandals have become old because of the very long journey.

Now notice they didn't say anything about hearing that they had taken Ai and Jericho. And yet that's exactly the reason why the people came is because they knew that Joshua was moving into the land. So it says, the men of Israel took some of their provisions, but they did not ask counsel of the Lord.

Oh, what needless pain we bear all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer. You know, there are some things that just look so good that there's no need to pray about them. It's obvious what is right.

You can just look for yourself and see the bread is moldy and it's dry. No doubt these guys have come on a long journey. Look at those old torn mended wineskins.

Poor fellows, I wonder how far they have been journeying. And you look at the evidence and you think, well, I don't need to pray about this. It's quite obvious here.

I can see, I have eyes, and I can smell the old moldy bread. I don't need to ask God about this. It's very obvious.

And it's unfortunate that we oftentimes become involved in alliances without first of all praying about it and seeking the mind of God. And these alliances so often turn out to be, just as was this alliance with the Gibeonites, a detriment to us for the rest of our lives. In the New Testament we are warned not to be unequally yoked together with an unbeliever.

God warns us against ungodly alliances. You can hinder your walk. You can cripple yourself by an ungodly alliance, plus bring a lot of pain and sorrow and suffering.

I wish you could hear the testimony of some of the young girls who were starry-eyed at one time that married these fellows that weren't saved and hear now the misery and the pain and the suffering they're experiencing as their husbands have not the same set of moral values. As their husbands are out drinking and chasing other women and they were sure that their love was great enough that it would bring a conversion and they became involved in an unequal yoke with an unbeliever, much to their own chagrin and sorrow and pain and suffering. God's Word is true.

And the warnings of God are faithful. And when God warns you about these kind of alliances with unbelievers, you better listen to the Word of God and I don't care what the evidence may show. Contrary-wise, oh he's so sweet, he's so kind, he's so generous, he's so attentive, he's so loving, he's so this, he's so that.

And you take a look at the rituals, the provisions and you don't inquire of the Lord. You really don't seek the godly counsel. And oh how many, many have been destroyed by going against the clear teaching of the Word of God.

This ungodly alliance was formed because they did not pray. Had they prayed and sought the wisdom of God, surely God would have shown them. They had the priest there and they inquired of the Lord.

You remember it was just not long ago when they had been defeated at Ai and Joshua prayed and said, Lord how come you've allowed us to fall before our enemies? And God said, there is sin in the camp. Now cause all the tribes to come before me and I'll choose the tribe. Then cause the families of that tribe to come before me and I'll choose the family.

Then cause the men to come before me and I'll choose the men. And then cause that family to come man by man and I'll show you who it was. And they went through Israel and they got the tribe of Judah and then they got the family and then they got the close family and then they came to Ai and God showed them, here's the man.

Out of all of Israel, God fingered the man. And God would have shown them here had they prayed. But they didn't pray.

Let that be a lesson to us in all things through prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God. How important that we seek God's counsel, God's guidance in every decision of life lest we find ourselves shackled in a very displeasing and unfavorable state because we made a decision. Because we made a commitment.

Because we entered into a contract without first of all seeking the wisdom and the guidance and the counsel of God. So they took of their provisions and inquired not of the Lord. So Joshua made peace with them and he made a covenant with them to let them live and the rulers of the congregation swore to it.

So Joshua, a chosen servant of God was not perfect. But as we pointed out he uses imperfect people to do his will and that always surprises us. I'm always surprised whenever God uses me because I know I'm imperfect.

But again, if God only used perfect people he wouldn't be able to use anybody so he's got to settle for what he's got and that's imperfect people. And Joshua, though a great leader yet was imperfect and this is one of the imperfections manifested here in his making his decision without seeking the counsel of God. Made the covenant.

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 later they find out we've been had. Then the children of Israel journeyed and came to their cities on the third day.

The cities were Gibeon and Shephira Beroth and Kirjath-Jerim. Now again, your Bible map will come in handy here and you'll find that these cities are west of Jerusalem. And they are pretty much in the center part of the country between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

In fact, today on the main road from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv you go past Kirjath-Jerim and so it lies just about west and slightly north from Jerusalem. But the children of Israel did not attack them because they had made this treaty. Because the rulers of the congregation had sworn to them by the Lord God of Israel and all of the congregation murmured against the rulers.

Here we are and they realize that our rulers made a mistake and so they murmured against the rulers. So, complaining about your senator or whatever is nothing new. Those that are in the government and ruling and making your decisions they were murmuring against their rulers.

