

2 Samuel 23:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief among three. And he lifted up his spear against three hundred, and slew them, and had the name among three.

Analysis

And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief among three. And he lifted up his spear against three hundred, and slew them, and had the name among three.

This verse contributes to the narrative of Last Words and Mighty Men, emphasizing legacy, faithful servants. David's last words emphasize the eternal covenant God established (v. 5) and declare principles of righteous rule. The accounts of David's mighty men demonstrate extraordinary courage and devotion. The water-drawing incident reveals David's unwillingness to value his comfort above his soldiers' lives. Theological themes include the importance of final testimonies, the eternal nature of God's covenant, the value of faithful servants, and the necessity of sacrificial leadership.

Historical Context

The historical setting of 2 Samuel 23 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 legacy, faithful servants 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

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 legacy, faithful servants?
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

וְאֶבִּיֶּשׂ י	אָחִי יוֹאָב	בֶּן	צֶרֻיָּה	הָיָא	רֹאשׁ אֶשׁ
And Abishai	the brother	of Joab	the son	of Zeruiah	H1931 was chief
H52	H251	H3097	H1121	H6870	H7218
הַשְּׁלֵשׁ י	וְהוּא	עֹלֶה ר	אֶת	חֶנֶּת ו	עַל בְּשִׁלְשָׁה:
among three	H1931	And he lifted up	H853	his spear	H5921 against three
H7992		H5782		H2595	H7969
מֵאֵל	וְהָרַג	וְלָוּ	שֵׁם	בְּשִׁלְשָׁה:	
hundred	and slew	H0	them and had the name	against three	
H3967	H2491		H8034	H7969	

Additional Cross-References

2 Samuel 10:10 (Parallel theme): And the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai his brother, that he might put them in array against the children of Ammon.

2 Samuel 10:14 (Parallel theme): And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, then fled they also before Abishai, and entered into the city. So Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came to Jerusalem.

2 Samuel 18:2 (Parallel theme): And David sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also.

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