

1 Samuel 23:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.

Analysis

Therefore David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.

David's inquiry demonstrates dependence on divine guidance. The Hebrew 'sha'al' (enquired/asked) indicates formal consultation, likely through Abiathar's ephod. David's question is specific and practical: should he engage the Philistines? God's response is equally direct—'go and smite' (Hebrew 'lekh vehikkita'). The added phrase 'and save Keilah' reveals God's compassion for the threatened town. This divine command to an outlaw fugitive bypasses the legitimate king entirely—God directs military operations through David while Saul pursues paranoid vendettas. The pattern of seeking God before acting would characterize David's best leadership throughout his life.

Historical Context

The phrase 'enquired of the LORD' typically involved the Urim and Thummim in the high priest's ephod. Abiathar's recent arrival with the ephod (22:20-23) provided David this means of divine consultation that Saul had lost through his faithlessness.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What practices do you employ to seek God's guidance before major decisions?
2. How does God's directive to David 'save Keilah' reveal His concern for vulnerable communities?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּשְׁאַל ל	דָּוִד	יְהוָה	וַיֹּאמֶר	הָאֵל	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה
enquired	Therefore David	And the LORD	said	H1980	and smite
H7592	H1732	H3068	H559		H5221
בַּפְּלִשְׁתִּים	הָאֵל לָהּ	וַיֹּאמֶר	יְהוָה	אֵל	דָּוִד
the Philistines	H428	said	And the LORD	H413	Therefore David
H6430		H559	H3068		H1732
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה	בַּפְּלִשְׁתִּים	וַיִּשְׁעֶתְהָ	אֶת	קַיִלָּה:	
and smite	the Philistines	and save	H853	Keilah	
H5221	H6430	H3467		H7084	

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 23:4 (References Lord): Then David enquired of the LORD yet again. And the LORD answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

2 Samuel 5:19 (References Lord): And David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD said unto David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

2 Samuel 5:23 (References Lord): And when David enquired of the LORD, he said, Thou shalt not go up; but fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees.

Jeremiah 10:23 (References Lord): O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

Joshua 9:14 (References Lord): And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD.

1 Samuel 30:8 (References Lord): And David enquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all.

1 Samuel 23:6 (References David): And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand.

Psalms 32:8 (Parallel theme): I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

1 Chronicles 14:10 (References Lord): And David enquired of God, saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? and wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD said unto him, Go up; for I will deliver them into thine hand.

Numbers 27:21 (References Lord): And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.