

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

הַבָּיִתְהָ אֲלֵי אֶבְשָׁלָן וּמִן עַבְדֵי אָבִיו אָוֹ
And when Absalom's servants came to the house

came servants And when Absalom's H413 And the woman to the house
H935 H5650 H53 H802 H1004

לְבָם וְתֵת אָמָר וְיֵה וְנִתְתַּחַת אֲחִים עָזִים
Where is Ahimaaz and Jonathan said
said H346 H290 H3083 H559 H0

בַּעֲמָדָה מִיכָּל מִיכָּל יְמִינָה
And the woman unto them They be gone over the brook of water
H802 H5674 H4323 H4325

וְיִבְחַשׂ וְלֹא מִצְאָה אֲוֹתָם וְיִשְׁבַּבְוּ
And when they had sought and could not find them they returned
H1245 H3808 H4672 H7725

לְרוֹשָׁלָם
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.