

1 Samuel 24:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of En-gedi.

Analysis

And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of En-gedi.

David's refusal to harm Saul despite opportunity and justification demonstrates respect for God's authority structures even when those in authority act wickedly. His conviction that he cannot 'stretch forth my hand against the LORD's anointed' teaches the principle of leaving vengeance to God rather than taking matters into one's own hands. David's restraint shows mature faith that trusts God to vindicate and promote in His timing. This passage warns against using apparent opportunities to advance personal interests when doing so requires violating godly principles.

Historical Context

The establishment of monarchy around 1050-1010 BCE represented a dramatic political and theological shift for Israel. Unlike surrounding nations where kings were considered divine or semi-divine, Israel's kings were supposed to function under God's ultimate authority as laid out in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. The Benjamite tribe occupied strategic territory between Ephraim and Judah, making Saul's selection a politically astute choice to balance tribal rivalries.

Archaeological remains from this period show increased fortification and centralization of settlements, confirming the transition to state-level organization.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does this passage deepen our understanding of God's character, purposes, and ways of working in human history?
2. What specific heart attitudes, thought patterns, or life practices does this passage call you to examine or change?
3. How does this passage connect to the larger biblical narrative of redemption and point toward Christ and the gospel?

Interlinear Text

מִאָמָר יְהוָה
H310
שֶׁאָל
H7586
וְשָׁאַל
H7725
כִּי
H834
בְּאָשָׁר
H1961
יְהוָה י
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לְאָמֵר לֹא
H2009
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פָּלֶשֶׁת יִמְלֹךְ
H6430
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בְּמִדְבָּר
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is in the wilderness
עַד
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בְּעֵד
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of Engedi

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 25:5 (Parallel theme): Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness.

Proverbs 29:12 (Parallel theme): If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked.

Ezekiel 22:9 (Parallel theme): In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains: in the midst of thee they commit lewdness.

Hosea 7:3 (Parallel theme): They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies.

1 Samuel 23:19 (References David): Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon?

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