

1 Samuel 25:36

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light.

Analysis

And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light.

The scene shifts to reveal Nabal's oblivious self-indulgence. The Hebrew 'mishteh kebishteh melekh' (feast like a king's feast) ironically describes the fool playing royalty while the true king's representative just left. His 'merry heart' (lev tov) from drunkenness contrasts with the deadly danger he narrowly escaped. The phrase 'very drunken' (shikor me'od) explains Abigail's silence—he was incapable of comprehending the situation. Her wisdom continued: 'told him nothing' until he could understand. The irony intensifies: Nabal feasted in kingly fashion, unaware that four hundred armed men had been diverted from destroying his house. His drunken revelry occurred during his closest approach to death.

Historical Context

Shearing feasts were occasions for generous celebration. Nabal's feast 'like a king's' demonstrated his wealth and perhaps his pretensions. His drunkenness

rendered him incapable of rational conversation, explaining Abigail's waiting until morning.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does Nabal's oblivious feasting reveal about foolish self-confidence?
2. How does irony in this scene emphasize the contrast between wisdom and folly?

Interlinear Text

כִּמְשִׁתְ הַ נְּבָל אֶל אֶבְיָג יָלוּ וְתַבְ אַ
and behold he held a feast
H4960
and Nabal's
H2009
and Abigail
H413
came
H935

ט וּבְ נְבָל יָלְבָד כִּמְשִׁתְ הַ בָּבִית וְ
was merry and Nabal's
H2896
heart
H3820
of a king
H4428
and behold he held a feast
H4960
in his house
H1004

וְלֹא מְאֹד שָׁכְרָה עַד שָׁכְרָה וְהַ וְאַעֲלֵה
H3808
within him for he was very
H3966
drunken
H5704
H7910
H1931
H5921

אֲרָא עַד יְגַד וְלֹא קָטָה לְבָרְאַת הַגִּדְהָ
light or more less him nothing told her
H216
H5704
H1419
H6996
H1697
H0
wherefore she told
H5046

בְּקָרָה:
until the morning
H1242

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 20:1 (Parallel theme): Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

1 Samuel 25:19 (Parallel theme): And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal.

2 Samuel 13:23 (Kingdom): And it came to pass after two full years, that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal-hazor, which is beside Ephraim: and Absalom invited all the king's sons.

2 Samuel 13:28 (Parallel theme): Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant.

Romans 13:13 (Parallel theme): Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

Matthew 10:16 (Parallel theme): Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.
