

1 Samuel 14:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Moreover the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp from the country round about, even they also turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan.

Analysis

Moreover the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp from the country round about, even they also turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan.

The 'Hebrews that were with the Philistines beforetime' - Israelites who had defected or served the enemy - now 'turned to be with the Israelites.' Military success attracts those who abandoned the cause in difficult times. The description of these turncoats 'which went up with them into the camp round about' suggests they opportunistically joined the winning side. God's victory draws even the faithless back, though their return reflects self-interest more than faith.

Historical Context

Israelites serving Philistines was common during periods of Philistine dominance. Economic necessity, fear, or pragmatism led some to collaborate with occupying forces. Such collaborators commonly switched allegiance when power dynamics shifted.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How should faith communities receive those who return after abandoning the cause during difficulty?
2. What distinguishes genuine repentance from opportunistic return?

Interlinear Text

Moreover the Hebrews	H5680	וְעַבְרֵי יִם	H1961	קַיְ ۚ	לְפָلָשִׁתִּים	H6430	כִּאֵתִים וְلָ	שָׁלֵשׁ וְמִ	תְּהִימָּה וְلָ	שָׁלֵשׁ וְמִ
	H834	which went up	H5927	עַל ۚ	עַמְּ מִ	H5973	בְּמִצְּבָּה	וְבְּמִצְּבָּה	הַ	תְּהִימָּה וְלָ
							with them into the camp			
							H4264			
from the country round about	H5439	סְבִּיבָּה	H1571	בְּ	מִגְּמָה	H1992	לְהִיּוֹת	עַמְּ		
							H1961			
							H5973			
even they also turned to be with the Israelites	H3478	וְשֶׁבֶת ۖ	H834	עַמְּ אֲשֶׁר	עַמְּ אֲשֶׁר	H5973	וְלָ	שָׁא ۚ	וְלָ	שָׁא ۚ
and Jonathan	H3129	וְיְוֹנָתָן								

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 29:4 (Parallel theme): And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? should it not be with the heads of these men?

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