

1 Samuel 29:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? should it not be with the heads of these men?

Analysis

The princes' anger and their reasoning reveal the fear underlying their suspicion. Their concern that David might become 'an adversary' (Hebrew: 'satan,' opponent, accuser) in battle reflects sound military judgment: a defector might re-defect at the crucial moment. The rhetorical question about how David might 'reconcile himself unto his master' (Hebrew: 'adonayw,' Saul as lord) suggests they understood the political reality better than Achish. The reference to 'the heads of these men' recalls David's trophies of Philistine heads, now potentially turned against them.

Historical Context

The Hebrew 'satan' here means adversary or opponent, not the later theological sense of Satan. The princes' fear that David might betray them at the battle's critical moment was strategically reasonable given his history and the stakes involved.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How do past reputations affect present trust, even when behavior has changed?
2. What wisdom exists in the concerns of those who distrust us?

Interlinear Text

לֹא יְאָמַרְוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים יְמִינְךָ ۚ

were wroth H5921 And the princes of the Philistines said H0

H7107

H8269

H6430

H559

H0

שְׁרִי

פְּלִשְׁתִּים

וַיֵּשֶׁב

אֶת

בָּאִישׁ

אֶל

And the princes of the Philistines return this fellow return H413

H8269

H6430

H7725

H376

H7725

H413

לֹא

הַפְּקִדָּת

שָׁם

to his place which thou hast appointed H8033

H4725

H834

which thou hast appointed H6485

H8033

H3808

לֹא כִּי הִיא יְרִיד

בְּמָלְכָם הָעֵמֶד כֵּן

לֹא כִּי הִיא יְרִיד

H1961

H0

him and let him not go down H3381

H5973

lest in the battle H4421

H4421

וְבַתְּהִרְאָה הַלְּשֹׁטֶן בְּמָלְכָם הָעֵמֶד כֵּן

he be an adversary H7854

lest in the battle H4421

H4100

to us for wherewith should he reconcile H7521

בְּאֶשְׁר אַל זֶה אֶדְנָה יְהוָה כָּל וְאֶתְהָבָבָה

H2088

H413

himself unto his master H113

H3808

should it not be with the heads H7218

בְּאֶשְׁר יְמִינְךָ בְּאֶשְׁר יְמִינְךָ

of these men H1992

H582

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 14:21 (Parallel theme): Moreover the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp from the country round about, even they also turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan.

1 Chronicles 12:19 (Parallel theme): And there fell some of Manasseh to David, when he came with the Philistines against Saul to battle: but they helped them not: for the lords of the Philistines upon advisement sent him away, saying, He will fall to his master Saul to the jeopardy of our heads.

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