

1 Samuel 28:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.

Analysis

Saul's question about what the woman sees and her response create one of the most mysterious scenes in Scripture. Her description of 'gods ascending out of the earth' (Hebrew: 'elohim olim min-ha'arets') uses the plural 'elohim,' which can mean gods, divine beings, or God. This ambiguous language may reflect her pagan framework for understanding what she sees. The apparition arising from the earth locates the dead in Sheol, the subterranean realm of Hebrew cosmology.

Historical Context

The term 'elohim' appears variously in Scripture referring to God, gods, angels, or supernatural beings generally. The woman's use of it here likely reflects Canaanite religious vocabulary rather than precise theological categories. Her perception was filtered through her pagan framework.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does our worldview shape how we interpret supernatural experiences?
2. What does the ambiguity of this account suggest about human perception of divine activity?

Interlinear Text

אָמַר	לָהּ	וְהַמֶּלֶךְ	אֵל	תִּירָא י	כִּי	מִה
said	H0	And the king	H408	unto her Be not afraid	H3588	H4100
H559		H4428		H3372		
רָא יְתִי	וְהַמֶּלֶךְ	וְהַמֶּלֶךְ	אֵל	שָׂא וְלֹא	אֱלֹהִים	רָא יְתִי
I saw	said	thou And the woman	H413	unto Saul	gods	I saw
H7200	H559	H802		H7586	H430	H7200
עָלָה	מִן	הָאָרֶץ:				
ascending	H4480	out of the earth				
H5927		H776				

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