

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to 1 Kings 20

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through 1 Kings

We got three more chapters left –

And we actually have a pretty long chapter tonight.

Well, let's go ahead and get started and go before the Lord.

Let's pray...

In our study last week –

We saw how the Lord was not done with Elijah –

One of the charges that the Lord had for Elijah was the calling of the person that was going to succeed him in being the mouthpiece of the Lord to the Kingdom of Israel.

So we saw the mantle being passed from Elijah to Elisha.

Beginning in our text this evening – Elijah and Elisha are going to take a break in our text –

As the focus now turns to King Ahab.

So really what we are going to see this week and next week is a series of battles between Ahab and Ben-Hadad, the King of Syria

[1Ki 20:1-43 NKJV] 1 Now Ben-Hadad the king of Syria gathered all his forces together; thirty-two kings [were] with him, with horses and chariots. And he went up and besieged Samaria, and made war against it. 2 Then he sent messengers into the city to Ahab king of Israel, and said to him, "Thus says Ben-Hadad: 3 'Your silver and your gold [are] mine; your loveliest wives and children are mine.'
"

A little background here –

Samaria is the capitol of the Northern Kingdom -

And you might recall that the Northern Kingdom had just experienced severe drought.

The King of Syria – Ben-Hadad, gathers an army to make war against Israel.

The entire city is surrounded – that is how they fought battles in the Old Testament – they would simply surround the city until they gave up or until they died of starvation.

Ben-Hadad sends word to King Ahab – I want everything you have of value.

Not only the material stuff you have but your family as well.

This king is overconfident in his power –

He lays out this bold proclamation of everything that Ahab possessed.

He is saying, "You are going to give this to me or else"

Church – there is an enemy today who is trying to lay hold of everything valuable in our life.

this is spiritual warfare –

He is trying to lay hold of our resources, our marriage, our children, our grandchildren.

And if we are in a position of weakness and spiritual decline – the enemy will press harder to take those things from us.

This is why our spiritual condition is so important –

Think about when Jesus warned Peter – during the last supper.

[Luk 22:31 NKJV] 31 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift [you] as wheat.

Peter – Satan has personally asked for you- he wants to destroy your faith.

And because Peter put his faith in his own strength – he failed.

Turn to 1 Peter 5

[1Pe 5:8-10 NKJV] 8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your

brotherhood in the world. 10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle [you].

This is the promise of God – if we are sober and vigilant – doesn't mean we are perfect – it just simply means that if we fall, we get back up and repent and continue to run the race – God will strengthen us and establish us so that the enemy cannot get that ground.

But the danger is - if we are willfully walking around in unrepented sin - then we are putting ourselves in a very dangerous predicament.

Ahab was not walking with the Lord – he was walking in open rebellion – he was leading the entire nation to worship Baal –

And look at how he responds to Ben-Hadad.

4 And the king of Israel answered and said, “My lord, O king, just as you say, I and all that I have [are] yours.”

Notice that Ahab doesn't even hesitate

He is in full submission to this pagan king. “My Lord, O king”

By the way – everything that he had belonged to the Lord in the first place – it wasn't even his.

But he gives into the enemies demands because he was so spiritually weak.

And the same thing happens to the believer who is spiritually weak.

Not walking right with the Lord – the enemy comes.

There is no resistance –

Ahab was a weak king –

Contrast his actions with David who tells Goliath

[1Sa 17:45 NKJV] "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin.

But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

David walked with God

Write this verse down –

[Jas 4:7 NKJV] 7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

In order for us to resist the devil – there has to be a submission to God first.

And if we are not walking in submission to God – then we are not going to be able to resist the devil because he is going to do whatever he wants with us.

He is going to stomp all over us.

Because if we are not in submission to God – we are no longer under the covering of God.

1 Peter 5:8-10 – we just read it.

This is why Ahab couldn't stand up to Ben-Hadad.

