

Lessons of Faith from Joshua

Surprised by Grace

Lesson #2 for October 11, 2025

Scriptures: Joshua 2:1-21; 9; Numbers 14:1-12; Hebrews 11:31; Exodus 12:13; Nehemiah 7:25.

1. Why would anyone be surprised by God's grace, even His grace with the Canaanites?

[From the *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=T-BSG:] For many readers, the book of Joshua is often associated with war, destruction, and death. While these elements are present in the book, they do not depict the whole story. **The destruction of the Canaanites occurred only after a long period [about 400 years] of grace (Gen. 15:16).—T-BSG* 26.^{†§}**

Genesis 15:16: [YAHWEH said to Abram:] “It will be four generations before your descendants come back here, because **I will not drive out the Amorites until they become so wicked that they must be punished.**”—American Bible Society. (©1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation*^{®*} [GNT] (*Today's English Version*) [TEV], Second Edition, Genesis 15:16). Philadelphia: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible-TEV** or *GNB-TEV**].^{††}

[T-BSG:] The events of the Exodus served as a significant testimony to God's sovereignty and can be seen as a final call for the inhabitants of Canaan. **The stories of Rahab and the Gibeonites demonstrate that most Canaanites were aware of what God had done, but only a few responded appropriately.** Instead of surrendering, they chose to resist, echoing the failure of Pharaoh 40 years prior.—*T-BSG* 26.^{††}*

2. Do not forget that many of these Canaanites were following practices like those in Sodom and Gomorrah! God could not allow them to remain in Palestine, or they would have totally led His people into sin. Remember what happened at Baal of Peor. (See Numbers 25.)
3. ***On occasion, have we made the mistake of committing the same sin a second time? Or, even multiple times?***

[T-BSG:] Indeed, Joshua is a book of grace and mercy. [In this lesson] ... we see how God's grace was manifested in the lives of the Israelites and Canaanites. Again, Israel is ready to enter the Promised Land. **God is giving them a second chance.** The threat posed by the capabilities of the Canaanite military has not changed. **What has changed is the faith of this second generation of Israelites.** [Was the faith of this “second generation” better than those who 40 years earlier refused to accept the words of Caleb and Joshua over the 10 other spies?] As for the Canaanites, the stories of **Rahab and the Gibeonites** demonstrate that not everything is lost in the doomed land. At the same time, their faith is far from perfect. The faith of the chosen people of God, however, is far from perfect too. We can learn important lessons for our spiritual journey as we compare the faith of Israel, Rahab, and the Gibeonites. The most crucial lesson, as we shall see, is that we all need God's amazing grace.—*T-BSG* 26.^{††}*

[From the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=BSG:] Israel has a second chance of entering the Promised Land, and Joshua takes this mission seriously.

The first step is to have a clear understanding of what Joshua and the Israelites face. **Joshua sends out two spies to bring him valuable information about the land:** its defense system, military preparedness, water supplies, and **the attitude of the population in the face of an invading force.**

One would think that God's promise of giving the land to the Israelites did not require any effort from them. Yet, **the assurance of divine support does not override human responsibility.** Israel stands at the border of Canaan for a second time. Expectations run high, but the last time Israel was at the border and had the same task, it resulted in an abysmal failure.

... [In this lesson,] we will explore two of the most fascinating stories of the book of Joshua and discover their relevance to our faith today. God's grace has infinite possibilities to surprise us.—*BSG** for Sabbath Afternoon, October 4.^{†‡}

Rahab, the Spies, and Faith

Joshua 2:1: Then Joshua sent two spies from the camp at Acacia with orders to go and **secretly explore** the land of Canaan, especially the city of Jericho. [How did they get across the Jordan?] When they came to the city, they went to spend the night in the house of a prostitute named Rahab.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†‡}

4. What kind of a “prostitute” was Rahab? Why do you think the two spies went to stay at her house? Some have said that she was an innkeeper. Jericho was on the main route between Mesopotamia and Egypt; so, it was a frequent stopping place for travelers.
5. Let us remember that back in Numbers 13, Moses had sent 12 spies to investigate the entire country. Ten of those twelve spies had that disastrous conclusion. So, this was not Israel's first experience with spies as Joshua sent two across the river from Acacia Grove (*Shittim* in Hebrew). It also reminds us of the terrible experience of the Israelites with the Moabite women at Baal of Peor after Balaam's recommendation, shortly before the Jericho experience.

