

13.06 Gibeonites (Joshua 9:1–27; Deuteronomy 7:1-11)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows.

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that should not be read aloud. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- “Joshua” Flash-a-Cards by A Beka Book, Pensacola, FL, 1985, and/or pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional needed materials.
- If students have not brought their own Bibles, provide the readers with Bibles of the same translation, or, if you choose, print copies of the Scripture found below from Deuteronomy 7:1-5, particularly verse 2.
- Burlap sack, wineskin bottle (or see picture below), really worn shoes or sandals

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Tips and terms are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *treaty*: a covenant (an agreement or promise) between countries
- *to swear an oath*: in this story to make an unbreakable promise

Scripture: (ESV)

Joshua 9:1 As soon as all the kings who were beyond the Jordan in the hill country and in the lowland all along the coast of the Great Sea toward Lebanon, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, heard of this, 2 they gathered together as one to fight against Joshua and Israel.

3 But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, 4 they on their part acted with cunning and went and made ready provisions and took worn-out sacks for their donkeys, and wineskins, worn-out and torn and mended, 5 with worn-out, patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes. And all their provisions were dry and crumbly. 6 And they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and to the men of Israel, “We have come from a distant country, so now make a covenant with us.” 7 But the men of Israel said to the Hivites, “Perhaps you live among us; then how can we make a covenant with you?” 8 They said to Joshua, “We are your servants.” And Joshua said to them, “Who are you? And where do you come from?” 9 They said to him, “From a very distant country your servants have come, because of the name of the Lord your God. For we have heard a report of him, and all that he did in Egypt, 10 and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon the king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth. 11 So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country said to us, ‘Take provisions in your hand for the journey and go to meet them and say to them, We are your servants. Come now, make a covenant with us.’ 12 Here is our bread. It was still warm when we took it from our houses as our food for the journey on the day we set out to come to you, but now, behold, it is dry and crumbly. 13 These wineskins were new when we filled them, and behold, they have burst. And these garments and sandals of ours are worn out from the very long journey.” 14 So the men took some of their provisions, but did not ask counsel from the Lord. 15 And Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live, and the leaders of the congregation swore to them.

16 At the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them, they heard that they were their neighbors and that they lived among them. 17 And the people of Israel set out and reached their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim. 18 But the people of Israel did not attack them, because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the Lord, the God of Israel. Then all the congregation murmured against the leaders. 19 But all the leaders said to all the congregation, “We have sworn to them by the Lord, the God of Israel, and now we may not touch them. 20 This we will do to them: let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath that we swore to them.” 21 And the leaders said to them, “Let them live.” So they became cutters of wood and drawers of water for all the congregation, just as the

leaders had said of them.

22 Joshua summoned them, and he said to them, “Why did you deceive us, saying, ‘We are very far from you,’ when you dwell among us? 23 Now therefore you are cursed, and some of you shall never be anything but servants, cutters of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God.” 24 They answered Joshua, “Because it was told to your servants for a certainty that the Lord your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you—so we feared greatly for our lives because of you and did this thing. 25 And now, behold, we are in your hand. Whatever seems good and right in your sight to do to us, do it.” 26 So he did this to them and delivered them out of the hand of the people of Israel, and they did not kill them. 27 But Joshua made them that day cutters of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the Lord, to this day, in the place that he should choose.

Deuteronomy 7:1 “When the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than you, 2 and when the Lord your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. 3 You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, 4 for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the Lord would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly. 5 But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and chop down their Asherim and burn their carved images with fire.

6 “For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. 7 It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, 10 and repays to their face those who hate him, by destroying them. He will not be slack with one who hates him. He will repay him to his face. 11 You shall therefore be careful to do the commandment and the statutes and the rules that I command you today.

Introduction/Review:

Our last story included blessings for obedience to God’s Word and cursings for disobedience to God’s Word. God gave ample warning about the consequences for disobeying His commands because He loved Israel and wanted to keep them protected from the horrible wickedness and idolatry they would find in the land they were to conquer.

Listen to the kind heart of God towards His people. [Read Deuteronomy 7:6-11, printed above, or read only verses 6b–8a and 11.] “The Lord your *God has chosen you* to be a people for *his treasured possession*, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that *the Lord set his love on you and chose you*, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because *the Lord loves you . . .* that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery. . . . You shall therefore be careful to do the commandment and the statutes and the rules that I command you today” (emphasis added).]

