

1 Samuel 15:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.

Analysis

And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.

Samuel recounts the mission: 'the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.' Three elements emphasize completeness: 'utterly destroy' (charam), 'fight against them,' and 'until they be consumed.' The Amalekites are labeled 'sinners' - their destruction was divine judgment, not arbitrary violence. Saul's role was executioner of divine verdict. The command left no room for the selective obedience Saul practiced.

Historical Context

The Hebrew charam ('utterly destroy' or 'devote to destruction') described holy war where everything was dedicated to God through destruction. Captured spoil belonged to the LORD, not the victors. Taking spoil from charam warfare was stealing from God.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does understanding commands as divine judgment affect our willingness to obey completely?
2. What is at stake when we modify clear divine instructions?

Interlinear Text

וְשָׁלַחַ	יהָהָה	בְּדַיְלָה	לְנֵי אָמָר	וְעַתְּבָמַתְּ	הַ
sent	And the LORD	thee on a journey	and said	H1980	and utterly destroy
H7971	H3068	H1870	H559		H2763
אֲתָּא	אֲתָּא	עַמְלֵל קָרְבָּן	וְנַלְמַתָּה	עַד בָּזֶן	
H853	the sinners	H853	the Amalekites	and fight	H0
	H2400		H6002		H5704
כְּלֹתָם:		אֲתָּמָם:			
against them until they be consumed		H853			
	H3615				

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