

1 Kings 20:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, when Ben-hadad heard this message, as he was drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions, that he said unto his servants, Set yourselves in array. And they set themselves in array against the city.

Analysis

And it came to pass, when Ben-hadad heard this message, as he was drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions, that he said unto his servants, Set yourselves in array. And they set themselves in array against the city.

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

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

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

וַיְהִי י	כַּשֵּׁם עַ	אֶת	הַדָּבָר	הַזֶּה	
H1961	And it came to pass when Benhadad heard	H853	this message	H2088	
	H8085		H1697		
וְהָיָה	שָׁתָה ה	ה וְא	וְהַמְלָכִים	בְּסֹכֹת	וַיֹּאמֶר
H1931	as he was drinking	H1931	he and the kings	in the pavilions	that he said
	H8354		H4428	H5521	H559
אֶל	עֲבָדָיו	וַיֵּשׁ יָמֹו	וַיֵּשׁ יָמֹו	עַל	
H413	unto his servants	Set	Set	H5921	
	H5650	H7760	H7760		
					הָעִיר:
					themselves in array against the city
					H5892

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 16:9 (Kingdom): And his servant Zimri, captain of half his chariots, conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza steward of his house in Tirzah.

1 Kings 20:16 (Kingdom): And they went out at noon. But Ben-hadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him.