

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 אֲשֶׁר כֵּן אַתָּה לְבָעֵר אֶל־נֶגֶד לְמַצֵּא אֶת מִצְאָתֶךָ
H2009 And behold I will send H853 a lad H1980 find out H853
H7971 H5288 H4672

הִנֵּה הַלְּבָעֵר אֶמְרָא אֶמְרָא אֶמְרָא אֶמְרָא
Behold the arrows H518 If I expressly H559 If I expressly H559 a lad H2009
H2671 H559 H5288

בְּאֵת מִמֶּנּוּ תִּקְרַב אֵלֶיךָ וְאֵלֶיךָ תִּבְאַל
Behold the arrows H4480 H2008 are on this side of thee take H3947 them then come H935
H2671

כִּי שָׁלֹום לְבָבְךָ וְלִבְבֵךְ אֵלֶיךָ וְלִבְבֵךְ תִּבְאַל
thou for there is peace H7965 H0 H369 to thee and no hurt H1697 liveth H2416 as the LORD H3068
H3588