

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, מִשְׁפָט) and righteousness (tsedeq, צְדָקָה) 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

אָתָּה יְצַא	וְיִהְרַג יְמֵינֶךָ	וְיִקְצַּח וְיִקְרַב	וְיִקְרַב וְיִקְרַב	וְיִקְרַב וְיִקְרַב	וְיִקְרַב וְיִקְרַב
commanded H6680	And David H1732	H853	his young men H5288	and they slew H2026	them and cut off H7112
יְדִיקָם	בְּגִלִּיה מִצְתָּל וְעַל	וַיְתַל וְעַל	וַיְתַל וְעַל	וַיְתַל וְעַל	וַיְתַל וְעַל
their hands H3027	and their feet H7272	H853	and hanged them up H8518	H5921	over the pool H1295
בְּקָרְבָּוֹן:	בְּשַׁת רְאשֵׁי תְּלִקְחָה	בְּשַׁת רְאשֵׁי תְּלִקְחָה	בְּשַׁת רְאשֵׁי תְּלִקְחָה	בְּשַׁת רְאשֵׁי תְּלִקְחָה	בְּשַׁת רְאשֵׁי תְּלִקְחָה
in Hebron H2275	the head H7218	H853	of Ishbosheth H378	But they took H3947	and buried H6912
בְּקָרְבָּוֹן:	אֲבִי רְאֵשׁ	אֲבִי רְאֵשׁ	אֲבִי רְאֵשׁ	אֲבִי רְאֵשׁ	אֲבִי רְאֵשׁ
it in the sepulchre H6913	of Abner H74	H2275	in Hebron		

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.

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