

Judges 20:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the people the men of Israel encouraged themselves, and set their battle again in array in the place where they put themselves in array the first day.

Analysis

The people the men of Israel encouraged themselves (וַיִּתְחַזְקוּ הָעָם אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל, vayithchazeq ha'am ish yisra'el)—'encouraged' (חָזַק, chazaq) means to strengthen, bolster courage. **Set their battle again in array in the place where they put themselves in array the first day**—they return to the same position and strategy that failed, merely strengthening their resolve.

This verse reveals dangerous self-reliance: they 'encourage themselves' rather than seeking God for analysis of their failure. Their response to defeat is to try harder with the same approach, returning to identical strategy and location. This demonstrates the human tendency to respond to failure with increased effort rather than repentance. Instead of asking 'Why did we fail?' and seeking God's correction, they assume the plan was right but execution was weak. Determination without discernment, courage without correction, persistence without repentance—these lead to repeated defeat.

Historical Context

Rallying troops after devastating defeat required strong leadership. Ancient armies could disintegrate after heavy casualties as men deserted. Israel's ability to regroup shows their organizational strength and commitment to covenant justice. However, their unchanged strategy demonstrates military stubbornness that would cost another 18,000 lives (v. 25).

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. When do you respond to failure with 'try harder' rather than seeking God's correction of your approach?
2. How does self-encouragement sometimes prevent the repentance God desires?
3. What distinguishes godly persistence from stubborn repetition of failed strategies?

Interlinear Text

וַיְתַחֲזֵק קַ	הָעָם	אֲנָשִׁים	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	וַיִּסָּפֹד	עַל רִכְוֹ
encouraged	And the people	the men	of Israel	again	in array
H2388	H5971	H376	H3478	H3254	H6186
מִלִּחְמָתָם ה			בַּמָּקוֹם וּם	אֲשֶׁר	עַל רִכְוֹ
themselves and set their battle			in the place	H834	in array
H4421			H4725	H6186	H8033
בְּיוֹם שֶׁ					
day					
H3117					
הָרִאשׁוֹן:					
the first					
H7223					