

1 Samuel 13:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned unto the way that leadeth to Ophrah, unto the land of Shual:

Analysis

And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned unto the way that leadeth to Ophrah, unto the land of Shual:

The Philistine raiding parties operating 'in three companies' demonstrate complete military initiative. They strike in three directions: toward Ophrah (north), Beth-horon (west), and the wilderness (east) - systematically devastating Israelite territory while Saul remains passive. The Hebrew *mashchit* ('spoilers' or 'destroyers') emphasizes their intent not merely to raid but to devastate. This military humiliation resulted directly from Saul's spiritual failure at Gilgal - sin's consequences extend far beyond the individual.

Historical Context

The three-pronged raiding strategy was standard ancient military practice for terrorizing occupied territory and preventing coordinated resistance. Ophrah was Gideon's hometown; Beth-horon controlled the main route to the coastal plain; the wilderness route threatened the Jordan valley settlements.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How do the consequences of leadership failure affect those under that leadership?
2. What pattern do you see between spiritual unfaithfulness and practical vulnerability?

Interlinear Text

וַיֵּצֵא א	הַמִּשָּׁחָה יֵת	מִמַּחֲנֶה ה	פְּלִשְׁתֵּי יָם	שְׁלֹשָׁה ה	הָרֶ אֲשֵׁ
came out	And the spoilers	of the camp	of the Philistines	in three	companies
H3318	H7843	H4264	H6430	H7969	H7218
הָרֶ אֲשֵׁ	אֶחָד ד	יָפְנוּ ה	אֶל	דָּרְךָ	עֶפְרָה ה
companies	one	turned	H413	unto the way	that leadeth to Ophrah
H7218	H259	H6437		H1870	H6084
אֶרֶץ	שׁוּעַל:				
unto the land	of Shual				
H776	H7777				

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 18:23 (Parallel theme): And Avim, and Parah, and Ophrah,

1 Samuel 14:15 (Parallel theme): And there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling.

