

1 Samuel 11:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel.

Analysis

And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel.

Nahash's demand to gouge out every right eye served dual purposes: marking them permanently as conquered vassals and rendering them militarily useless, since ancient warriors held shields with their left hands, covering the left eye while aiming with the right. His intent to bring 'reproach upon all Israel' reveals this was not merely local aggression but a calculated assault on the covenant community's honor and their God's reputation. The Hebrew word cherpah (reproach) carries connotations of spiritual disgrace.

Historical Context

Eye-gouging was practiced by various ancient Near Eastern peoples as a form of punishment and subjugation. The Philistines would later blind Samson (Judges 16:21). Such mutilation served as a permanent, visible reminder of defeat and shame.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 – Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 – God is love

Study Questions

1. How do enemies of the faith today seek to 'blind' believers and bring reproach upon God's people?
 2. What does Nahash's cruelty reveal about the nature of those who oppose God's purposes?

Interlinear Text

בָּזָאת	קָעָמוֹנִי	נְחַש	אֵלִים	וְאָמָר
answered	H413	And Nahash	the Ammonite	them On this
H559		H5176	H5984	H2063
condition will I make	H0	a covenant with you that I may thrust out	H0	H3605
H3772		H5365		
eyes	all your right	and lay	it for a reproach	upon all Israel
H5869	H3225	H7760	H2781	H3478

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 17:26 (References Israel): And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?

Genesis 34:14 (Parallel theme): And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us:

Numbers 16:14 (Parallel theme): Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up.

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