5 Then the messengers came back and said, "Thus speaks Ben-Hadad, saying, 'Indeed I have sent to you, saying, "You shall deliver to me your silver and your gold, your wives and your children"; 6 'but I will send my servants to you tomorrow about this time, and they shall search your house and the houses of your servants. And it shall be, [that] whatever is pleasant in your eyes, they will put in their hands and take [it].' "

Ben-Hadad gets word that Ahab was quick to yield to his request.

Notice that he takes it up a notch.

Now, he sends word that he is sending his guys to search for what they want – and they are going to take it.

But also notice – it has extended to the king's servants.

Ahab gave in a little area but the enemy wanted more.

And that is exactly what our enemy does.

The moment that we begin to compromise and turn things over to him – it doesn't stop.

7 So the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, "Notice, please, and see how this [man] seeks trouble, for he sent to me for my wives, my children, my silver, and my gold; and I did not deny him." 8 And all the elders and all the people said to him, "Do not listen or consent." 9 Therefore he said to the messengers of Ben-Hadad, "Tell my lord the king, 'All that you sent for to your servant the first time I will do, but this thing I cannot do.' " And the messengers departed and brought back word to him.

Ahab finally does something good –

He seeks council

He tells them – I yielded to the bad man's demands – but now he wants more.

And their response – "Do not listen or consent"

Don't do it Ahab.

But then Ahab – sends messengers back – that he will do the first thing but he doesn't agree to these new terms.

"I will compromise a little bit – but not a lot"

Ahab still doesn't get it.

10 Then Ben-Hadad sent to him and said, "The gods do so to me, and more also, if enough dust is left of Samaria for a handful for each of the people who follow me."

The gods do so to me, and more also – do you guys remember hearing those words?

We heard them a few weeks ago

Those were the exact words of the message that Jezebel gave the messenger to give to Elijah.

The same spirit that was in Jezebel is in Ben-Hadad.

Again, we must remember that we don't wrestle against flesh and blood – spiritual warfare out there.

11 So the king of Israel answered and said, "Tell [him], 'Let not the one who puts on [his armor] boast like the one who takes [it off].'"

In other words – "We'll see about that!"

He is finally standing up to the enemy.

12 And it happened when [Ben-Hadad] heard this message, as he and the kings [were] drinking at the command post, that he said to his servants, "Get ready."

And they got ready to attack the city. 13 Suddenly a prophet approached Ahab king of Israel, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Have you seen all this great

multitude? Behold, I will deliver it into your hand today, and you shall know that I [am] the LORD.' "

As Ben-Hadad is getting ready to attack – notice a prophet comes to Ahab and gives him a word from the Lord.

And notice again that it comes after Ahab finally makes a stand

And the message from the Lord – “I am going to fight on your behalf.”

You took a stand, I am going to take a stand with you

The same thing goes for our lives.

God knows that we don't have it in ourselves to win the fight on our own.

He is willing to take the stand with us and fight the battle for us.

But we first have to come to the point where we say – this is enough.

And the Lord will meet us where we are at.

And He will fight the fight for you and for me.

One of the things I don't want us to miss in all this.

Ahab was extremely wicked, yet God was determined to win his heart.

This is why He said, I will deliver it into your hand today, and you shall know that I [am] the LORD.' “

14 So Ahab said, "By whom?" And he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'By the young leaders of the provinces.' " Then he said, "Who will set the battle in order?" And he answered, "You."

Ahab wants to know how God is going to give them the victory.

And the prophet's response – God is going to use you.

Ahab – despite seeing with his own eyes the fire rain down from the sky – he has no concept of what God is able to do in his behalf.

15 Then he mustered the young leaders of the provinces, and there were two hundred and thirty-two; and after them he mustered all the people, all the children of Israel--seven thousand. 16 So they went out at noon. Meanwhile Ben-Hadad and the thirty-two kings helping him were getting drunk at the command post. 17 The young leaders of the provinces went out first. And Ben-Hadad sent out [a patrol], and they told him, saying, "Men are coming out of Samaria!" 18 So he said, "If they have come out for peace, take them alive; and if they have come out for war, take them alive." 19 Then these young leaders of the provinces went out of the city with the army which followed them. 20 And each one killed his man; so the Syrians fled, and Israel pursued them; and Ben-Hadad the king of Syria escaped on a horse with the cavalry. 21 Then the king of Israel went out

and attacked the horses and chariots, and killed the Syrians with a great slaughter.

