

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

And Benhadad said	H559	H413	unto him	H5892	the cities	H834	לְקַח אֲשֶׁר	אֲבִי	took as my father	H1
H853	as my father	H1	I will restore	H7725	streets	H2351	and thou shalt make	שָׁמֶן	לְבָנָה	H0
for thee in Damascus	H1834	H834	and thou shalt make	H7760	as my father	H1	בְּשָׁמֶר וְ	אֲבִי	in Samaria	H8111
H589	a covenant	H1285	Then said Ahab I will send thee away	H7971	So he made	H3772	לְבָנָה	וְיִכְרֹת		H0
a covenant	H1285		וְיִשְׁלַחְתָּה							

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.