

1 Samuel 24:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

Analysis

The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

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

יִשְׁפֹּט ט	יְהוָה ה	בִּינִי י	וּבִינִי ג	וְנָקַמ נִי	יְהוָה ה	מִמֶּנּוּ ג
judge	The LORD	H996	H996	avenge	The LORD	H4480
H8199	H3068			H5358	H3068	
יָדִי י	ל א	תְּהִיָּה	בְּרִי:			
me of thee but mine hand	H3808	H1961	H0			
H3027						

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 43:1 (Judgment): Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.

Judges 11:27 (Judgment): Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me: the LORD the Judge be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon.

Psalms 35:1 (References Lord): Plead my cause, O LORD, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.

Genesis 16:5 (Judgment): And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee.

Psalms 94:1 (References Lord): O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.

Job 5:8 (Parallel theme): I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause:

Romans 12:19 (Judgment): Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

1 Peter 2:23 (Judgment): Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

Revelation 6:10 (Judgment): And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

Genesis 31:53 (Judgment): The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us. And Jacob sware by the fear of his father Isaac.