

A CERTAIN MAN DREW A BOW AT A VENTURE

TEXT: I KINGS 22:29-40

INTRODUCTION:

1. King Ahab was a man whom God had marked for death. Ahab tried to disguise himself, but when the LORD marks a man for death disguises will not do any good.
2. Ahab coveted the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, and when Naboth would not let him have it, King Ahab and his wicked wife Queen Jezebel had Naboth killed.
3. The LORD sent Elijah the prophet to Ahab, and Elijah said, "Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine" (I Kings 21:19).
4. In the very next chapter, we see Elijah's words fulfilled (22:29-40).

I. AHAB'S WICKEDNESS

1. We are first introduced to King Ahab in I Kings 16:28-33. From these verses we learn that Ahab did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him (16:30).
2. Ahab took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him (16:31, 32).
3. In I Kings 16:33 we see that "Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him."
4. King Ahab and Queen Jezebel precipitated a religious crisis in Israel. The entire nation was on the verge of abandoning the true worship of Jehovah God and replacing God with Baal, the heathen god.
5. But God raised up Elijah the prophet, who turned the nation back to God and killed the prophets of Baal (I Kings 18:20, 21, 36-41).
6. In I Kings 20, we read that the LORD gave Israel a great victory over the Syrians. Benhadad, the king of Syria, meekly surrendered to Ahab. But rather than execute him, Ahab foolishly let him go. The LORD pronounced judgment upon Ahab for this (I Kings 20:34-43).
7. This was the first pronouncement of judgment, but there would be more to follow.
8. Proverbs 29:1 says, "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

II. GOD'S JUDGMENT

1. After King Ahab allowed Benhadad to escape, the prophet of God said, "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" (I Kings 20:42).
2. "Therefore thy life shall go for his life" -- later on King Ahab would himself be killed on the battlefield by a Syrian soldier.
3. This prophecy "displeased" King Ahab (20:43).
4. He then went to see Naboth the Jezreelite (chapter 21). Chapter 21 records the sad story of what happened. Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard (21:1-4). When Naboth refused to sell it to Ahab, Jezebel plotted to have Naboth falsely accused of blasphemy and quickly executed.
5. After Naboth's death, Ahab took possession of Naboth's vineyard (21:5-16). Elijah went out to meet Ahab, and pronounced the judgment of God against him for his injustice (21:17-20).
6. Elijah told him that not only was he personally marked for death, but God would cut off his posterity (I Kings 21:21).
7. Ahab was given one more warning before he went to his final battle. In I Kings 22:17 and 28, Micaiah the prophet said to King Ahab, "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd...If thou return at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me."

III. AHAB'S DEATH

1. First Kings 22:1 indicates that three years had passed since Elijah told King Ahab he was marked for death.
2. I heard a story about a certain man who was walking in his neighborhood when he came face to face with the Grim Reaper. He noticed an expression of surprise on the the Grim Reaper's face, but the Grim Reaper said not a word.
3. This man was terribly frightened and so he went to a friend for advice. His friend told him the Grim Reaper would probably come for him that night and he would surely be dead by the morning light.
4. This made the fellow even more afraid and so they talked about a way of escape. They decided the man should get in his car and drive to a distant city in an effort to elude the Grim Reaper.
5. So the man got in his car and drove all night, finally arriving in the distant city before the break of day. But before he climbed out of his

- car, the Grim Reaper tapped him on his shoulder and said, "Excuse me, but I have come for you."
6. The man was shocked, and said, "I thought I saw you yesterday near my home!"
 7. "Exactly," said the Grim Reaper. "That is why I was surprised because I was told our appointment was for today in this city."
 8. Like that hapless fellow, King Ahab tried to escape death, but when God marks a man for death there is no escape (cf. I Kings 22:29-34).
 9. Matthew Henry said, "Those cannot escape with life whom God hath doomed to death." No armour can protect a man from the darts of divine vengeance (I Kings 22:34).
 10. Amos 9:2-4 says, "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them: And though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good."
 11. I heard about two soldiers in a fierce battle. Bullets were flying everywhere, and the young soldier admitted to the older soldier that he was afraid. The older soldier said, "Don't worry. When a bullet has your name on it there is nothing you can do."
 12. The young soldier said, "I am not talking about the bullet that has my name on it. I'm talking about the ones that say: 'To Whom it May Concern!'"
 13. The arrow that killed King Ahab did not say: "To Whom it May Concern." This arrow was marked for King Ahab and it was directed by the LORD Himself (I Kings 22:34).
 14. God is true to His Word -- true to His promises and true to His threats.
 15. Meanwhile King Jehoshaphat was protected by the LORD (cf. II Chron. 18:31). It is easy to discern God's hand in all of this.

CONCLUSION:

Warren Wiersbe said, "If Ahab had put a target on Jehoshaphat's back, he would not have made it easier for the enemy to kill him! If Jehoshaphat had died, then his son would have taken the throne, and Ahab's daughter would have been the Jezebel of Judah! If Ahab then united the two thrones and blended the Davidic line with his own line, what would have happened to

the Davidic covenant and the Messianic line? But God is sovereign in all things and protected Jehoshaphat, while at the same time allowing a random arrow to hit an opening in Ahab's armor and kill him. Ahab was disguised and yet was killed, while Jehoshaphat was in his royal robes and never touched. Ahab had set the king of Syria free when he should have destroyed him, and now the Syrians killed Ahab" (*The Bible Exposition Commentary*).