

Joshua 9:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the children of Israel journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim.

Analysis

Investigation: 'the children of Israel journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim.' The verb 'journeyed' (nasa, נָסַע) indicates Israel actively investigated, traveling to verify the report. The 'third day' creates timeline—hear report, travel to cities, confirm proximity all within three days of treaty-making. The naming of four cities—Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, Kirjath-jearim—specifies the Gibeonite confederation. This geographic precision adds historical credibility and shows these weren't insignificant villages but four substantial cities in confederation. The investigation's thoroughness shows Israel's leaders trying to understand what they'd committed to. The passage illustrates proper response when deception is discovered: investigate fully, establish facts, then determine appropriate action within covenant constraints. They couldn't undo the oath but could establish accurate understanding and just terms going forward.

Historical Context

The four cities named formed the Gibeonite confederation in Benjamin's territory (later allotted to that tribe, chapter 18). Archaeological surveys and excavations have identified these sites. Gibeon was the largest and most significant (10:2). Chephirah lay about five miles west, Beeroth about six miles north, and Kirjath-jearim about eight miles northwest of Gibeon. The confederation represented a significant population and territory—not just one city but a regional alliance. The

discovery that four cities (not just one) were involved would have shocked Israel's leaders—the scope of peoples they'd sworn to protect was larger than initially apparent. The third-day timeline meant rapid response—from treaty signing, to rumor hearing, to investigation, all within three days. This quick action shows Joshua's leadership—addressing problems promptly rather than letting them fester. The naming of specific cities provided clear understanding of treaty obligations' scope and established precedent for future interaction with these communities.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does thorough investigation after discovering deception help determine appropriate responses within covenant constraints?
2. What does Israel's rapid response (three days from treaty to investigation) teach about addressing problems promptly?
3. When have you had to adjust relationships after discovering they were based on misunderstandings or deception?

Interlinear Text

וַיֵּסַע ו	בְּנֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	וַיָּבֹאוּ	אֶל	יְעֲרִיָּהִם	בִּי יוֹם
journeyed	And the children	of Israel	and came	H413	Now their cities	day
H5265	H1121	H3478	H935		H5892	H3117
הַשְּׁלִישִׁי	יְעֲרִיָּהִם	גִּבְעֹן	וְחֶפְצִירָה	וּבְאֵר שֶׁת	וּקְרִית	
on the third	Now their cities	were Gibeon	and Chephirah	and Beeroth		H0
H7992	H5892	H1391	H3716	H881		
יְעָרִים:						
and Kirjathjearim						
H7157						

Additional Cross-References

Ezra 2:25 (Parallel theme): The children of Kirjath-arim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty and three.