One statute that God commanded was especially important. It is found in Deuteronomy 7:2. [Display the verse, enlarged below, or use a sword drill for all the children to find and read this verse.] “When the Lord your God gives [the nations] over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. *You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them*” (emphasis added). What three things did God tell them to do? [Completely destroy them; make no covenant with them; show no mercy to them.] ✓If you think this is harsh treatment towards the enemy, remember that it was for the good

of God's people and for the punishment of evil, which was downright demonic in Canaan (Deuteronomy 18:9–14).

Israel, already, had suffered one defeat by mistakenly going ahead without seeking God's will. Where and how did this happen? [At Ai, when they didn't ask God for direction, not knowing about Achan's sin.] ✓God likely would have prevented their defeat if they had sought Him first. Again, soon after Ai, Israel would not consult God before making a huge decision and would suffer unwelcome consequences. Listen to today's story to learn more.

Story:

Kings panic

All the kings on the west side of the Jordan River including those living [locate all these areas on map found below] in the valleys, along the coasts, and on the hills had heard about what God had done since Israel had come to the Promised Land, Canaan. What are those things that God had done? [Defeated Sihon and Og, the giants; miraculously brought Israel over the Jordan River; brought down the walls of Jericho; defeated Ai.] They had heard, also, that God definitely promised to give all the land to Israel and to destroy all its inhabitants. They were scared to death of this prospect!

In fact, all the kings of those cities banded together in order to fight against Israel. All the kings, that is, except one group of kings over four cities. We call them the Gibeonites, for that was the name of their chief city. It was only six miles away from Ai and probably was the next city in line to be attacked by Israel. The Gibeonites wanted to live, and live they would if—if Israel would believe a colossal lie!

Gibeonites approach

First, the Gibeonites gathered together old worn-out sacks; old wineskins that had split and been patched so that they could hardly hold liquid; bread that was dry and crumbly; sandals, worn out and patched; and clothes, tattered and thin.

Listen to their lie. Would you have believed it? They said, "Joshua and men of Israel, we are men who have come from a far country, and we want to make a treaty with you." Oh. A treaty.

Suspicious, the Israelites asked, "Maybe you live close to us. If so, we cannot make a covenant with you. Where do you come from?"

[Speak meekly.] "We, your servants, have come from a very distant country because of the name of the Lord your God. For we have heard a report of Him and all that He did in Egypt and all that He did to the two kings, Sihon and Og, beyond the Jordan."

Notice, students, that the Gibeonites did not report hearing about the Jordan River or Jericho or Ai, for those events would have been too recent for people from a "far country" to know about.

The Gibeonites continued. "So our country's leaders said to us, 'Take food for the journey and go say to them, "We are your servants."' Come now; make a covenant with us.

"Look, here is our bread. It was still warm when we took it from our houses, but now it is dry and crumbly. These wineskins were new when we filled them, and look; they are split. These clothes and sandals are worn out from the very long journey."

That was pretty good evidence, wouldn't you say? I think I might have believed them, but if I had, I would have been deceived.

Israelites promise

Israel, too, looked at the evidence, but did they seek God's counsel in the matter? No. They were convinced by the obvious sincerity and the journey-worn condition of the men. "Surely," they thought, "these guys are from a country far away. Since they are from a faraway land, it should be okay to make a treaty with them."

And they did: they promised they would not destroy the Gibeonite cities.

Three days later, the Israelites, on the war path, came to those four Gibeonite cities—Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, Kirjath-jearim—the next area in line to be destroyed. Oh, no! The Gibeonites were not from a far country but were neighbors!

✓The Bible doesn't say the meeting went this way, but maybe Israelite spies said to the Gibeonites, "Hey, you look familiar. Where have we seen you before?"

✓The Gibeonites might have answered, "Oh, yes, we met you three days ago when you promised not to destroy our cities."

✓"What?!? Are you—? Where did you—? You—you told us you were from a distant land! You liars! You cheats! You—! Oooh!"

"Well, you can't attack our cities because you promised."

"Joshua and elders of Israel, what shall we do?" asked the Israelites.

Gibeonites serve

Joshua answered, "You Gibeonites are right. We promised by the name of our God, and we can't break our promise even though you tricked us into a treaty. Therefore we won't attack you. But we will make you our menial servants—like slaves. You will chop wood and carry water for us, especially for the sacrifices at the tabernacle, but also for the whole Israelite population. Now, why did you deceive us?"

