

1 Samuel 14:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped; but no man put his hand to his mouth: for the people feared the oath.

Analysis

And when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped; but no man put his hand to his mouth: for the people feared the oath.

The people's fear of Saul's curse overpowers their physical need: they see 'the honey dropped' but 'no man put his hand to his mouth.' The Hebrew emphasizes restraint despite extreme temptation - honey literally dripping before exhausted, hungry warriors. Fear of the king's oath supersedes natural desire and practical need. Saul's word binds more than God's provision frees. This reversal of proper authority - king's command over divine gift - characterizes Saul's dysfunctional leadership.

Historical Context

Ancient curses were taken with utmost seriousness. The people's fear reflects belief in the effective power of pronounced oaths. Violation was thought to bring automatic negative consequences. This cultural context explains the troops' restraint despite exhaustion.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. When does fear of human authority prevent receiving what God provides?
2. How do we distinguish between proper respect for leadership and improper bondage to human decrees?

Interlinear Text

וַיָּבֹא	וְעַתָּה	אֶל	בַּיּוֹרֶה	וְלֹא	נָפַל	וְהִנֵּה	נָפַל
were come	And when the people	H413	into the wood	H2009	dropped		
H935	H5971		H3293		H1982		
וְדֹבֶשׁ	וְאֵין	מִשְׁמֶרֶת	יָדָוָה	אֶל	פֶּה	בְּפֶה	אָמֵן
behold the honey	H369	but no man put	H5381	his hand	H413	to his mouth	H3588
H1706			H3027		H6310		H3372
וְעַתָּה	אֶת	פְּשָׁבְעָה:					
And when the people	H853	the oath	H7621				
H5971							

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org