

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

אֶל לְאֶתֶּן רְלֵאֶת מִעֵת הַזֹּאת שְׁלֹחַ 1 וְעַתָּה הַזֹּאת

H6258 Now therefore send H7971 H4120 quickly H5046 and tell H1732 David H408 saying H559

תְּעַבּוּר וְרֵא מִגְּמַלְתָּה כְּלֵל יְלֵה בְּעַרְבָּה וְזַת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ רְבָנָה כְּלֵל יְלֵה

Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness H1571 but speedily H5674

H3885 H3915 H6160 H4057

בְּשַׁעַר מִגְּמַלְתָּה כְּלֵל יְלֵה לְמִלְחָמָה וְרֵא מִגְּמַלְתָּה כְּלֵל יְלֵה

but speedily H6435 be swallowed up H1104 lest the king H4428

H5674 H3605

and all the people H5971

אֲתָּה אֲשֶׁר

H834 H854

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.