

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

Psalm 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

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶּה אֶלְעָזָר וְאֶל־בְּנֵי נְצָרָת
And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said

וְאֶל־בְּנֵי נְצָרָת וְאֶל־אֶת־בְּנֵי נְצָרָת
H5800 H853 H1241 H7323 H310 H452 H559

אֶלְעָזָר יְבָנָה אֶלְעָזָר יְבָנָה
Let me I pray thee kiss my father and my mother after
H5401 H4994 H1 H517 H1980 H310

עֲשֵׂה יְהִי שְׁמֶךָ לְךָ וְאֶת־אֶתְרָה
and said and then I will follow again for what have I done
H559 H0 H3212 H7725 H3588 H4100 H6213

לְךָ
H0

Additional Cross-References

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

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