

1 Samuel 18:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But it came to pass at the time when Merab Saul's daughter should have been given to David, that she was given unto Adriel the Meholathite to wife.

Analysis

But it came to pass at the time when Merab Saul's daughter should have been given to David, that she was given unto Adriel the Meholathite to wife.

Saul's broken promise - giving Merab to Adriel instead of David - reveals royal treachery. The Hebrew structure emphasizes the violation: 'at the time when...should have been given.' Saul broke his sworn word without apparent consequence. This betrayal, while painful, protected David from deeper entanglement with the deteriorating royal house. God's apparent failures to deliver expected blessings sometimes protect us from arrangements that would ultimately harm. Merab's descendants would later be executed (2 Samuel 21:8-9), suggesting David was spared involvement in that tragedy.

Historical Context

Adriel was from Abel-meholah in the Jordan Valley, possibly connected to the prominent clan associated with Elisha. Royal marriages were political arrangements; Saul may have seen greater advantage in the Meholathite alliance. Breaking marriage promises to subordinates carried social stigma but few practical consequences for kings.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. When has God's apparent denial of expected blessing actually protected you from harm?
2. How do you respond when those in authority break promises made to you?

Interlinear Text

וַיְהִי י	בַּעֵת	נִתְּנָה	אֶת	מֶרַב	
H1961	But it came to pass at the time	should have been given	H853	when Merab	
	H6256	H5414		H4764	
בֵּת	שָׁא וּל	לְדָוִד	וְיָהּ י	נִתְּנָה	לְעֶדְרִיאֵל
daughter	Saul's	to David	H1931	should have been given	unto Adriel
H1323	H7586	H1732		H5414	H5741
הַמְּחֹלָתִי י	לְאִשָּׁה:				
the Meholathite	to wife				
H4259	H802				

Additional Cross-References

2 Samuel 21:8 (Parallel theme): But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite:

Judges 7:22 (Parallel theme): And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and

the host fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath.

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