

Acts 12:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.

Analysis

And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. Israel's demand for king demonstrates human rejection of divine rule, yet God graciously provides while warning against idolizing human leadership.

Historical Context

They desired king (1 Samuel 8) represented rejecting God's direct rule. God gave Saul despite warning of kingship's costs. Saul's 40-year reign (approximate, some scholars suggest shorter) ended in failure. The irony—speaker named Saul/Paul (same Hebrew name) described original King Saul's failure. Around 48 CE, this reminded hearers that human leadership repeatedly disappoints, preparing for presentation of Jesus as perfect King.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What does demanding king reveal about human preference for visible leadership?
2. How does God graciously provide even when motives are wrong?
3. In what ways do human leaders inevitably disappoint?
4. Why include failed king in gospel sermon?
5. What does Saul's failure prepare hearers to understand about need for perfect King?

Interlinear Text

τακτῇ δὲ ἡμέρᾳ ὁ Ἡρώδης ἐνδυσάμενος ἐσθῆτα
upon a set And day G3588 Herod arrayed apparel
G5002 G1161 G2250 G2264 G1746 G2066

βασιλικὴν καὶ καθίσας ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος ἐδημηγόρει
in royal and sat upon throne made an oration
G937 G2532 G2523 G1909 G3588 G968 G1215

πρὸς αὐτούς

unto his
G4314 G846

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