

1 Samuel 10:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh;

Analysis

And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh;

Samuel's convocation at Mizpah (Mitzpah, meaning 'watchtower') shifts from private anointing to public selection. The phrase 'unto the LORD' (el-YHWH) emphasizes the sacred, covenantal nature of this assembly - it was not merely political convention but religious convocation. Mizpah held significant history: Jacob and Laban made their covenant there (Genesis 31:49); Israel assembled there during the Benjamite civil war (Judges 20-21); and Samuel previously gathered Israel there for repentance and deliverance from Philistines (1 Samuel 7:5-6). This continuity of sacred space underscored that establishing monarchy occurred within, not apart from, Israel's covenant relationship with Yahweh. Samuel, as prophet and judge, possessed the authority to summon all Israel. The gathering's purpose would be to confirm through lot-casting what God had already revealed privately - a pattern showing that divine sovereignty works through human processes.

Historical Context

Mizpah, likely Tell en-Nasbeh north of Jerusalem, served as an important assembly site throughout Israel's history. Its elevated location ('watchtower') provided practical advantages for large gatherings and symbolic significance as a place of covenant vigilance. Archaeological excavations reveal substantial fortifications from this period.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. Why does God often confirm privately revealed purposes through public processes?
2. How does the sacred nature of Israel's political assembly challenge modern secular assumptions about governance?

Interlinear Text

רִאשְׁתָּה	שְׁמוֹאֵל	אֶת	בָּעֵם	אֶל	יְהִי הָיָה	בְּמִצְפָּה:
called	And Samuel	H853	the people	H413	together unto the LORD	to Mizpeh
H6817	H8050		H5971		H3068	H4709

Additional Cross-References

Judges 20:1 (References Lord): Then all the children of Israel went out, and the congregation was gathered together as one man, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, with the land of Gilead, unto the LORD in Mizpeh.

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