One Bible story teller [Ethel Barrett] answered this question by saying, "The Gibeonites said they would rather be live slaves than dead kings." However, the answer given in the Bible shows much more respect for God Himself. Listen: "Because we knew the Lord your God had commanded Moses to give you all this land and to destroy all the people living here, we were afraid for our lives and did this thing. Now we are in your hand. Do to us whatever seems good and right in your sight."

Israel murmurs

Israel was quite unhappy with its leaders for falling into this trap. They complained to their princes, but the leaders answered the congregation, "We swore to them by the Lord, the God of Israel, and now we may not touch them. We will let them live. If we don't, God's wrath will come upon us because we promised."

Joshua answered, "We dare not go back on our promise. Now therefore they are cursed and shall never be anything but servants—cutters of wood and drawers of water for the house of our God."

Students, these Gibeonites were in earnest. Despite the fact that Israel had disobeyed in making a treaty with them, ✓it seems as if they served the Lord sincerely, for I read of no place in the Bible where the Gibeonites tried to get the Israelites to worship their gods. ✓It appears that they revered the true God of Israel. Later on after the temple was built, they still were chopping wood and carrying water for the Temple and ✓were called Nethinim (Ezra 7:24). ✓They were true servants (slaves) of God and likely worshiped Him themselves. On the other hand, they certainly had a lot of menial work to do. Imagine how much wood needed to be chopped in order to keep the fire on the altar burning at all times.

Nevertheless, the Israelites faced more trouble with the other kings of this area. We'll learn more about that trouble next week.

Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus:
 - Contrary to the practice of Joshua and the elders in this story, Jesus Christ always did the will of the Father: "I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me" (John 8:28).
- Seek God's will before making important decisions.

- Keep your promises even if keeping them brings you trouble.

Activities:

- Play dough: sacks, bread, sandals, clothes, wine skins
- Snack: Biscotti (like dry bread). Several biscotti recipes may be found at <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipes/837/desserts/cookies/biscotti/?page=2>.
- Play-act this story.
- Sing “How Did Moses/Joshua Cross the Red Sea/Jordan?” found in “Lesson 13.03 Crossing the Jordan” or on the “Songs” page at teachingthebibletokids.org, where an audio and visuals are available.
- Review the Ten Commandments by singing either “Stop! It’s the Law” or “Exodus 20:1–17” found under “Exodus” on the “Songs” page at teachingthebibletokids.org.
- Review questions: (Game: Cut the following letters out of felt or print on colored paper, back with paper towel, and cut out the letters found below: G, I, B, E, O, N, I, T, E, S [that’s 2 – I’s and 2 – E’s and one each of the other letters]. An alternative is to print the letters on colored cardstock for use in a pocket chart. After answering a question correctly, a student may randomly choose a letter and place it on a flannel board or in a pocket chart. When all the letters have been displayed, students will unscramble the letters to form the word *Gibeonites*.)
 1. Fill in the blank. When God said to devote the nations to destruction, He also said, “Make no _____ with the people.” [Treaty or covenant.]
 2. Instead of planning to fight against Israel, one group chose to trick Israel. What was the name of this group? [Gibeonites.]
 3. Name two things the Gibeonites showed to Israel to make them believe they had come from a far country. [They had worn-out sacks, wineskins, sandals. and clothes. All their food was dry and crumbly.]
 4. What did the Gibeonites ask the Israelites to do? [Make a treaty promising not to war against them.]
 5. Trick question. What did God answer when Joshua asked what to do? [Joshua did not ask God.]
 6. How long was it before Israel realized the Gibeonites were neighbors? [Three days.]
 7. Why wouldn’t Israel attack the Gibeonites? [They had promised peace to them.]
 8. True or false. Israel should have attacked the Gibeonites because these people had tricked Israel. [False.]
 9. Explain why the answer in #8 is false. [Israel should not have attacked the Gibeonites even if they had tricked Israel because Israel had promised them peace.]
 10. The Gibeonites were allowed to live, but what did they have to do from then on? [Cut wood and draw water for Israel.]

Memory Verse[s]:

- Joshua 1:6, 7: Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go.

