

RUNNING AHEAD OF GOD

Now when all the kings west of the Jordan heard about these things they came together to make war against Joshua and Israel. However, when the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, they resorted to a deception: They went as a delegation whose donkeys were loaded with worn-out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended. The men put worn and patched sandals on their feet and wore old clothes. All the bread of their food supply was dry and moldy. Then they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and the men of Israel, "We have come from a distant country; make a treaty with us." The men of Israel said to the Hivites, "But perhaps you live near us. How then can we make a treaty with you?" "We are your servants," they said to Joshua. But Joshua asked, "Who are you and where do you come from?" They answered: "Your servants have come from a very distant country because of the fame of the Lord your God. For we have heard reports of him: all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan--Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth. And our elders and all those living in our country said to us, "Take provisions for your journey; go and meet them and say to them, "We are your servants; make a treaty with us." "This bread of ours was warm when we packed it at home on the day we left to come to you. But now see how dry and moldy it is. And these wineskins that we filled were new, but see how cracked they are. And our clothes and sandals are worn out by the very long journey." The men of Israel sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the Lord. Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath. Three days after they made the treaty with the Gibeonites, the Israelites heard that they were neighbors, living near them. So the Israelites set out and on the third day came to their cities: Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth and Kiriath Jearim. But the Israelites did not attack them, because the leaders of the assembly had sworn an oath to them by the Lord, the God of Israel." The whole assembly grumbled against the leaders, but all the leaders answered, "We have given them our oath by the Lord, the God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now...Then Joshua summoned the Gibeonites and said, "Why did you deceive us by saying, 'We live a long way from you,' while actually you live near us? You are now under a curse: You will never cease to serve as woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God." They answered Joshua, "Your servants were clearly told how the Lord your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you the whole land and to wipe out all its inhabitants from before you. So we feared for our lives because of you, and that is why we did this. We are now in your hands. Do to us whatever seems good and right to you." So Joshua saved them from the Israelites, and they did not kill them. That day he made the Gibeonites woodcutters and water carriers for the community and for the altar of the Lord at the place the Lord would choose. And that is what they are to this day.

Joshua 9:1-27 (NIV)

❖ We Must Recognize That God Always Has a Plan

However, in the cities of the nations the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, do not leave alive anything that breathes. Completely destroy them--the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites--as the Lord your God has commanded you. Otherwise, they will teach you to follow all the detestable things they do in worshiping their gods, and you will sin against the Lord your God.

Deuteronomy 20:16-18 (NIV)

1. God commanded Israel to FOLLOW His PLAN without exception.
For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than yours, and my thoughts than yours.

Isaiah 55:9 (LB)

2. God's plan was two-fold; for Israel's PROTECTION and to fulfill His PROMISE.
"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

- Key Truth: God's ultimate plan is for ALL to be SAVED and be part of His FAMILY.

For God was in Christ, restoring the world to Himself, no longer counting men's sins against them but blotting them out. This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others.

2 Corinthians 5:19 (LB)

❖ We Also Need to Realize That Satan Has his Own Plan

"For you are the children of your father the devil and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning and a hater of truth--there is not an iota of truth in him. When he lies, it is perfectly normal; for he is the father of liars."

John 8:44 (LB)

1. Satan's desire is to DECEIVE people and lead them toward DESTRUCTION.
Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

1 Peter 5:8 (NIV)

2. Satan's desire is to DETER God's people from DELIVERING God's message.
Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand safe against all strategies and tricks of Satan.

Ephesians 6:11 (LB)

- Key Truth: God's POWER will always defeat Satan's PLANS.

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

James 4:7 (NIV)

❖ There are LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES when choosing our ways over GOD'S WILL.

So Joshua saved Gibeonites from the Israelites, and did not allow them to kill them. That day he made the Gibeonites woodcutters and water carriers for the community and for the altar of the Lord at the place the Lord would choose. And that is what they are to this day.

Joshua 9:26-27 (NIV)

1. Israel, because of their covenant with Gibeon, had now become their PROTECTOR.
Now Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard...the people of Gibeon had made a treaty of peace with Israel and were and had become their allies... Then the five

kings of the Amorites...They moved up with all their troops and took up positions against Gibeon and attacked it. The Gibeonites then sent word to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal: "Do not abandon your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us! Help us, because all the Amorite kings from the hill country have joined forces against us."

Joshua 10:1, 5-6 (NIV)

2. Due to this commitment Israel made, there would be LASTING CONSEQUENCES.

During the reign of David, there was a famine for three successive years; so David sought the face of the Lord. The Lord said, "It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death."

2 Samuel 21:1 (NIV)

- Key Truth: The MISTAKES of our past can be REDEEMED and FORGIVEN.
My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

1 John 2:1 (NIV)

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9 (NIV)

You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

1 John 4:4 (NASB)