

1 Chronicles 20:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he brought out the people that were in it, and cut them with saws, and with harrows of iron, and with axes. Even so dealt David with all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

Analysis

Theological Analysis: This passage falls within the section on Final conquests and giant slayers. The Hebrew term רָפָה (rapha) - giant/Rephaim is theologically significant here, pointing to God enables victory over impossible odds. 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 enables victory over impossible odds. 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: Christ defeats spiritual giants (powers and principalities).

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 Final conquests and giant slayers 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

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does this verse's emphasis on God enables victory over impossible odds challenge or affirm your current spiritual priorities and practices?
2. What does Christ defeats spiritual giants (powers and principalities) 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

וְאֵת H853	הָעָם and all the people H5971	אֲשֶׁר H834	בָּהּ H0	הוֹצִיא And he brought out H3318	וְיָשַׁר that were in it and cut H7787
וּבַמִּגֵּר וְ and with axes H4050	וּבַחֲרִיצֵי י and with harrows H2757	הַבִּרְזָל of iron H1270	וּבַמִּגֵּר וְ and with axes H4050	וְכֵן H3651	יַעֲשֶׂה ה Even so dealt H6213
וְדָוִד י And David H1732	לְכָל ל H3605	עָרֵי י with all the cities H5892	בְּנֵי of the children H1121	עַמּוֹן of Ammon H5983	וַיָּשָׁב returned H7725
וְדָוִד י And David H1732	וְכָל H3605	הָעָם and all the people H5971	יְרוּשָׁלַם: to Jerusalem H3389		

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