Handwork:

- Have students color a page or do a worksheet printed from <http://calvarycurriculum.com/pdf/Curriculum/Original/Curriculum/CURR059.PDF>.

treaty

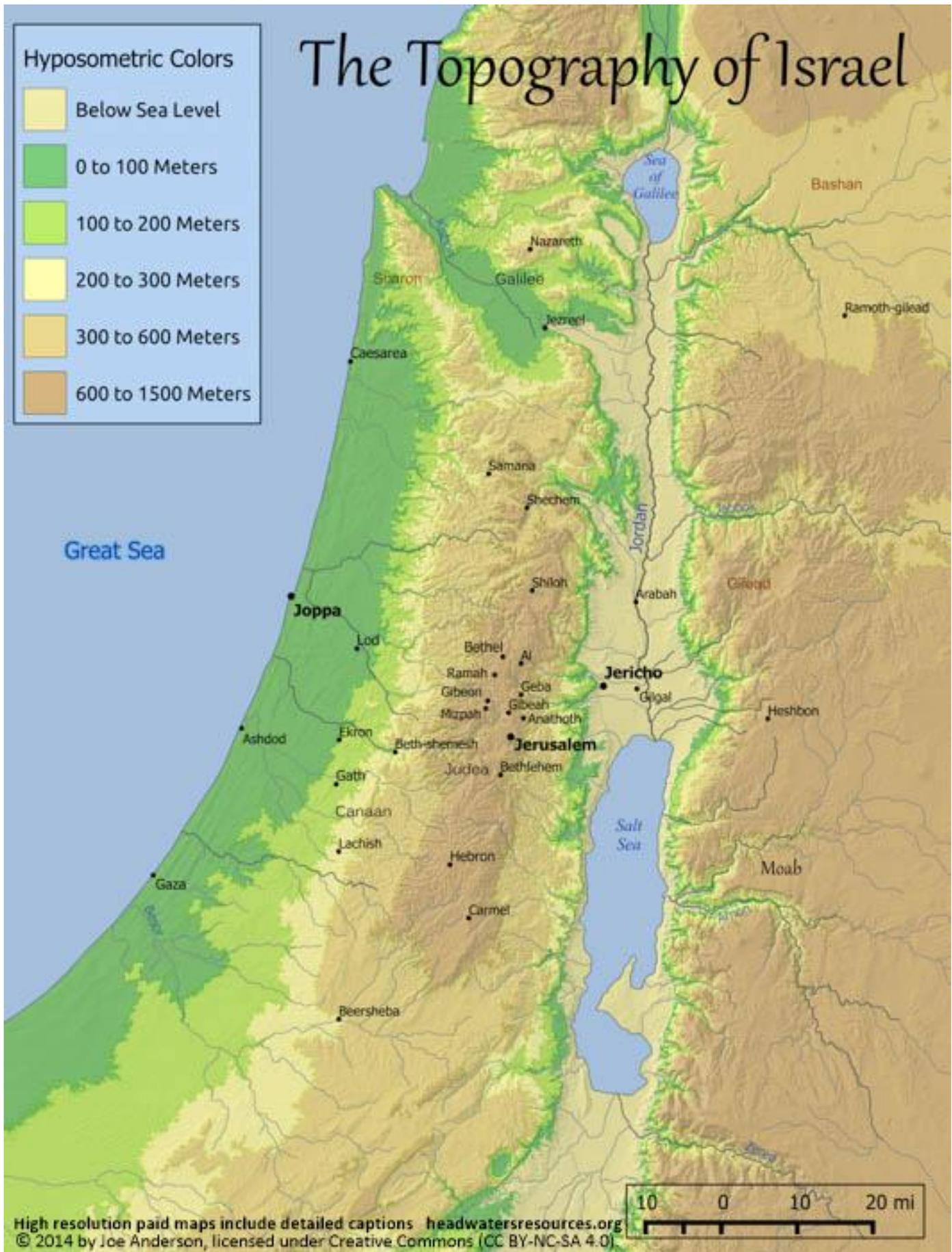
to swear

When the Lord your
God gives them over to
you, and you defeat
them, then you must
devote them to
complete destruction.

*You shall make no
covenant with them and
show no mercy to them
(Deuteronomy 7:2).*

The Topography of Israel

Hyposometric Colors



High resolution paid maps include detailed captions headwatersresources.org
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A wineskin <https://beyondhalfway.files.wordpress.com/2017/02/wineskin-300x274.jpg>



<https://obscurecharacters.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/gibeonites.jpg>



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