

1 Samuel 28:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee.

Analysis

Saul's disguise reveals both his desperation and his awareness that his actions are wrong. The Hebrew 'wayyithchapes' (disguised himself) and 'wayyilbash begadim 'acherim' (put on other garments) indicate intentional concealment of identity. Approaching by night with only two companions, the king of Israel seeks forbidden knowledge while hiding from recognition. The irony is profound: Saul, who once stood among the prophets (1 Samuel 10:11), now cloaks himself to consult the dead.

Historical Context

Royal disguises appear elsewhere in Scripture (1 Kings 14:2, 22:30) when kings seek information or action they cannot pursue openly. Saul's nocturnal journey through or around enemy lines demonstrates the extremity of his desperation.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does it reveal when we must hide our pursuit of guidance from others?
2. How does disguise indicate internal awareness that our actions are wrong?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּתְחַפֵּי שׁ	וּלְבָשׁ	בְּגָדֵי יָם	אֲחֵרֵי יָם	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וְהָיָה
disguised	himself and put on	raiment	other		
H2664	H3847	H899	H312	H1980	H1931
וּשְׁנֵי י	אֲנָשִׁים	עִמּוֹ	וַיָּבֹאוּ	אֶל	הָאִשָּׁה
and two	men		with him and they came		to the woman
H8147	H582	H5973	H935	H413	H802
וְהָיָה	אֲנִי	לִי	בְּאֵזְבִּי	וְהָיָה	אֲנִי
and he said	I pray thee divine		unto me by the familiar spirit		
H559	H7080	H4994	H0	H178	
וְהָיָה	אֲנִי	אֲשֶׁר	אֲנִי	אֲנִי	אֲנִי
and bring me him up			and he said		
H5927	H0	H853	H834	H413	H559

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 8:19 (Spirit): And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?

1 Chronicles 10:13 (Spirit): So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it;

1 Kings 22:30 (Parallel theme): And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle.

2 Chronicles 35:22 (Parallel theme): Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo.

2 Chronicles 18:29 (Parallel theme): And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and will go to the battle; but put thou on thy robes. So the king of Israel disguised himself; and they went to the battle.

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