

1 Samuel 25:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?

Analysis

Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?

Nabal's refusal compounds insult with selfishness. The emphatic 'my bread, my water, my flesh' (Hebrew possessive repetition) claims absolute ownership without recognition of divine provision. His rhetorical question assumes the answer 'no'—he will not share what he considers exclusively his. The phrase 'men whom I know not whence they be' continues the pretense of ignorance while insulting David's legitimacy. Nabal's focus on 'my shearers' prioritizes hired workers over those who protected his entire operation. This response embodies the fool's perspective: viewing wealth as personal achievement to be hoarded rather than divine trust to be stewarded.

Historical Context

The shearing feast required significant food preparation. Nabal's claim that provisions were exclusively for his workers ignored the cultural expectation of generosity during festive seasons. His possessive language ('my bread, my water') contradicted the covenantal understanding that all possessions ultimately belong to God.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Nabal's possessive language reflect a foolish understanding of wealth?
2. What does his refusal teach about the dangers of viewing blessings as personal achievements?

Interlinear Text

וְלָקַחְתִּי י' Shall I then take H3947	אֶת H853	לֶחְמִי my bread H3899	וְאֶת H853	מִיַּי and my water H4325	וְאֶת H853	טֶבֶתִּי י' and my flesh H2878
אֲשֶׁר H834	טֶבַע חַיִּי that I have killed H2873	לְגִזְזִי י' for my shearers H1494	וְנָתַתִּי and give H5414	לְאֲנָשֵׁי יָם H376	אֲשֶׁר H834	לֹא H3808
יֵד עֲתִי whom I know H3045	אֵי י' H335	מִזֶּה H2088	הַמָּה: H1992			

Additional Cross-References

Judges 8:6 (Parallel theme): And the princes of Succoth said, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thine army?

Galatians 6:10 (Parallel theme): As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

