

2 Samuel 10:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away.

Analysis

Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away.

This verse contributes to the narrative of War with Ammon and Aram, emphasizing responding to insult with strength. The Ammonite insult to David's ambassadors and subsequent war demonstrates appropriate responses to hostility. Theological themes include honor/shame dynamics in ancient cultures, the legitimacy of responding firmly to aggression, and trusting God when facing overwhelming opposition. The Hebrew narrative emphasizes strategic wisdom alongside divine enablement.

Historical Context

The historical setting of 2 Samuel 10 occurs during David's reign (circa 1010-970 BCE) over Israel's united monarchy. Archaeological discoveries, including the Tel Dan inscription mentioning the 'House of David,' corroborate biblical historicity. Ancient Near Eastern customs regarding responding to insult with strength provide crucial background. The geopolitical situation involved regional powers—Philistines, Ammonites, Arameans, Moabites, Edomites—as David consolidated and expanded Israel's territory. Cultural practices concerning kingship, warfare, covenant relationships, family dynamics, and religious observance differed

significantly from modern Western contexts, requiring careful attention to avoid anachronistic interpretation while extracting timeless theological principles applicable across cultures and eras.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does this passage deepen your understanding of responding to insult with strength?
2. What does this verse reveal about God's character, and how should that shape your worship and obedience?
3. In what specific ways can you apply this truth to your current circumstances and relationships this week?

Interlinear Text

אָתָּה יִגְלַח עֲבָדֵי דָּוִיד אֲתָּה בְּנֵי הָנָן וְיָקַר עֲבָדֵי
took Wherefore Hanun H853 servants David's and shaved off H853
H3947 H2586 H5650 H1732 H1548

בְּחֵצֵי מִדְיָנִים בְּחֵצֵי מִדְיָנִים
in the middle of their beards and cut off H853 their garments in the middle
H2677 H2206 H3772 H4063 H2677

וַיִּשְׁלַחֵם שְׁתוּתֵיהֶם עַתְּה
even to their buttocks and sent them away
H5704 H8357 H7971

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 20:4 (Parallel theme): So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.

Jeremiah 41:5 (Parallel theme): That there came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, even fourscore men, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring them to the house of the LORD.

Isaiah 15:2 (Parallel theme): He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads shall be baldness, and every beard cut off.

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