

2 Samuel 17:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David, and said unto David, Arise, and pass quickly over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you.

Analysis

And it came to pass, after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David, and said unto David, Arise, and pass quickly over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you.

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

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

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

וְיָמָה	וְיָמָה	אַחֲרֵי	אַחֲרֵי	לִקְרָב	לִקְרָב	מִמְבָּא	מִמְבָּא	רַעַלְוָה	רַעַלְוָה	מִמְבָּא	מִמְבָּא	
H1961	And it came to pass after	H310		H1980		H5927	that they came up	H875	out of the well	H875		
וַיַּעֲבֹר	וַיַּעֲבֹר	וְיָמָה	וְיָמָה	לְפָנָי	לְפָנָי	אֶל	אֶל	וְיָמָה	וְיָמָה	וְיָמָה	וְיָמָה	
H1980	and told	H5046	king	H4428	David	H1732	and said	H559	David	H1732	Arise	over
וְיָמָה	וְיָמָה	אֶת	אֶת	בְּעֵמָה	בְּעֵמָה	כִּי	כִּי	כִּי	כִּי	עַלְיָמָה	עַלְיָמָה	
and pass quickly	H4120	H853	the water	H4325	H3588	H3602				H3289	counselled	H5921
אֲחִיתְפֵּלְךָ												
for thus hath Ahithophel												
	H302											

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org