

1 Samuel 21:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath.

Analysis

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The Hebrew phrase 'vayasem et-haddevarim' (laid up these words) indicates David carefully considered the implications of what he heard. His fear intensified —'vayira me'od' (was exceedingly afraid). This internal response contrasts sharply with the David who faced Goliath without trembling. The difference reveals that circumstances, exhaustion, and isolation can erode even courageous faith. David's fear was rational—he had entered enemy territory carrying their champion's weapon. Yet his response would demonstrate that faith can coexist with fear, and that God's servants sometimes find deliverance through unconventional means. Psalm 56 records his prayer during this terrifying time.

Historical Context

David's decision to flee to Gath may have assumed that enemies of his enemy (Saul) might become allies. This calculation failed because his reputation preceded him. Ancient Near Eastern kings frequently executed enemy champions to prevent future threats.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How do you process threatening information—do you ruminate in fear or bring it to God in prayer?
2. What does David's 'exceeding fear' teach about the experience of fear even among the faithful?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵת אֲלֵבֶב וְבָא לְהָ פְּדָבֶב יִם אָתְתִּי דְּבָרְמָם
laid up And David H853 these words H428 in his heart afraid
H7760 H1732 H1697 H3824 H3372

מַלְךָ אֲכִישׁ מִפְנֵן וְנִתְבְּנֵת
and was sore of Achish the king of Gath
H3966 H6440 H397 H4428 H1661

Additional Cross-References

Luke 2:19 (Parallel theme): But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.