

1 Samuel 15:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?

Analysis

Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?

Samuel's accusation intensifies: 'Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil?' The verb 'fly' (ya'at) pictures ravenous greed - the same word used for the people's desperate eating in 14:32. Samuel characterizes Saul's keeping of livestock as greedy seizure, not pious intention. The concluding verdict - 'and didst evil in the sight of the LORD' - is comprehensive judgment. What Saul spiritualized as sacrifice, God sees as evil. Intent does not sanctify disobedient action.

Historical Context

The phrase 'evil in the sight of the LORD' is a recurring formula for covenant violation (Judges 2:11; 3:7, 12; etc.). Samuel applies to Saul the same language used for Israel's repeated apostasy during the judges period. The king has become like his disobedient people.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How do religious justifications mask what God sees as greed or disobedience?
2. What is the relationship between divine assessment and human self-assessment of our actions?

Interlinear Text

לֹא וְלֹמַד שְׁמָעָת בְּקָר וְלֹהֶה:
H4100 H3808 Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD
H8085 H6963 H3068

בָּעֵינֵי פְּנֵי עָשָׂת לְפָנָל וְלֹמַד עַל
but didst fly H413 upon the spoil and didst evil in the sight of the LORD
H5860 H7998 H6213 H7451 H5869 H3068

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 14:32 (Parallel theme): And the people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew them on the ground: and the people did eat them with the blood.

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