

1 Samuel 20:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him,
Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?

Analysis

And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?

Jonathan's courageous response - 'Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?' - directly challenged his father's murderous intent with legal argument. These two questions demand justification: what crime deserves death, and what evidence supports it? Jonathan appealed to justice even against his father's rage. The questions exposed the irrational basis for Saul's hatred - there was no legitimate answer. Sometimes the most powerful defense is simply asking what wrong has been done. Jonathan stood between his father and his friend, demanding righteousness.

Historical Context

Legal proceedings required specific accusations and evidence. Jonathan's questions followed proper judicial form. Challenging a king's death sentence required considerable courage, especially for the heir apparent who might have benefited from David's elimination.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. When have you courageously asked powerful people to justify their harmful intentions?
2. What does Jonathan's willingness to challenge his father teach about the priority of justice over family loyalty?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּעַן	וְיֵה וְיֹנָתָן	אֶת	שָׁא וּל	אָבִיו	וַיֹּאמֶר	אֵלָיו	לָמָּה
answered	And Jonathan		Saul	his father	and said		
H6030	H3083	H853	H7586	H1	H559	H413	H4100
וְיָמָּה		מָה		עָשָׂה:			
unto him		Wherefore shall he be slain		what hath he done			
H4191		H4100		H6213			

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 27:23 (Parallel theme): And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

1 Samuel 19:5 (Parallel theme): For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?

Genesis 31:36 (Parallel theme): And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban: and Jacob answered and said to Laban, What is my trespass? what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me?

Luke 23:22 (Parallel theme): And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.

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