[BSG:] The other incident at Shittim represents one of the most defiant, idolatrous violations of the covenant by the Israelites, when, at the instigation of Balaam, they committed a debauchery with the Moabite women and worshiped their gods (*Num. 25:1–3, Num. 31:16*). In this context, the name Shittim [*sic*] creates an extraordinary tension as to the outcome of the whole story. Will it be another failure on the border of the Promised Land? Or will it lead to the long-awaited fulfillment of the ancient promise?—*BSG** for Sunday, October 5.^{‡§}

Numbers 25:1-3: ¹ When the Israelites were camped at Acacia Valley, the men began to have sexual intercourse with the Moabite women who were there. ²These women invited them to sacrificial feasts, where the god of Moab was worshiped. The **Israelites ate the food and worshiped the god ³Baal of Peor. So the LORD was angry with them.**—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†} [This happened while the “faithful second generation” was waiting to cross the Jordan!][‡]

6. Isn't it amazing that God continued to work with the children of Israel despite all their failings. But, He could not allow them to live among a large number of those Canaanite fertility-cult worshipers because He knew what would happen. In fact, to a large extent, it did happen!

7. Do these stories give us any hint about how we should treat fellow sinners who need forgiveness and love?

Joshua 2:2-11: ²The king of Jericho heard that some Israelites had come that night to spy out the country, ³so he sent word to Rahab: **“The men in your house have come to spy out the whole country! Bring them out!”**

⁴⁻⁶ “Some men did come to my house,” she answered, “but I don’t know where they were from. They left at sunset before the city gate was closed. I didn’t find out where they were going, but if you start after them quickly, you can catch them.” (Now Rahab had taken the two spies up on the roof and hidden them under some stalks of flax that she had put there.) ⁷The king’s men left the city, and then the gate was shut. They went looking for the Israelite spies as far as the place where the road crosses the Jordan. [Was Rahab good at lying?]

⁸ Before the spies settled down for the night, Rahab went up on the roof ⁹and said to them, **“I know that the LORD has given you this land. Everyone in the country is terrified of you. ¹⁰We have heard how the LORD dried up the Red Sea in front of you when you were leaving Egypt. We have also heard how you killed Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan. ¹¹We were afraid as soon as we heard about it; we have all lost our courage because of you. The LORD your God is God in heaven above and here on earth.”**—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*††}

Joshua 2:10 [*New International Version*]: [Rahab said:] “We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed.” [Footnote: The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the Lord [*sic*], often by totally destroying them.]—*New International Version*.^{*†}

[T-BSG:] The verb *haram* (“to destroy utterly”), which appears in Rahab’s speech, designates an object or person devoted to destruction by God. The concept is known outside Israel, as its use in extrabiblical texts demonstrates.—*T-BSG** 28.^{‡§}

8. If Rahab was a prostitute in the usual sense that was common in the days of Jericho, then she may have lied for many husbands whose wives came looking for them!
9. A few years ago, one medical student who was asked what he would have prayed as a spy while lying under the flax on Rahab’s roof when the soldiers came knocking on her door. His response: “I would have been praying fervently that God would help me not to sneeze!”
10. As part of God’s plan, He sent Abram as a missionary to Canaan. Many were converted and joined Abram’s camp as workers. However, the vast majority of Canaanites continued in their sinful ways. God gave them about 400 more years to change; but, they did not.

