

1 Samuel 9:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is.

Analysis

Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is.

Dramatic irony pervades this verse: Saul asks Samuel about Samuel's own location, unaware that he is speaking to the very prophet he seeks. His polite request, 'Tell me, I pray thee' (haggidah-na li), shows proper deference to a stranger. The setting in 'the gate' (sha'ar) places this pivotal conversation in the most public space of the city, though no one yet understands its significance. Saul's question about 'the seer's house' indicates he expected a private consultation, not realizing he would be invited to a public feast as the guest of honor. The contrast between what Saul seeks (information about donkeys) and what he will receive (the kingdom of Israel) exemplifies how God's answers infinitely exceed our requests. This moment of unknowing approach toward destiny resonates with every believer's experience of seeking God for small matters while He prepares larger purposes.

Historical Context

The city gate area typically included chambers or recesses where legal proceedings and official business were conducted. Saul's assumption that the seer would have a house for consultations reflects the common practice of prophets maintaining a residence where people could seek counsel. Samuel's circuit ministry (7:16-17) meant he was not always available in one location.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. When have you sought God for one thing and received something far greater?
2. How does Saul's unawareness of Samuel's identity parallel our sometimes limited perception of how God is working?

Interlinear Text

וְשָׁאַלְתָּהּ	שְׁמֹואֵל	בַּתְּוָרֵךְ	בַּעַד	וְיִמְרָא	וְיִמְרָא	וְיִמְרָא
drew near	Then Saul	H853	to Samuel	in	the gate	and said
H5066	H7586		H8050	H8432	H8179	H559
לְאֵין	אֵין	הַיִתְבָּאֵן	בְּבֵית	בְּבֵית	בְּבֵית	Tell
H4994	H0	me I pray thee where	H2088	house	the seer's	H5046
		H335		H1004	H7200	

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