

1 Samuel 25:41

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And she arose, and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.

Analysis

And she arose, and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.

Abigail's response demonstrates continued humility despite her elevation. Her prostration 'on her face to the earth' echoes her earlier approach to David (v. 23). Her self-designation—'handmaid' (amah) willing to serve as 'servant' (shifchah) washing feet—employs the lowest terminology for female service. Foot-washing was typically slave work; Abigail offers to serve even David's servants. This humble acceptance contrasts dramatically with Nabal's arrogant refusals. The woman of 'good understanding' (v. 3) demonstrated that wisdom includes humility. Her excessive deference may reflect genuine character or formal response to royal proposal—likely both.

Historical Context

Foot-washing was among the lowliest household tasks, typically assigned to slaves. Abigail's offer to perform this service for David's servants indicated extreme humility. Her language employed maximum self-deprecation appropriate for accepting royal favor.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Abigail's humble response model appropriate reception of honor?
2. What does her willingness to serve even David's servants teach about true greatness?

Interlinear Text

הִנֵּה הִנֵּה אָמַר יְהִי קָם
And she arose and bowed herself on her face to the earth and said H2009
H6965 H7812 H639 H776 H559

עֲבָד יְהִי לְשִׁפְט הַלְּחֵץ בְּגַל לְשִׁפְט הַלְּחֵץ
Behold let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants H5650
H519 H8198 H7364 H7272

אֶלְעָנָי
of my lord
H113

Additional Cross-References

1 Timothy 5:10 (Parallel theme): Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

Ruth 2:10 (Parallel theme): Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?

Proverbs 18:12 (Parallel theme): Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.

Proverbs 15:33 (References Lord): The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.

Genesis 18:4 (Parallel theme): Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:

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