

Judges 17:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed be thou of the LORD, my son.

Analysis

And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed be thou of the LORD, my son. This verse reveals profound spiritual confusion. Micah confesses theft from his own mother—violating the eighth and fifth commandments. The mother had pronounced a curse (alah, אֵלָה) on the thief, yet her response—"Blessed be thou of the LORD"—epitomizes theological perversion. She invokes Yahweh's name to bless a confessed thief while planning to use the silver for idol-making (verse 3).

This reflects the syncretistic worldview where Yahweh becomes a manipulable deity rather than the sovereign, holy God who demands exclusive worship. Her "blessing" uses the covenant name LORD (Yahweh, יְהוָה), yet completely contradicts His revealed character. As Reformed theology emphasizes, true knowledge of God comes through His self-revelation in Scripture, not human imagination. This verse illustrates total depravity—even family relationships and religious language become corrupted by sin. Paul warns that "having a form of godliness" while "denying the power thereof" characterizes false religion (2 Timothy 3:5).

Historical Context

The eleven hundred shekels of silver (approximately 28 pounds) represent massive wealth—over 36 times the price of a slave (Exodus 20:32). That Micah's family possessed such wealth suggests they were among the landed elite, yet this economic privilege did not translate into spiritual faithfulness. The practice of cursing thieves was widespread in the ancient Near East, with curses believed to have inherent power. However, Micah's mother perverts this by invoking Yahweh's name for both curse and blessing in service of idolatry, violating the third commandment.

This incident reveals the breakdown of family catechism and covenant education. Deuteronomy 6:6-9 commanded parents to teach God's law diligently to children, yet Micah's mother teaches the opposite. The generational apostasy prophesied in Judges 2:10-12 manifests here: a family that knows covenant vocabulary but not covenant theology.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How do we invoke God's name to bless what He explicitly condemns, revealing our syncretistic worldview?
2. What areas of life reflect the inconsistency of religious language paired with disobedient practice?
3. How does this passage warn against presuming God's blessing while living in unrepented sin?

Interlinear Text

וַתֹּאמֶר	אִמּוֹ	אֶלֶף	וַיֵּאָמֶר	הִנֵּה כֶסֶף
And he said	it And his mother	The eleven hundred	H3967	behold the silver
H559	H517	H505		H3701
אֲשֶׁר	לָקַחְתִּי יְיָ	וְאֵתִי לָךְ	אֶלֶּיְךָ	
H834	is with me I took	H0	H859	from thee about which thou cursedst
	H3947			H422
וַיֹּאמֶר	בְּאָזְנוֹי	הִנֵּה	הִנֵּה כֶסֶף	אֵתִי
H1571	And he said	of also in mine ears	H2009	behold the silver
	H559	H241		H854
				H589
				H3701
לָקַחְתִּי יְיָ	וַתֹּאמֶר	אִמּוֹ	בְּרֵךְ וְנָ	בְּנִי
is with me I took	And he said	it And his mother	Blessed	my son
H3947	H559	H517	H1288	H1121
לֵיהוָה:				
be thou of the LORD				
H3068				

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 13:25 (Curse): And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.

Ruth 3:10 (Blessing): And he said, Blessed be thou of the LORD, my daughter: for thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich.