

1 Samuel 15:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.

Analysis

And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.

Samuel's declaration - 'the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent' - provides crucial theological clarification. After verse 11's statement that God 'repented,' Samuel affirms God does not repent like humans. The title 'Strength of Israel' (Netsach Yisra'el) emphasizes divine glory and permanence. The apparent contradiction dissolves when we understand two different senses: God grieves over human failure (v. 11) but does not change His eternal character or purposes (v. 29). Divine emotion and divine immutability coexist.

Historical Context

The Hebrew netsach can mean 'glory,' 'permanence,' or 'victory.' This divine title appears only here. The tension between divine repentance (v. 11) and divine non-repentance (v. 29) generated extensive theological reflection in Jewish and Christian interpretation.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How do we hold together God's genuine emotional response and His unchanging purposes?
2. What does 'the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent' mean for your confidence in God's promises?

Interlinear Text

וְגַם	וְצָחַ	לֹא	יִשְׁבַּא	לֹ	וְשִׁקַּר	רֹא	וְלֹא	לְהַנִּזְקֵם:
H1571	And also the Strength	of Israel	H3478	will not lie	H8266	nor	H3808	repent
	H5331							H5162
לֹא	כִּי	לֹא	אַצְטָמָ	הַ	לְהַנִּזְקֵם:			
H3588	H3808	for he is not a man	H120	H1931	nor	repent		H5162

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 23:19 (Repentance): God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

Ezekiel 24:14 (Repentance): I the LORD have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord GOD.

Titus 1:2 (Parallel theme): In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

Hebrews 6:18 (Parallel theme): That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

2 Timothy 2:13 (Parallel theme): If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

Psalms 95:11 (Parallel theme): Unto whom I sware in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

Isaiah 45:24 (Parallel theme): Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.

2 Corinthians 12:9 (Parallel theme): And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Joel 3:16 (References Israel): The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

Psalms 68:35 (References Israel): O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God.