

1 Kings 17:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

Analysis

And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

This verse contributes to the broader narrative of Elijah and the drought, within the book's focus on prophetic ministry of Elijah confronting Baalism.

The Hebrew text reveals nuances important for understanding this passage's contribution to 1 Kings' theological message about kingship, covenant, and faithfulness to Yahweh. This verse demonstrates the consequences when God's people—especially their leaders—either follow or forsake the covenant established at Sinai.

Historical Context

First Kings was written during or after the Babylonian exile (6th century BCE), reflecting on the monarchy period (10th-9th centuries BCE) to explain why the kingdoms fell. Elijah's ministry (c. 860-850 BCE) occurred during Ahab's reign, a time of intense spiritual crisis in Israel.

Ancient Near Eastern kingship ideology viewed kings as divine representatives responsible for maintaining cosmic order through right worship. Archaeological discoveries from sites like Megiddo, Hazor, and Samaria confirm the historical reliability of 1 Kings' descriptions of building projects and administrative structures.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does this passage illustrate the importance of complete obedience to God's word without compromise?
2. What does Elijah's ministry reveal about God's character and His commitment to His covenant people?
3. How does this verse point toward or prepare for the coming of Christ and His eternal kingdom?

Interlinear Text

מְעַד גָּד לֹא יִשְׁאַל אָמֵר
not a cake I have H3426 H0
thy God H518 H430
As the LORD H3068
liveth H2416
And she said H559

שְׁמָן וְמַעַט שְׁמָן
oil and a little H8081 H4592
בְּכֶד מִתְמַעַט בְּכֶד
in a barrel and a little H3537 H4592
מִלְאָקָה שְׁתִּים
of meal two H7058 H8147
but an handful H518 H4393 H3709

בְּאַפָּה סְתִת
that I may go in H935
וְהִנֵּן
and behold I am gathering H7197
in a cruse H2005
H6835

יְמִתְנָה
it and die H4191
לֹא יִשְׁאַל
that we may eat H398
אֶלְכָנָה הוּא
it for me and my son H1121 H0
and dress H6213

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 17:1 (References God): And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

Genesis 21:16 (Parallel theme): And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept.