

1 Kings 21:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?
And he answered, I have found thee: because thou hast sold
thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD.

Analysis

And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD.

This verse contributes to the broader narrative of Naboth's vineyard, within the book's focus on prophetic ministry of Elijah confronting Baalism. The prophetic office represents God's faithful witness even in apostasy, calling His people back to covenant faithfulness.

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

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

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	אֶחָאָב	אֶל	אֵל לִי הוּא	מָצָא אֹתִי	אֹיְבִי י
And he answered	And Ahab	H413	to Elijah	Hast thou found	me O mine enemy
H559	H256		H452	H4672	H341
וַיֹּאמֶר	מָצָא אֹתִי	י עַן	הִתְמַכְרְךָ	לַעֲשׂוֹת	
And he answered	Hast thou found	H3282	thee because thou hast sold	thyself to work	
H559	H4672		H4376	H6213	
הָרָע	בְּעֵינֵי י	יְהוָה:			
evil	in the sight	of the LORD			
H7451	H5869	H3068			

Additional Cross-References

Romans 7:14 (Parallel theme): For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

2 Kings 17:17 (Evil): And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

1 Kings 18:17 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel?

1 Kings 21:25 (Evil): But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.

Revelation 11:10 (Parallel theme): And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

Isaiah 52:3 (References Lord): For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.