

# Psalm 78:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel.

## Analysis

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**The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel**—divine wrath (*hēmat 'Ēlōhîm*) targeted specifically the *mišmannîm* (fattest, most robust) and *bahûrîm* (chosen/choice young men). The healthiest died first—those whose strength made them confident in self-sufficiency. Their vigor became vulnerability when misplaced in fleshly appetite rather than spiritual devotion.

This selective judgment parallels Ananias and Sapphira's sudden deaths (Acts 5:1-11)—not the weakest but the presumptuous died as warnings to others. Paul explains: 'For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died' (1 Corinthians 11:30)—divine discipline targets covenant people who treat grace as license. God judges the household first (1 Peter 4:17).

## Historical Context

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The 'chosen men' likely included tribal leaders and warriors—Israel's elite who should have modeled faith but instead led rebellion. Their deaths at Kibroth-hattaavah ('graves of craving') memorialized that privilege increases accountability.

## Related Passages

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. How might your strength (health, wealth, talent) become the arena where you're most vulnerable to judgment?
2. Does God's discipline of 'chosen' Israel warn you that Christian privilege increases, not decreases, accountability?

## Interlinear Text

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רַע	אֱלֹהִים	לְהַלְכָה	בְּפָנָיו	בְּמִשְׁמְרַת	בְּפָנָיו
<b>The wrath</b>	<b>of God</b>	<b>came</b>	H0	<b>upon them and slew</b>	<b>the fattest</b>
H639	H430	H5927		H2026	H4924
וּבְחִזְקָה	וְשָׁרָא	לְ	הַכְּרִיעָה		
<b>the chosen</b>	<b>men of Israel</b>	<b>of them and smote down</b>			
H970	H3478		H3766		

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