

1 Samuel 19:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when the messengers were come in, behold, there was an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster.

Analysis

And when the messengers were come in, behold, there was an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster.

The discovery of the deception - an image (teraphim) with goats' hair pillow - revealed Michal's ruse and David's escape. The household idol's presence raises theological questions about religious practice in David's home, but the narrative focuses on the escape's success. The messengers' discovery brought Michal under royal suspicion while confirming David had fled. God's purposes advanced despite, or through, morally ambiguous means. The text records events without endorsing every element, showing how divine sovereignty works through flawed human actions.

Historical Context

Teraphim were household religious objects, possibly ancestral images. Their presence in Israelite homes, though prohibited, was apparently common. The goats' hair pillow created visual illusion from a distance, especially in dimly lit rooms.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does God accomplish His purposes through imperfect means and flawed instruments?
2. What does the presence of teraphim suggest about the gradual nature of spiritual reformation?

Interlinear Text

וַיָּבֹאוּ	הַמַּלְאָכִים	וְהָיָה	הַתֵּרָפִים	אֵל
were come in	And when the messengers	H2009	behold there was an image	H413
H935	H4397		H8655	
הַמֶּטֶה	וּכְבִּי	הָעִזִּים	מְרָאשְׁתּוֹ:	
in the bed	with a pillow	of goats	hair for his bolster	
H4296	H3523	H5795	H4763	

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