

2 Kings 4:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.

Analysis

And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.

This verse contributes to the overall theme of chapter 4: God's compassionate power through His prophet. 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

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

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

וַיְהִי י	הַיּוֹם	עָבַר וְ	אֵלִישָׁע	אֶל	שׁוּנֵם	וְשָׁם
H1961	And it fell on a day	as he passed by	that Elisha	H413	to Shunem	H8033
	H3117	H5674	H477		H7766	
אִשָּׁה	גְּדוֹלָה	וַתִּחְזֹק	בּוֹ	לֶאֱכֹל	לֶחֶם:	וַיְהִי
woman	where was a great	and she constrained	H0	him to eat	bread	H1961
H802	H1419	H2388		H398	H3899	
מִדָּי י	עָבַר וְ	יָסֵר	שָׁמָּה	לֶאֱכֹל	לֶחֶם:	
And so it was that as oft	as he passed by	he turned	H8033	him to eat	bread	
H1767	H5674	H5493		H398	H3899	

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 19:18 (Parallel theme): And their border was toward Jezreel, and Chesulloth, and Shunem,

Job 1:3 (Parallel theme): His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

Job 32:9 (Parallel theme): Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.

Genesis 19:3 (Parallel theme): And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

Luke 24:29 (Parallel theme): But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

1 Kings 1:3 (Parallel theme): So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag a Shunammite, and brought her to the king.

2 Samuel 19:32 (Parallel theme): Now Barzillai was a very aged man, even fourscore years old: and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he was a very great man.

Judges 19:20 (Parallel theme): And the old man said, Peace be with thee; howsoever let all thy wants lie upon me; only lodge not in the street.

Acts 16:15 (Parallel theme): And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

Proverbs 7:21 (Parallel theme): With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.