

1 Samuel 2:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them.

Analysis

This verse presents the most dramatic social reversal: the poor raised from dust and dunghill (ash heap) to sit with princes and inherit glory. The imagery is deliberately extreme - from the garbage heap to the royal throne. The theological foundation appears in the final clause: 'the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them.' Creation itself depends on God; therefore, all social structures rest on His will. His right to reorganize human hierarchies flows from His role as Creator and Sustainer of all things.

Historical Context

The 'ash heap' (ashpot) or dunghill was where the poorest sat to glean scraps (Lamentations 4:5). It represents utter destitution and social shame. The 'pillars of the earth' reflects ancient cosmology's conception of the world resting on foundations established by God.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does God's absolute ownership of creation mean for human claims to status or achievement?
2. How does this verse challenge social hierarchies that seem permanent and unchangeable?

Interlinear Text

וְיַעֲשֵׂת יְהֹוָה כָּלֵבֶן מִמְּלֹא קֶרֶב יְהֹוָה
He raiseth up out of the dust the poor from the dunghill and lifteth up
H6965 H6083 H1800 H830 H7311

בָּבֶן וְדָבָר יְהֹוָה אֶלְעָזֶר אֶלְעָזֶר אֶלְעָזֶר
the beggar to set them among princes the throne of glory
H34 H3427 H5973 H5081 H3678 H3519

וְיַעֲשֵׂת יְהֹוָה כָּלֵבֶן מִמְּלֹא קֶרֶב יְהֹוָה
and to make them inherit are the LORD'S for the pillars of the earth
H5157 H3588 H3068 H4690 H776

וְיַעֲשֵׂת יְהֹוָה כָּלֵבֶן מִמְּלֹא קֶרֶב יְהֹוָה
and he hath set the world
H7896 H5921 H8398

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 2:48 (Parallel theme): Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.

James 2:5 (Parallel theme): Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

Daniel 6:3 (Parallel theme): Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.

Revelation 1:6 (Glory): And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Ecclesiastes 4:14 (Parallel theme): For out of prison he cometh to reign; whereas also he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor.

1 Samuel 15:17 (References Lord): And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?

Revelation 5:10 (Parallel theme): And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Revelation 22:5 (References Lord): And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

2 Samuel 7:8 (References Lord): Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepridge, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel:

Revelation 3:21 (Parallel theme): To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.