

1 Samuel 28:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.

Analysis

Saul's fear response marks his complete spiritual collapse. The Hebrew 'wayyir'a... wayyecherad libbo me'od' (he feared and his heart trembled greatly) uses intensified language to convey overwhelming terror. The mighty warrior who once stood head and shoulders above Israel now trembles before the Philistine host. This fear stems not merely from military assessment but from the void left by God's departed presence. Without divine guidance, Saul faces his enemies alone.

Historical Context

Saul's earlier military career included significant victories over the Philistines and other enemies. His terror here reflects not just military concern but the accumulated weight of spiritual decline over decades. The warrior king had become a broken man.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does spiritual emptiness amplify the fears that circumstances create?
2. What happens when we face challenges without the assurance of God's presence and guidance?

Interlinear Text

וַיֵּרָא	וְשָׂא וְלֵאמֹר	אֶת	מִחֲנֵה הַ	פְּלִשְׁתִּים	וְרָא	וַיִּרְדּוּ
saw	And when Saul	H853	the host	of the Philistines	he was afraid	trembled
H7200	H7586		H4264	H6430	H3372	H2729
וּלְ	לִבּוֹ	מְאֹד:				
and his heart	greatly					
H3820	H3966					

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 7:2 (Parallel theme): And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.

Psalms 73:19 (Parallel theme): How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.

Job 18:11 (Parallel theme): Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet.

Job 15:21 (Parallel theme): A dreadful sound is in his ears: in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him.

Proverbs 10:24 (Parallel theme): The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted.

Daniel 5:6 (Parallel theme): Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.

