

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

וַתֹּאמֶר	חַיִּי	יְהוָה ה	אֱלֹהֶיךָ	אִם	יֵשׁ	לִי	מֶעַ וְגַם
And she said	liveth	As the LORD	thy God	H518	I have	H0	not a cake
H559	H2416	H3068	H430		H3426		H4580
אִם כִּי	מָלֵא	כַּף	קֶמַח	בַּבַּד	וּמַעֲט	שֶׁן מֶן	
H3588	H518	but an handful	H3709	of meal	in a barrel	and a little	oil
	H4393		H7058	H3537	H4592		H8081
בַּצֶּפֶר חַת	וְהִנֵּנִי	מְקַשֵּׁת שֵׁת	שְׁנַיִם	עֵצִים	וְכִי אֵתִי		
in a cruse	H2005	and behold I am gathering	two	sticks	that I may go in		
H6835		H7197	H8147	H6086	H935		
וְעָשִׂיתִי יְהוָה	לִי	וְלִבְנִי	וְאֶכְלֶנּוּ הוּא	וּמָתְנוּ:			
and dress	H0	it for me and my son	that we may eat	it and die			
H6213		H1121	H398	H4191			

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.