

1 Kings 19:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?

Analysis

And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?

This verse contributes to the broader narrative of Elijah flees to Horeb, within the book's focus on prophetic ministry of Elijah confronting Baalism. The prophetic office represents God's faithful witness even in apostasy, calling His people back to covenant faithfulness.

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

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

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

וַיֵּצֵא ב	אֶת	הַבֶּקָר	וַיָּרָץ	אַחֲרַיִךְ	אֵלָיו הוּא	וַיֹּאמֶר
And he left	H853	the oxen	and ran	after	Elijah	and said
H5800		H1241	H7323	H310	H452	H559
אֲשָׁקָה	נָא	לְאָבִי	וּלְאִמִּי	וְאַלְכֶּה	אַחֲרַיִךְ	
Let me I pray thee kiss	H4994	my father	and my mother	H1980	after	
H5401		H1	H517		H310	
וַיֹּאמֶר	לוֹ	לֵךְ	שׁוּב	כִּי	מָה	עָשָׂה יְתִי
and said	H0	and then I will follow	again	H3588	H4100	for what have I done
H559		H3212	H7725			H6213
לִּי:						
H0						

Additional Cross-References

Acts 20:37 (Parallel theme): And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,