

2 Samuel 17:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him.

Analysis

Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him.

This verse contributes to the narrative of Competing Counsel, emphasizing divine providence over human wisdom. The contrast between Ahithophel's shrewd counsel and Hushai's divinely-blessed alternative demonstrates God's providential control over human wisdom. The text explicitly states "the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel" (v. 14), emphasizing divine sovereignty. Ahithophel's suicide demonstrates despair when human wisdom fails. Theological themes include God's sovereignty over human planning, divine protection of His anointed, and the inadequacy of worldly wisdom apart from God.

Historical Context

The historical setting of 2 Samuel 17 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 divine providence over human wisdom 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

Study Questions

1. How does this passage deepen your understanding of divine providence over human wisdom?
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

וְעַתָּה הִ	שְׁלַח וְ	מְהֵרָה	וְהִגֵּד יָדוֹ	לְדָוִד	יֵאמֹר	אֵל
H6258	Now therefore send	quickly	and tell	David	saying	H408
	H7971	H4120	H5046	H1732	H559	
לִּלְוֶה	הַלַּיְלָה	בְּעֶרְבֵי הַ	הַמִּדְבָּר	וְגַם	תָּעֵב	וְ
Lodge	not this night	in the plains	of the wilderness	H1571	but speedily	
H3885	H3915	H6160	H4057		H5674	
וְתָעֵב וְ	פֶּן	יִבְלָע	לִמֶּלֶךְ	וְלָכֹל	הָעָם	
but speedily	H6435	be swallowed up	lest the king	H3605	and all the people	
H5674		H1104	H4428		H5971	
אֶתְּוֹ:	אֲשֶׁר					
H854	H834					

Additional Cross-References

2 Samuel 15:28 (Parallel theme): See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me.

1 Corinthians 15:54 (Parallel theme): So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

2 Corinthians 5:4 (Parallel theme): For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.