

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

וְהֵעֲבֵר יָם	הִי ו	לְפִלְשְׁתִּים	כְּאֵתֶם וּל	שָׁלֹשׁ וָזֶמֶן
Moreover the Hebrews	H1961	that were with the Philistines	before	that time
H5680		H6430	H865	H8032
אֲשֶׁר	עָלָה	עִמָּם	בְּמַחֲנֵה	
H834	which went up	H5973	with them into the camp	
	H5927		H4264	
סָבִיב	וְגַם	הַמָּה	לִהְיוֹת	עִמָּם
from the country round about	H1571	H1992	H1961	H5973
H5439				
וְיִשְׂרָאֵל	אֲשֶׁר	עִמָּם	וְשָׂא	
even they also turned to be with the Israelites	H834	H5973	that were with Saul	
H3478			H7586	
וַיִּזְכֹּר:				
and Jonathan				
H3129				

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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