

1 Samuel 21:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?

Analysis

Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?

Achish's rhetorical questions complete David's deliverance through dismissal. The Hebrew 'chaser meshugga'im' (lacking madmen) sarcastically implies he already has enough troubled individuals around him. His refusal to allow David into his 'house' (royal court) effectively banished the fugitive from Philistine territory. The double reference to 'this fellow' (Hebrew 'zeh') expresses contempt—yet this contempt saved David's life. Psalm 34's superscription connects it to this event, where David praises God: 'I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.' What appeared as degrading self-abasement became the vehicle of divine deliverance.

Historical Context

Ancient royal courts carefully controlled access to the king's presence. Achish's rejection meant David would be expelled from Gath, removing the immediate threat while leaving him homeless. This began David's wilderness wandering period.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does Psalm 34, written after this event, reshape your understanding of this passage?
2. When has rejection or dismissal by others actually been God's means of protection?

Interlinear Text

הָסֵר	עַל־הַשָּׂמֵן	אֶנִּי	כִּי	יְבֹא	אֶת־
Have I need	of mad men	H589	H3588	in my presence shall this fellow come	H853
H2638	H7696			H935	
הָסֵר	עַל־הַשָּׂמֵן	עַל־יְ	הָסֵר	יְבֹא	אֶת־
H2088	of mad men	H5921	H2088	in my presence shall this fellow come	H413
	H7696			H935	
בֵּיתִי:					
into my house					
H1004					