

1 Kings 20:42

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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.

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

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

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

רַאֲמֵן	יְהִי הָרָאָם	לְעֵד	לְמִזְבֵּחַ
And he said	And he said the LORD	I am	Because thou hast let go
H559	H3541	H559	H3282
			H7971
אַתָּה אֲשֶׁר	שְׁרָמָם	מִיד	וְבִיאָת הָ
H853 a man	whom I appointed to utter destruction	out of thy hand	H1961
H376	H2764	H3027	
וְנַפְשֵׁךְ	לְנַפְשֵׁךְ	עַמּוֹךְ	תְּנַחֲתָךְ
shall go for his life	shall go for his life	and thy people	H8478
H5315	H8478	H5971	
עַמּוֹךְ			
and thy people			
H5971			

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 20:39 (Parallel theme): 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.

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