[T-BSG:] Faith, which is better understood as trust, is really at the heart of the issue here. In the relationship with His creatures, God always leaves room for trust. In a certain sense, trust has been the pivotal issue since the Fall in the Garden of Eden. Is it not the same in the human sphere? There can be no genuine relationship without trust. If the Israelites had trusted in God, they would have expelled the Canaanites by supernatural means (*Exod. 23:28*). The lack of trust demonstrated by the previous generation is explicitly indicated by

God as the reason for their failure when He asks Moses: “ ‘How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them?’ ” (*Num. 14:11, NKJV*).—*T-BSG** 27.†§

[*T-BSG:*] [When they reported to Joshua,] The spies simply state: “ ‘Truly the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands’ ” (*Josh. 2:24, NKJV*). What gives them such confidence? The only thing they have is Rahab’s assurance. The spies essentially repeat to Joshua what Rahab told them: “ ‘I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you’ ” (*Josh. 2:9, NKJV*). Rahab’s words, in turn, echo the words of Joshua and Caleb in Numbers 14:8: “ ‘He will . . . give it to us’ ” (*NKJV*).—*T-BSG** 27.†§

[*BSG:*] **Central to Rahab’s story is the lie told to protect the spies.** In considering her lie, we have to realize that she was embedded in a society that was extremely sinful, which finally led to God’s decision to judge that society (*Gen. 15:16, Deut. 9:5, Lev. 18:25–28*).—*BSG** for Monday, October 6.††§

Leviticus 18:25-29: ²⁵**Their** [the Canaanites] **actions made the land unclean**, and so the LORD is punishing the land and making it reject the people who lived there. ^{26–27}They did all these disgusting things and **made the land unclean**, but you must not do them. All of you, whether Israelites or foreigners living with you, must keep the LORD’s laws and commands, ²⁸and then the land will not reject you, as it rejected the pagans who lived there before you. ²⁹**You know that whoever does any of these disgusting things will no longer be considered one of God’s people.**—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*††

[*BSG:*] While it is true that the New Testament commends her faith, a careful analysis of the New Testament references to Rahab’s act reveals that none endorse everything about her, and none validate her lie.—*BSG** for Monday, October 6.† [What was so great about her faith? Was it that she believed the rumors that she had heard about the Israelites?][†]

11. ***What do you think is implied by this message? How might it apply to our world today? Would God call our world today “unclean”? Why?***

[*T-BSG:*] **The first generation did not trust, despite what they had seen. However, this new generation trusts based on what they heard from a harlot.** “The key figure in their escape and their knowledge of the land and its inhabitants is the harlot Rahab. . . . She is both savior and oracle.”—Phyllis A. Bird, “The Harlot as Heroine: Narrative Art and Social Presupposition in Three Old Testament Texts,” *Semeia* 46 (1989), p. 127.—*T-BSG** 27.††§

[*BSG:*] Hebrews 11:31 confirms her [Rahab’s] faith in casting her lot with the spies instead of choosing to hold on to a corrupt culture. James 2:25 commends her offer of lodging to the two Israelite spies and for giving them directions on how to return by a safe route. In the middle of a decadent, corrupt culture and Rahab’s own sinful lifestyle, God, in His grace, saw a spark of faith through which He could save her. God used what was good in Rahab—which was manifest faith in Him and in her choice to belong to His people—but never commended everything she did. **[No endorsement was made about her lying!]** God valued Rahab for her exceptional courage, for her brave faith, for

being an agent of salvation, and for choosing Israel's God.—*BSG** for Monday, October 6.[‡]

Hebrews 11:31: It was faith that kept the prostitute Rahab from being killed with those who disobeyed God, for she gave the Israelite spies a friendly welcome.—*Good News Bible-TEV.**

James 2:25: It was the same with the prostitute Rahab. She was put right with God through her actions, by welcoming the Israelite spies and helping them to escape by a different road.—*Good News Bible-TEV.**

