

The Gibeonites

Joshua 9:1 – 10:28

by Don Falkos

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The people of Gibeon sent a delegation to Joshua. Their clothes were old, their sandals worn out. They were provisioned with dry and moldy bread. Their wineskins were cracked and patched. They said to Joshua, "We heard about the wonderful things your God has done and have come from a distant country to make a treaty with you. When we left home, our wineskins were new and our bread was fresh from the ovens. Now look at us. Our clothes and our sandals are worn out from the journey, and our supplies are so old they've become inedible."

Joshua and the leaders of Israel did not consult with the Lord. Instead, they trusted what they saw and heard and made a peace treaty with these men. A few days later, they discovered the Gibeonites were not from a distant country but lived close by in Canaan.

Joshua told the Gibeonites, "We swore an oath to you, so you will not be killed. But from now on you will be our slaves."

Five Canaanite kings joined forces and attacked Gibeon. The Gibeonites sent word to Joshua, "We're your slaves. Come quickly and save us!"

Joshua and the entire Israelite army marched all night and in the morning launched a surprise attack in defense of Gibeon. The enemy was routed, but as they fled the Lord destroyed them with a hailstorm. More of them died from the hail than were killed by the Israelites.

On that day Joshua prayed, "Let the sun stand still over Gibeon."

The sun stopped in the middle of the sky until the Israelites had defeated their enemies. At the end of that long day, Joshua executed the five Canaanite kings who had mounted the attack on Gibeon.