

2 Samuel 4:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they brought the head of Ish-bosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, which sought thy life; and the LORD hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed.

Analysis

And they brought the head of Ish-bosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, which sought thy life; and the LORD hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed.

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

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

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

וְיֻבָּא	אֶת	רַאֲשָׁה	אִישׁ	בְּשִׁתְּתַחְתָּה	אֶל	לְוִידָה
And they brought	H853	Behold the head	H0	of Ishbosheth	H413	unto David
H935		H7218		H378		H1732
כְּבָרוֹן	וַיֹּאמֶר	אֶל	לְרַאֲשָׁה	הַנֶּה	רַאֲשָׁה	אִישׁ
to Hebron	and said	H413	the king	H2009	Behold the head	H0
H2275	H559		H4428		H7218	
בְּשִׁתְּתַחְתָּה	אֶת	רַאֲשָׁה	אֶשׁר	בְּקַשׁ	אֲתָה	
of Ishbosheth	the son	H7586	thine enemy	H834	which sought	H853
H378	H1121		H341		H1245	
בְּנֵי	וְמִמְּרָעָיו	בְּנֵי	לְרַאֲשָׁה	נִקְמָה	הַיּוֹם	בְּזִהְבָּבָה
thy life	hath	and the LORD	my lord	the king	avenged	this day
H5315	H5414	H3068	H113	H4428	H5360	H3117
מִשְׁאָה	וּמִתְּרַעֵּוֹת					
of Saul	and of his seed					
H7586	H2233					

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 25:29 (References Lord): Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling.

1 Samuel 23:15 (References David): And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David was in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood.

2 Samuel 22:48 (Parallel theme): It is God that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the people under me,