

1 Kings 20:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Ben-hadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me.

Analysis

And Ben-hadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me.

This verse contributes to the broader narrative of Ahab's wars with Syria, within the book's focus on prophetic ministry of Elijah confronting Baalism.

The Hebrew text reveals nuances important for understanding this passage's contribution to 1 Kings' theological message about kingship, covenant, and faithfulness to Yahweh. This verse demonstrates the consequences when God's people—especially their leaders—either follow or forsake the covenant established at Sinai.

Historical Context

First Kings was written during or after the Babylonian exile (6th century BCE), reflecting on the monarchy period (10th-9th centuries BCE) to explain why the kingdoms fell. Elijah's ministry (c. 860-850 BCE) occurred during Ahab's reign, a time of intense spiritual crisis in Israel.

Ancient Near Eastern kingship ideology viewed kings as divine representatives responsible for maintaining cosmic order through right worship. Archaeological

discoveries from sites like Megiddo, Hazor, and Samaria confirm the historical reliability of 1 Kings' descriptions of building projects and administrative structures.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does this passage illustrate the importance of complete obedience to God's word without compromise?
2. What does Elijah's ministry reveal about God's character and His commitment to His covenant people?
3. How does this verse point toward or prepare for the coming of Christ and His eternal kingdom?

Interlinear Text

וְשָׁלַח	אֵלָיו	בָּנָיו	בְּנֵי דָבָר	וְיֹאמְרָה	כִּי	וְיֹעַשְׂתָה
sent	H413	H0	And Benhadad	unto him and said	H3541	do so
H7971			H1130	H559		H6213
אֱלֹהִים	וְיֹצֵא	וְיֹסֵד	וְיֹאמֶר	וְיֹשְׁפָךְ	וְיֹרֶא	וְיֹעַפְךְ
The gods	H3541	unto me and more also	H518	shall suffice	if the dust	
H430		H3254		H5606		H6083
שְׁמָרְנוּ	לְשָׁעַלְתָּם	לְכָלְתָּם	רָאשָׁרְתָּם	בְּרָגְלִים	אֲשֶׁר	בְּרָגְלִים
of Samaria	for handfuls	H3605	for all the people	H834	that follow	
H8111	H8168		H5971			H7272

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 19:2 (References God): Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time.

Exodus 11:8 (Parallel theme): And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger.

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