

1 Chronicles 5:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For there fell down many slain, because the war was of God.
And they dwelt in their steads until the captivity.

Analysis

Genealogical Significance: This verse appears within the Trans-Jordanian tribes and their failures section of Chronicles' genealogical framework. The Hebrew term מַאֲל (ma'al) - unfaithfulness/treachery is central to understanding this passage's purpose. The Chronicler, writing to post-exilic Israel (c. 450-400 BCE), uses these genealogies not merely as historical records but as theological statements about covenant continuity and divine faithfulness.

The genealogical structure serves multiple purposes:

1. establishing Israel's connection to God's creation plan from Adam
2. legitimizing post-exilic community's claim to covenant promises
3. emphasizing Judah and Levi's special roles in God's redemptive plan,
4. demonstrating that despite exile, God's covenant purposes continue.

The selection and arrangement of names is intentional, highlighting Consequences of covenant unfaithfulness.

Chronicles diverges from Genesis and Samuel-Kings in its genealogical presentation, reflecting the Chronicler's distinct theological agenda. Where earlier texts focus on narrative history, Chronicles emphasizes continuity, legitimacy, and hope for restoration. This verse contributes to the larger argument that the post-exilic community is the rightful heir of God's ancient covenant promises.

Historical Context

Post-Exilic Context: The Chronicler wrote during the Persian period (450-400 BCE) to a community returned from Babylonian exile, struggling with identity and purpose. These genealogies answered crucial questions: Who are we? What is our relationship to ancient Israel? Do God's promises still apply to us?

The historical setting influences the text's emphasis on Trans-Jordanian tribes: Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. Ancient Near Eastern cultures valued genealogies for establishing land rights, royal legitimacy, and tribal identity. Chronicles' genealogies served similar functions while adding theological depth. The inclusion of specific names and details reflects the author's access to temple archives, royal records, and earlier biblical texts.

Archaeological evidence from Persian-period Judah shows a small, struggling community centered around Jerusalem and the rebuilt temple. The genealogies reinforced their connection to the glorious past and provided hope for future restoration through God's covenant faithfulness.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does understanding genealogies as theological statements rather than mere historical records change your reading of Chronicles and other biblical genealogies?
2. What does this verse teach about God's faithfulness across generations, and how does that apply to your own family's spiritual legacy?
3. How does the consequences of covenant unfaithfulness connect to the New Testament revelation of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of Old Testament promises?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	חָלַל יָם	רַבִּים	נָפַל לוֹ	כִּי	מִמֶּלְכָּהּ יָם	הַמִּלְחָמָה הַ
H3588	slain	down many	For there fell	H3588	was of God	because the war
	H2491	H7227	H5307		H430	H4421
וַיָּשֻׁבוּ	תַּחְתֵּיהֶם	עַד	הַגָּלָה:			
And they dwelt			in their steads until the captivity			
H3427	H8478	H5704	H1473			

Additional Cross-References

2 Chronicles 32:8 (References God): With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

Romans 8:31 (References God): What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

Joshua 23:10 (References God): One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you.

2 Kings 17:6 (Parallel theme): In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

2 Kings 15:29 (Parallel theme): In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria.