

Judges 20:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But now this shall be the thing which we will do to Gibeah; we will go up by lot against it;

Analysis

This shall be the thing which we will do to Gibeah; we will go up by lot against it (נָעֲלָה אֵלֶיָּהּ בְּגוֹרָל, na'aleh aleha begoral)—'by lot' (גּוֹרָל, goral) typically indicated seeking divine direction (Joshua 18:6; 1 Samuel 14:41-42; Proverbs 16:33). Israel's use of lots suggests some attempt at divine consultation, yet their implementation reveals they predetermined the outcome. They decided on war before casting lots; the lots merely determined tactical order.

This demonstrates the difference between consulting God and informing Him of decisions already made. True divine inquiry means submitting the 'whether' to God, not merely the 'how.' Israel asks 'Who shall go up first?' (v. 18) but never asks 'Should we go up at all?' or 'How should we approach Benjamin to bring them to repentance?' Their entire strategic framework assumes military assault is the right response, seeking God only for implementation details. This pattern persists throughout the chapter: repeated inquiries that never question their fundamental approach. When we've already decided our course of action, our 'seeking God' becomes ritual validation rather than genuine submission. God may answer such prayers (v. 18, 23, 28) while still allowing our predetermined plans to exact terrible costs that teach humility.

Historical Context

The practice of casting lots for military organization had precedent in Israelite warfare (1 Samuel 14:41-42; Joshua 7:14-18). However, proper consultation of God

included inquiring through the Urim and Thummim via the high priest (Exodus 28:30; Numbers 27:21). The contrast between Israel's minimal consultation here and their eventual fuller inquiry (v. 27-28 mentions Phinehas and the ark) shows their spiritual progression through suffering.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. When do you consult God about 'how' while never questioning 'whether' your basic approach aligns with His will?
2. How do you use spiritual practices (prayer, seeking counsel) as validation rather than genuine submission?
3. What would it mean to truly surrender your predetermined plans and let God redirect your entire approach?

Interlinear Text

וְעַתָּה הִנֵּה	זֶה הַדָּבָר	אֲשֶׁר	נַעֲשֶׂה ה
H6258	H2088	H834	H6213
	But now this shall be the thing		which we will do
	H1697		
לִגְבֹּעַ הַ	עַל יָהּ	בְּגוֹבֹל:	
to Gibeah	H5921	we will go up by lot	
H1390		H1486	

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