

Dr. David Howard, Joshua - Ruth, Session 14, Joshua 9 – Gibeonite Treaty Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 14, Joshua 9 – Gibeonite Treaty, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture excerpt from Dr. David Howard's series on Joshua and Ruth **focuses on Joshua chapter 9**, specifically the **Gibeonite Treaty**. It **examines the Gibeonites' deceptive strategy to secure a treaty with Israel**, contrasting their actions with those of other Canaanite kings. The lecture then **discusses the consequences of Israel's failure to seek God's counsel** before making the treaty and finally highlights **the Gibeonites' eventual integration into Israelite society**, centuries later, as depicted in the Book of Nehemiah. The overall theme is **God's mercy and the complexities of covenant in the Old Testament**.

2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 14 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Joshua-Ruth).



**Howard_Josh_Ruth
_Session14.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 14, Joshua 9 – Gibeonite Treaty

Okay, here is a briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, "Howard_Josh_Ruth_EN_Session14_Josh9.pdf":

Briefing Document: Joshua 9 - The Gibeonite Treaty

Main Themes and Ideas:

1. Context within the Book of Joshua:

- Joshua 9 marks the beginning of a section spanning three chapters (9-11) focused on coalitions of kings opposing Israel. This section contrasts with the earlier, more geographically focused battles at Jericho and Ai (Chapters 6-8).
- The overarching theme in these three chapters is the response to Israel's growing reputation. We see the repetition of kings 'hearing' about Israel's victories as a catalyst for action, "This motif of the king's hearing is found back in chapter 2, verses 9 to 11, chapter 5, verse 1, chapter 9, verse 1, chapter 9, verse 3 as well."
- Initially, the Canaanites were fearful due to Israel's victories and God's power, but the defeat at Ai changed their response, making them more likely to fight rather than cower in fear.

1. The Gibeonites' Cunning Strategy:

- Unlike other Canaanite kings who chose to fight, the Gibeonites employed deception to secure their survival. "When the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, they went on, they on their part, acted with cunning."
- They knew about God's instruction to destroy the Canaanites and therefore pretended to be from a distant land to form an alliance with Israel, thus avoiding being considered inhabitants of the land of Canaan, "The point is, that we've come from a place not under the ban. We're okay."
- They prepared worn-out provisions to make their story of being from a distant country plausible, "Here's our bread. It was still warm when we took it from our houses. Now it's old and crumbly, and the wine skeins were new, but now they're old, and so on."

1. Israel's Failure and its Implications:

- The Israelites fell for the Gibeonites' deception by not seeking God's guidance before entering into a treaty. "They did not ask counsel from the Lord."
- This act of neglecting to consult with the Lord is presented as a significant failure of Joshua and the elders. "It's one of the few places in the book of Joshua where Joshua, well, first of all, Joshua does not even appear at this point."
- Despite discovering the deceit, the Israelites upheld their oath due to the solemnity of covenant-making, an important practice of the time, "But the people of Israel did not attack them because their leaders had sworn by the Lord."

1. Consequences for the Gibeonites:

- The Gibeonites were spared from destruction, but as punishment, they were made servants, tasked with wood cutting and water drawing for the Israelites, "You're going to be our servants, cutters of wood, drawers of water."
- This servitude became a long-term reality, as they were appointed to these tasks "to this day," indicating the practice continued for many years, likely until the writing of the Book of Joshua.
- The lecturer observes that three groups were spared the command to be completely destroyed: Rahab, the Gibeonites, and those the Israelites did not have the strength to drive out from the land.

1. Long-Term Integration and Redemption of the Gibeonites:

- The Gibeonites' story has a "happy ending," showing their integration into Israelite society centuries later as a consequence of God's grace.
- In the book of Nehemiah (chapter 3), the Gibeonites are among those who helped rebuild the walls of Jerusalem during the post-exile period, indicating their full participation in the life of Israel, "But as a matter of fact, among this list of all the Jews who are rebuilding the walls, all the people of God who are doing this, we have Gibeonites."
- Furthermore, in Nehemiah 7, the Gibeonites are mentioned as returning exiles, demonstrating they were considered part of the Jewish community, "the sons of Gibeon, 95."
- This shows a transformative process from deception and servitude to acceptance and assimilation into the people of God.

1. Significance of Gilgal:

- The location of this event is in a second location named Gilgal that is not the same place near the Jordan river.
- The original Gilgal was the place where the reproach of Egypt was "rolled away," (related to the Hebrew word Galal)

Key Quotes:

- "This motif of the king's hearing is found back in chapter 2, verses 9 to 11, chapter 5, verse 1, chapter 9, verse 1, chapter 9, verse 3 as well."
- "When the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, they went on, they on their part, acted with cunning."
- "The point is, that we've come from a place not under the ban. We're okay."
- "Here's our bread. It was still warm when we took it from our houses. Now it's old and crumbly, and the wine skeins were new, but now they're old, and so on."
- "They did not ask counsel from the Lord."
- "You're going to be our servants, cutters of wood, drawers of water."
- "But as a matter of fact, among this list of all the Jews who are rebuilding the walls, all the people of God who are doing this, we have Gibeonites."
- "the sons of Gibeon, 95."