[BSG:] After seeing what was happening, she declared, “ ‘For the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath’ ” (*Josh. 2:11, NKJV*). It's significant to hear a Canaanite woman acknowledging that Yahweh [*sic*] is the only God, especially on a roof where, in her pagan religion, prayers were usually offered to what they believed were celestial deities.—*BSG** for Monday, October 6.^{‡§}

12. Where do you think Rahab got the idea of using this expression?

[BSG:] **The expression of Rahab is previously found only in the context of God's exclusive right to receive worship** (*Exod. 20:4, Deut. 4:39, Deut. 5:8*). Her words bear witness to a premeditated, conscientious choice to acknowledge that the God of the Israelites is the only true deity. Her confession demonstrates her understanding of the close relationship between God's sovereignty and the judgment under which Jericho is doomed.—*BSG** for Monday, October 6.^{‡§}

[BSG:] Her moral choice recognizes that, in light of Yahweh's [*sic*] judgment, there were only two possibilities: to continue in rebellion against Him and be annihilated, or to choose to surrender in faith. **By choosing the God of the Israelites, Rahab became an example of what could have been the destiny of all the inhabitants of Jericho had they turned to Israel's God for mercy.**—*BSG** for Monday, October 6.[‡]

Rahab Makes a Deal

Joshua 2:12-16: ¹² “Now swear by him that you will treat my family as kindly as I have treated you, and **give me some sign that I can trust you.** ¹³ Promise me that you will save my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all their families! Don't let us be killed!”

¹⁴ The men said to her, “May God take our lives if we don't do as we say! If you do not tell anyone what we have been doing, we promise you that when the LORD gives us this land, we will treat you well.” [Did God authorize that?]

¹⁵ **Rahab lived in a house built into the city wall, so she let the men down from the window by a rope.** ¹⁶ “Go into the hill country,” she said, “or the king's men will find you. Hide there for three days until they come back. After that, you can go on your way.”—*Good News Bible-TEV.*‡*

Joshua 2:17-21: ¹⁷ The men said to her, “We will keep the promise that you have made us give. ¹⁸ This is what you must do. **When we invade your land, tie this red cord to the window you let us down from.** Get your father and mother, your brothers, and all your father's family together in your house. ¹⁹ If anyone

goes out of the house, his death will be his own fault, and we will not be responsible; but if anyone in the house with you is harmed, then we will be responsible. ²⁰However, if you tell anyone what we have been doing, then we will not have to keep our promise which you have made us give you.” ²¹She agreed and sent them away. When they had gone, she tied the red cord to the window.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†}

[BSG:] Interestingly enough, the same chapter (*Deuteronomy 7*) prescribes the ban (*cherem*) on the Canaanites. Here is Rahab, a Canaanite who is under the ban, and yet she claims, by her emerging faith, the promises that were given to the Israelites. As a result, she is saved.—BSG^{*} for Tuesday, October 7.^{†‡§}

13. ***Exodus 12:13,22-23 describe placing of the blood on the doorposts to prevent the death of the firstborn in Egypt. How does that compare with Rahab's scarlet cord in the window? Was a red cord, hanging from a window, just as good for a sign as a splash of blood with hyssop over the doorpost? Both proved to be lifesaving!***

[BSG:] The first image that inevitably comes to mind related to the conversation of the spies with Rahab is the Passover at the Exodus. There, in order for the Israelites to be protected, they had to stay inside their homes and mark the doorposts and lintels of their houses with the blood of the sacrificial lamb.—BSG^{*} for Tuesday, October 7.[‡]

[EGW:] The advancing hosts of Israel found that knowledge of the mighty workings of the God of the Hebrews had gone before them, and that some among the heathen were learning that He alone was the true God. In wicked Jericho the testimony of a heathen woman was, “The Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.” Joshua 2:11. The knowledge of Jehovah that had thus come to her, proved her salvation. By faith “Rahab perished not with them that believed not.” Hebrews 11:31. And her conversion was not an isolated case of God’s mercy toward idolaters who acknowledged His divine authority....

