

# Joshua 9:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they answered Joshua, and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the LORD thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing.

## Analysis

---

**Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the LORD thy God commanded... to destroy all the inhabitants**—the Gibeonites' theological awareness is remarkable. They knew not merely Israel's military prowess but the divine mandate behind the conquest (תִּשְׁחַם, hisshamed—to utterly destroy). Their phrase **we were sore afraid of our lives** (וְנִירָא מֵאֶיךָ לְנַפְשֵׁינוּ, vanirah me'od lenafshoteinu) reveals existential terror at God's holiness, not merely human armies.

Unlike Jericho's doomed citizens or Ai's defenders, the Gibeonites responded to revelation with action, choosing survival through servitude over pride unto death. Their knowledge of God's commands suggests either espionage or God's sovereign disclosure—similar to Rahab's confession (Joshua 2:9-11). Faith, however imperfect or mixed with deception, seeks refuge in God's people rather than fighting against His purposes.

## Historical Context

---

The Gibeonite confederacy knew detailed Mosaic law, including the destruction mandate (Deuteronomy 7:1-2, 20:16-17) and the exception for distant cities willing to make peace (Deuteronomy 20:10-15). Their deception exploited this legal loophole by falsely claiming distant origin. This demonstrates how widely knowledge of Israel's God and His commands had spread through Canaan following the exodus and Jordan crossing.

## Related Passages

---

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

## Study Questions

---

1. What does the Gibeonites' accurate knowledge of God's commands teach about the responsibility that comes with divine revelation?
2. How does their choice to seek refuge through deception—rather than direct repentance—complicate our understanding of faith?
3. In what ways does God's acceptance of even flawed faith (when it leads to His people) challenge rigid religious formalism?

## Interlinear Text

וְיָדָה	בְּאָמָר	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	אַתָּה	יְשַׁׁבֵּן	וְיָדָה	בְּאָמָר	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	אַתָּה	יְשַׁׁבֵּן
<b>And they answered</b>	H853	<b>Joshua</b>		<b>and said</b>	H3588	<b>Because it was certain</b>			H5046

צִוָּה	אֲשֶׁר	אִתְּ	עָבָדִי	הָנֶגֶד	
Because it was certainly	his servant	H853	H834	commanded	

לְכָם	לִתְתַּעֲבֶד	וְמַשְׁחֵה	אֶת	אֱלֹהָיָךְ	יְהִי הָ	how that the LORD
H0	H5414	H5650	H4872	H853	thy God	H3068

מִפְנִיכָּם לְנַפְשְׁתִּי יְנִזְעָמָה תְּבִיא אֲמִרָּתְךָ מִפְנִיכָּם

בְּזֶבַע שְׁנִים הָיָה	בְּזֶבַע רָא תְּ	בְּזֶבַע אַת	בְּזֶבַע הָיָה
of you and have done	H853	this thing	H2088

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org