

2 Chronicles 24:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you.

Analysis

And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you.

This verse is part of the narrative of Judah's kings, specifically addressing Initial faithfulness deteriorating after mentor's death. 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

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

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

וְרוּחַ	הָאֱלֹהִים	אָתָּה	לְבָשָׁה	זִכְרִיָּה	בֶּן	יְהוֹיָדָע
And the Spirit	God	came	H853	upon Zechariah	the son	of Jehoiada
H7307	H430	H3847		H2148	H1121	H3077
הַכֹּהֵן	וַיַּעַמְד	מֵעַל	לְעַם	אָמַר	לָהֶם	כֹּה
the priest	which stood	H5921	above the people	and said	H0	H3541
H3548	H5975		H5971	H559		
אָמַר	הָאֱלֹהִים	לָמָּה	אַתָּה	עֹבֵר	יָמִים	אָתָּה
and said	God	H4100	H859	Why transgress	H853	
H559	H430			H5674		
מִצְוֹת	יְהוָה	וְלֹא	תִצְלַח	יָחַד	כִּי	
ye the commandments	of the LORD	H3808	that ye cannot prosper		H3588	
H4687	H3068		H6743			
וְעַל	אָתָּה	יְהוָה	וְעַל	אֲתָכֶם:		
because ye have forsaken	H853	of the LORD	because ye have forsaken	H853		
H5800		H3068	H5800			

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 14:41 (Word): And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the LORD? but it shall not prosper.

Jeremiah 5:25 (Parallel theme): Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you.

2 Chronicles 20:14 (Spirit): Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation;

1 Chronicles 12:18 (Spirit): Then the spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee. Then David received them, and made them captains of the band.

Matthew 23:35 (Parallel theme): That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.