

1 Samuel 24:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.

Analysis

And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.

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

Revelation 20:12 – Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

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

וַיָּבֹא	אֶל	וְתִּקְרֹב	אֶל	עַל	בְּצָאת	עַל	פְּדָנֶה	וְשָׁמֶן
And he came	H413	to the sheepcotes	H6629	H5921	by the way	H8033		

בְּגָלִיל	אֶת	לְבָסָר	שָׁאָל	וַיֹּבֶא	בַּמְעָרָה	ה
of the cave	And he came	and Saul	to cover	H853	his feet	and David
H4631	H935	H7586	H5526		H7272	H1732

וְשָׁבִים:	הַמֵּעָרָה	הַנִּשְׁמַחַת	בְּיַרְכַּת	וְאֶנְשָׁן	H376
	of the cave	remained	in the sides		H3411 H4631 H3427

Additional Cross-References

Judges 3:24 (Parallel theme): When he was gone out, his servants came; and when they saw that, behold, the doors of the parlour were locked, they said, Surely he covereth his feet in his summer chamber.

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