

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

Psalm 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

צָוָת בְּ כַּפְלָגָה הַכֹּה | הַכֹּה לְאַחִימֶלֶךְ לְגַם דָּוִד יְאָמַר
hath commanded The king the priest unto Ahimelech unto David and hath said

H6680

H4428

H288

H3548

יְדַעַת אֶל אֵל יְאָמַר בְּזַבְבָּר וְאֵשׁ אֵל יְאָמַר בְּזַבְבָּר
know know unto me Let no man unto me and hath said and me a business

H3045

H408

H376

שָׁלַחַת רְאֵשׁ וְאַנְכִּי אֲשֶׁר בְּזַבְבָּר אַתְּ מַא וְמַה
whereabout I send I send me a business any thing

H834

H7971

פָּלָנִי מַקְםָן וּמְלָא יְדַעַת אֶל יְדַעַת בְּזַבְבָּר יְמִינָה
to such a place know my servants and hath commanded

H6423

H413

H3045

אַל מִזְמֹנִי

and such

H492

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