

1 Samuel 18:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife: only be thou valiant for me, and fight the LORD'S battles. For Saul said, Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.

Analysis

And Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife: only be thou valiant for me, and fight the LORD'S battles. For Saul said, Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.

Saul's offer of his daughter Merab concealed murderous intent: 'Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines.' The promise 'be thou valiant for me, and fight the LORD's battles' employed pious language for impious purposes. Saul would technically fulfill his promise from 17:25 while hoping David would die in combat. This manipulation represents using religious language to mask sinful agendas.

Historical Context

Royal marriages created political alliances and obligations. Saul's promise of his daughter to Goliath's slayer (17:25) created expectations he now manipulated. Sending David against Philistines provided honorable cover for his deadly hopes.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

Revelation 20:12 – Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How do you discern when religious language masks ungodly intent?
2. What does Saul's manipulation teach about the corruption of those who resist God's purposes?

Interlinear Text

מ'ב	הגדול ה	בת	הנה	דַּי דַּי	אל	וְשָׁא וְלַ	אמַר
said	And Saul	H413	to David	H2009	daughter	Behold my elder	Merah
H559	H7586		H1732		H1323	H1419	H4764

אַתָּה	אַתָּן	לְבָב	לְאַשְׁהָרָה	לִי	לִבְנָה
H853	her will I give	H0	thee to wife	H389	H1961

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 17:25 (Parallel theme): And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.

1 Samuel 25:28 (References Lord): I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days.

1 Samuel 18:25 (References David): And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

1 Samuel 18:21 (References David): And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou shalt this day be my son in law in the one of the twain.

1 Samuel 17:47 (References Lord): And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands.