

1 Kings 8:37

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be;

Analysis

If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be;

This verse contributes to the broader narrative of dedication of the temple, within the book's focus on Solomon's wisdom, temple building, and tragic apostasy.

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. Solomon's reign (c. 970-930 BCE) represented Israel's golden age of peace and prosperity.

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

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does the temple as God's dwelling place help us understand Christ's incarnation and the church as God's temple today?
2. What does Solomon's prayer and dedication teach about approaching God in worship and prayer?
3. How does this verse point toward or prepare for the coming of Christ and His eternal kingdom?

Interlinear Text

רָעָב	כִּי	יְהִי הָ	בָּא רָץ	יָבֹר	כִּי	יְהִי הָ
famine	H3588	H1961	If there be in the land	if there be pestilence	H3588	H1961
H7458			H776	H1698		
שֹׂדֵף וְ	אֲרֶבֶת הָ	יִרְקָן וְ	חֲסִיל	כִּי	יְהִי הָ	כִּי
blasting	mildew	locust	or if there be caterpillar	H3588	H1961	H3588
H7711	H3420	H697	H2625			
יָצַר	ל וְ	אֹיְבֵי וְ	בָּא רָץ	שָׁעָר יוֹ	כָּל	
besiege	H0	if their enemy	If there be in the land	of their cities	H3605	
H6887		H341	H776	H8179		
נִגַּע	כָּל	מַחֲלָה:				
whatsoever plague	H3605	whatsoever sickness				
H5061		H4245				

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 26:16 (Parallel theme): I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.

2 Chronicles 20:9 (Parallel theme): If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.