

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 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's judgments 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

prophesied H5012	Then Eliezer H461	the son H1121	of Dodavah H1735	of Mareshah H4762	על מִתְנַבֵּב אֶלְيָזָר בֶּן דָּדָוָה מִשְׁׁה מִרְאֵשָׁה H5921
against Jehoshaphat H3092					סֹבֵב יְהוֹשָׁפָט H559
saying H2266					לֹאמֶר בַּcause thou hast joined H5973
against Ahaziah H274					עִמְךָ הוּא אַחֲרָיו H5973
hath broken H6555					בָּשָׁר יְהוָה בָּשָׁר יְהוָה H3068
the LORD H853					בָּשָׁר יְהוָה בָּשָׁר יְהוָה H4639
thy works H7665					בָּשָׁר יְהוָה בָּשָׁר יְהוָה H591
were broken H591					בָּשָׁר יְהוָה בָּשָׁר יְהוָה H3808
And the ships H3808					אַל עֲצָר בְּלֹא כְּתָב תַּרְשִׁישָׁה: H8659
that they were not able H6113					אַל עֲצָר בְּלֹא כְּתָב תַּרְשִׁישָׁה: H1980
to Tarshish H8659					אַל עֲצָר בְּלֹא כְּתָב תַּרְשִׁישָׁה: H413

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 Huram: every three years once came the ships of Tarshish bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.

