

1 Samuel 28:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa.

Analysis

The geographic staging of the armies presents the military reality facing Saul. The Philistines at Shunem and Israel at Gilboa face each other across the Jezreel Valley, far from Saul's traditional southern strongholds. The Hebrew 'chanu' (pitched, encamped) for both armies indicates a standoff before battle. Mount Gilboa's terrain would prove fatal for Israel's forces, particularly for chariot-less infantry facing Philistine military technology on open ground.

Historical Context

Shunem and Gilboa frame the Jezreel Valley, one of Israel's most strategic and fertile regions. The Philistine advance this far north indicates significant military pressure. Israel's eventual defeat here would open the northern territories to Philistine occupation.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. When have you faced situations where the terrain itself seemed against you?
2. How do overwhelming circumstances affect your spiritual condition?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּקְבְּץ	פְּלִשְׁתֵּי יָם	וַיָּבֹאוּ	וַיַּחֲנוּ	בְּשֻׁנֶם	וַיִּקְבְּץ
gathered	And the Philistines	and came	and pitched	in Shunem	gathered
H6908	H6430	H935	H2583	H7766	H6908
וַיִּקְבְּץ	אֶת	כָּל	יִשְׂרָאֵל	וַיַּחֲנוּ	בְּגִלְבֹּעַ:
and Saul	H853	H3605	all Israel	and pitched	in Gilboa
H7586			H3478	H2583	H1533

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 19:18 (Parallel theme): And their border was toward Jezreel, and Chesulloth, and Shunem,

1 Samuel 31:1 (References Israel): Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa.

2 Kings 4:8 (Parallel theme): And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.