

1 Samuel 2:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength.

Analysis

Hannah now applies her theology to concrete reversals of fortune. The 'bows of the mighty' represent military power and self-sufficient strength. Their breaking demonstrates God's ability to disarm the powerful. Conversely, those who 'stumbled' (the weak and failing) receive strength like a warrior's belt. This reversal pattern permeates Scripture and finds ultimate expression in the cross, where apparent defeat becomes cosmic victory. God consistently works contrary to human expectations, exalting the humble and humbling the proud.

Historical Context

The bow was the premier long-range weapon of ancient warfare and a symbol of military might. Being 'girded with strength' refers to the warrior's belt that held weapons and enabled combat. These images would resonate with audiences familiar with military realities.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Where have you witnessed God's pattern of strengthening the weak and humbling the powerful?
2. How should this divine pattern affect believers' pursuit of power and position?

Interlinear Text

קִשְׁתֵּי	גִבּוֹרֵי יָם	חֲתוּיִם	וְנִכְשְׁלֵי יָם	אֶזְרֵי
The bows	of the mighty men	are broken	and they that stumbled	are girded
H7198	H1368	H2844	H3782	H247
חֵלֵל:				
with strength				
H2428				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 76:3 (Parallel theme): There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah.

Psalms 37:15 (Parallel theme): Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.

Psalms 46:9 (Parallel theme): He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

Philippians 4:13 (Parallel theme): I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Hebrews 11:34 (Parallel theme): Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Psalms 37:17 (Parallel theme): For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholdeth the righteous.

2 Corinthians 12:9 (Parallel theme): And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Isaiah 10:4 (Parallel theme): Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

Jeremiah 37:10 (Parallel theme): For though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remained but wounded men among them, yet should they rise up every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire.

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