

1 Samuel 25:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him: and he hath requited me evil for good.

Analysis

Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him: and he hath requited me evil for good.

David's bitter reflection reveals his mindset before meeting Abigail. The Hebrew 'akh lasheker' (surely in vain/for nothing) expresses frustration that his protection proved worthless. His summary—"nothing was missed" yet "he hath requited me evil for good"—accurately describes the injustice. The phrase "this fellow" (Hebrew 'zeh') conveys contempt matching Nabal's own dismissive language. David's reasoning, while justified regarding the facts, was leading toward sinful response. His oath (v. 22) would compound emotional reasoning with binding commitment to violence. This interior monologue explains why David's response exceeded Nabal's offense—perceived betrayal ignited deeper anger than mere refusal.

Historical Context

David's protection of Nabal's property represented real investment of time and resources. The contrast between his generous service and Nabal's insulting refusal created legitimate grievance. However, David's emotional response was disproportionate to the offense.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does justified grievance sometimes lead to unjustified responses?
2. What warning does David's bitter reflection offer about nursing anger?

Interlinear Text

אֲשֶׁר	כִּל	אָתָּה	שְׁמַם	רְתִּיעִ	לֹשֶׁן	קָרָא	אֶת	אָמַר	רַא	זֶה	דָּבָר
Now David	had said	H389	Surely in vain	H853	have I kept	H3605					H834
H1732	H559		H8267		H8104						
לֵזָה											
all that this	fellow hath in the wilderness	H3808	בְּמִדְבָּר	Iلֹא	נִפְגַּד	H3605	מִכֶּל	אֲשֶׁר	לֵזָה	H0	
H2088	H4057				H6485						
מִאָה וָמָה			נִשְׁבַּע				רָע	לֵזָה			
so that nothing	of all that pertained unto him and he hath requited	H3972		H7725		H0	me evil				H7451
טוֹבָה:	תְּחִתָּה										
H8478	for good	H2896									

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 17:13 (Evil): Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house.

Ephesians 4:26 (Parallel theme): Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

Ephesians 4:31 (Evil): Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

Romans 12:21 (Evil): Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

1 Thessalonians 5:15 (Evil): See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

1 Peter 3:17 (Evil): For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org