

1 Samuel 21:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?

Analysis

Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?

David's flight to Nob marks a pivotal moment in his wilderness years. The Hebrew verb 'charad' (was afraid) indicates Ahimelech's trembling at David's unexpected arrival without his usual retinue. Nob had become the priestly center after Shiloh's destruction, housing the tabernacle and sacred objects. The priest's fearful inquiry reveals the political tension surrounding David's relationship with Saul. Ahimelech's question exposes the anomaly of a royal official traveling alone—a detail that would prove fatal when Doeg later reported this encounter. This passage demonstrates how even ordinary interactions during times of persecution carry weighty consequences, foreshadowing the tragedy that would befall the innocent priests.

Historical Context

Nob was located north of Jerusalem, approximately one mile from the city. After the destruction of Shiloh (Jeremiah 7:12-14), the tabernacle and priesthood relocated here. The Ahimelech mentioned is likely the great-grandson of Eli, continuing the priestly line despite the judgment pronounced on Eli's house.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How do you navigate situations where your presence might endanger others who help you?
2. What does Ahimelech's willingness to assist David teach us about hospitality amid uncertainty?

Interlinear Text

וְיָבָא	נִבְהָא	אֶל	אַחִימֶלֶךְ	פָּכָה	יְחִיבָּד
Then came	David	to Nob	H413	and Ahimelech	the priest

אֲחִים לְרֵבֶת לְקַבֵּעַ אֶת דָּיוֹד וְאֶמְרָה וְלֹו מִדְּעָה אֲחִים לְרֵבֶת לְקַבֵּעַ אֶת דָּיוֹד וְאֶמְרָה וְלֹו מִדְּעָה
and Ahimelech at the meeting David and said H0 H4069 H859
H288 H7125 H1732 H559

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 11:32 (Parallel theme): And at Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah,

Isaiah 10:32 (Parallel theme): As yet shall he remain at Nob that day: he shall shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.

Mark 2:26 (Parallel theme): How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?

1 Samuel 14:3 (Parallel theme): And Ahiah, the son of Ahitub, I-chabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD'S priest in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone.

1 Samuel 16:4 (Parallel theme): And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Beth-lehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?

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