

# 1 Kings 20:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And as the king passed by, he cried unto the king: and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle; and, behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver.

## Analysis

---

**And as the king passed by, he cried unto the king: and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle; and, behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver.**

This verse contributes to the broader narrative of Ahab's wars with Syria, within the book's focus on the 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

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## **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	הַמֶּלֶךְ	עָבַר	וְהוּא	צָעָק	אֶל	הַמֶּלֶךְ
H1961	And as the king	passed by	H1931	he cried	H413	And as the king
	H4428	H5674		H6817		H4428
וַיֹּאמֶר	עַבְדְּךָ	יָצָא	בְּקֶרֶב	הַמִּלְחָמָה	וְהָיָה	הָאִישׁ
and he said	Thy servant	went out	into the midst	of the battle	H2009	a man
H559	H5650	H3318	H7130	H4421		H376
סָר	וַיָּבֹא	אֶל י	הָאִישׁ	וַיֹּאמֶר	שָׁמַר	הָאִישׁ
turned aside	and brought	H413	a man	and he said	Keep	H853
H5493	H935		H376	H559	H8104	H376
הָיָה	אִם	יִפְקֹד	יִפְקֹד	וְהָיָה	נַפְשׁוֹ	תָּחַת
H2088	H518	he be missing	he be missing	H1961	be for his life	H8478
		H6485	H6485		H5315	
נַפְשׁוֹ	אִם	כֶּסֶף	כֶּסֶף	תִּשְׁקוּל:		
be for his life	H176	a talent	of silver	or else thou shalt pay		
H5315		H3603	H3701	H8254		

## Additional Cross-References

---

**2 Kings 10:24** (Parallel theme): And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings, Jehu appointed fourscore men without, and said, If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life shall be for the life of him.