

1 Samuel 21:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

Analysis

And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

The Philistine servants' recognition exposes David's perilous position. Their reference to the victory song (first recorded in 18:7) shows how David's fame had spread even to Israel's enemies. The phrase 'king of the land' (Hebrew 'melek ha'aretz') reveals the Philistines perceived David's true significance before Israel formally acknowledged it. Their knowledge of Hebrew songs and dances indicates significant cultural exchange between the peoples despite ongoing warfare. David's reputation, which should have brought honor, now threatened his life—demonstrating how the same qualities that elevate us can also endanger us in hostile contexts.

Historical Context

The Philistines maintained extensive intelligence about Israel's leadership and military heroes. Victory songs celebrating military achievements were common throughout the ancient Near East and would have been known to neighboring peoples through various channels.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How has your reputation or past achievements created unexpected challenges?
2. What does the Philistines' recognition of David teach about how God's work becomes visible even to unbelievers?

Interlinear Text

לֵאמֹר פָּלוֹא אֶל יְהוָה
said And the servants of Achish H413 H3808 one to another of him
H559 H5650 H397 H2088 H2088

לֵאמֹר פָּלוֹא בְּלִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
and David the king of the land H3808 one to another of him did they not sing
H1732 H4428 H776 H2088 H6030

לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה שָׁאול בְּמַחְלֹות
in dances said hath slain Saul his thousands and David
H4246 H559 H5221 H7586 H505 H1732

בְּרַבְבָּתָו:
his ten thousands
H7233

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 29:5 (References David): Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

1 Samuel 16:1 (Kingdom): And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

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