

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

וַיִּקְרַב זְבֹב בְּשׂוֹגֵם פָּלֶשֶׁת יָם וַיַּקְרַב זְבֹב
gathered And the Philistines and came and pitched in Shunem gathered
H6908 H6430 H935 H2583 H7766 H6908

בְּגִלְבּוֹעַ: תִּקְרַב אֶת שָׁאָול
and Saul all Israel and pitched in Gilboa
H7586 H853 H3605 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.