

1 Kings 20:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said, Whether they be come out for peace, take them alive; or whether they be come out for war, take them alive.

Analysis

And he said, Whether they be come out for peace, take them alive; or whether they be come out for war, take them alive.

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

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

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

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|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| וַיֹּאמֶר | אִם | לְשָׁלֹם | וְצֵאוּ | אִם | תִּפְּשׂוּם: |
| And he said | H518 | for peace | Whether they be come out | take | them alive |
| H559 | | H7965 | H3318 | H8610 | H2416 |
| וְאִם | לְמִלְחָמָה | וְצֵאוּ | אִם | תִּפְּשׂוּם: | |
| H518 | for war | Whether they be come out | them alive | take | |
| | H4421 | H3318 | H2416 | H8610 | |
