

1 Samuel 10:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us?
And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he
held his peace.

Analysis

But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.

The chapter concludes with immediate opposition from 'children of Belial' (benei beliya'al) - literally 'sons of worthlessness,' a Hebrew idiom for thoroughly wicked individuals. Their contemptuous question 'How shall this man save us?' (mah-yoshienu zeh) challenges both Saul's capacity and God's selection. Withholding customary gifts (minchah, tribute or present) constituted political rejection of his authority. Yet Saul's response - 'he held his peace' (vayehi kemaacharish, literally 'he was as one being silent') - demonstrates remarkable restraint. This self-control contrasts sharply with his later violent reactions to perceived slights. Early Saul could absorb insult without retaliation; later Saul would slaughter an entire priestly city for suspected disloyalty. The presence of opposition from day one shows that even God-chosen leaders face rejection; success depends not on universal approval but on faithful obedience to divine calling.

Historical Context

The term 'Belial' appears throughout the Old Testament for worthless or wicked persons. Its etymology is debated (perhaps 'without profit' or 'without yoke/restraint'). These opponents may have had tribal jealousies (non-Benjamites resenting Benjamin's elevation) or doubts about Saul's military credentials.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How do you respond to those who question or oppose your God-given calling?
2. What does the contrast between early Saul's restraint and later Saul's violence teach about character development?

Interlinear Text

וּבְנֵי י	בְּלִי עַל	אָמַר ו	מָה	יֵשַׁע נֹו	זֶה
But the children	of Belial	said	H4100	How shall this man save	H2088
H1121	H1100	H559		H3467	
וַיִּבְזְּ הוּא	וְלֹא	הֵב יָאוֹ	ל ו	מִנְחָה	יָיָהּ
us And they despised	H3808	him and brought	H0	him no presents	H1961
H959		H935		H4503	
כַּמְחִירָשׁ:					
But he held his peace					
H2790					

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 13:13 (Parallel theme): Certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known;

1 Kings 10:25 (Parallel theme): And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.

2 Chronicles 17:5 (Parallel theme): Therefore the LORD stablished the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents; and he had riches and honour in abundance.

1 Samuel 2:12 (Parallel theme): Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD.

Isaiah 36:21 (Peace): But they held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not.

Acts 7:35 (Parallel theme): This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

Psalms 72:10 (Parallel theme): The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.

Psalms 38:13 (Parallel theme): But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.

1 Kings 4:21 (Parallel theme): And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.

2 Chronicles 13:7 (Parallel theme): And there are gathered unto him vain men, the children of Belial, and have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and tenderhearted, and could not withstand them.