

1 Samuel 17:56

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling is.

Analysis

And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling is.

The term 'stripling' ('elem) denotes a young man just reaching maturity - one whose beard is barely growing. Saul's command to investigate David's lineage reveals concern for political and social standing before granting his promised rewards. The king who should have led Israel against Goliath now inquires about the family credentials of the one who did. There is irony here: Saul investigates David's human credentials while remaining blind to David's divine appointment. The king measured by appearance and lineage; God had measured by the heart (16:7).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern kings regularly investigated the family backgrounds of those entering royal service. Marriage into the royal family required verification of acceptable social status. The term 'stripling' indicates David's youthful appearance distinguished him from battle-hardened warriors.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. When have you focused on outward credentials while missing someone's God-given calling?
2. How does God's evaluation of people differ from typical human assessment?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	וְהַמֶּלֶךְ	שָׁאַל	אֶתְּהוּ	בֶן	מִי	זֶה
said	And the king	Enquire	H859	thou whose son	H4310	H2088
H559	H4428	H7592		H1121		

הַעֶלְם:

the stripling

H5958

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