

Joshua 9:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy:

Analysis

More evidence: 'And these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new; and, behold, they be rent: and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey.' The wineskins (oboth, אֲבוֹת—leather containers) were 'new' when filled but now 'rent' (torn, split). Old wineskins became brittle and split (Jesus later uses this imagery, Matthew 9:17). The garments and shoes show wear from 'very long journey.' The Hebrew accumulation of evidence—bread, wineskins, garments, shoes—creates overwhelming impression. Every verifiable detail supports the distance claim. The phrase 'very long' (רַחֵק רַחֵק, meod meod—very, very) emphasizes journey's extreme length. The comprehensive staging of evidence across multiple domains (food, drink, clothing, footwear) shows remarkable thoroughness. Yet verse 14 reveals the fatal flaw: 'the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD.' Empirical investigation without divine guidance leads to deception.

Historical Context

Wineskins in the ancient world were made from animal hides—goatskins typically. New skins were supple; old ones dried, cracked, and split. The deterioration from new to rent convincingly suggested time passage. Garments and shoes similarly wore with travel—rough terrain, sun exposure, constant use all took toll. Ancient travelers' appearance upon arrival communicated journey length. The Gibeonites understood this social literacy and manipulated every signal. The detail about

wineskins being 'new' when filled explains why they'd take new ones—normally, you'd use serviceable old ones for journey, saving new ones. But if journey was long enough, even new ones would deteriorate—thus the mention establishes extreme distance. The deception's sophistication suggests intelligence operation, not improvised scheme. This required planning, resourcing (acquiring old items), and coordination (ensuring all envoys told consistent story). The success despite Israel's initial suspicion (verse 7) shows deception's power when staged comprehensively. Only divine discernment could have penetrated it.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does the comprehensiveness of Gibeon's deception teach about thoroughness in spiritual warfare?
2. How does verse 14's revelation that Israel 'asked not counsel of the LORD' explain the deception's success?
3. What practices help you remember to seek divine guidance before making important decisions?

Interlinear Text

זֶה הַ	לֶחֶם נֹ	חַם	הַצֵּטִי דָנוּ	אֶתוֹ	מִבֵּית יֵנוּ
H2088	This our bread	we took hot	for our provision	H854	out of our houses
	H3899	H2525	H6679		H1004
בִּי וּם	צֵאתִי נֹ	לָלָךְ	אֵלַיְכֶם	וְעַתָּה	הִנֵּה ה
on the day	we came forth	H1980	H413	H6258	H2009
H3117	H3318				
יְבֹשֶׁה	וְהִיא ה	נֶקְדָּיִם:			
unto you but now behold it is dry	H1961	and it is mouldy			
H3001		H5350			

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