Conclusion:

Joshua 9 illustrates a pivotal moment in Israel's conquest where a lack of divine consultation leads to an unexpected treaty with the Gibeonites. Despite the deception, the treaty is upheld, highlighting the importance of oaths in the ancient Near East. The story also demonstrates God's grace and the surprising integration of outsiders into the people of God, culminating in the Gibeonites' full participation in the rebuilding of Jerusalem, a thousand years later.

4. Study Guide: Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 14, Joshua 9 – Gibeonite Treaty

Joshua 9: The Gibeonite Treaty - Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. How did the initial reaction of the Canaanite kings to the Israelites' victories differ from their later reaction, and what caused this change?
2. What specific instructions from the Pentateuch did the Gibeonites seem to be aware of that informed their actions?
3. Describe the deceptive strategy employed by the Gibeonites when approaching the Israelites.
4. What was the fatal flaw in the Israelites' decision to enter into a covenant with the Gibeonites, and why was it considered a failure of leadership?
5. Why was the covenant that Joshua and the elders made with the Gibeonites considered unbreakable?
6. What was the immediate consequence for the Gibeonites after the Israelites discovered the deception?
7. Besides Rahab, what are two other groups of Canaanites mentioned in the book of Joshua who were spared?
8. In what way does the book of Nehemiah provide a positive development in the story of the Gibeonites?
9. How does the story of the Gibeonites demonstrate a theme of God's grace despite their initial deception?
10. What is the significance of the multiple locations called Gilgal mentioned in the text, and where was the specific Gilgal mentioned in this passage located?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Initially, the Canaanite kings were afraid of the Israelites because they had heard about God's victories, but after the Israelites suffered a defeat at Ai, the kings gained courage and formed coalitions to fight against Israel.

2. The Gibeonites were aware of the instructions in Deuteronomy 20, specifically regarding offering terms of peace to distant cities but completely destroying those within Canaan, leading them to pretend they were from far away.
3. The Gibeonites disguised themselves as travelers from a distant country by wearing worn-out clothes, carrying old provisions, and claiming to have come from a place outside of Canaan.
4. The Israelites failed to ask for counsel from the Lord before making the covenant, highlighting a failure of leadership, particularly by Joshua. They should have sought God's guidance to avoid being deceived.
5. In the ancient Near Eastern context, making a covenant was a solemn and binding act, not to be lightly broken, especially when an oath was sworn by the Lord.
6. The Gibeonites were not killed, but were made servants, specifically cutters of wood and drawers of water, for the Israelites.
7. Besides Rahab and the Gibeonites, the third group of Canaanites spared were those people in Canaan that the Israelites did not drive out from their territory, mentioned in the later chapters of Joshua.
8. Nehemiah reveals that about a thousand years later the Gibeonites are no longer subservient. Instead, they are full participants in the life of Israel, helping to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, demonstrating their assimilation into the community.
9. Despite deceiving the Israelites to save their own lives, the Gibeonites ultimately became part of Israel and were integrated into the people of God, demonstrating God's ultimate graciousness.
10. There are multiple locations called Gilgal, but the specific location in this passage is the Gilgal in the central hill country, unlike the Gilgal near the Jordan River.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Write an essay of at least 500 words for each of the following questions.

1. Analyze the significance of the Gibeonite treaty in the broader narrative of the book of Joshua, considering both the immediate consequences and the long-term implications for the Israelites and the Gibeonites.
2. Compare and contrast the different responses to Israel's victories and reputation as demonstrated by the Canaanites, and explain how these different responses reveal key themes about faith, fear, and deception in the book of Joshua.
3. Explore the theological implications of the Israelites' failure to seek God's counsel in the Gibeonite treaty incident, and discuss how this incident serves as a cautionary tale about obedience and leadership.
4. Discuss the various ways in which the Gibeonites' story illustrates the complex themes of inclusion and assimilation within the broader narrative of the Old Testament, using examples from Joshua and Nehemiah to support your arguments.
5. Considering the long trajectory of the Gibeonite narrative from deception in Joshua to assimilation in Nehemiah, discuss how this arc reflects on the themes of divine grace and the complex nature of identity formation within the context of Israel's relationship with God and others.

Glossary

- **Gibeonite Treaty:** The agreement made between the Israelites and the Gibeonites in Joshua 9, in which the Gibeonites deceived the Israelites into a covenant.
- **Gilgal:** A significant site for the Israelites; the text references two locations: one near the Jordan River (where the circumcision occurred) and one in the central hill country.
- **Pentateuch:** The first five books of the Hebrew Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), which includes laws and instructions for the Israelites.
- **Covenant:** A formal agreement or treaty, often involving oaths and solemn promises.
- **The Ban:** A divine command to completely destroy the people and possessions in certain cities, specifically within the land of Canaan.
- **Rahab:** A Canaanite woman from Jericho who was spared by the Israelites for helping the spies, and who was integrated into the lineage of Jesus.
- **Nehemiah:** A book of the Old Testament that details the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls and the return of the Jewish exiles from Babylon.
- **Assimilation:** The process by which a person or group of people become integrated into a larger society or culture.
- **Adonai Zedek:** The king of Jerusalem who led a coalition against the Israelites after hearing of their victory at Ai.
- **Jabin:** The king of Hazor, who assembled a coalition against the Israelites after the destruction of Ai.

5. FAQs on Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 14, Joshua 9 – Gibeonite Treaty, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ: Joshua 9 and the Gibeonite Treaty

1. **What is the main focus of Joshua chapter 9?**
2. Joshua chapter 9 centers on the treaty between the Israelites and the Gibeonites. It explores how the Gibeonites, aware of Israel's military victories and the command to destroy Canaanite cities, use deception to secure a covenant of peace. This chapter marks a shift in the narrative from straightforward military conquest to the complexities of diplomacy and the consequences of not seeking divine guidance. It also sets the stage for later events involving the Gibeonites within the biblical narrative.
3. **How did the Gibeonites differ from other Canaanite groups in their response to Israel?**
4. Unlike other Canaanite kings who formed coalitions to fight against Israel, the Gibeonites chose a different approach. Hearing of Israel's victories at Jericho and Ai, and likely knowing about the command in Deuteronomy 20 to offer peace terms, they used deception. They disguised themselves as travelers from a distant land to convince the Israelites to enter into a covenant with them, avoiding the otherwise certain fate of being destroyed.
5. **What deception did the Gibeonites employ, and why was it successful?**
6. The Gibeonites presented themselves as travelers from a far-off country, using old sacks, worn-out wineskins, and dry bread as evidence. They explicitly stated they were not from the land Israel was commanded to conquer. This tactic worked because it exploited Israel's policy of making treaties with distant cities and because the Israelites failed to consult God about the situation. The Gibeonites' cunning played on Israel's protocol and their assumption of the Gibeonites' story.

7. **What was the main mistake the Israelites made in making the treaty with the Gibeonites?**
8. The central mistake made by the Israelites was that they "did not ask counsel from the Lord" (Joshua 9:14). They relied on their own judgment, accepting the Gibeonites' presentation at face value without seeking God's guidance. This oversight caused them to unknowingly violate God's instructions to utterly destroy the inhabitants of Canaan. The lack of prayer and reliance on immediate physical senses is considered the crucial failing of Israel in this situation.
9. **What was the immediate consequence for the Gibeonites after their deception was revealed?**
10. When their deception was uncovered, the Gibeonites were not killed, due to the covenant which was considered sacred. Instead, they were made servants, specifically "cutters of wood and drawers of water" for the Israelites and the sanctuary. This consequence highlights the seriousness of making a covenant, even if deceit was used to obtain it, and it also established the Gibeonites place as a servant people for the Israelites for the following centuries.
11. **Beyond Joshua 9, where else are the Gibeonites mentioned in the Old Testament?**

The Gibeonites are mentioned again in the book of Nehemiah. In Nehemiah 3:7, they are listed among those who helped rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, showing their integration into the life of Israel. In Nehemiah 7:25, they are included among those who returned from exile in Babylon, demonstrating their continued identity as part of the Israelite community even after generations of history. They have become more than just servants.

1. **How did the Gibeonites ultimately become integrated into the Israelite community?**
2. Despite beginning their relationship with Israel through deception and servitude, the Gibeonites eventually became fully integrated into the Israelite community. Over a thousand years, they moved from being viewed as servants to being participants in rebuilding Jerusalem and were among the people of Israel exiled and returning from Babylon. This integration signifies a narrative of redemption and the gracious ways in which God interacts with those who come to him, even when their beginnings were less than ideal.

3. **What are some key theological themes present in the story of the Gibeonite treaty?**
4. Several key themes emerge. First, the importance of seeking God's guidance in decision-making is emphasized; the Israelites' failure to consult God led to their being deceived. Second, the story reveals the gravity of covenants in the ancient world. Even though the treaty with the Gibeonites was made due to deception, its sanctity required it to be upheld. Finally, the integration of the Gibeonites into Israel, despite their deceitful entrance, suggests a theme of God's mercy and the possibility of redemption for those who turn to him. It shows how God works even through the errors of his people and how foreigners can become part of God's chosen family.