

1 Samuel 9:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here?

Analysis

And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here?

The encounter with young women drawing water follows a biblical pattern of significant meetings at wells, though here the element is subtle rather than romantic (cf. Genesis 24; 29; Exodus 2). Their 'going up' (olim) to the city built on a hill reflects both geography and spiritual symbolism, as ascent often accompanies approach to sacred space or divine encounter. The maidens' presence at the water source indicates late afternoon, the customary time for this daily task. Saul's question 'Is the seer here?' uses the older term discussed in verse 9, suggesting either his rural dialect or the term's continued common usage despite the narrator's later note. These young women, like the servant earlier, become unwitting instruments of providence, positioned at precisely the right moment to direct Israel's future king toward his anointing.

Historical Context

Drawing water was primarily women's work, performed in late afternoon when temperatures cooled. Wells and springs were social gathering points where news spread and strangers could make inquiries. The hill-city topography was common in ancient Israel, with settlements built on elevated ground for defensive purposes and water sources typically located at lower elevations.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How do ordinary people in our daily encounters sometimes serve as divine messengers without knowing it?
2. What does the biblical pattern of significant encounters at water sources suggest about God's use of common routines?

Interlinear Text

וְהָמָה H1992	עָלִים H5927	בְּמַעַל הַ H4608	הָעִיר H5892	וְהָמָה H1992	מָצְאוּ H4672
And as they went up	the hill	to the city	they found		
נָעֲרֹת H5291	יֹצְאוֹת H3318	לְשֹׂא בִ H7579	מַיִם H4325	וַיֹּאמְרוּ H559	לָהֶן H0
young maidens	going out	to draw	water	and said	unto them Is
					H3426
הַרְאָהּ H2088	בֶּן הַ H7200				
the seer					

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 24:11 (Parallel theme): And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.

Exodus 2:16 (Parallel theme): Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock.

