

1 Samuel 30:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way.

Analysis

The Amalekites' unusual restraint in taking captives rather than killing presents a theological puzzle. The Hebrew 'lo hemitu' (they did not kill) indicates deliberate decision. This mercy may reflect slave-trade economics (living captives were valuable) or divine providence preserving lives for rescue. The phrase 'carried them away' (Hebrew: 'wayyinhagu') suggests forced march with captives, including women and children. What appeared as disaster contained the seeds of restoration.

Historical Context

The slave trade was significant in the ancient Near East. Living captives, especially women and children, could be sold in Egyptian or Arabian markets. The Amalekites' commercial motivations inadvertently preserved the families for rescue.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. When has apparent disaster contained hidden provisions for recovery?
2. How do even enemies' self-interested choices sometimes serve God's protective purposes?

Interlinear Text

וְשָׁב וְ	אֶת	הַנָּשִׁים	אֲשֶׁר	בָּהּ	מִקָּטָן	וְעַד
captives	H853	And had taken the women	H834	H0	or small	H5704
H7617		H802			H6996	
גָּדוֹל	לֹא	הָיָה יָדוֹ	אֵין	וְנָהֲגוּ		
either great	H3808	that were therein they slew	not any	but carried them away		
H1419		H4191	H376	H5090		
וְלֹכֶם:	לְדִרְכָּם:					
H1980	on their way					
	H1870					

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 27:11 (Parallel theme): And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring tidings to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David, and so will be his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines.