

BOOK OF 1 KINGS
AHAB VS BENHADAD – PART 1
1 KINGS 20:1-6

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Introduction

In this Chapter, the story switches away from the story of the two prophets Elijah and Elisha for a bit to focus upon two Kings—Ahab, the King of Israel, and Benhadad, the King of Syria.

The story begins with the first of three battles fought in 1 Kings. Here we see King Ahab and Israel (a/k/a Samaria) are under attack from Benhadad, the Syrian King. Benhadad’s desire was to defeat Samaria and to suck the very life out of God’s people who lived in Samaria.

I. WE SEE BENHADAD’S SIEGE OF SAMARIA! (Vs 1)

Let’s review what we have seen going on up to this point in the two kingdoms of God’s people—The Southern Kingdom of Judah and the Northern Kingdom of Israel (a/k/a Samaria).

It has been a while since we were dealing with the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Let me remind you of how the people of Judah were tottering back and forth spiritually under the leadership of some bad kings and some good kings. At least they had a couple of good kings!

In the Northern Kingdom of Israel (or Samaria), we’ve seen how they had eight bad kings in succession with the latest being Ahab. Because of Israel’s indifference, iniquity, and indecisiveness to follow the LORD, He chastised His people by allowing their enemies to gain strength so they could afflict God's people.

We will see how that over the next 200 years, the LORD would use three chastening rods, three nations, to chastise His people....Syria, Assyria, and Babylon. Syria was the threat here in this Chapter!

We see that this King Benhadad came from Syria along with 32 previously defeated and subordinate kings to war against Samaria.

Fifty-seven years earlier, Judah's King Asa made a league with a King Benhadad to destroy Baasha who was king of Israel at that time. That was Benhadad I and this is his son, Benhadad II.

Here we see that this Benhadad besieged and attacked Samaria with an overwhelming force of men and chariots.

II. WE SEE BENHADAD’S SELFISHNESS IN SAMARIA! (Vs 2-3)

Messengers were sent to Ahab with the message of *verse 3*:

“Thy silver and gold is mine. Thy wives and thy children are mine, even the goodliest are mine.” (i.e. *goodliest = the best*)

Benhadad wasted no time in going after what he wanted! The spoils of war belong to the victor, but no victory had been attained at this point! Benhadad had laid siege to the city of Samaria and began to war against Samaria to scare Ahab into submission. So he sent messengers in with these demands!

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Now listen, there are some things that are worth fighting for! Family is one of those things worth fighting for and defending. (You can mess with me if you want, but leave my family alone!)

Freedom ought to be another thing that is worth fighting for and defending! Thank God for the many who have fought and shed their blood for us so that we could be a free nation and remain a free nation! Those who fought for our freedoms would be appalled if they could see how little freedom is valued today in our society!

There is a war unfolding right now for the very soul of our nation! The freedoms that we have are at risk of being taken away from us!

This war is not being fought with bullets yet. For now, the battle is being played out in the public arena and at the ballot box!

We who are Believers should be fighting the battle by putting into play *2 Chronicles 7:14* – *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”*

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That's because the strength of our nation has been weakened because our nation has forsaken the source of what made it great to begin with...the LORD Himself and His Righteousness!

Proverbs 14:34 – “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.”

The sin of a nation will suck the very strength out of it, robbing it of its greatness. That is what we see happening in our land!

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In the Scripture here, we see Benhadad expected Ahab to become just another defeated king doing his bidding like the other 32 kings had done.

He expected Ahab to surrender not only his gold and silver, but his harem and his children. That was not only a surrender of his throne, but his manhood, and his respect for himself.

Benhadad didn't know it yet, but his greed and covetousness were going to get him into trouble with the LORD! **Sadly, greed and covetousness most always leads one to more trouble than they can handle!**

e.g. *It brought trouble to Achan who both coveted and took a garment and a wedge of gold in the battle for Jericho and it cost him his life and the life of his family.*

It brought trouble to King Saul who saved the best sheep the Amalekites had instead of destroying them and ended up losing his throne.

It troubled Judas who at first betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver but ended up hanging himself in the end.

It troubled Ananias and Sapphira who lied about their gift to the LORD and they were smitten by God Himself.

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Covetousness and greed are destructive and terrible attitudes.
In fact, Paul told the Colossian Believers that **covetousness is a form of idolatry** in *Colossians 3:5*.

Popularity, power, and possessions (including money and the things that money can buy) often become priorities in folk's lives. When anything comes before God in one's life, it becomes an idol!

Paul issued a warning in 1 Timothy:

1 Timothy 6:9-10—But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

A covetous spirit can often lead to compromise and corruptive actions in one's life in order to gain more and more!

Covetousness and greed blind us to what we already possess and causes us to forget what God has blessed us with already!

Covetousness and greed make us discontented and dissatisfied with what we have which makes us unable to enjoy what we have because we are always looking for more.

*Proverbs 27:20 – “Hell and destruction are never full; so **the eyes of man are never satisfied.**”*

Greed creates problems in the home. I've seen it time and again!
*Proverbs 15:27 – “**He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live.**”*

One way a house is troubled is when children learn from the covetous attitude and actions of their parents. They learn to be discontent and dissatisfied because their parents are never content and never satisfied!

Proverbs 28:22 – “He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.”

III. WE SEE AHAB’S SURRENDER TO BENHADAD! (Vs 4)

Character is determined by what it takes to stop you! It appears that it didn’t take much for Ahab! Someone suggested that as bossy and wicked as Jezebel was, maybe Ahab was ready to get rid of her! I don’t know, maybe so!

Notice though that Ahab did not bother to pray to the LORD and ask Him for help. That is because in spite of Baal being proved to be fake by Elijah, Ahab had not embraced the LORD for himself! How sad for Him and Israel! He just continued in his sinful, godless ways!

Those who don’t know the LORD have to rely on their own reasoning because they have no faith in the LORD.

We find another great truth here. We too are powerless without the LORD being an integral part of our life!

Jesus said in *John 15:5 – “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”*

Just as Ahab was powerless before Benhadad without the LORD, we too are powerless over sinful habits that can and will rob us of all we have that is precious to us and will enslave us and keep us in bondage!

Nevertheless, Jesus Christ can empower us who have Believed on Him and give us victory in our life and walk if we will just look to Him!

IV. WE SEE BENHADAD’S DESIRE FOR MORE! (Vs 5-6)

Ahab was ready to fulfill Benhadad’s original demands. But, Benhadad wasn’t satisfied with that. We’re not told, Benhadad’s reasoning. Maybe he thought Ahab gave up too easy and was probably holding back something else he might want!

If Ahab had more, then Benhadad wanted that more than he had! He wanted to loot the city and take everything that was precious to Ahab away! He wanted Ahab’s unconditional surrender!

Could I tell you that Satan is the same way in our lives! He is never satisfied! He wants us in bondage to him! He wants to take away everything that is precious to us!

1 Peter 5:8-9 – “8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”

Don’t be ignorant of Satan’s devices! He is always looking to get whatever advantage on us that he can!

2 Corinthians 2:11 – “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.”

Don’t give the devil a foothold in your life...don’t give him a place!
Ephesians 4:27 – “Neither give place to the devil.”

Give your life wholly to God! Don’t give the devil an inch, because he won’t be satisfied until he has swallowed up your entire life!
James 4:7 – “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

Ephesians 6:10-11 – “10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Conclusion

That’s our Bible Study for this evening. We’ll come back and see what comes of all this next week, LORD willing!