A real brief summary of the battle –

Ahab sends 232 into battle

Ben-Hadad tells his guys – I want these 232 guys alive – not dead (vs 18)

The 232 guys – they came to fight.

They start killing the Syrians as they come to arrest them

Ahab then sends 7000 more troops to help finish the job.

And they chase Ben Hadad back home.

So victory is achieved – just like God had told Ahab.

22 And the prophet came to the king of Israel and said to him, "Go, strengthen yourself; take note, and see what you should do, for in the spring of the year the king of Syria will come up against you."

The prophet comes back to Ahab and tells him to prepare to fight Ben Hadad again.

23 Then the servants of the king of Syria said to him, "Their gods [are] gods of the hills. Therefore they were stronger than we; but if we fight against them in the plain, surely we will be stronger than they. 24 "So do this thing: Dismiss the

kings, each from his position, and put captains in their places; 25 "and you shall muster an army like the army that you have lost, horse for horse and chariot for chariot. Then we will fight against them in the plain; surely we will be stronger than they." And he listened to their voice and did so.

In the same way that Ahab was to prepare – the King of Syria was going to prepare – They want payback – they were just defeated - they just lost a bunch of men. The kings advisors tell him that the reason they lost was because the god of Israel was the god of the hills –

Their pagan god is more powerful in the flat lands – if they fight Israel again in the plains, they will surely win.

Also, they advice the king to get rid of the other leaders and bring in more people that know how to fight.

26 So it was, in the spring of the year, that Ben-Hadad mustered the Syrians and went up to Aphek to fight against Israel. 27 And the children of Israel were mustered and given provisions, and they went against them. Now the children of Israel encamped before them like two little flocks of goats, while the Syrians filled the countryside. 28 Then a man of God came and spoke to the king of Israel, and said, "Thus says the LORD: 'Because the Syrians have said, "The LORD [is] God of the hills, but He [is] not God of the valleys," therefore I will

deliver all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I [am] the LORD.' " 29 And they encamped opposite each other for seven days. So it was that on the seventh day the battle was joined; and the children of Israel killed one hundred thousand foot soldiers [of] the Syrians in one day. 30 But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; then a wall fell on twenty-seven thousand of the men [who were] left. And Ben-Hadad fled and went into the city, into an inner chamber.

So – here is how round two goes.

Ahab anticipates Syria attacking

He takes his men and they meet the Syrian army.

After a week of facing each other off – the children of Israel kill 100,000 Syrian soldiers.

Those that escaped ran into the nearest city and were crushed when they tried to hide in the city walls. That was another 27,000 Syrians.

But Ben-Hadad was able to escape.

31 Then his servants said to him, "Look now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel [are] merciful kings. Please, let us put sackcloth around our waists and ropes around our heads, and go out to the king of Israel; perhaps he will spare your life." 32 So they wore sackcloth around their waists and [put]

ropes around their heads, and came to the king of Israel and said, "Your servant Ben-Hadad says, 'Please let me live.' " And he said, "[Is] he still alive? He [is] my brother." 33 Now the men were watching closely to see whether [any sign of mercy would come] from him; and they quickly grasped [at this word] and said, "Your brother Ben-Hadad." So he said, "Go, bring him." Then Ben-Hadad came out to him; and he had him come up into the chariot. 34 So [Ben-Hadad] said to him, "The cities which my father took from your father I will restore; and you may set up marketplaces for yourself in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria." Then [Ahab said], "I will send you away with this treaty." So he made a treaty with him and sent him away.

It was the end for Hadad - so his advisors quickly encouraged him to ask for peace they told him to throw himself to the mercy of the king of Israel

and why not? He had nothing to lose.

The problem was that not did Ahab did not only show him mercy – they became best friends.

