

2 Chronicles 18:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, It is the king of Israel. Therefore they compassed about him to fight: but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him; and God moved them to depart from him.

Analysis

And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, It is the king of Israel. Therefore they compassed about him to fight: but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him; and God moved them to depart from him.

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

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

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

וַיֵּהָיֶה י'	כִּרְאוֹת	שָׁרֵי י'	הָרֶכֶב	אֶת
H1961	saw	And it came to pass when the captains	of the chariots	H853
	H7200	H8269	H7393	
יְהוֹשָׁפָט	וְהָמָּה	אָמְרוּ	מֶלֶךְ	יִשְׂרָאֵל ל
Jehoshaphat	H1992	that they said	It is the king	of Israel
H3092		H559	H4428	H1931
				H3478
וַיִּסֹּבּוּ	יְהוֹשָׁפָט	עַל יוֹ	לְהִלָּחֵם	וַיִּזְעַק
Therefore they compassed about	H5437	H5921	him to fight	cried out
			H3898	H2199
				H3092
וַיְהִי הָ	עֲזָרוֹ	וַיִּסִּיתָ	אֵלָּהּ יָם	מִמֶּנּוּ:
and the LORD	helped	moved	him and God	H4480
H3068	H5826	H5496	H430	

Additional Cross-References

2 Chronicles 13:14 (References Lord): And when Judah looked back, behold, the battle was before and behind: and they cried unto the LORD, and the priests sounded with the trumpets.

Psalms 118:13 (References Lord): Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the LORD helped me.

Psalms 46:11 (References God): The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

Psalms 46:1 (References God): God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Psalms 34:7 (References Lord): The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

Psalms 94:17 (References Lord): Unless the LORD had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence.

Proverbs 21:1 (Kingdom): The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

Proverbs 16:7 (References Lord): When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Nehemiah 1:11 (Kingdom): O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.