

2 Chronicles 13:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter:
so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand
chosen men.

Analysis

And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter: so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men.

This verse is part of the narrative of Judah's kings, specifically addressing Covenant faithfulness brings victory despite odds. The Chronicler's theological perspective emphasizes immediate divine retribution—kings who seek God prosper, while those who forsake Him face judgment. This pattern provides instruction for the post-exilic community on the conditions for God's blessing.

The account demonstrates God's covenant faithfulness despite human unfaithfulness. Even in judgment, God preserves a remnant and offers restoration through repentance. The repeated cycle of apostasy, judgment, and restoration reveals both human sinfulness and divine mercy. References to the temple, proper worship, and priestly service emphasize the Chronicler's concern for correct religious observance.

Theologically, these accounts point beyond immediate history to God's ultimate purposes through the Davidic line. Despite repeated failures, God preserves David's dynasty, anticipating the perfect King who will reign in righteousness. The pattern of judgment for sin and restoration through repentance prefigures the gospel message of salvation through Christ.

Historical Context

This passage occurs during the divided monarchy period when Judah existed separately from northern Israel. The Chronicler writes from a post-exilic perspective, addressing the restored community in Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile (539 BCE onward). His emphasis on temple worship, proper religious observance, and God's covenant faithfulness speaks directly to the needs of his audience who had just rebuilt the temple and were reestablishing their identity as God's people.

The historical context demonstrates both God's judgment on persistent sin and His readiness to restore those who genuinely repent. The Chronicler omits most northern kingdom material, focusing on Judah and the Davidic line to emphasize God's faithfulness to His covenant promises. Archaeological discoveries from sites like Lachish, Beersheba, and Jerusalem corroborate the biblical accounts of various kings' reigns and building projects.

Understanding the Chronicler's post-exilic perspective is crucial—he's not merely recording history but applying past lessons to his contemporary audience, showing that the same principles of seeking God, maintaining proper worship, and covenant faithfulness that determined blessing or judgment in the past still apply.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does this verse illustrate the principle of divine retribution (blessing for obedience, judgment for sin)?
2. What specific applications does this passage have for maintaining spiritual faithfulness in contemporary Christian life?

3. How does this account point to God's ultimate purposes through the Davidic line and the coming Messiah?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּכּוּ	בְּהֶם	אֲבִי הַ	וְעַמּוֹ	מִכָּה	רַבָּה	
slew	H0	And Abijah	and his people	slaughter	them with a great	
H5221		H29	H5971	H4347	H7227	
וַיִּפֹּל וְ		הַלְלִים	מִשְׁכָּא ל	חֲמִשָּׁה	יָמָא וְ	אֶל יֵשׁ
so there fell down		slain	of Israel	five	hundred	thousand men
H5307		H2491	H3478	H2568	H3967	H505 H376
בְּחֹרֶ:						
chosen						
H977						

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