

1 Samuel 20:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he is not clean; surely he is not clean.

Analysis

Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he is not clean; surely he is not clean.

Saul's silence on the first day - assuming David was ceremonially unclean - revealed his religious pretense. He would not publicly inquire lest it appear he suspected David. The phrase 'surely he is not clean' uses ritual language to mask murderous intent. Saul maintained the appearance of pious concern while harboring deadly purpose. Religious people sometimes hide violent hearts behind ceremonial scruples. The waiting game continued into the second day.

Historical Context

Ceremonial uncleanness from various causes prohibited participation in religious feasts (Leviticus 7:20-21). Assuming such uncleanness was charitable interpretation of absence. Saul's restraint the first day showed calculated patience awaiting clearer opportunity.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Revelation 20:12 – Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. When have religious explanations been used to mask less noble motivations?
2. What does Saul's pretended concern reveal about the gap between religious appearance and heart reality?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹא	דָּבָר	שָׁא וְלֹ	מֵא וְמָה	בַּיּוֹם	בַּהֲיוֹן	וְלֹא	וְלֹא
H3808	spake	Nevertheless Saul	not any thing	that day	H1931		H3588
H1696		H7586		H3972		H3117	

אמַר	מִקְרָה	ה וְאַ	בְּלַתְּ יִ	ה וְאַ	טְהוֹרָה
for he thought	Something hath befallen	H1931	him he is not	clean	H1931

ל א פ הָרָקָה: clean

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 15:5 (Parallel theme): And whosoever toucheth his bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.

Leviticus 11:27 (Parallel theme): And whatsoever goeth upon his paws, among all manner of beasts that go on all four, those are unclean unto you: whoso toucheth their carcase shall be unclean until the even.

Leviticus 11:24 (Parallel theme): And for these ye shall be unclean: whosoever toucheth the carcase of them shall be unclean until the even.

