

1 Samuel 25:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground,

Analysis

And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground,

Abigail's approach demonstrates complete humility. The Hebrew 'vatemaher' (hasted) continues her urgent action. 'Lighted off the ass' (vattired) describes quick dismount from her riding position—she would not address David from superior elevation. Her prostration 'on her face' (al paneyha) with bowing 'to the ground' (artsah) represents the posture of supplication before royalty. Though David was an outlaw, Abigail recognized his true status and approached accordingly. This physical humility prefaced her verbal appeal. Her posture communicated what her words would argue: David deserved the honor Nabal had denied, and she came to give it.

Historical Context

Prostration before persons of higher status was standard ancient Near Eastern protocol. Abigail's posture acknowledged David's authority despite his fugitive status. The combination of haste, dismounting, and prostration demonstrated maximal respect.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does physical posture communicate heart attitude in approaching others?
2. What does Abigail's recognition of David's true status teach about spiritual discernment?

Interlinear Text

מַעַל וַיַּעֲבֹד אֲבִיגַיִל אֶת־דָּוִיד וַיַּתְּמַהַר רַא

saw **And when Abigail** H853 **David** H1732 **she hasted** and lighted off H5921

H7200 H26 H4116 H3381

וַיַּתְּשַׂת חֹזֶק יְפֵן לְאַפִּי וַיַּתְּפֵל בְּפֶתַח־דָּוִיד עַל־פְּנֵי־יְהוָה וַיַּעֲשֶׂה

the ass **and fell** before **David** H5921 **on her face** and bowed H7812

H2543 H5307 H639 H1732 H6440 H7812

אֶצְבָּע:

herself to the ground

H776

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 20:41 (References David): And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded.

Joshua 15:18 (Light): And it came to pass, as she came unto him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wouldest thou?

Judges 1:14 (Light): And it came to pass, when she came to him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted from off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou?

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org