

1 Samuel 28:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.

Analysis

The identifying details, 'an old man covered with a mantle' (Hebrew: 'me'il'), connect to Samuel's characteristic prophetic garb. The mantle (me'il) was specifically associated with Samuel from when his mother made him a little robe (2:19) to when Saul tore his mantle symbolizing the torn kingdom (15:27). Saul's immediate perception that 'it was Samuel' and his prostration (Hebrew: 'wayyiqqod') indicate recognition and reverence. The king bows before the prophet he once resisted, now seeking what he previously rejected.

Historical Context

The mantle was the characteristic garment of prophets, later associated with Elijah and Elisha. Samuel's me'il served as a recognition marker and symbol of prophetic authority throughout his career.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What identifying marks reveal someone's true identity and calling?
2. How do we respond differently to God's messengers in desperate situations than in prosperous ones?

Interlinear Text

וַתֹּאמֶר	מָה לָּהּ	תֹּאמַר וְ	וַתֹּאמֶר	אֶישׁ	זָקֵן	
And he said	H0	H4100	unto her What form	And he said	man	An old
H559			H8389	H559	H376	H2205
עָלָה	וְהָיָא	עָטָה	מָעַיִל	וַיֵּדַע	שָׂאוֹל	כִּי
cometh up	H1931	and he is covered	with a mantle	perceived	And Saul	H3588
H5927		H5844	H4598	H3045	H7586	
שְׂמוּאֵל ל	הָיָא	וַיִּקְדּוּ	אִפְּיָם	אֶרְצָה	וַשְׁתַּחֲוֶה	
that it was Samuel	H1931	and he stooped	with his face	to the ground	and bowed	
H8050		H6915	H639	H776	H7812	

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 15:27 (Parallel theme): And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent.