

Joshua 10:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us.

Analysis

Gibeon's desperate appeal: 'the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us.' The urgency is palpable—multiple imperatives: don't slack, come quickly, save, help. The phrase 'thy servants' invokes covenant relationship established by treaty (9:15). Calling themselves servants acknowledges subordinate status while claiming treaty protection rights. The request 'come up quickly' (mahar, מָהָר—hasten, hurry) indicates extreme urgency. The verbs 'save' (yasha, יָשָׁע) and 'help' (azar, עָזַר) request both deliverance and assistance. The identification of threat—'all the kings...that dwell in the mountains'—specifies southern highland coalition. This plea tests Israel's covenant faithfulness: will they honor a treaty obtained by deception? Joshua's positive response demonstrates covenant integrity even when inconvenient.

Historical Context

The message from Gibeon to Gilgal covered roughly twenty-five miles—doable in a day by rapid messenger. The urgency suggests Gibeon faced imminent danger—possibly the five armies had just arrived and begun siege operations. Ancient

sieges could succeed quickly if defenders' morale broke or walls were breached rapidly. Gibeon's appeal tested Israel's treaty commitment. Technically, the treaty was obtained fraudulently (9:22-23), but Israel had sworn by the LORD (9:18-19), making the oath binding regardless of circumstances. The covenant's sanctity superseded pragmatic considerations. This reflects ancient Near Eastern treaty theology where oaths before deities were absolutely binding. Gibeon's confidence in appealing despite the deception shows they trusted Israel's covenant faithfulness. Their trust proved well-founded—Joshua marched immediately (verse 7). The episode teaches that covenant integrity matters more than convenience or past grievances. God honors faithfulness to commitments even when costly or complicated.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does keeping commitments even when inconvenient or obtained through deception reflect God's covenant faithfulness?
2. What does Gibeon's confidence in Israel's treaty commitment teach about the witness of covenant faithfulness?
3. When has God called you to honor commitments despite costs or complicated circumstances?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּשְׁלַח ו	אֲנָשִׁי	גִבְעֹן וְ	אֶל	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	אֶל	הַמַּחֲנֶה	הַגִּלְגָּל לֵאמֹר
sent	H376	of Gibeon	H413	unto Joshua	H413	to the camp	to Gilgal
H7971		H1391		H3091		H4264	H1537
וַיֹּאמֶר	אֵל	תְּכַף	יָדְךָ	מִעַבְדְּךָ	עָלֶיךָ	אֵל יִנּוֹ	
saying	H408	Slack	not thy hand	from thy servants	come up		H413
H559		H7503	H3027	H5650	H5927		
מְהֵרָה	וְהוֹשַׁעְךָ	לִנְנוֹ	וְעֲזָרָנוֹ	כִּי	נִקְבְּצוּ	וְ	
to us quickly	and save	H0	us and help	H3588	are gathered together		
H4120	H3467		H5826		H6908		
אֵל יִנּוֹ	כָּל	מַלְכֵי	הָאֲמֹרִי	יֹשְׁבֵי	הַהָרִים:		
H413	H3605	us for all the kings	of the Amorites	that dwell	in the mountains		
		H4428	H567	H3427	H2022		

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 5:10 (Parallel theme): And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.

Joshua 9:6 (Parallel theme): And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us.