No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste, is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple courts, that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. It lifts out of Satan’s influence those who have been deluded by his deceptions, and places them within reach of the throne of God, the throne encircled by the rainbow of promise. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free. [Galatians 3:28]—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*^{*} 369.2-270.0.[‡] [<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p88.1652&index=0>][‡]

[BSG:] It is stated that she [Rahab] became the wife of Salmon (from the tribe of Judah), the mother of Boaz, and the mother-in-law of another remarkable woman mentioned in the same genealogy [of Jesus]: Ruth (*Matt. 1:5; compare with Ruth 4:13, 21*). Through her faith in God, the prostitute of Jericho, condemned to total destruction, becomes a significant link in the royal line of David and a progenitor of the Messiah. This is what God is able to accomplish

through faith, even if it might be only the size of a mustard seed (*Matt. 17:20, Luke 17:6*).—*BSG** for Friday, October 10.^{‡§}

Matthew 1:2-6a: ^{2-6a} From Abraham to King David, the following ancestors are listed: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah and his brothers; then Perez and Zerah (**their mother was Tamar** [their father's daughter-in-law]), Hezron, Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon, Salmon, **Boaz (his mother was Rahab)**, **Obed (his mother was Ruth)**, Jesse, and King David.—*Good News Bible-TEV.*††*

Ruth 4:13,18-22: ¹³ So Boaz took Ruth home as his wife. The LORD blessed her, and she became pregnant and had a son [Obed].... [Why hadn't she become pregnant from her first husband? She had been married to a young man for ten years!]

¹⁸⁻²² This is the family line from Perez to David: Perez [whose mother was Tamar, his father's daughter-in-law], Hezron, Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon, Salmon [whose wife was Rahab], Boaz [whose wife was Ruth], Obed, Jesse, David.—*Good News Bible-TEV.*†*

14. It is obvious that the key to Rahab's admission to be one of the children of Israel was her lie to the soldiers to protect the spies. **Was Rahab ever commended for her lie?**
15. ***What does this story of Rahab teach us about God?***
16. These lessons such as the story of Rahab teach us that **God is determined to save everyone that can be trusted to live next door to for the rest of eternity!** That takes some character building!

Deceit and The Gibeonites

17. Let us turn now to the story of the Gibeonites.

Joshua 9:1-15: ¹ The victories of Israel became known to all the kings west of the Jordan—in the hills, in the foothills, and all along the coastal plain of the Mediterranean Sea as far north as Lebanon; these were the kings of the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ²They all came together and joined forces to fight against Joshua and the Israelites.

³ But the people of Gibeon, who were Hivites, heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, ⁴and they decided to deceive him. They went and got some food and loaded their donkeys with worn-out sacks and patched-up wineskins. ⁵They put on ragged clothes and worn-out sandals that had been mended. The bread they took with them was dry and moldy. ⁶Then they went to the camp at Gilgal and said to Joshua and the Israelites, "We have come from a distant land. We want you to make a treaty with us."

⁷ But the Israelites said, "Why should we make a treaty with you? Maybe you live nearby."

⁸ They said to Joshua, "We are at your service."
Joshua asked them, "Who are you? Where do you come from?"

⁹ Then they told him this story: "We have come from a very distant land, sir, because we have heard of the LORD your God. We have heard about everything that he did in Egypt ¹⁰and what he did to the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan: King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth.

¹¹Our leaders and all the people that live in our land told us to get some food ready for a journey and to go and meet you. We were told to put ourselves at your service and ask you to make a treaty with us. ¹²Look at our bread. When we left home with it and started out to meet you, it was still warm. But look! Now it is dry and moldy. ¹³When we filled these wineskins, they were new, but look! They are torn. Our clothes and sandals are worn out from the long journey.”

