

Joshua 9:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying,
Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, We are very far from
you; when ye dwell among us?

Analysis

Wherefore have ye beguiled us (לָמַח רִמִּיתֶם, lamah rimitem)—the verb לָמַח (ramah) means to deceive or betray, the same word used of Jacob's deception of Isaac (Genesis 27:35). Joshua's confrontation exposed the Gibeonites' elaborate ruse: worn-out provisions, patched wineskins, and false claims of distant origins (vv. 4-13). Their deception succeeded because Israel 'asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD' (v. 14).

This diplomatic failure contrasts sharply with the covenant renewal at Mount Ebal (8:30-35). When Israel relied on human discernment rather than divine guidance, they were outwitted by Canaanite cunning. Yet God sovereignly used even this treaty violation to preserve a remnant who feared Him (v. 24), foreshadowing Rahab and Ruth—Gentiles grafted into Israel's covenant community through faith.

Historical Context

Gibeon was a major Canaanite city-state located about six miles northwest of Jerusalem. Archaeological evidence confirms it was a significant urban center during the Late Bronze Age. The Gibeonites were Hivites (v. 7), descendants of Ham listed among the Canaanite nations marked for judgment. Their deception occurred soon after Israel's conquest of Jericho and Ai, when Israel's military reputation terrified the region.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Israel's failure to seek God's counsel before making the treaty warn against relying solely on appearances and human wisdom?
2. What does Joshua's confrontation rather than immediate execution reveal about covenant integrity even when deceived?
3. How do the Gibeonites' actions demonstrate that genuine fear of God can emerge even from pagan backgrounds?

Interlinear Text

וְקָרָא אֶת	לָהֶם	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	וַיְדַבֵּר	אֵלֵיהֶם	לְאֹמְרָם
called	H0	And Joshua	for them and he spake	H413	unto them saying
H7121		H3091	H1696		H559
לָמָּה	רָמִיתָם	אֶתְּנוּ	לְאֹמְרָם	רְחוֹק יָמִים	
H4100	Wherefore have ye beguiled	H853	unto them saying	far	
	H7411		H559	H7350	
אֲנִי חֲנוּ	מִכֶּם	מְאֹד	וְאֵתְּנוּ	בְּקִרְבֵּנוּ	יֹשְׁבֵי:
H587	H4480	We are very	H859	among	from you when ye dwell
		H3966		H7130	H3427

Additional Cross-References

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.

Joshua 9:16 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them.

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