

2 Kings 4:40

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot. And they could not eat thereof.

Analysis

So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot. And they could not eat thereof.

This verse contributes to the overall theme of chapter 4: God's compassionate power through His prophet. The divine name emphasizes Yahweh's covenant relationship with Israel and His sovereign control over historical events. The prophetic ministry served as God's primary means of covenant enforcement, calling both kings and people to faithfulness. During this period, Israel and Judah struggled with persistent idolatry, particularly Baal worship introduced under Ahab and Jezebel.

The narrative demonstrates God's justice in judging covenant unfaithfulness while maintaining His ultimate purposes for redemption.

Historical Context

Historical Setting: 2 Kings 4 takes place during the Elisha prophetic ministry, approximately 850-800 BCE. The chapter's theme (Elisha's Miracles of Provision and Life) reflects the historical reality of God's compassionate provision through

prophetic miracles while both kingdoms struggled with persistent idolatry. Archaeological evidence from this period includes royal inscriptions, administrative documents, and material culture that corroborate the biblical account while providing additional context for understanding the political and social dynamics at work.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does this verse contribute to understanding the theological message of 2 Kings 4 regarding god's compassionate power through his prophet?
2. What does this passage reveal about God's character, particularly His justice, mercy, and faithfulness to covenant promises?
3. In what practical ways should this text shape contemporary Christian thinking about faithfulness, worship, and obedience to God?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּצְקוּ	אָ יֵשׁ	לֶאֱכֹל:	יְהִי		
So they poured out	O thou man	And it came to pass as they were eating	H1961		
H3332	H376	H398			
לֶאֱכֹל:	מִהֲנֹי יָד	יְהִי מָה	צָעָה קוּ		
And it came to pass as they were eating	of the pottage	H1992	that they cried out		
H398	H5138		H6817		
וַיֹּאמְרוּ	מָה יָת	בַּסִּיר	אָ יֵשׁ	הָאֱלֹהִים יָם	וְלֹא אֱלֹהִים
and said	there is death	in the pot	O thou man	of God	H3808
H559	H4194	H5518	H376	H430	
וְכָל	לֶאֱכֹל:				
And they could	And it came to pass as they were eating				
H3201	H398				

Additional Cross-References

Mark 16:18 (Parallel theme): They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Exodus 10:17 (References God): Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and intreat the LORD your God, that he may take away from me this death only.

Exodus 15:23 (Parallel theme): And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.