

Trinity Home Teams

Sermon Notes / Feb. 8, 2026

The Book of Joshua / **Undiscerning Alliances P2**

Joshua 9:1-27

1. Since Israel was tricked by the Gibeonites, why wasn't their commitment (to the Gibeonites) null and void?
2. How was the grace of God extended to the Gibeonites as well as Israel?
3. How has God's grace been visible in your life despite your sin, or wrong/failed commitments?

Last week's sermon dealt with falling into undiscerning alliances, as Israel was duped into making peace with a nearby city, violating Yahweh's command. Today we see how Israel dealt with the mess that haste and a lack of discernment brought them.

The gravity of Israel's commitment (read v16-21)

When the treachery of the Gibeonites is revealed, the people of Israel set out for the Gibeonite cities. Were they going to verify that the Gibeonites were their neighbors? Surely they were shocked their own leaders could violate Yahweh's command. Were they going to lay siege to the cities and destroy them? Yet when they arrive, their swords are restrained because of the oath their leaders swore "*by the Lord, the God of Israel.*" Because they invoked the name of Yahweh in their oath, to kill the Gibeonites would incur the wrath of Yahweh.

Since the covenant was entered into under false pretenses, why wasn't it null and void? Because Israel's leaders didn't verify the claim of the Gibeonites, there was no provision for the covenant's termination if they were found to be neighbors. In other words, the covenant was completely binding on the Israelites. It was entered into hastily and without proper discernment, but it was valid, and they were bound. To violate the covenant would be to bring reproach upon the name of Yahweh.

How great was the gravity of this covenant? Around 600 years later, Saul 'sought to strike [the Gibeonites] down in his zeal for the people of Israel and Judah.' The result was three years of famine which was only ended when David sought the Lord and avenged these deaths by giving seven sons of Saul to the Gibeonites to be hanged before the Lord. The Israelites were right to honor the covenant made by their leaders.

There are important implications for us as followers of Christ. It is not without reason that Paul admonishes the Corinthians against tethering themselves to those who do not follow Christ:

2 Corinthians 6:14-16 "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? 16 What

agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God."

Entering lightly into covenants, or agreements, or alliances, or partnerships, or any relationship where we bind ourselves to another person or organization is, as a follower of Christ, unwise. Exiting an agreement is equally risky without considering the glory of Christ.

Regarding oaths, Jesus says this:

Matthew 5:33-37 "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' 34 But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil."

Sometimes God's people are called to live obediently amidst the results of their folly. There are times when our preferences, our conveniences, our justifications must not be allowed to dissolve those difficult situations.

The grace of Yahweh (read v22-27)

They were given grace to walk faithfully in the midst of difficult circumstances and wisdom to navigate their unfortunate predicament.

YAHWEH'S GRACE TO GIBEON -- Their confession was very similar to Rahab's confession to the two spies. However, they stopped short of proclaiming that 'the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath' (Joshua 2:11). Still, they did not equivocate on Yahweh's power. They knew that to be Israel's enemy was to fight against Yahweh.

Genesis 9:25 "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers."

But, as Yahweh often does, he turns defeat into victory and curse into blessing. Once again, Yahweh's grace abounds to sinners who are not a part of Israel. The Gibeonites are saved from *herem* (delivered by Joshua), becoming servants then apparently part of Israel.

Is grace extended to those who practice deception? Consider Rahab (deceives guards when spies are hidden) and Jacob (Israel) who deceived Isaac for Esau's blessing.

DAVID JACKMAN: "This is the glory of Yahweh. He cannot be outmaneuvered by human cunning or hindered by human fallibility. That glory is shown in the grace that can turn a curse into a blessing, that can use our mistakes and foolishness to bind us more closely than ever to him, that can reveal where we went wrong and make it become the means by which we can begin to go right."