

1 Samuel 31:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there.

Analysis

The all-night march by Jabesh-gilead's valiant men demonstrates courage and loyalty that honors Saul in death as he honored them in life. Their retrieval of the bodies from Beth-shan's wall, burning them at Jabesh, and proper burial represents significant risk. The burning (unusual for Israelite practice) may have been necessary due to decomposition or to prevent further desecration. Their courage restores some dignity to the fallen king.

Historical Context

Cremation was not typical Israelite practice, making this action notable. Some suggest burning removed decayed flesh while preserving bones for proper burial. Others see it as emergency measure given circumstances. The courage required to retrieve bodies from enemy territory was exceptional.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What risks are worth taking to honor those who cannot honor themselves?
2. How does the men of Jabesh-gilead's courage model loyalty to fallen leaders?

Interlinear Text

את	לִקְחָה	1	פְּלִילָה	כָּל	לִלְכָּד	מִלְחָמָה	אֲשֶׁר	כָּל	לִלְכָּד	מִלְחָמָה	וְמוֹעֵד
arose	H3605	men	All the valiant	H1980	H3605	all night	and took	H853			
H6965		H376		H2428		H3915		H3947			
בְּיַהְתְּ	מִחוּמָת	ת	בְּתִי	גַּיִת	וְאֶת	שָׁא	וְלָ	גַּיִת	וְאֶת	שָׁא	וְלָ
and the bodies	of Saul	H853	and the bodies	H1472	of his sons	from the wall	H0				
H1472	H7586		H1472	H1121	H2346						
שׁ	שׁ	שׁ	שׁ	שׁ	שׁ	שׁ	שׁ	שׁ	שׁ	שׁ	שׁ
of Bethshan	and came	to Jabesh	and burnt	H853	H8033						
H1052	H935	H3003	H8313								

Additional Cross-References

2 Chronicles 16:14 (Parallel theme): And they buried him in his own sepulchres, which he had made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries' art: and they made a very great burning for him.

Jeremiah 34:5 (Parallel theme): But thou shalt die in peace: and with the burnings of thy fathers, the former kings which were before thee, so shall they burn odours for thee; and they will lament thee, saying, Ah lord! for I have pronounced the word, saith the LORD.

Amos 6:10 (Parallel theme): And a man's uncle shall take him up, and he that burneth him, to bring out the bones out of the house, and shall say unto him that is by the sides of the house, Is there yet any with thee? and he shall say, No. Then shall he say, Hold thy tongue: for we may not make mention of the name of the LORD.

