

1 Chronicles 21:30

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But David could not go before it to enquire of God: for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

Analysis

Theological Analysis: This passage falls within the section on David's census and divine judgment. The Hebrew term חַטָּא (chet) - sin/offense is theologically significant here, pointing to Even godly leaders sin and face consequences. 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 Even godly leaders sin and face consequences. 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 bears judgment for sin on our behalf.

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 David's census 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

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does this verse's emphasis on Even godly leaders sin and face consequences challenge or affirm your current spiritual priorities and practices?