¹⁴ The Israelites accepted some food from them, **but did not consult the LORD about it.** ¹⁵Joshua made a treaty of friendship with the people of Gibeon and allowed them to live. The leaders of the community of Israel gave their solemn promise to keep the treaty.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†}

18. Back in Numbers 27:16-21, God had given clear instructions about what the children of Israel were to do if they were not sure what course to take; the leader was to consult God through the priest via the Urim and the Thummim.
19. Shouldn't it be the first thought in the mind of a Christian or theocratic leader to consult God?

[BSG:] The speech of the Gibeonites is strikingly similar to that of Rahab. Both acknowledge the power of Israel's God, and both acknowledge that Israel's success is not simply a human feat. In contrast to other Canaanites, they do not rebel against Yahweh's [sic] plan to grant the land to the Israelites, and they admit that the Lord Himself is driving these nations out before Israel. The news of the deliverance from Egypt, and the victories over Sihon and Og, prompt both Rahab and the Gibeonites to seek an alliance with the Israelites. However, instead of fully acknowledging their willingness to surrender to the God of Israel, as Rahab does, **the Gibeonites resort to a subterfuge.**

The law of Moses made provisions for learning the will of God in such cases as this (*Num. 27:16–21*). **Joshua should have inquired for the will of the Lord** and avoided the deception of the Gibeonites.—*BSG*^{*} for Wednesday, October 8.^{†§}

Joshua 9:16-21: ¹⁶ Three days after the treaty had been made, the Israelites learned that these people did indeed live nearby. ¹⁷So the people of Israel started out and three days later arrived at the cities where these people lived: Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath Jearim. ¹⁸But the Israelites could not kill them, because their leaders had made a solemn promise to them in the name of the LORD, Israel's God. All the people complained to the leaders about this, ¹⁹but they answered, “We have made our solemn promise to them in the name of the LORD God of Israel. Now we cannot harm them. ²⁰We must let them live because of our promise; if we don't, God will punish us. ²¹Let them live, but they will have to cut wood and carry water for us.” This was what the leaders suggested.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*}

20. When the children of Israel entered into the central part of Palestine at the invitation of the Gibeonites, it led to panic by many of the northern tribes. Those tribes decided to cooperate together and try to defeat the Israelites. But, **instead**, Joshua completely defeated them.
21. Fortunately, Joshua's answer proved to be just and also loving.

Joshua 9:22-27: ²² Joshua ordered the people of Gibeon to be brought to him, and he asked them, “Why did you deceive us and tell us that you were from far away, when you live right here? ²³Because you did this, God has condemned

you. Your people will always be slaves, cutting wood and carrying water for the sanctuary of my God.”

²⁴ They answered, “We did it, sir, because we learned that it was really true that the LORD your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you the whole land and to kill the people living in it as you advanced. We did it because we were terrified of you; we were in fear of our lives. ²⁵Now we are in your power; do with us what you think is right.” ²⁶So this is what Joshua did: he protected them and did not allow the people of Israel to kill them. ²⁷But at the same time he made them slaves, to cut wood and carry water for the people of Israel and for the LORD’s altar. To this day they have continued to do this work in the place where the LORD has chosen to be worshiped.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*

[BSG:] Even if the people of Israel had wanted to attack the Gibeonites, they would not have been allowed to pursue it because of the oath sworn by the rulers of the congregation. The Israelite leaders acted according to the principle that an oath, as long as it does not involve wrongdoing or criminal intent (*Judg. 11:29–40*), is binding, even if it leads to one’s personal hurt.—*BSG** for Thursday, October 9.†§

22. Violating an oath given to God, was considered to be extremely wrong, even life-threatening. Think of the story of Jephthah and his daughter as recorded in Judges 11:29-40.

