

1 Chronicles 10:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa.

Analysis

Theological Analysis: This passage falls within the section on Saul's death and divine judgment. The Hebrew term **לַעֲלֹל** (ma'al) - to act unfaithfully is theologically significant here, pointing to Divine judgment on disobedience. The Chronicler's narrative, while paralleling Samuel-Kings in places, offers a distinct theological perspective emphasizing temple worship, Levitical service, and covenant faithfulness.

Chronicles presents David not primarily as warrior-king but as worship organizer and temple planner. This verse contributes to that portrait by highlighting the spiritual dimensions of Israel's national life. The text demonstrates that true prosperity comes through proper worship and covenant obedience rather than merely military or political success.

Doctrinally, this passage teaches about Divine judgment on disobedience. Cross-references throughout Chronicles connect David's reign to the broader redemptive narrative, showing how God's covenant promises advance through faithful human leadership while ultimately depending on divine grace and power. The messianic implications are profound: Contrast between failed human kingship and Christ's perfect reign.

Historical Context

Historical Background: This section describes events from David's reign (c. 1010-970 BCE) but was written centuries later during the Persian period (c. 450-400 BCE). The Chronicler's selectivity in retelling David's story serves his theological purposes—he omits David's sins (Bathsheba, Absalom's rebellion) while emphasizing David's worship reforms and temple preparations.

The historical setting of Saul's death and divine judgment occurred during Israel's united monarchy, when the nation reached its territorial and political zenith. Archaeological evidence from this period shows significant building projects and administrative development. However, the Chronicler writes for a much smaller, struggling post-exilic community, using David's golden age to inspire hope for restoration.

Ancient Near Eastern parallels show that temple construction and royal sponsorship of worship were common across cultures. However, Israel's understanding of worship centered on covenant relationship with the one true God rather than manipulation of capricious deities. This theological distinctiveness shapes the Chronicler's presentation.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does this verse's emphasis on Divine judgment on disobedience challenge or affirm your current spiritual priorities and practices?
2. What does Contrast between failed human kingship and Christ's perfect reign teach you about Jesus Christ and His redemptive work?
3. In what practical ways can you apply the principles of covenant faithfulness and proper worship demonstrated in this passage?

Interlinear Text

פְּלִשְׁתִּים	נִלְחַם וְ	יִשְׂרָאֵל	וַיָּנָס	אִישׁ	יִשְׂרָאֵל
Now the Philistines	fought	against Israel	fled	and the men	against Israel
H6430	H3898	H3478	H5127	H376	H3478
מִפְּנֵי	פְּלִשְׁתִּים	וַפָּל וְ	חָלָל יָמָם	בְּהָר	גִּלְבֹּעַ:
from before	Now the Philistines	and fell down	slain	in mount	Gilboa
H6440	H6430	H5307	H2491	H2022	H1533

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 10:8 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen in mount Gilboa.