

1 Samuel 21:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul.

Analysis

Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul.

This ominous verse introduces Doeg with foreboding detail. The Hebrew 'ne'etsar' (detained) suggests he was there for ritual purposes—perhaps fulfilling a vow or undergoing purification. The irony is devastating: a man at the sanctuary for religious observance would become the instrument of its destruction. His identity as an Edomite connects him to Israel's ancient enemy, the descendants of Esau. As 'chiefest of the herdmen' (literally 'mighty one among the shepherds'), he held significant authority. Psalm 52 records David's later reflection on Doeg's treachery. This brief verse demonstrates how witnesses to innocent actions can become deadly accusers when circumstances change.

Historical Context

Edomites could participate in Israelite worship after the third generation (Deuteronomy 23:7-8). Doeg's position as chief herdsman gave him access to royal intelligence. His presence at Nob was providentially noted by Scripture as the catalyst for coming tragedy.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How do you respond when you realize someone hostile has witnessed your vulnerable moments?
2. What does Doeg's religious observance combined with later cruelty teach about external religion?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵשׁ	וְאֵשׁ	אִישׁ	מְעַבֵּד	וְلִשְׁאוֹלָל	בְּיַם	בְּיַם	בְּהָאָה
H8033	Now a certain man	H376	H5650	H7586	was there that day	H3117	H1931
דָּמָרָא	לִפְנֵי	וְשָׁם	וְיְהִי	וְאֵת	בְּאֶדְםָה	אָבִיר	
detained	before	the LORD	and his name	was Doeg	an Edomite	the chiefest	
H6113	H6440	H3068	H8034	H1673	H130	H47	
אֲשֶׁר	רְכֻעַם	לִשְׁאוֹלָל					
of the herdmen	H834	of Saul					
H7462		H7586					

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 22:9 (Parallel theme): Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub.

1 Chronicles 27:29 (Parallel theme): And over the herds that fed in Sharon was Shitrai the Sharonite: and over the herds that were in the valleys was Shaphat the son of Adlai:

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