[BSG:] In the Old Testament, being prudent before making an oath and the keeping of one’s oath are seen as virtues of the pious (*Ps. 15:4; Ps. 24:4; Eccl. 5:2, 6*). Because the oath was made in the name of the Lord, the God of Israel, the leaders could not change it.—*BSG** for Thursday, October 9.†§

[BSG:] With the solemn oath taken by the leaders of Israel, the destiny of Israel was indissolubly linked to that of the Gibeonites. In fact, through their designation as woodcutters and water carriers for the house of God (*Josh. 9:23*), the Gibeonites became part and parcel of Israel’s worshiping community. Joshua’s answer, in contrast to the verdict of the rulers of Israel, which decreed servitude for “all the congregation” (*Josh. 9:21, NKJV*), transformed the curse into a potential blessing for the Gibeonites (*compare with 2 Sam. 6:11*).—*BSG** for Thursday, October 9.†§

23. Remember that we suggested that **a large number of workers, soldiers, and shepherds who had joined themselves to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as well as his sons almost certainly went to Egypt with them and became an official part of the household of Jacob/Israel**. And, thus, they were considered descendants of Abraham.

[BSG:] **The subsequent history of Gibeon testifies to the high religious privileges the city enjoyed, as well as to their loyalty to God’s people.** The vow taken by Israel remained in place down through generations, so that when the Israelites returned from the Babylonian captivity, the Gibeonites were among those who helped rebuild Jerusalem (*Neh. 7:25*). Their actions will have eternally positive consequences but only because of God’s grace.—*BSG** for Thursday, October 9.†§

[BSG:] What might have happened had the Gibeonites disclosed their identity and requested mercy as Rahab did? We don’t know, but we cannot rule out the possibility that even a consultation of God’s will could have resulted in an

exemption of the Gibeonites from destruction. **God's ultimate purpose is not to punish sinners but to see them repent and to grant them His mercy (compare with Ezek. 18:23 and Ezek. 33:11). The subterfuge of the Gibeonites has to be perceived as an appeal to God's mercy, to His kind and just character.** It was the Canaanites' refusal to repent and their defiance of God's purposes that led to the decision for their annihilation (*Gen. 15:16*). God honored the recognition of His supremacy by the Gibeonites, as well as their desire for peace rather than rebellion, and their willingness to give up idolatry and to worship the only true God.—*BSG** for Thursday, October 9.^{†§}

[T-BSG:] **This dynamic indicates that 40 years in the desert taught the Israelites the most potent ability they could develop: trust in Yahweh [sic]. This ability would make them invincible before their most formidable enemies.—T-BSG* 27.^{†‡}**

24. The Bible study guide compares the faith of Rahab and the Gibeonites. Both were based on hearing about the Israelites and telling lies. The goal of each was to be spared. The immediate result was deliverance for both. The long-term result was full citizenship for Rahab and being an ancestor of King David and Jesus while it was servitude for the Gibeonites.
25. Based on biblical accounts in 2 Samuel 6:10-11 and 1 Chronicles 13:13-14, the covenant box or ark of the covenant, **after the experience with Uzzah which was after return of the covenant box from the Philistines**, was taken to the house of Obed-Edom, a Levite. His house served as a temporary resting place for the ark. During the three months the ark remained there, God blessed Obed-Edom and his entire household.

[EGW:] Such was the footing on which the Gibeonites might have been received, but for the deception to which they had resorted. It was no light humiliation to those citizens of a "royal city," "all the men whereof were mighty," to be made hewers of wood and drawers of water throughout their generations. But they had adopted the garb of poverty for the purpose of deception, and it was fastened upon them as a badge of perpetual servitude. Thus through all their generations their servile condition would testify to God's hatred of falsehood.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 507.3.[‡]

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p84.2338&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p84.2338&index=0)[†]

[EGW:] In the midst of the land a numerous people—the Gibeonites—renounced their heathenism and united with Israel, sharing in the blessings of the covenant.—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings** 369.2.[‡]

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p88.1652&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p88.1652&index=0)[†]

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Last Modified: September 15, 2025

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