

# 1 Samuel 16:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me.  
And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am  
come to sacrifice to the LORD.

## Analysis

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**And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD.**

Samuel's fear of Saul reveals that even mature prophets experience human weakness. God's response demonstrates that divine commands often include practical wisdom for their execution. The cover story of sacrifice was truthful - Samuel would indeed sacrifice - while concealing the full purpose. This instance of divinely sanctioned discretion raises important questions about truth-telling in dangerous circumstances, a theme explored by Reformed theologians regarding legitimate concealment versus lying.

## Historical Context

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Saul's paranoid behavior had intensified after his rejection, making travel by religious figures potentially dangerous. The distance from Ramah to Bethlehem was approximately 10 miles through territory Saul controlled. Sacrificial feasts were common occasions for family gatherings and religious observance.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. How do you balance transparency with wisdom when obedience to God might provoke opposition?
2. What does Samuel's honest fear teach us about the compatibility of faith and natural human emotions?

## Interlinear Text

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וְאָמְרֵם	שְׁמוּאֵל	אֵלֶיךָ	אֵלֶיךָ	וְשָׁמַע	וְאִם	יִהְיֶה
and say	And Samuel	H349	H1980	hear	if Saul	it he will kill
H559	H8050			H8085	H7586	H2026

וְאָמְרֵם	לִיהוָה	עֶגְלָת	בָּקָר	תֵּקַח	בְּיָדְךָ
and say	me And the LORD	H5697	an heifer	Take	with thee
H559	H3068		H1241	H3947	H3027

וְאָמְרֵם	לְזַבֵּחַ	לִיהוָה	בָּאתִי
and say	to sacrifice	me And the LORD	I am come
H559	H2076	H3068	H935

## Additional Cross-References

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**1 Samuel 9:12** (Sacrifice): And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, he is before you: make haste now, for he came to day to the city; for there is a sacrifice of the people to day in the high place:

**1 Samuel 20:29** (Sacrifice): And he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me to be there:

and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table.

**Matthew 10:16** (Parallel theme): Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

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