

1 Samuel 29:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God: notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle.

Analysis

Achish's comparison of David to 'an angel of God' (Hebrew: 'kemal'ak elohim') ironically uses divine vocabulary to describe someone whose primary activity has been deception. The Philistine king's complete confidence in David's goodness reveals how thoroughly the deception succeeded. Yet the phrase also carries theological weight: David has indeed functioned as a divine messenger, carrying out Israel's mandate against Amalekites and other enemies while appearing to serve Philistia. God's providence works through even compromised circumstances.

Historical Context

The phrase 'angel of God' in ancient Near Eastern context could mean divine messenger or simply someone exceptionally good. Achish's use of it expresses highest confidence in David's character and loyalty.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How do you feel when others' high estimation of you is based on incomplete information?
2. What does it mean that God's purposes can work through compromised human actions?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּעַן	אָכִישׁ	אָמַר ו	אֶל	דָּוִד	יָדַעְתִּי	כִּי	טוֹב
answered	And Achish	and said	H413	to David	I know	H3588	that thou art good
H6030	H397	H559		H1732	H3045		H2896
הָאֵת	בְּעֵינַי	כַּמְלָאֵךְ	אֱלֹהֵי יָם	אַתָּה	שָׂרֵי		
H859	in my sight	as an angel	of God	H389	notwithstanding the princes		
	H5869	H4397	H430		H8269		
פְּלִשְׁתִּים	אָמַר ו	לֹא	יַעֲלֶה	עִמָּנוּ	בַּמִּלְחָמָה		
of the Philistines	and said	H3808	He shall not go up	H5973	with us to the battle		
H6430	H559		H5927		H4421		

Additional Cross-References

2 Samuel 14:17 (Good): Then thine handmaid said, The word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable: for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad: therefore the LORD thy God will be with thee.

2 Samuel 14:20 (References God): To fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing: and my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth.

2 Samuel 19:27 (Good): And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king is as an angel of God: do therefore what is good in thine eyes.

Galatians 4:14 (References God): And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.

1 Samuel 29:4 (Parallel theme): 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?

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