

1 Samuel 9:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that was with him, Come, and let us return; lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us.

Analysis

And when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that was with him, Come, and let us return; lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us.

Saul's words reveal a son's concern for his father's anxiety, showing filial piety that was highly valued in Israelite culture. The land of Zuph holds special significance as the ancestral territory of Samuel's family (1:1). Thus Saul's decision to abandon the search brings him precisely to where God intended. His reasoning demonstrates practical wisdom: prolonged absence would cause his father to worry more about his son than the lost animals. The Hebrew *da'ag* ('take thought' or 'be anxious') suggests genuine emotional concern. Ironically, Saul's consideration for his father's peace of mind leads him to the very place where his family's future would be forever changed. This intersection of human decision and divine sovereignty illustrates how God weaves our choices into His predetermined plan without violating our moral agency.

Historical Context

The land of Zuph was associated with Samuel's Levitical ancestry through Zuph/Zophai (1 Chronicles 6:26, 35). This region in the hill country of Ephraim contained Ramah, Samuel's home and prophetic base. The servant's subsequent

knowledge of a 'man of God' in this city suggests Samuel's reputation had spread throughout the region.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does honoring parents and family responsibilities sometimes lead to unexpected divine appointments?
2. What balance should we strike between persistent effort and knowing when to change course?

Interlinear Text

הַ מִּתְּהָ	בְּ אֹ	בְּ אֶצְ	צַ וְ	אָמָר וְשָׁאַלְ
H1992	And when they were come	to the land	of Zuph	Saul said
	H935	H776	H6689	H7586 H559
לְמַעַרְ	לְכָה עַמְ	וְאַשְׁר	וְנִשְׁׁ וְבָהָ	לִחְזַק לְגַ
to his servant	H834	H5973	H1980	and let us return
				H6435 H2308
אָבִ	מִלְ	בְּאָתְנָ וְתָ	וְאַדְ	לְנָ
lest my father	H4480	caring for the asses	and take thought	H0
		H860	H1672	

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 10:2 (Parallel theme): When thou art departed from me to day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and,

lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son?

1 Samuel 1:1 (Parallel theme): Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite:

Luke 12:11 (Parallel theme): And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say:

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