

2 Samuel 21:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David swore unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel.

Analysis

But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David swore unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel.

This verse contributes to the narrative of Famine and Giants, emphasizing justice, covenant obligations. The three-year famine traced to Saul's treaty violation demonstrates God's demand for covenant faithfulness and justice. The execution of Saul's descendants and Rizpah's faithful vigil over their bodies presents complex ethical questions. The Philistine giant battles demonstrate ongoing threats. Theological themes include multi-generational covenant obligations, the high cost of treaty violations, God's demand for justice, and His provision of strength for continued battles.

Historical Context

The historical setting of 2 Samuel 21 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 justice, covenant obligations 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

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does this passage deepen your understanding of justice, covenant obligations?
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

וַעֲזָר לוֹ אֲבִישַׁי בֶּן צֶרֶחַ הַ וַיִּךְ אֶת
succoured H0 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah him and smote H853
H5826 H52 H1121 H6870 H5221

לִּי הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי וַיָּמָת הוּא אֶזְכָּר נִשְׁבַּעוּ אַנְשֵׁי דָוִד לֵאמֹר
the Philistine and killed H227 swear H376 of David H0
H6430 H4191 H7650 H1732

אֶתְּנוּ עֹד תֵּצֵא לֵאמֹר
unto him saying H3808 Thou shalt go H5750 H854
H559 H3318

נִרְאֶה לְמַלְחָמָה וְלֹא תִכְבֶּה אֶת נֵר
no more out with us to battle H3808 that thou quench H853 not the light
H4421 H3518 H5216

יִשְׂרָאֵל:
of Israel
H3478

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 11:36 (Light): And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there.

2 Samuel 18:3 (Parallel theme): But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but now thou art worth ten thousand of us: therefore now it is better that thou succour us out of the city.

Psalms 132:17 (References David): There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.

1 Kings 15:4 (References David): Nevertheless for David's sake did the LORD his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem:

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