

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	ἡμέρα	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	G3588	throne	made an oration
G937	G2532	G2523	G1909		G968	G1215
πρὸς	αὐτούς					
unto	his					
G4314	G846					