

1 Samuel 11:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel: and then, if there be no man to save us, we will come out to thee.

Analysis

And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel: and then, if there be no man to save us, we will come out to thee.

The elders' request for seven days reveals both their desperate straits and, remarkably, Nahash's overconfidence. That he grants this respite suggests his certainty that no help would come - a miscalculation rooted in his underestimation of Israel's God. The appeal to 'all the coasts of Israel' represents a final desperate hope that the scattered tribes might unite. This moment exposes the fundamental weakness of the pre-monarchical period: no central authority existed to coordinate national defense.

Historical Context

The seven-day period allowed messengers to travel throughout Israel. The fragmented nature of the tribal confederation meant military response required voluntary cooperation. The period of judges had seen repeated failures of inter-tribal unity (Judges 5:15-17).

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does God sometimes use desperate situations to accomplish His purposes?
2. When has an enemy's overconfidence led to their downfall in your experience?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר ו	אֶל יוֹ	זִקְנֵי י	יָבִישׁ	הָרָף	לִנּוּ
said	H413	And the elders	of Jabesh	respice	H0
H559		H2205	H3003	H7503	
שְׁבַעַת	יָמֵי	וְנִשְׁלָחָהּ	מַלְאָכָיִם	בְּכֹל ל	
unto him Give us seven	days	that we may send	messengers	H3605	
H7651	H3117	H7971	H4397		
גִּבּוֹל	יִשְׂרָאֵל	וְאִם	אֵין	מוֹשֵׁעַ	
unto all the coasts	of Israel	H518	H369	and then if there be no man to save	
H1366	H3478			H3467	
אֲנִי	וְנֵצֵא	אֵלֵיכֶם:			
H853	us we will come out	H413			
	H3318				