

2 Chronicles 20:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another.

Analysis

For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another.

This verse is part of the narrative of Judah's kings, specifically addressing God's fights for those who seek Him in crisis. 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

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

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

עָמָד	בְּנֵי	עַמְּלֵי	עַל	וּמֹאֲבָבָה	בְּיֹשֵׁב
stood up	For the children	of Ammon	and Moab	against	the inhabitants
H5975	H1121	H5983	H4124	H5921	H3427
בְּרֵרֶת	לְבָתָר יָמִין	שָׁעַר יְרֵרֶת	וְלֹפֶשֶׁת יְדֵי	בְּיֹשֵׁב	עָזָר וּשְׁעָרֶת
of mount	Seir	utterly to slay	and destroy	against the inhabitants	helped
H2022	H8165	H2763	H8045	H3427	H5826
וְכָלֹתָם	בְּיֹשֵׁב	עָזָר וּשְׁעָרֶת	בְּיֹשֵׁב	בְּיֹשֵׁב	בְּיֹשֵׁב
them and when they had made an end	against the inhabitants	Seir	Seir	against the inhabitants	helped
H3615	H3427	H8165	H8165	H3427	H5826
לְמַשְׁחִיתָה בְּרֵרֶת הָאִישׁ	בְּרֵרֶת הָאִישׁ	בְּרֵרֶת הָאִישׁ	בְּרֵרֶת הָאִישׁ	בְּרֵרֶת הָאִישׁ	בְּרֵרֶת הָאִישׁ
every one	another	to destroy	to destroy	to destroy	to destroy
H376	H7453	H4889	H4889	H4889	H4889

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 14:20 (Parallel theme): And Saul and all the people that were with him assembled themselves, and they came to the battle: and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was a very great discomfiture.

Judges 7:22 (Parallel theme): And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and

the host fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath.

Joshua 24:4 (Parallel theme): And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt.

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