

2 Chronicles 20:37

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the LORD hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

Analysis

Then Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the LORD hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

This verse is part of the narrative of Judah's kings, specifically addressing God 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

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by 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

עַל	מִמֶּה רָשָׁה	הַ דָּדָוָה הוּ	בֶן	אֶלְיָעִזֶּר זֶרַח	וַיִּתְּנָהּ אֵל
	of Mareshah	of Dodavah	the son	Then Eliezer	prophesied
	H4762	H1735	H1121	H461	H5012
אֶחָדָם הוּא	עִמָּוֶל	כִּי תִתְחַבֵּרְךָ	לֵאמֹר רַחֵם	יְהוֹשָׁפָט ט	
thymself with Ahaziah		Because thou hast joined	saying	against Jehoshaphat	
H274	H5973	H2266	H559	H3092	
וְלֹא אֶת	אֲנִי וְ	וַיִּשָּׁבְרוּ	מַעֲשֵׂי יְיָ	אֶת יְהוָה	כָּרַץ
	And the ships	were broken	thy works	the LORD	hath broken
	H591	H7665	H4639	H3068	H6555
תַּרְשִׁישׁ:	אֶל	לְלִכְתּוֹ	עָצָר וְ		
to Tarshish			that they were not able		
H8659	H413	H1980	H6113		

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 13:20 (Parallel theme): He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

2 Chronicles 19:2 (References Lord): And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD.

2 Chronicles 9:21 (Parallel theme): For the king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram: every three years once came the ships of Tarshish bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.

