

1 Samuel 23:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them.

Analysis

And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them.

The tension reaches its climax. The Hebrew description of opposing sides of the mountain creates vivid imagery—hunter and prey separated only by terrain. David's 'haste' (Hebrew 'bahel') indicates urgent, fearful movement. The phrase 'compassed round about' (Hebrew 'otrim') describes encirclement—Saul's forces were closing in. For the first time, escape seemed impossible. The Hebrew construction emphasizes the apparent hopelessness: David was surrounded, outnumbered, and out of options. Yet this moment of maximum danger would reveal God's deliverance most dramatically. Human extremity creates space for divine intervention.

Historical Context

Encirclement tactics were standard for capturing fugitives in mountainous terrain. Saul's larger force could spread to cover escape routes. David's position appeared

strategically hopeless—surrounded in wilderness with no apparent means of escape.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. When have you felt completely surrounded by threatening circumstances?
2. What does this moment of apparent defeat teach about trusting God's timing?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵנֶשׂ יְהוָה מִצְדָּקָה וְשָׁאַל יְהוָה לְגֹנֶב

H1980

And Saul

on that side

of the mountain

H2088

David

H376

מִצְדָּקָה

בְּרֵבָבָה

מִצְדָּקָה

נִחְפֵּץ

לְלִכְתָּה

on that side

of the mountain

H2088

H1961

David

made haste

H1980

מִפְנִים

And Saul

And Saul

H376

compassed

H413

David

H413

H6440

H7586

H7586

H5849

H1732

לְמִפְשָׁמָן: אֵנֶשׂ יְהוָה

H376

to take

H8610

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 17:9 (Parallel theme): From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about.

Revelation 20:9 (Parallel theme): And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

Psalms 22:16 (Parallel theme): For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

Psalms 22:12 (Parallel theme): Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.

Psalms 31:22 (Parallel theme): For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.

Psalms 17:11 (Parallel theme): They have now compassed us in our steps: they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth;

2 Corinthians 1:8 (Parallel theme): For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

2 Chronicles 20:12 (Parallel theme): O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.

1 Samuel 20:38 (Parallel theme): And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.

1 Samuel 19:12 (References David): So Michal let David down through a window: and he went, and fled, and escaped.