

2 Samuel 17:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house, they said, Where is Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman said unto them, They be gone over the brook of water. And when they had sought and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.

Analysis

And when Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house, they said, Where is Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman said unto them, They be gone over the brook of water. And when they had sought and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.

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

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

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

וַיָּבֹאוּ	עֲבָדָיו	אֲבִשָׁל וּ	אֵל	הָאִשָּׁה	הַבַּיִת
came	servants	And when Absalom's	H413	And the woman	to the house
H935	H5650	H53		H802	H1004
אָמַר	אֵי	אֲחִימָעַ	וַיְהִי וְיֹנָתָן	אָמַר	לָהֶם
said	H346	Where is Ahimaaz	and Jonathan	said	H0
H559		H290	H3083	H559	
הָאִשָּׁה	עָבְרוּ	מִיַּד	הַמַּיִם		
And the woman	unto them	They be gone over	the brook	of water	
H802		H5674	H4323	H4325	
וַיִּבְקְשׁוּ	וְלֹא	מָצְאוּ	וַיָּשׁוּ		
And when they had sought	H3808	and could not find	them they returned		
H1245		H4672	H7725		
יְרוּשָׁלַם:					
to Jerusalem					
H3389					

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 1:19 (Parallel theme): And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them.