

1 Samuel 20:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And, behold, I will send a lad, saying, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee, take them; then come thou: for there is peace to thee, and no hurt; as the LORD liveth.

Analysis

And, behold, I will send a lad, saying, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee, take them; then come thou: for there is peace to thee, and no hurt; as the LORD liveth.

The signal system's positive interpretation: 'arrows on this side' means safety - 'there is peace to thee, and no hurt.' The unwitting lad becomes instrument of communication without understanding its significance. Jonathan's oath 'as the LORD liveth' adds divine witness to the signal's reliability. The phrase 'come thou' indicates David could safely return. Such elaborate signaling protected both friends while accomplishing necessary communication.

Historical Context

Using servants for tasks they did not fully understand was common practice. The servant's ignorance protected him from being implicated if the scheme was discovered. Jonathan's invocation of God added solemnity to an otherwise ordinary archery exercise.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How do you protect others from the full weight of difficult situations they help you navigate?
2. What does the servant's unknowing participation teach about God's use of unaware instruments?

Interlinear Text

וְהִנֵּה	אֲשֶׁלְּךָ	אֶת	לְבַיְעָר	לִי	מֵצֵא	אֶת
H2009	And behold I will send	H853	a lad	H1980	find out	H853
	H7971		H5288		H4672	

הִנֵּה יִסֵּי	אִם	אִם רָ	אִם רָ	לְבַיְעָר	הִנֵּה
Behold the arrows	H518	If I expressly	If I expressly	a lad	H2009
H2671		H559	H559	H5288	

הִנֵּה יִסֵּי	מִמֶּךָ	זֶה נָה	קִטְנוֹן	וְבָאָה
Behold the arrows	H4480	H2008	are on this side of thee take	them then come
H2671			H3947	H935

פִּי	שָׁלֹוֹם	לְךָ	וְאֵין	דָּבָר	חַיִּי	יְהוָה:
H3588	thou for there is peace	H0	H369	to thee and no hurt	liveth	as the LORD
	H7965			H1697	H2416	H3068