

2 Samuel 4:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth, and buried it in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.

Analysis

And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth, and buried it in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.

This verse contributes to the narrative of Ish-bosheth Murdered, emphasizing righteous vs unrighteous means. The assassination of Ish-bosheth and David's execution of the murderers demonstrates crucial distinctions between godly and ungodly means. While the result (removing Saul's dynasty) aligned with God's purposes, the method (treacherous murder) violated divine standards. Hebrew concepts of justice (mishpat, מִשְׁפָּט) and righteousness (tsedeq, צֶדֶק) permeate David's response.

Historical Context

The historical setting of 2 Samuel 4 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 righteous vs unrighteous means 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

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does this passage deepen your understanding of righteous vs unrighteous means?
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

וַיִּצַו	וַדָּוִד	אֶת	הַנְּעָרִים	וַהֲרָגוּם	וַיִּקְצְצוּ	אֹתָם
commanded	And David	H853	his young men	and they slew	them and cut off	H853
H6680	H1732		H5288	H2026	H7112	
יְדֵיהֶם	וְאֵת	בְּגִלְיָהֶם	וַיִּתֵּל וְ	עַל	הַבְּרֶכָה	
their hands	H853	and their feet	and hanged them up	H5921	over the pool	
H3027		H7272	H8518		H1295	
בְּחֶבְרוֹן:	וְאֵת	רֹאשׁ	אִישׁ	בְּשֵׁת	לָקְחוּ	וַיִּקְבְּרוּ
in Hebron	H853	the head	H0	of Ishbosheth	But they took	and buried
H2275		H7218		H378	H3947	H6912
בְּקֶבֶר	אֲבִנֵּי	בְּחֶבְרוֹן:				
it in the sepulchre	of Abner	in Hebron				
H6913	H74	H2275				

Additional Cross-References

2 Samuel 3:32 (Parallel theme): And they buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept.

2 Samuel 1:15 (References David): And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, and fall upon him. And he smote him that he died.