

1 Samuel 28:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?

Analysis

The medium's fearful response exposes the danger of her profession and the effectiveness of Saul's earlier purge. Her reference to what 'Saul hath done' uses language suggesting violent action ('hikrit,' cut off) against practitioners. Her accusation 'thou layest a snare for my life' reveals awareness that her activities carry a death sentence. This exchange creates dramatic tension: Saul seeks help from someone whose death he previously ordered, while she fears the one seeking her aid.

Historical Context

The death penalty for consulting spirits (Leviticus 20:27) was apparently enforced during Saul's reign. The woman's fear indicates real danger, not mere formality. Her survival suggests either remote location, community protection, or incomplete enforcement.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How do fear and self-preservation conflict with calling in dangerous times?
2. What ironies emerge when we seek help from those we have previously condemned?

Interlinear Text

אָתָּה הִנֵּה אֶל-יְהוָה בְּאָשָׁה וְתַאֲמִר
said And the woman H413 H2009 H859
H559 H802

אָשָׁר אַתָּה עָשָׂה שְׁאֵל אָשָׁר
unto him Behold thou knowest H853 H834 hath done what Saul H834
H3045 H6213 H7586

בְּדַעַת יְהוָה יְהִי תְּהִלָּה וְתַאֲבֵב וְתַחֲבֵר
how he hath cut off H853 those that have familiar spirits H853 and the wizards H3049
H3772 H178

מִתְנַקֵּשׁ שְׁאֵל מִן-אֶלְמָה אָתָּה הַלְמָה הַבָּא
H4480 out of the land H4100 H859 wherefore then layest thou a snare H5367
H776

לְמִתְנַפֵּשׁ בְּנַפְשִׁי
for my life to cause me to die H4191
H5315

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 28:3 (Spirit): Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.