

1 Chronicles 19:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when the Syrians saw that they were put to the worse before Israel, they sent messengers, and drew forth the Syrians that were beyond the river: and Shophach the captain of the host of Hadarezer went before them.

Analysis

Theological Analysis: This passage falls within the section on Ammonite war - David's continued conquests. The Hebrew term מלחמה (milchamah) - war/battle is theologically significant here, pointing to God fights for His people. 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 God fights for His people. 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: Spiritual warfare and Christ's triumph.

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 Ammonite war - David's continued conquests 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

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does this verse's emphasis on God fights for His people challenge or affirm your current spiritual priorities and practices?

2. What does Spiritual warfare and Christ's triumph 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

וַיַּרְא	אֶת	כִּי	תִּגְפֹּחַ	לִפְנֵיכֶם:
saw	And when the Syrians	H3588	that they were put to the worse	before
H7200	H758		H5062	H6440
יִשְׂרָאֵל	מֶלֶךְ	יְשַׁלְּחוּ	אֶת	אֶת
Israel	they sent	messengers	and drew forth	And when the Syrians
H3478	H7971	H4397	H3318	H758
אֲשֶׁר	מֵעַד	רָבָבָה	וְשׁוֹפָחַ	אֶבֶן אֶת
H834	that were beyond	the river	and Shophach	the captain of the host
	H5676	H5104	H7780	H6635
בְּדִין	זֶה	לִפְנֵיכֶם:		
of Hadarezer	before			
H1928	H6440			

Additional Cross-References

2 Samuel 10:16 (Parallel theme): And Hadarezer sent, and brought out the Syrians that were beyond the river: and they came to Helam; and Shobach the captain of the host of Hadarezer went before them.