

1 Samuel 12:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, here I am: witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you.

Analysis

Behold, here I am: witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you.

Samuel's invitation to testify against him 'before the LORD and before his anointed' establishes unprecedented accountability. He invites scrutiny regarding fraud (ashaq), oppression (ratsats), and bribery. The phrase 'whose ox have I taken?' echoes Moses' similar self-defense (Numbers 16:15). By calling both Yahweh and the new king as witnesses, Samuel models the principle that leaders must answer both to God and to legitimate human authority.

Historical Context

The specific accusations Samuel invites - taking oxen or donkeys, defrauding, oppressing, accepting bribes - were common forms of judicial corruption in the ancient Near East. Samuel's challenge directly contrasts with his sons' documented offenses and establishes the standard to which Saul should aspire.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. Could you invite similar scrutiny of your leadership, service, or integrity?
2. What does Samuel's willingness to be examined teach about accountability in ministry?

Interlinear Text

הִנֵּה	אֵין	בְּ	בְּ	הִנֵּה	בְּ	אֵין
H2005	Behold here I am witness	H0	H5048	against me before the LORD	H5048	
	H6030			H3068		
מִ	טָהָרָה	וְ	מֶשֶׁיחַ	אֵת	לְקַחְתִּי	מִ
and before his anointed	H853	whose ox	H4310	have I taken	H3947	or whose ass
H4899		H7794		H2543		H4310
מִ	אֵת	לְקַחְתִּי	מִ	עַשְׂלֵת	מִ	אֵת
have I taken	H853	or whom have I defrauded	H4310	H6231	H853	H4310
H3947						
בְּ	וְ	לְקַחְתִּי	מִ	לְקַחְתִּי	מִ	
whom have I oppressed	or of whose hand	H4310	H4310	have I taken	H3947	
H7533		H3027				
כְּ	פָּרָה	בְּ	עֵינִי	בְּ	יְבָשָׂה	
have I received any bribe	to blind	mine eyes	H0	therewith and I will restore	H7725	
H3724	H5956	H5869				
לְכַמְּנָה						
H0						

Additional Cross-References

Acts 20:33 (Parallel theme): I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

Numbers 16:15 (References Lord): And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the LORD, Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.

Deuteronomy 16:19 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.

1 Samuel 24:6 (References Lord): And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD.

1 Peter 5:2 (Parallel theme): Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

Exodus 23:8 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous.

1 Thessalonians 2:10 (Witness): Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:

1 Samuel 12:5 (Witness): And he said unto them, The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, He is witness.

1 Samuel 10:1 (References Lord): Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?

Exodus 20:17 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.