

1 Samuel 2:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But Samuel ministered before the LORD, being a child, girded with a linen ephod.

Analysis

The narrative deliberately juxtaposes the corruption of Eli's sons with Samuel's faithful service. 'But Samuel ministered before the LORD' presents sharp contrast. His 'linen ephod' - a priestly garment - indicates legitimate service even as a child. Where Hophni and Phinehas profaned their office, Samuel honored his. Where they exploited worshipers, he served the LORD. The word 'child' (na'ar) emphasizes his youth, making the contrast more striking. God is already preparing His replacement for the failed priesthood even while judgment approaches.

Historical Context

The linen ephod was typically a priestly garment (Exodus 28:42; Leviticus 6:10), though a simpler version was worn by others in sacred service (2 Samuel 6:14). Samuel's wearing it indicates his consecrated status, even before he assumed formal prophetic office.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does faithful service in youth prepare for greater responsibility?
2. What does the contrast between Samuel and Eli's sons teach about character formation?

Interlinear Text

אָפַר אַדְמָגָר וְשִׁמְוֹאָל
But Samuel ministered before the LORD being a child girded an ephod
H8050 H8334 H853 H6440 H3068 H5288 H2296 H646

בְּלָבָן:

with a linen

H906

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 28:4 (Parallel theme): And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

1 Samuel 3:1 (References Lord): And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision.

1 Samuel 2:11 (References Lord): And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest.

2 Samuel 6:14 (References Lord): And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod.

1 Samuel 22:18 (Parallel theme): And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod.

