

Commitment 2: Bad Deals**9702**

In thinking about the idea of commitment, we might find ourselves asking the question, "How should we honor a commitment that turned out to be a mistake or a bad deal?" In Joshua chapters 9 and 10 we find the story of Gibeon. If you remember, Joshua and the people of Israel were commanded to wipe out totally the nations who were at that time living in the promised land of Canaan; they were to make no treaties with them in any way. But the people of Gibeon were very crafty. They put on their most ragged clothes, took moldy bread and approached the Israelite leaders claiming to be from a far country and asked for peace. Joshua and the others, without consulting God first, made an alliance with them. Then they found out that they were indeed close neighbors.

Was this commitment honored? Yes, indeed! It was upheld not only by Joshua and Israel but by God! The Gibeonites were even protected by God. As the story goes, the nearby heathen nations were so angry at the Gibeonites that they surrounded them and were going to wipe them out. You might think that this was a perfect situation for Joshua to get out of the problem without breaking the alliance. Why not just let these groups fight it out, thus reducing their collective strength? Once Gibeon was wiped out, then he could bring his army around to mop up! He would have only had to deal with a force that was much weakened from fighting. But Joshua honored his commitment even though it had been made in error. He marched to Gibeon and attacked the people who wanted to annihilate the Gibeonites.

A similar point could be made about the oath that Jephthah swore, where he promised to sacrifice the first thing that came through his gate when he got home if the Lord gave him victory. As precious as it was to him, it turned out to be his little girl. The Bible indicates that he honored the commitment that he had made. We ought also to honor our commitment no matter what! Of course, there are times when a contract is broken in such a way that prevents us from continuing with it. But the importance of keeping our promise is clear.

Have you ever made a bad deal? Like when you traded your best marble for some gizmo that didn't last for fifteen minutes? Have you every bought a car that turned out to be a pure lemon? In one way of looking at it, God made a deal for mankind; he traded His Son. Do you ever think that He looks at us in horror some times as the idea comes to Him that He got ripped off? Fortunately for us, God is not like man. God knew the worth of mankind when He sent His son to die for us. God loved us enough to put through what on the surface looks like a very bad deal. If we would just love Him back, it will all be worthwhile to Him.

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