

1 Samuel 31:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchi-shua, Saul's sons.

Analysis

The Philistines' pursuit specifically targets Saul's sons, eliminating the succession. Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchi-shua fall together. The Hebrew 'wayyabhiqqu' (followed hard, stuck close to) indicates determined pursuit, not random battlefield death. Jonathan's death creates particular pathos: David's closest friend and covenant partner dies fighting against the Philistines David was supposed to have joined. The prince who loved David dies while David is providentially absent.

Historical Context

The naming of three sons indicates the battle was a targeting operation against the royal family. Ish-bosheth (called Esh-baal in Chronicles) survived, apparently not present at the battle, to provide brief opposition to David's reign.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How do you process the loss of righteous people in circumstances connected to others' sin?
2. What does Jonathan's death, faithful to the end, teach about faithfulness regardless of outcome?

Interlinear Text

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|---------------------|---------------------|------------|----------|--------------|-------------------|------------------|
| וַיִּדְבֹק וְ | פְּלִשְׁתֵּי יָם | אֶת | שָׁאוּל: | וְאֶת | בְּנֵי י | וַיַּצֵּל |
| followed hard | And the Philistines | H853 | Saul's | H853 | and upon his sons | slew |
| H1692 | H6430 | | H7586 | | H1121 | H5221 |
| פְּלִשְׁתֵּי יָם | אֶת | יְהוֹנָתָן | וְאֶת | אֲבִינָדָב ב | וְאֶת | מַלְכִּישׁוּא וְ |
| And the Philistines | H853 | Jonathan | H853 | and Abinadab | H853 | and Malchishua |
| H6430 | | H3083 | | H41 | | H4444 |
| בְּנֵי י | שָׁאוּל: | | | | | |
| and upon his sons | Saul's | | | | | |
| H1121 | H7586 | | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 8:33 (Parallel theme): And Ner begat Kish, and Kish begat Saul, and Saul begat Jonathan, and Malchi-shua, and Abinadab, and Esh-baal.

1 Samuel 14:49 (Parallel theme): Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishui, and Melchi-shua: and the names of his two daughters were these; the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal: