

2 Samuel 17:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For, said Hushai, thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field: and thy father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people.

Analysis

For, said Hushai, thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field: and thy father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people.

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

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

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

אֶלֶּל אִישׁ וְאָבִיךָ אֶת־יָדְעָתָּה חוּשִׁי יְיָ אָמַר							
For said	Hushai	H859	thou knowest	H853	and thy father	H853	is a man
H559	H2365		H3045		H1		H376
יְיָ מַה־בְּפֶשַׁע וְהֵם־מְחִיזִים וְהֵם־מְחִיזִים							
that they be mighty men		and they be chafed		in their minds			
H3588	H1368	H1992	H4751	H5315			H1992
מֶלֶחֶם הָאִישׁ וְאָבִיךָ בְּשָׂדֵה הַשֹּׁכֵל כְּדֹב							
as a bear	robbed	of her whelps in the field	and thy father	is a man	of war		
H1677	H7909	H7704	H1	H376	H4421		
וְלֹא־יִלְּךָ אֶת־הָעָם יִלְּךָ־יְיָ							
and will not lodge		with the people					
H3808	H3885	H854	H5971				

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 13:8 (Parallel theme): I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion: the wild beast shall tear them.

1 Samuel 16:18 (Parallel theme): Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD is with him.

Proverbs 17:12 (Parallel theme): Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly.

Daniel 7:5 (Parallel theme): And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.