

1 Samuel 21:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place.

Analysis

And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place.

David's deception raises difficult ethical questions that Scripture does not sanitize. The Hebrew phrase 'davar satar' (secret matter) creates a plausible cover story. While David's lie protected himself, it ultimately contributed to the massacre of the priests. Jesus later referenced this incident in Mark 2:25-26, notably without condemning David for eating the showbread, yet neither endorsing the deception. The text presents David's humanity—a man after God's own heart who nonetheless sinned under pressure. This serves as a sobering reminder that desperation can lead even the godly to compromise, and that such compromises often have unforeseen consequences.

Historical Context

Deception in ancient Near Eastern warfare and survival contexts was common, though the Hebrew moral tradition generally condemned lying (Proverbs 6:16-19).

David's fabrication about a royal mission exploited the cultural expectation of secrecy surrounding royal affairs.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. When have you been tempted to deceive others to protect yourself, and what were the consequences?
2. How do you balance self-preservation with truthfulness in threatening situations?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר וַדָּוִד לְאַחִיעֶזֶר הַכֹּהֵן הַמֶּלֶךְ צִוָּתָהּ
and hath said **And David** **unto Ahimelech** **the priest** **The king** **hath commanded**
H559 H1732 H288 H3548 H4428 H6680

הַדָּבָר וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי אֵין יֵשׁ אֵל יוֹד עֲתִידִי
me a business **and hath said** H413 **unto me Let no man** H408 **know**
H1697 H559 H376 H3045

אֵת מָה וְכֵן הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי שְׁלֹחַ וְאֵשׁ
any thing H853 **me a business** H834 H595 **whereabout I send** H834
H3972 H1697 H7971

צִוָּתָהּ וְאֵת הַנְּעָרִים יוֹד עֲתִידִי אֵל מָקוֹם כָּל
hath commanded H853 **my servants** **know** H413 **a place** **to such**
H6680 H5288 H3045 H4725 H6423

אֵלמוֹנִי:
and such
H492