

1 Samuel 26:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil is in mine hand?

Analysis

David's plaintive question exposes the irrationality of Saul's persecution: 'Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant?' The Hebrew construction emphasizes the absurdity: the king of Israel hunting a faithful servant who has done no wrong. David's appeal to evidence ('what have I done? or what evil is in mine hand?') challenges Saul to produce any legitimate justification. This defense anticipates the righteous sufferer's cry throughout Scripture, culminating in Christ before His accusers.

Historical Context

The servant-master relationship (Hebrew: 'eved') implied mutual obligations in ancient Israel. Masters owed protection and provision; servants owed loyalty and service. David's faithful service made Saul's persecution a violation of covenantal expectations.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. When have you suffered persecution without legitimate cause?
2. How does David's appeal to justice model appropriate self-defense?

Interlinear Text

And he said	וַיֹּאמֶר	וְلֹא	מָה	זֶה	אָדָם	רֹדֵךְ	אַחֲרֵיכֶם
	H559	H4100	H2088		Wherefore doth my lord	thus pursue	after
his servant	H3588	H4100		for what have I done	H4100	is in mine hand	or what evil

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 24:9 (Parallel theme): And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?

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