

1 Samuel 28:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But he refused, and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, compelled him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed.

Analysis

Saul's initial refusal to eat ('I will not eat') reflects the paralysis of despair. The servants and woman together 'compelled him' (Hebrew: 'wayyifrets-u-vo'), using a verb suggesting breaking through resistance. Saul's eventual compliance ('he hearkened unto their voice... arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed') shows him accepting minimal restoration before his final battle. The image of the condemned king sitting on a bed in a medium's house captures the complete collapse of his majesty.

Historical Context

The verb 'compelled' (parats) implies forceful persuasion, breaking through Saul's resistance. The bed (mittah) may have been the woman's own, suggesting she gave her best accommodation to the doomed king.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. When have others had to break through your despair to provide basic care?
2. How do we respond to those paralyzed by circumstances beyond their control?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	לֹא	יָאֹכֵל	אֲכַל	בְּבָנָיו	עֲבָדָיו
But he refused	and said	H3808	I will not eat	compelled	H0
H3985	H559		H398	H6555	H5650
וְאֶתְּנָשָׁן	וְאֶתְּנָשָׁן	וְאֶתְּנָשָׁן	וְאֶתְּנָשָׁן	וְאֶתְּנָשָׁן	וְאֶתְּנָשָׁן
H1571	together with the woman	H802	him and he hearkened	H8085	unto their voice
					H6963
וְאֶתְּנָשָׁן	וְאֶתְּנָשָׁן	וְאֶתְּנָשָׁן	וְאֶתְּנָשָׁן	וְאֶתְּנָשָׁן	So he arose
H6965					
מִבֵּדֶן	מִבֵּדֶן	מִבֵּדֶן	מִבֵּדֶן	מִבֵּדֶן	מִבֵּדֶן
from the earth	and sat	H413	upon the bed	H4296	
H776	H3427				

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 21:4 (Parallel theme): And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.