



Joshua 9:3-15

(3) And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, (4) They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up; (5) And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy. (6) And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us. (7) And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you? (8) And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? and from whence come ye? (9) And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, (10) And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth. (11) Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us. (12) This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy: (13) And these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new; and, behold, they be rent: and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey. (14) And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD. (15) And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.

King James Version

Deception is so tricky and commonplace these days that we can lose sight of what it even looks like, so here are some things to consider:

- » If we must disguise ourselves or our intentions, are we doing God's will? [Jesus Christ](#) never operated this way.
- » If we must approach a matter from the side instead of the front gate or front door, are we doing God's will? Jesus calls someone who climbs in some other way a thief and a robber—someone who is out for what he can get, not what [God](#) wants ([John 10:1](#)).
- » If we use or manipulate others to get something done, it indicates that something is rotten.
- » If we do things for appearance's sake instead of reality, we should recognize that what we are doing is not of the holy God. At best, we are doing the will of a carnal person—ourselves. At worst, we are doing the will of someone even more unscrupulous. Jesus has good reason to name [Satan](#) the father of lies and liars ([John 8:44](#)).

Notice what John writes in [Revelation 22:14-15](#):

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and [*whoever loves and practices a lie*](#) .
(Emphasis ours.)

These verses serve as a final bookend and mirror of that fateful day in the Garden of Eden. Satan practiced his lies, and Adam and Eve loved them. They had the truth from God, but Adam knowingly chose to listen to someone else, loving what was false. As a result, God drove humanity from His presence, and they lost the right to the Tree of Life.

Thus, God decries both sides of this worthless coin of deception. On one side, He commands us not to bear false witness, which covers all forms of

dishonesty. But on the flipside, He urgently warns us not to allow ourselves to be deceived, taken in, hoodwinked, or used by others in their schemes, machinations, or manipulations.

Jesus counsels us to "be wise as serpents but harmless as doves" ([Matthew 10:16](#)). We likely lean toward one or the other. Some have the "wise as serpents" part down but lack a dove's gentleness and harmlessness. Others are dovelike, but they turn a blind eye to the fact that evil is real and end up ensnared.

The right balance is to do what Joshua neglected to do about the Gibeonites: earnestly [seek God](#). In this way, we can keep from planting the seeds that will bear bitter fruit for ourselves and others. Deception may work, but in time, it always proves the law of unintended consequences—both for the deceiver and the deceived.

— David C. Grabbe

To learn more, see:

[Joshua and the Gibeonites \(Part Three\)](#)

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