Then all of the rulers said to all of the congregation we have sworn to them by the Jehovah God of Israel now therefore we may not touch them. 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.

Now, even though they were deceived yet they were honoring the covenant that was made and that is commendable. Today, such a covenant would not need to be honored under our present laws. Any agreement that was predicated upon fraud is not binding.

This was an agreement predicated upon fraud. But these men were honorable and even though they realized that they made a mistake they realized that they were deceived because they had sworn before the Lord before the God of Israel they honored the oath that they had taken. So, the ruler said to them, let them live they will be the woodcutters the water carriers for all of the congregation as the rulers had promised them.

These people said, we are your servants so we will make them then our slaves. They will cut our wood, carry our water. 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 actually were living near us or dwelling near us.

Now therefore you are cursed and none of you shall be freed from being slaves woodcutters, water carriers for the house of my God. So the answer Joshua said now the question was why did you deceive us? The answer, because it was certainly told your servants that Jehovah 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.

So, somewhere along the line they had heard what God commanded Moses. And knowing that God had commanded Moses that all of the inhabitants should be destroyed they feared for their lives and figured it would be better to be servants than to be destroyed. And now here we are in your hands do with us as seems good and right to do to us.

So he did to them and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel so that they did not kill them. And that day Joshua made them wood cutters and water carriers for the congregation and for the altar of the Lord in the place which he would choose even to this day. Now, unfortunately in time to come they

were a snare to Israel.

And in time to come because they were not obedient to God in destroying all of the idols and all of the gods of the land the children of Israel began to turn to these idols and to these gods and began to worship them and they turned away from the true and the living God. And as we move into the next book the book of Judges we're going to find this over and over again. Israel sinning against the Lord and beginning to worship the gods of the Canaanites the gods of the land the gods of the people whom they had driven out because they had not obeyed God completely.

And thus the ungodly alliance ultimately pulled them down as ungodly alliances will so often do. It's a constant downward pressure. A constant pressure to compromise your convictions.

To compromise your commitment unto God. And this compromise or this ungodly alliance in time drug them down and the children of Israel committed sin in the sight of the Lord in turning to these other gods. We'll return with more insightful teachings from the book of Joshua in our next lesson as we continue with The Victory of the Amorites and we do hope you'll make plans to join us.

But right now I'd like to remind you that if you missed any part of today's message or perhaps you'd like to order a copy for that special friend or loved one you can do so by simply contacting one of our customer service representatives and they'd be more than happy to assist you with the ordering details. Simply call 1-800-272-WORD and phone orders can be taken Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Time. Once again our toll free number is 1-800-272-9673 and for your added convenience you can order online anytime when you go to [www.thewordfortoday.org](http://www.thewordfortoday.org) and while you're there be sure to browse through the additional resources that include Bible studies, commentaries, CDs, DVDs and so much more.

Once again that's [www.thewordfortoday.org](http://www.thewordfortoday.org) And for those of you who still prefer to write you can use our mailing address which is The Word for Today P.O. Box 8000 Costa Mesa, California 92628 and be sure to include the call letters of this station with your correspondence. And now on behalf of The Word for Today we'd like to thank all of you who share in supporting this ministry with your prayers and financial support and be sure to join us again next time as Pastor Chuck Smith continues his verse-by-verse study through the book of Joshua. That's right here on the next edition of The Word for Today.

And now once again here's Pastor Chuck Smith. May the Lord bless you and may the Lord help you as you walk with Jesus to experience that power of God's Spirit within your life that He might do for you what you can't do for yourself. Granting you that power to live after the Spirit that as you yield yourself to the power of God's Spirit within He might work in you to conform you into the image of Jesus Christ that you might develop and mature spiritually until you come into the fullness of the measure of the image of Christ.

God bless you and may He work in us this week in Jesus' name. The Word for Today I have a special surprise for you. The Word for Today is releasing to the public this year's Pastor's Wives retreat on DVD entitled Simply Grace.

Watch and listen to Cheryl Broderson You see, as Pastor's Wives sometimes we start trying to atone for our own sins but Jesus has paid it all. Sandy McIntosh I only have to go back to the day of my salvation to realize how much I need and want God. Kathy Laurie And so in doing God's will it is not only a necessity but it is something that we should enjoy doing.

And many more. To order your copy of this year's Pastor's Wives retreat Simply Grace on DVD with a bonus mp3 call The Word for Today at 1-800-272-9673 or visit us online at [thewordfortoday.org](http://thewordfortoday.org) This program has been sponsored by The Word for Today in Costa Mesa, California.

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