

2 Samuel 2:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Howbeit he refused to turn aside: wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth rib, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and it came to pass, that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still.

Analysis

Howbeit he refused to turn aside: wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth rib, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and it came to pass, that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still.

This verse contributes to the narrative of David Becomes King of Judah, emphasizing divine timing, patience in promises. The Hebrew vayyimloch (מלך, 'and he reigned') marks David's official royal status over Judah at Hebron. The seven-year period before ruling all Israel demonstrates patient trust in God's timing. Theological themes include divine election, the gradual unfolding of God's promises through historical process, and the reality that human resistance to God's plans produces genuine suffering.

Historical Context

The historical setting of 2 Samuel 2 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 timing, patience in promises 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

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does this passage deepen your understanding of divine timing, patience in promises?
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

מִאַחֲרֵי	וְיִמְאָא	לְסֵן	וְרָא	לְפָנֶיךָ	אֶבְנֶר	מִאַחֲרֵי
Howbeit he refused	to turn aside	smote	wherefore	Abner	behind	
H3985	H5493	H5221	H74		H310	
מִאַחֲרֵי	וְיִמְאָא	לְסֵן	וְרָא	לְפָנֶיךָ	אֶבְנֶר	מִאַחֲרֵי
of the spear	him under	the fifth	came out	of the spear	behind	fell down
H2595	H413	H2570	H3318	H2595	H310	H5307
מִאַחֲרֵי	וְיִמְאָא	לְסֵן	וְרָא	לְפָנֶיךָ	אֶבְנֶר	מִאַחֲרֵי
and died	in the same place					
H8033	H4191	H8478	H1961	H3605		
מִאַחֲרֵי	וְיִמְאָא	לְסֵן	וְרָא	לְפָנֶיךָ	אֶבְנֶר	מִאַחֲרֵי
and it came to pass that as many as came		him under	to the place			
H935		H413	H4725		H834	H5307
מִאַחֲרֵי	וְיִמְאָא	לְסֵן	וְרָא	לְפָנֶיךָ	אֶבְנֶר	מִאַחֲרֵי
where Asahel	and died	stood still				
H8033	H6214	H4191	H5975			

Additional Cross-References

2 Samuel 3:27 (Parallel theme): And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth rib, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother.

2 Samuel 4:6 (Parallel theme): And they came thither into the midst of the house, as though they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him under the fifth rib: and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped.