

1 Samuel 16:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Beth-lehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?

Analysis

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The elders' trembling at Samuel's arrival reflects the prophet's reputation as bearer of divine judgment. Their question 'Comest thou peaceably?' (shalom) acknowledges that prophetic visitations often accompanied divine displeasure. Samuel's presence reminded them of God's sovereign oversight of their community. The fear of holy men was characteristic of Israel's awareness that proximity to the divine carried both blessing and danger.

Historical Context

Local elders served as civic and judicial leaders in Israelite towns. Samuel's previous circuit as judge (1 Samuel 7:16-17) had established his authority throughout the region. The memory of his role in Saul's coronation and subsequent confrontations heightened awareness of his prophetic power.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What does the elders' fear teach about the weightiness of genuine encounters with God's messengers?
2. How should awareness of God's holiness shape our approach to worship and spiritual leaders?

Interlinear Text

בָּאָבָּן:	יְהִי הַ	דָּבָר אֲשֶׁר אָתָּה שָׁמֹאֵל וְעַשֶּׂ	דָּבָר אֲשֶׁר אָתָּה שָׁמֹאֵל וְעַשֶּׂ	did And Samuel	H853	H834	spake	that which the LORD	Comest	H3068	H935
H6213	H8050						H1696				
לִכְנָאת וְ בָּעֵיר זְלָגִים יְלִגְנִים יְלִגְנִים	to Bethlehem	H1035	H2729	And the elders	H2205	of the town	H5892	H7122			
H0											
בָּאָבָּן: שָׁלֵם וְאָמַר	בָּאָבָּן: שָׁלֵם וְאָמַר	בָּאָבָּן: שָׁלֵם וְאָמַר	בָּאָבָּן: שָׁלֵם וְאָמַר	and said thou peaceably Comest	H559	H7965	H935				

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 2:13 (Peace): And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon. And she said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably.

Luke 5:8 (References Lord): When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

2 Kings 9:22 (Peace): And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?

1 Samuel 21:1 (Parallel theme): Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?

1 Kings 17:18 (Parallel theme): And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?

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