

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

בָּרָאשׁ שֶׁלַשׁ הָ
came out And the spoilers of the camp of the Philistines in three companies
H3318 H7843 H4264 H6430 H7969 H7218

אֶל עַפְּבָה הָ
companies one turned unto the way that leadeth to Ophrah H413
H7218 H259 H6437 H1870 H6084 H413

שׁוּעָלָה אֶל כִּי
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.

