

1 Samuel 25:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep.

Analysis

They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep.

The metaphor 'wall' (Hebrew 'chomah') powerfully describes David's protection. Walls provided security for cities; David's men provided equivalent protection in open fields. The phrase 'by night and day' indicates continuous vigilance—shepherds faced threats at all hours. 'All the while' (kol yemei) emphasizes the extended duration of this protection. This testimony from Nabal's own servant thoroughly validates David's request: real, substantial service had been rendered without request for payment until now. The protective 'wall' that guarded Nabal's flocks contrasts with the military force now coming to destroy his house.

Historical Context

Night was particularly dangerous for shepherds, as predators and thieves exploited darkness. David's men providing round-the-clock protection represented significant commitment. The 'wall' metaphor was especially meaningful in a culture where city walls meant survival.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How did David's protection of Nabal's shepherds demonstrate his character despite his outlaw status?
2. What does this 'wall' imagery teach about the kind of protection godly leaders provide?

Interlinear Text

חֹמֶה	כִּי ו	עַל יָדוֹ	גַּם	לַיְלָה	גַּם	יוֹמָם	כָּל
They were a wall	H1961	H5921	H1571	unto us both by night	H1571	and day	H3605
H2346				H3915		H3119	
יְמֵי	הַיּוֹתָנוּ	עִמָּם	רַעֲיָם	הַצֹּאן:			
all the while	H1961	H5973	we were with them keeping	the sheep			
H3117			H7462	H6629			

Additional Cross-References

Job 1:10 (Parallel theme): Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

Exodus 14:22 (Parallel theme): And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

Zechariah 2:5 (Parallel theme): For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.

