

1 Kings 3:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living.

Analysis

Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living.

This verse contributes to the broader narrative of Solomon's wisdom and the famous judgment, within the book's focus on Solomon's wisdom, temple building, and tragic apostasy.

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. Solomon's reign (c. 970-930 BCE) represented Israel's golden age of peace and prosperity.

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

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the temple as God's dwelling place help us understand Christ's incarnation and the church as God's temple today?
2. What does Solomon's prayer and dedication teach about approaching God in worship and prayer?
3. How does this verse point toward or prepare for the coming of Christ and His eternal kingdom?

Interlinear Text

כִּי־בָּן־אֹמֶת־רַת־בָּם־לֹג־זֶה־אָת־בָּם־זֶה־אָת־רַת־זֶה־אָת־רַת
Then said the king The one Then said Nay but thy son is the living
H559 H4428 H2063 H559 H2088 H1121 H2416

כִּי־לְאָמֶת־רַת־בָּם־תְּזַהַּר־זֶה־אָת־רַת־זֶה־אָת־רַת
Nay but thy son is the dead The one Then said Nay but thy son
H1121 H4191 H2063 H559 H3808 H3588 H1121

בָּם־תְּזַהַּר־זֶה־אָת־רַת־כִּי־
is the dead Nay but thy son is the living
H4191 H1121 H2416