

2 Chronicles 36:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel.

Analysis

And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel.

This verse is part of the narrative of Judah's kings, specifically addressing Persistent rebellion bringing covenant curses; hope of restoration. 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

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

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

רַגְלֵי H1571 against king H4428	נְבֻכָּדְנָצָר H5019 Nebuchadnezzar	מִרְבָּחָה H4775 And he also rebelled	אָשָׁר H834		
הַשְׁבִּיעַ וְ who had made him swear		אֱלֹהִים H430 God	אָתָה קָשָׁה H7185 but he stiffened	עַרְפֹּוֹ וְ H6203 his neck	זָהָם H553 and hardened
אֶלְבָּבְךָ וְ H3824 his heart	מִשְׁבְּכָה וְ H7725 from turning	אֶל הָרָבָּה H413 unto the LORD	אֱלֹהִים H3068 God	יִשְׂרָאֵל: H3478 of Israel	

Additional Cross-References

2 Chronicles 30:8 (References God): Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the LORD, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.

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