

2 Chronicles 32:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of his own bowels slew him there with the sword.

Analysis

And the LORD sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of his own bowels slew him there with the sword.

This verse is part of the narrative of Judah's kings, specifically addressing God's deliverance of the faithful; pride's danger even after blessing. 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

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

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

וְשָׁלַח	יְהוָה	מַלְאָךְ	וַיִּכָּתֵד	כָּל	גִּבּוֹרֵי
sent	And the LORD	an angel	which cut off	H3605	all the mighty men
H7971	H3068	H4397	H3582		H1368
וְיָלַד	וְנָגְדֵי	וְשָׂרֵי	בִּמְחֵי	מֶלֶךְ	אֲשֶׁר
of valour	and the leaders	and captains	in the camp	of the king	of Assyria
H2428	H5057	H8269	H4264	H4428	H804
וַיָּשָׁב	בְּבֹשֶׁת	פָּנָיו	לְאֶרְצוֹ	וַיָּבֹא	
So he returned	with shame	of face	to his own land	And when he was come	
H7725	H1322	H6440	H776	H935	
בֵּיתוֹ	אֱלֹהֵי	וַיֵּצֵאוּ	מִעֵי	שָׁמָּה	
into the house	of his god	they that came forth	of his own bowels	H8033	
H1004	H430	H3329	H4578		
הִפִּילֵהוּ	בְּחֶרֶב:				
slew	him there with the sword				
H5307	H2719				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 76:5 (Parallel theme): The stouthearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands.

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