And Ahab makes a treaty with Ben Hadad

Question – did Ben Hadad really intend to make peace with Israel – No

His whole plan was to use a season of peace and apparent friendship as a

way to rebuild so he could once again attack.

Ahab should have executed Ben Hadad

And we will see the consequences of his actions

35 Now a certain man of the sons of the prophets said to his neighbor by the word of the LORD, "Strike me, please." And the man refused to strike him. 36 Then he said to him, "Because you have not obeyed the voice of the LORD, surely, as soon as you depart from me, a lion shall kill you." And as soon as he left him, a lion found him and killed him.

I know what you are all thinking –

What?

This prophet was being commissioned by God to go confront King Ahab with a poignant object lesson.

So he approached someone with a command to smack him with a serious blow that would wound him; that wound would be part of the lesson for Ahab.

The person the prophet asked to strike him knew this was being directed by God (notice it says that it was his neighbor – which means. he was also a son of the prophets) but he refused.

That's why the guy was judged so harshly

He should have known better.

The problem was that he was trying to use his logic.

Now – think about how this applies to our everyday lives

Because sometimes the Lord will ask us to do something that doesn't make logical sense –

God doesn't tell us to walk in obedience only if it makes logical sense to us

We are asked to obey him only if His word is clear to us.

Then we are to follow it, we are to do it.

That is what we studied on Sunday as we looked at the life of Abraham in our study in Romans.

It takes faith to obey the Lord

Keep this guy in the back of your mind – the first guy that got eaten by a lion.

Because he becomes a picture of what Ahab has done

37 And he found another man, and said, "Strike me, please." So the man struck him, inflicting a wound. 38 Then the prophet departed and waited for the king by the road, and disguised himself with a bandage over his eyes. 39 Now as the king passed by, he cried out to the king and said, "Your servant went out into the

midst of the battle; and there, a man came over and brought a man to me, and said, 'Guard this man; if by any means he is missing, your life shall be for his life, or else you shall pay a talent of silver.' 40 "While your servant was busy here and there, he was gone." Then the king of Israel said to him, "So [shall] your judgment [be]; you yourself have decided [it]."

So – this is very similar to when the prophet Nathan had the conversation with David – and told him the story of the guys taking the other guy's sheep and cooking it.

And David goes – that guy deserves to die – And Nathan goes – that guy is you.

So the prophet tells the king the story that he was in battle and he was given an order to be in charge of watching a prisoner – he lost sight of the prisoner

He got busy – and the prisoner is gone. So he was told that he either had to pay with his life or pay a talent of silver.

Ahab's response – when you are given an order – you should obey it or pay the consequences. No excuses.

You are accountable for what you have done.

You chose to be distracted.

Being distracted is our choice

By the way – we are all accountable to the Lord

[1Co 7:35 NKJV] 35 And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction.

Paul says that we are to serve the Lord without distraction –

So this prophet is giving the king a picture of a servant who has failed to do what he was called to do because he was distracted.

And that which was entrusted to him – is gone.

41 And he hastened to take the bandage away from his eyes; and the king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets. 42 Then he said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Because you have let slip out of [your] hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people.' " **43 So the king of Israel went to his house sullen and displeased, and came to Samaria.**

You see the point of the story –

The prophet tells Ahab that in the same way that you just passed judgment – as you allowed the man to judge for himself what he did – God is allowing you to judge yourself for what you did.

God entrusted to you, His command to deal with the enemies and instead – you made the choice to become distracted, to take your eye off the task that God had given to

you and you did what was right in your own heart – and now, you will be judged in the same way.

You see, God's intent in all this was not simply to bring justice to a pagan king

God wanted Ahab to recognize and be in submission to God's authority.

And Ahab failed the test – again.

He is not letting God be the Lord.

He is not letting God be the God of His life.

He still wants to be in control over every aspect of his life.

43 So the king of Israel went to his house sullen and displeased, and came to Samaria.

He was sad and displeased – but notice, he did not repent.

By the way – as we will see over the next two weeks –

He still has one more battle against the Syrians – and Ahab will face judgment for the choice he made.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'