

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

לוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים שָׂרֵי עַל יוֹ וַיִּקְצְפוּ ו
were wroth H5921 And the princes of the Philistines said H0
H7107 H8269 H6430 H559

אֶל וַיָּשָׁב הָאִישׁ אֶת וַיָּשָׁב פְּלִשְׁתִּים שָׂרֵי
And the princes of the Philistines return H853 this fellow return H413
H8269 H6430 H7725 H376 H7725

וְלֹא שָׁם הַפְּקֻדָּה אֲשֶׁר מְקוֹמוֹ
to his place H834 which thou hast appointed H8033 H3808
H4725 H6485

לֵךְ נָוּ יִהְיֶה וְלֹא בַּמִּלְחָמָה עִמָּנוּ יֵרֵד
him and let him not go down H5973 lest in the battle H3808 H1961 H0
H3381 H4421

וַיִּתְרַצֵּה וַיִּבְקַח הַבַּמִּלְחָמָה לִשְׂטָן
he be an adversary lest in the battle H4100 to us for wherewith should he reconcile
H7854 H4421 H7521

בְּרֹאשֵׁי הֵל וְאֵדְנָיו אֶל זֶה
himself unto his master H3808 should it not be with the heads
H2088 H413 H113 H7218

הָהֵם: הָאֲנָשִׁים יִם
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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