

1 Samuel 20:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD be between thee and me for ever.

Analysis

And as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD be between thee and me for ever.

Jonathan's declaration 'the LORD be between thee and me for ever' places God at the center of their covenant. This divine mediation transforms human friendship into sacred bond. The 'for ever' ('ad 'olam) extends commitment beyond their lifetimes to eternal significance. Human covenants grounded in divine presence gain stability that merely human arrangements lack.

Historical Context

Invoking deity as covenant witness and enforcer was standard ancient practice. Israel's distinctive contribution was understanding Yahweh as active participant in human relationships, not merely distant observer. The eternal dimension transcended mortal limitations.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does placing God at the center of relationships transform them?
2. What friendships in your life would benefit from explicit recognition of God's mediating presence?

Interlinear Text

וְעַבְדָּךְ רְאֵשׁ רָאשׁ	H834	דְּבָרָנוּ	H1696	אַתָּה אַתָּה	H589	אַתָּה אַתָּה	H859
And as touching the matter	H1697	which thou and I have spoken	H1696				
וְעַבְדָּךְ רְאֵשׁ רָאשׁ	H834	דְּבָרָנוּ	H1696	אַתָּה אַתָּה	H589	אַתָּה אַתָּה	H859
of behold the LORD	H2009	be between thee and me for	H5704	עוֹלָם:	H5769	ever	
וְעַבְדָּךְ רְאֵשׁ רָאשׁ	H834	דְּבָרָנוּ	H1696	אַתָּה אַתָּה	H589	אַתָּה אַתָּה	H859
יְהִי הָבֵן יְהִי הָבֵן	H996	וְבֵין	H996	עַד	H5704	עוֹלָם:	H5769
of behold the LORD	H3068	be between thee and me for	H5704	ever	H5769		

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 20:42 (References Lord): And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

Genesis 31:50 (Parallel theme): If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is witness betwixt me and thee.

Genesis 16:5 (References Lord): And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee.