

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'aretz') 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

Psalm 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

מְהִיא כִּי תִירא אַל בְּמַלְךָ לְהִתְאַמֵּר
said H559 And the king H4428 unto her Be not afraid H3372 H3588 H4100

בְּאִתִּי אֱלֹהִים שְׁאַל אֶל בָּאָשָׁה וְתִתְאַמֵּר
I saw H7200 said H559 thou And the woman H802 unto Saul H7586 gods H430 I saw H7200

עַל יְמִינְךָ בָּאָרֶץ מִן
ascending H4480 out of the earth H776

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org