

1 Samuel 20:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee: notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father?

Analysis

Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee: notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father?

David's appeal to 'the covenant of the LORD' grounds their relationship in sacred commitment. His willingness to be slain by Jonathan if guilty ('if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself') demonstrates confident innocence. The phrase 'deal kindly' (chesed - covenant loyalty) invokes the faithful love that binds covenant partners. David trusted Jonathan's integrity enough to place his life in covenant hands.

Historical Context

Covenant terminology (berit YHWH) indicated the most sacred of relationships. Allowing a friend to execute judgment demonstrated ultimate trust. The request to be killed personally rather than delivered to Saul preserved David's honor.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does covenant commitment provide security that mere friendship cannot?
2. What does David's trust in Jonathan's integrity teach about relationships built on shared faith?

Interlinear Text

וְעַשْ יְתָ	עַל	כִּי	עָבֹדָה	בְּבָרֶךְ יְתָ
Therefore thou shalt deal	kindly	H5921	thy servant	H3588
H6213	H2617		H5650	H1285
יְהִי הָ	אֵת	עָבֹדָה	וְאִם עַפְתָּ	בְּאָמֵן
of the LORD	for thou hast brought	H853	thy servant	H5973
H3068	H935		H5650	H518
בֶּן	עָוֹן	בְּמִתְּהִ	עָד	אֵת
with thee notwithstanding if there be	H0	in me iniquity	H859	H5704
H3426		H5771	H4191	
אָבִיךָ	בְּנִי	נִ	מְתַתְּ	עַד
me to thy father	for thou hast brought	H935		
H4100	H2088			

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 18:3 (Covenant): Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

2 Samuel 14:32 (Sin): And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur? it had been good for me to have been there still: now therefore let me see the king's face; and if there be any iniquity in me, let him kill me.

1 Samuel 23:18 (Covenant): And they two made a covenant before the LORD: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.

1 Samuel 20:16 (Covenant): So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the LORD even require it at the hand of David's enemies.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org