

2 Chronicles 18:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah came near, and smote Micaiah upon the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee?

Analysis

Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah came near, and smote Micaiah upon the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee?

This verse is part of the narrative of Judah's kings, specifically addressing Danger of ungodly partnerships despite personal faithfulness. 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

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

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

מִיכָּה אָתָּה	מִיכָּה אָתָּה	מִיכָּה אָתָּה	מִיכָּה אָתָּה	מִיכָּה אָתָּה	מִיכָּה אָתָּה
came near	Then Zedekiah	the son	of Chenaanah	and smote	Micaiah
H5066	H6667	H1121	H3668	H5221	H4321
על עַבְרֵךְ פָּלָחֵךְ אָמַר יְהִי עַל	upon the cheek	and said	Which	way	the Spirit
H5921	H3895	H559	H335	H2088	H1870
אָתָּה לְדִבָּר מִאָתָּה יְהִי הַ	from me to speak				
of the LORD	H853	H1696	H854		
H3068					

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 20:2 (References Lord): Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the LORD.

Mark 14:65 (Parallel theme): And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophesy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.