

1 Kings 20:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Ben-hadad said unto him, The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then said Ahab, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away.

Analysis

And Ben-hadad said unto him, The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then said Ahab, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away.

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. God's covenant faithfulness remains steadfast despite human unfaithfulness, ultimately fulfilled in the new covenant through Christ.

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

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

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

וַיֹּאמֶר	אֶל יוֹ	הָעָר יִם	אֲשֶׁר	לָקַח	אָבִי
And Benhadad said	H413	unto him The cities	H834	took	as my father
H559		H5892		H3947	H1
מֵאֵת	אָבִי	אֲשֶׁר יִב	וְחָצוֹת	שָׁם	לָב
H853	as my father	I will restore	streets	and thou shalt make	H0
	H1	H7725	H2351	H7760	
בְּדָמָה שָׁקָה	כְּאֲשֶׁר	שָׁם	אָבִי	בְּשָׂר מֶרְוֹן	
for thee in Damascus	H834	and thou shalt make	as my father	in Samaria	
H1834		H7760	H1	H8111	
וַיַּעֲבֹד יְהוָה	בְּרִית יִתְּ	וַיִּשְׁלַחְהוּ:	וַיַּכֶּת	לֹא	
H589	a covenant	Then said Ahab I will send thee away	So he made	H0	
	H1285	H7971	H3772		
בְּרִית יִתְּ	וַיִּשְׁלַחְהוּ:				
a covenant	Then said Ahab I will send thee away				
H1285	H7971				

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 15:20 (Parallel theme): So Ben-hadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of the hosts which he had against the cities of Israel, and smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-beth-maachah, and all Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali.

Isaiah 26:10 (Parallel theme): Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD.

1 Kings 20:42 (Parallel theme): And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.