

1 Samuel 18:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

Analysis

But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

The contrast is stark: Saul feared while 'all Israel and Judah loved' ('ahav). The Hebrew emphasizes totality - both northern tribes (Israel) and David's own tribe (Judah) united in affection for him. The reason given is simple: 'he went out and came in before them.' David led from the front, sharing the dangers his men faced. Leadership through presence rather than pronouncement earned genuine loyalty. This foreshadows the Good Shepherd who goes before His sheep, ultimately laying down His life for them. David's popularity grew not through self-promotion but through faithful service.

Historical Context

The distinction between 'Israel' (northern tribes) and 'Judah' (southern) anticipates later division. David's ability to unite both reveals his broad appeal. Military leaders who led personally rather than commanding from safety earned exceptional devotion from ancient armies.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does leading through personal presence and shared risk build genuine loyalty?
2. What does David's servant-leadership foreshadow about Christ's approach to His people?

Interlinear Text

וְכָל	יִשְׂרָאֵל	וַיהוּדָה	אֶהָב	אֶת	דָּוִד	כִּי	וְהָיָה
H3605	But all Israel	and Judah	loved	H853	David	H3588	H1931
	H3478	H3063	H157		H1732		
	יָצָא	וָבֹא	לִפְנֵיהֶם:				
	because he went out	and came in	before				
	H3318	H935	H6440				

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 18:5 (References David): And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.