

Joshua 11:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle.

Analysis

There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon—The exclusivity is striking: only Gibeon sought peace (chapter 9), and that through deception. The phrase **made peace** (הַשְׁלִימָה, *hishlimah*) comes from *shalom* (שָׁלוֹם), meaning peace, wholeness, or covenant relationship. Every other city chose warfare over surrender.

All other they took in battle (אֶת-הָכָל לְקַחַן בָּמִלְחָמָה, *et-hakol laqchu bamilchamah*)—The comprehensive **all** reinforces total military conquest. This universal resistance demands explanation, which verse 20 provides: God hardened their hearts. From a human perspective, the cities' refusal to surrender seems foolish—Israel's reputation from Egypt and Transjordan conquests (2:9-11) should have prompted capitulation. Yet divine hardening ensured judgment's thoroughness. The Gibeonite exception proves the rule: had cities sought peace, survival was possible (though Joshua's oath to Gibeon came from deception, not divine command). The New Testament parallel is sobering: 'Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts' (Hebrews 3:7-8). Persistent resistance to God leads to judicial hardening unto destruction.

Historical Context

Gibeon's treaty (Joshua 9) occurred early in the conquest, before Canaan's cities understood Israel's strength and divine mandate. The southern coalition's attack

on Gibeon (chapter 10) demonstrates that making peace with Israel was considered treason by other Canaanite kings. This peer pressure and political reality made surrender difficult even when militarily prudent. Ancient Near Eastern warfare typically allowed cities to surrender before siege, becoming vassals paying tribute. The Canaanite cities' refusal to exercise this option—despite Israel's overwhelming success—requires theological explanation: divine hardening for judgment. The Gibeonite survival shows that Rahab's faith-based surrender at Jericho (chapter 2) wasn't unique—others could have sought mercy. Their refusal stemmed from hardened hearts, fulfilling God's purpose to execute judgment and give Israel the land completely. The historical reality of near-universal resistance facilitated thorough Canaanite removal, preventing the syncretism that partial conquest would have fostered. Despite this, Israel's incomplete obedience left Canaanite remnants that later became 'snares' (Judges 2:3).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What does the near-universal refusal to make peace teach about humanity's natural hostility toward God apart from His grace?
2. How does the Gibeonite exception demonstrate that seeking peace with God's people—even imperfectly—finds mercy?
3. What warnings does this verse provide about the danger of persistent resistance to God leading to judicial hardening?

Interlinear Text

אֲלֹהֶל יְמִימָה אֲשֶׁר בִּימְתַה הַלְּאָ

H3808 H1961 There was not a city H834 H7999 H413

H5892

גִּבְעָן יְשַׁבֵּן בְּלִתְתַּחַת יְשַׁבָּא לְ

with the children of Israel save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon

H1121

H3478

H1115

save the Hivites

H2340

H3427

H1391

בְּמָלְטָמָה לְקָנָה וּבְכָל אֶת

H853 H3605 all other they took in battle

H3947

H4421

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