

Judges 1:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the man went into the land of the Hittites, and built a city, and called the name thereof Luz: which is the name thereof unto this day.

Analysis

And the man went into the land of the Hittites, and built a city, and called the name thereof Luz: which is the name thereof unto this day.

This verse reveals the consequences of Joseph's incomplete obedience. The informant 'went into the land of the Hittites' (north of Israel, in modern Syria-Turkey region) and rebuilt the Canaanite city, naming it Luz after the original. The phrase 'unto this day' (ad hayyom hazzeh, עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה) indicates the city still existed when Judges was written, representing Canaanite culture's continuation despite conquest. What seemed like justified mercy created a lasting monument to compromise—literally naming the city after what was supposed to be eliminated.

The contrast with Rahab proves instructive. Rahab declared faith in Yahweh (Joshua 2:9-11), joined Israel, married an Israelite (Salmon), and became King David's ancestor and appears in Christ's genealogy (Matthew 1:5). She represents redemptive inclusion. The Beth-el informant, however, received mercy without conversion, remaining Canaanite in identity and rebuilding Canaanite culture. He represents incomplete conquest's consequences—spared enemies perpetuating opposition.

Theologically, this warns against showing 'mercy' to sin and worldliness that should be eliminated. Paul commands, 'put off the old man' (Ephesians 4:22) and 'put to death' sinful practices (Colossians 3:5), using language as decisive as

herem warfare. Sparing besetting sins or worldly patterns because they seem manageable or have been 'helpful' (like the informant) allows them to reestablish themselves elsewhere in life. Complete sanctification requires thorough dealing with sin, not pragmatic compromises that allow reentrenched patterns.

Historical Context

The 'land of the Hittites' refers to territories north of Israel in modern Syria-Turkey. After the Hittite Empire's collapse (c. 1200 BCE), Neo-Hittite city-states emerged in northern Syria and southern Anatolia. These kingdoms maintained Hittite cultural elements while adapting to changed political circumstances. Archaeological evidence from sites like Carchemish, Aleppo, and Hamath shows continued occupation and cultural development during Israel's judges period.

Rebuilding cities after conquest was common practice. Destroyed cities often possessed strategic locations—water sources, trade routes, defensible positions—making rebuilding attractive despite previous destruction. The informant's ability to build a city suggests he possessed wealth, status, or leadership skills. Whether he ruled the new Luz or simply founded it remains unclear. The city's name perpetuated Canaanite identity, showing cultural preservation despite military defeat.

The preservation of 'Luz' as city name 'unto this day' demonstrates the biblical authors' historical awareness and accuracy. Such notes indicate composition after described events, helping date texts. The phrase appears throughout Joshua-Judges-Samuel, indicating these books reached final form after the events described but retaining accurate historical memory. The detail about Luz's continuation wouldn't be preserved unless actual city existed confirming the account.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What 'Luz' (monuments to compromise) exist in your life where incomplete obedience allowed worldly patterns to reestablish themselves?
2. How does the contrast between Rahab (who joined Israel) and this informant (who rebuilt paganism) distinguish genuine conversion from mere survival tactics?
3. What besetting sins have you 'shown mercy' to that should be completely eliminated through Spirit-empowered warfare?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּלֶּךְ	הָאִישׁ	אֶרֶץ	הַחִתִּים	וַיְבִן	עִיר	וַיִּקְרָא
H1980	And the man	into the land	of the Hittites	and built	a city	and called
	H376	H776	H2850	H1129	H5892	H7121
שְׁמֹה	לִזְ	הָיָא	שְׁמֹה	עַד	הַיּוֹם	הַזֶּה:
the name	thereof Luz	H1931	the name	H5704	thereof unto this day	H2088
H8034	H3870		H8034		H3117	

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