

1 Samuel 18:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

Analysis

And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

The bride-price of 'an hundred foreskins of the Philistines' was designed as a death sentence. Saul expected David to die attempting to collect such a gruesome dowry. The demand combined ritual humiliation of enemies with maximum danger to David. Yet what Saul intended for death became testimony to God's protection, as David returned with double the requirement (v.27).

Historical Context

Bride-prices were customary in ancient Near Eastern marriages. Extraordinary requirements sometimes tested the groom's devotion or capability. Collecting enemy foreskins proved kills while humiliating uncircumcised opponents.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. When have impossible demands become opportunities for God to demonstrate His power?
2. What does David's excess (200 instead of 100) teach about whole-hearted response to challenges?

Interlinear Text

תֹּאמַר ו	וְשָׂא וְלִי	כֹּה	תֹּאמַר ו	דָּוִד	אֵין	חֵפְץ
Thus shall ye say	And Saul	H3541	Thus shall ye say	to David	H369	desireth
H559	H7586		H559	H1732		H2656
הַמֶּלֶךְ	בְּמִדְּוָי	כִּי	בְּמִמָּוָה	עֵרְלֹת	פְּלִשְׁתִּים:	
The king	not any dowry	H3588	but an hundred	foreskins	of the Philistines	
H4428	H4119		H3967	H6190	H6430	
לְהִנָּקֵם	בְּאֹיְבָי	הַמֶּלֶךְ	וְשָׂא וְלִי	חָשַׁב	לִהֲפֹל	אֶת
to be avenged	enemies	The king	And Saul	thought	fall	H853
H5358	H341	H4428	H7586	H2803	H5307	H1732
דָּוִד	פְּלִשְׁתִּים:	בְּיָד				
to David	of the Philistines	by the hand				
H1732	H6430	H3027				

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 34:12 (Parallel theme): Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife.

1 Samuel 18:17 (References David): And Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife: only be thou valiant for me, and fight the LORD'S battles. For Saul said, Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.

1 Samuel 14:24 (Parallel theme): And the men of Israel were distressed that day: for Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted any food.

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